D6.12

Policy Brief 2

Work package: 6
Due date: 30/09/2023
Submission date: 29/09/2023
Resubmission after 2nd reviewing period: 29/04/2024
Work package leader: UNIMORE
Deliverable responsible: UNIMORE
Dissemination level: Public
Author(s): Federica Manzoli

Project full title: ITHACA, Interconnecting Histories and Archives for Migrant Agency: Entangled Narratives Across Europe and the Mediterranean Region
Start date: 1 January 2021
Duration: 51 months
Project funding scheme: H2020-SC6-MIGRATION-09-2020
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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

WP   Work Package
T   Task
M   Month
PCE Policy Council Event

Document review history

Date	Author(s)	Feedback/Review	Version
25/08/2023	Federica Manzoli (UNIMORE)	Jacopo Pili, Matteo Al Kalak and Maria Chiara Rioli (UNIMORE)	D6.12_1
29/08/2023	Federica Manzoli (UNIMORE)	Valentina Napolitano (CNRS IFPO)	D6.12_2
19/09/2023	Federica Manzoli (UNIMORE)	Alberto Sciortino (ARCS Tunisie), Kanza Oumlil and Catherine Therrien (AUI)	D6.12_3
26/09/2023	Federica Manzoli (UNIMORE)	Andrew Shield (ULEI)	D6.12_4
16/01/2024	Federica Manzoli (UNIMORE)	REA Appointed reviewers	D6.12_5
09/04/2024	Federica Manzoli (UNIMORE)		D6.12_6

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Introduction

This second Policy Brief was produced following the second round of Policy Council Events ("PCEs") (see T5.5) held in seven of the ITHACA countries: Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Morocco, Tunisia, Azerbaijan and Jordan. The events were staged in 12 towns (Rome, Milan, Modena, Athens, Leiden, Rabat, Tunis, Tataouine, Baku, Ahan Village, Amman and Ifrane) between January and June 2023.

The text of the Policy Brief is reported below which summarises the main aspects of the 90 pages of reports delivered by the partners UMIL, UNIMORE, AMM, ULEI, NKUA, ARCS Tunisie, AUI, IGAZ and CNRS IFPO following their local and national councils, along with the report resulting from the final international council held in Ifrane. These events were attended by members of various migrant associations, by policymakers and by researchers from Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.
This second round of PCEs forms the subject of the last ITHACA newsletter:
https://ithacahorizon.eu/news/qualitative-researchers-speaks-with-policy-makers-and-practitioners-how-to-foster-the-collaboration/.

Thanks to the collaboration and expertise of ITHACA's partners and their ability to assemble stakeholders from different fields, the discussion around "Qualitative research in support of Euro-Mediterranean migration policies" gave rise to innovative results and practical recommendations for practitioners, policymakers and researchers.
Particular emphasis was placed on the results emerging from the Moroccan, Jordanian and Tunisian councils, where qualitative and archival research was found to encompass great potential for informing policymakers and fostering migrant agency.

Following the second review meeting ("GENERAL PROJECT REVIEW CONSOLIDATED REPORT", 30/01/2024), a series of interviews were conducted via email by 2 stakeholders who participated in the Italian and Greek PCEs (Marzio Barbieri, Social Planning, Integration and Inclusion, Poverty Alleviation Area, Emilia-Romagna Region, Italy; Theodoros Fouskas, Assistant Professor in Sociology, University of West Attica, Greece) and Karina Horsti (University of Jyväskylä, member of the ITHACA Scientific Advisory Board).
Their comments and the corresponding action taken to improve the Policy Briefs are reported in Annex 1 to this document.

The public version of this Policy Brief is available on the ITHACA website:
https://ithacahorizon.eu/policybriefs/.
A specific layout has been provided by the ITHACA graphic designer, respecting the rules of accessible readability (typeface, font size, colours contrast, left alignment of text, good balance of the lenght of paragraphs), in order to create an inclusive document to ensure that ITHACA project can be understood by as wide an audience as possible.
To reach local and national policymakers, a translation into Italian, French and Arabic will be provided on the website within Summer 2024.

Qualitative-archival research on migration is not just preservation

POLICY BRIEF

This Policy Briefs provides answers to and recommendations about two main questions:

- In the current scenario, how does qualitative and archival research interrelate with migration policies at local, national and international level around the Mediterranean and beyond?

- How can the relationship between qualitative and archival research and actual migration policies become more collaborative and effective in the future?

Social research methods are needed to support effective policies and the work of practitioners in the field of migration. In particular, qualitative and archival research can assist in providing in-depth knowledge of social contexts.

This Policy Brief will assist readers in understanding how this occurs in the different contexts, given that over 150 stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, practitioners, migrant associations, governments, civil society/non-governmental organisations and migrants from seven Mediterranean countries, contributed to answering the questions indicated above.

Three key findings emerged:

Qualitative and archival research is a tool of social innovation - Qualitative research, based on individual and collective narratives, is an essential tool for informing non-emergency policies, along with social work planning and evaluation. Research helps to explain the reasons behind the phenomenon of migration and to contextualise them as necessary, be it in political, educational, labour, health or reception settings.

Moreover, if disseminated well, migrant narratives collected and contextualised by qualitative researchers can help to highlight the complexity of the term "migration", tackling the pervasive, yet false, belief that migrants all fall within the same monolithic category.

Importance of archives - The archival research conducted within ITHACA demonstrates the potential of providing dynamic and interlinked information, including legal frameworks, policy documents, historical context, and fresh narratives, in supporting science and policies *in the long-term*.

Aside from the "preservation" capacities of archives and the technical possibility of linking different sources and data to be used for producing policies, they are a tool with great potential for fostering migrant agency.

Enablers of improved qualitative and archival research-policy relations - *Space, time* and *people* are the three main enablers. Qualitative and archival research offers a contextual and comparative tool for investigating in-depth the various local features and extending them to national and international levels, covering the global-local nexus. On the other hand, there is a call for synchronicity, with a common programme being required from the outset when planning an action or a policy. Finally, research and politics must come together more often and more regularly, so that their common goals and development can be better understood.

These three key findings are examined in greater detail in the following pages, providing fresh quotations from multiple voices of the stakeholders who actively shared their experiences and expectations. Particular attention is paid to the results originating from Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco, as in countries such as these where research-policy dialogue is insufficiently established, qualitative research demonstrates strong potential for informing policies and fostering migrant agency. A set of final recommendations provides the answers to our initial questions and offers practical instructions.

A novel approach

From January to June 2023, the EU-funded H2020 ITHACA project organised a series of Policy Council Events (PCEs). The PCEs were set up to enable a broad group of stakeholders to meet and exchange thoughts, views and proposals at local, national and international levels on the topic of the relationship between research and policies (hereinafter, research-policy relations).

Participants: Policymakers, researchers in migration studies, sociologists, anthropologists, historians, migrant association representatives, communicators, intergovernmental organisation representatives and lawyers, all convened by ITHACA's partners. Around 150 participants took part in 12 meetings.

Locations: Seven countries (Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Morocco, Tunisia, Azerbaijan and Jordan), in 12 towns (Rome, Milan, Modena, Athens, Leiden, Rabat, Tunis, Tataouine, Baku, Ahan Village and Amman).

Methods: The local and national meetings were split into two main parts: during the first part, the participants discussed the meanings of research and archives from their professional and personal experience, along with the opportunities offered and the obstacles encountered in conducting and transferring the results; during the second part, the participants shared their views on ways of strengthening the synergy between qualitative and archival research and migration policies. Each ITHACA project partner involved provided a report of each meeting, developed through a themed analysis.

ITHACA Second International Policy Council Event, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, June 2023.

Aims: In order to reflect on the relations between research and policy, conceptual frameworks were developed to make sense of research-policy relations and the impact on both research and policy at European and international level (Scholten, 2018), with particular regard to social-qualitative research (WHO, 2022; Iosifides, 2011). Various different models were developed based on the extent to which scholars are actively engaged in policymaking processes, or, conversely, if they remain hidden away in their 'ivory tower' protected by scientific objectivity.

In this policy brief, ITHACA expands the focus from Europe to the Middle East, North Africa and beyond, and to a unique variety of stakeholders operating in the field of migration policies which are current or potential protagonists in the area of qualitative and archival research.

Thanks to this project action, ITHACA has enlarged the network of migrants/migrant associations and practitioners operating in the field of different local, national and international policies, not just raising their awareness on this topic, but allowing them to **co-create recommendations for ethical and effective policy-oriented research.**

This action is part of the ITHACA project (G.A. 101004539) which aims to analyse migration patterns from the Middle Ages to the present day, within a rigorous historical framework, and to make the results available via a web platform. This will provide migrants, researchers, practitioners and policymakers with a digital database of narratives, documents and archival sources. The Consortium pays particular attention to making an impact at political and social level in order to transform narratives and policies on migration. The topics, practices and discourses that arose during the ITHACA PCE concerned different geographical, social and economic contexts; however, the feedback from stakeholders revealed some significant areas of uniformity in terms of problems, opportunities and recommendations.

This policy brief represents the views of the ITHACA project partners. The support received from the Horizon 2020 Programme for the project publications does not constitute an endorsement of their contents, which reflect the views of the authors only. The European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

KEY FINDINGS 1

Qualitative research relations with migration policies: Meanings, challenges and opportunities

There has been some debate about the differences between quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research deals with numbers and uses statistical models to explain data, with the most well-known quantitative methods being opinion polls and surveys. Qualitative research, on the other hand, avoids numbers and concentrates on analysing words and images (whether written, audio, video, images or multimedia), thereby "interpreting" social contexts. Two prominent qualitative methods consist of in-depth interviews and focus groups. While quantitative research asks questions such as "how much" or 'how often', qualitative research instead focuses on the "what", "how", and "why".

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are needed **to support effective policymaking, based upon evidence and in-depth knowledge of social contexts**. Qualitative and interpretive research can extend our comprehension of the vast and complex issue of policymaking processes and can facilitate our in-depth, sophisticated and intricate understanding of the context, enabling and supporting the policy implementation process.

This policy brief concentrates on **qualitative and archival research** as this is the main focus of the ITHACA project. Its ultimate goal is to produce a **platform to act as an interactive space for collecting and disseminating migration narratives, both in the past and in the present**, forming a knowledge base for policymakers, researchers, practitioners and all stakeholders involved in the journey, arrival and assistance of migrants.

Aside from being the main recipients of this document, they were also invited to be its **co-producers**.

1.1 Qualitative research and migration policies

"It is important to remember that official state and international policies are often based only on quantitative considerations. The decision to attempt migration can arise from numerous personal conditions, at individual, family, cultural and social level and all these levels should be taken into consideration when attempting to understand the phenomenon of migration. In this sense, an important distinction has been made in our debate between the personal motivations and the social causes of migration, and this distinction can act as a meeting point between qualitative and quantitative research. A complex set of personal reasons is involved in every decision to migrate, but when migrations become a numerically large phenomenon, this means that something has happened in society that is not the simple sum of those individual reasons."
— Researcher, Tataouine, Tunisia

Qualitative methods not only assist academic research, but also provide the basis for making decisions at every stage of the process of planning, implementing and evaluating policies and practical activities, **which implies listening before acting**. These methods are part of various areas of **social work**: "We hold a lot of meetings, attempting to bring people together and to allow them to co-produce solutions with us," explained a healthcare practitioner in one of our Italian PCEs.

A starting point for agreeing on a common definition of *qualitative research for policies*, is deciding **when** research becomes necessary. A common finding among the ITHACA stakeholders is that **research helps to improve our knowledge of migration, providing an explanation of the reasons behind** the phenomenon, also **contextualising** them wherever this is most needed, whether in political, educational, labour, health or reception settings. Qualitative research (hereafter QR) helps in **assessing migration policies** and making proposals to improve them, while guaranteeing consistency with other public policies. Migration policy consists of a constantly evolving series of texts whose expression and interpretation **vary according to the context** in which the policies are to be put into practice.

There is evidence to support the claim that QR helps to build policies that are not based on abstract assumptions but are instead **based on individual and collective experiences**, as qualitative research methods - such as interviews and focus groups - offer a nuanced understanding of migration practices, motivations, and challenges. As QR is **based on discourse**, it facilitates an in-depth exploration of the values and reasons behind migration in the various different cultures and can assist in **explaining, through stories and lived experiences**, the different elements of migration of varying significance to the overall concept. It can also assist in ascertaining how the various stakeholders involved view the experience of migration - the motivation, the journey, the arrival, the practical implications, the risks faced by migrants - and how this perspective affects their decisions, also identifying how countries, politicians and administrations respond when adopting specific reception procedures.

"Conducting qualitative research, based on discourse rather than on numbers, is the necessary **basis for non-emergency policies**, far removed from abstract theories, but **based on individual and collective narratives**," explained a policymaker with a background in migration, based in Rome.

1.2 Research and policies protagonists

Based upon the knowledge goals that motivate the research, four main groups of protagonists emerged from the PCEs: those who **fund** research; those who **design, conduct and analyse** research; those who participate as **subjects**; and those who **use the results** of research.

In addition to the more obvious role played by researchers and policymakers, a clear finding from the PCEs was the need to engage a variety of stakeholders. Research and data on migration are not only produced by academics but also by practitioners, migrant associations, governments, civil society/non-governmental organisations (CSOs/NGOs) and migrants themselves, through reports, websites and also narratives, often consisting of social media posts (see the First ITHACA Policy Brief on migrants' self-representations and Covid-19).

Migrants

If disseminated correctly, migrant narratives collected and contextualised by qualitative researchers can help to highlight the complexity of the term "migration", tackling the pervasive, yet false, belief that migrants all fall within the same monolithic category.

In the ITHACA project, the term migrant is used to describe anyone (an individual, a group or a community) who moves from one place to another, either crossing an international border (international migration) or remaining within the same country (internal migration), on a voluntary or forced basis, for economic, environmental, political or religious reasons, including refugees, whether illegally or not.

Migrants are both the subjects of QR as well as its potential users. If properly communicated by researchers, QR findings can facilitate migrants' understanding of their arrival countries and societies, and the related activities and practices of inclusion. On one side, several policymakers commented in the ITHACA PCEs, from the Netherlands to North Africa, that giving migrants a voice through **periodic consultations** is extremely important. If the purpose and usefulness of research into constructing more effective policies is conveyed successfully to potential migrants in their **countries of origin**, their willingness to participate will increase: "Rural dwellers are open to providing personal information about themselves when it concerns migration. Sharing information with us researchers through interviews means that they can raise more attention to their problems. Many communities have not been involved in any projects implemented by non-governmental organisations or in any internationally-run projects before," stated a geographer during a meeting in Ahan, a small village in Azerbaijan's Ismayilli district. On the other side, in regions where the research-policy relationship is more advanced, a key point of action is to increase the **representativeness of migrants in the political life of cities, regions and states**. "Right now, we are seeing inadequate involvement of migrant communities in local political life, also due to the feeling that their participation has no impact on public affairs," claimed a politician and council member of the Municipality of Turin, Italy, with African origins.

Civil society organizations

Across all seven ITHACA countries that hosted the PCEs, the fundamental subjects of QR are **civil society organisations**, including communicators, mediators, associations and NGOs that are active in the field. "They are experts in the area, more so than researchers," claimed a researcher in Leiden, the Netherlands, while discussing governmental and academic practitioners' roles in the reception of LGBTQ+ migrants.

QR also helps to **preserve data for the future**, enabling work in this area to be better planned and evaluated. In conjunction with local, national and international institutions, this can ultimately be of assistance in designing new and effective migration policies.

Furthermore, "studies and research are a **basic working tool for NGOs,**" said a practitioner and activist in Italy. For example, a recent analysis of data on the topic of sea rescues deconstructed the representation of NGOs as pull factors of illegal migration. In addition, the work of *forensic architecture* conducted in a joint effort of academia and civil society organisations revealed its effectiveness in addressing valid humanitarian actions and in evaluating them.

In analysing the discourse of the ITHACA stakeholders asked about their role in QR and how they apply it, the **need for collaboration between the different players** was identified as being of paramount importance.

1.3 QR and policies in practice

QR starts with documents and stories: experiences described, heard, analysed and re-narrated. It allows those who use it to immerse themselves in the results, ultimately transforming and channelling this information into practices and policies. The experiences highlighted by the ITHACA stakeholders reveal both opportunities and obstacles in their implementation.

Qualitative research as a tool of social innovation

By providing in-depth knowledge of migrants' real stories, qualitative research can furnish organisations and policymakers with **new solutions and new programmes**, and also **raise awareness** on the real conditions of migrants.

After gathering stories, experiences and testimonies from migrants and from practitioners working in the field, as well as from those who design and evaluate migration policies, these must then be **reflected on**, **deconstructing** their complexities, and then considering their **solutions**.

"Sometimes the data indicate that migrants or, in any case, foreigners find it difficult to access services due to their culture of origin; they have different views on health, fragility, prevention, and care. Research opens up new pathways that lead from the institution and goes towards the migrants, seeking all those spaces, facilities and informal environments where foreigners live and where they can be reached" — Healthcare practitioner, Modena, Italy

"Being able to access qualitative research data makes it possible to implement interventions that are more fitting for the territory in which we live, going beyond the prejudices that, even

with the best intentions, most of us hold. For example, if I find that I am managing the reception of a migrant, I ask myself about his or her characteristics, his or her specific features, the consequences for him or her of not having a home." — Practitioner, NOG, Modena, Italy

"A research team from the University conducted QR to study access by migrants to social services. The results led to the design of a new application form, with a view to easing the everyday lives of migrants, offering valuable and updated information on the available services, with the possibility of giving feedback and, therefore, opening a dialogue with the administration"
— Ministry of Migration and Asylum officer, Athens, Greece.

In pushing innovation, the findings of QR provide an opportunity to:
- **discuss stereotypes**, by exploring the multifaceted experiences of migrants
- pose **new questions** to decision makers and practitioners ("to be there is not enough, you have to know")
- **monitor and evaluate** existing policies
- **improve and create new policies**
- **base decisions on the complexity** of the phenomenon and, as often tends to be **the case, not on emergency situations**
- **save money**, avoiding starting from scratch (situations and solutions have often already been studied and policy decisions can take advantage of existing experiences)
- **network with the stakeholders involved**, who can share their stories and suggestions with practitioners, researchers and policymakers, and facilitate access to migrant communities.

From research to policies, from policies to research: Obstacles along the way
The nature and types of obstacles in QR-policy relationships are based upon *structural/practical* and *political* reasons.
Across the countries involved in ITHACA, the **structural obstacles** identified by stakeholders which prevent policymakers from using research results include:
- **regulatory gaps;**
- **local specificities;**
- **administrative practices;**
- **different timeframes.**

"A great deal of valuable and important research data may not be used, depending on each Government's agenda. With regard to how the administration works, many services are shared between ministries and so we cannot always monitor what is happening in the different departments. The public administration lacks an inclusive institutional framework to connect the various players." — Practitioner, NGO, Athens, Greece

"On one hand, international and national institutions are run by administrative-bureaucratic structures that are very much oriented towards themselves. On the other hand, they are the subject of continuous negotiation, in an attempt to bring together different needs and tendencies." — Researcher and international policy maker, Rome, Italy

"The legal framework must be adapted to local situations and in order to get to know these specific aspects, data needs to be collected on the ground… the relationships and communications between migrant associations and the Government became more complex after the Cabinet reshuffle." — Stakeholder, Rabat, Morocco

One of the reasons for the ineffective relationship between research and policies is politics.

Policy planning and decisions vary according to the political agenda of each Government, and the research results - especially if they are not aligned with current government programmes - are often not taken into consideration.

"There must be a political will to listen to the stories of migrants. Listening to them directly implies a political responsibility... The logic of power is scarcely discussed, meaning that policies are often disconnected from the reality on the ground," explained a researcher at the Tunis PCE.

From the research side, some practitioners and policymakers call for more policy-oriented research. Their findings need to be challenged, debated and tested before they can provide a reliable basis for any recommendations.

The structural and political gaps identified above are behind the **insufficient utilisation** of existing and potential QR.

> *"Research is often not used, not taking the time to make sense of it, to repeat it over a long period. I'll give you an example: almost thirty years have passed since my colleague carried out some research entitled "What do you do on Sunday?". He interviewed 40 or 50 people. Back then, the migration phenomenon [in Italy] was much smaller, numerically and also in terms of origin. The migrants had found a job and a place to live. Though, in the policies in place at the time, they were considered only from Monday to Friday; Saturday and Sunday weren't part of the programme. Integration is not just into the work environment. There is still room to think about how to involve people who have arrived in Modena and to ensure that there is a Sunday for them, that they are not just workers." — Reception centre practitioner, Modena, Italy*

1.4 Ethics aspects

Terms such as "transparency", "respect", "independence", "ethics" and "honesty" frequently appear in the arguments made by ITHACA stakeholders when discussing how to use QR.

The main ethical risk in the relationship between research (all research fields and methods) and policies is **instrumentality**. Knowledge can be used to substantiate specific political claims or ideas, or to foster populism.

Biases are found everywhere: one communicator and activist in Rome explained that "there are those who consider themselves anti-racist but they have not deconstructed their way of thinking. Instead, we need to deconstruct internalised racism. Sometimes, major events about racism have all-white panels".

The main opportunity provided by responsible research is that it can identify questions and views that help to **dismantle stereotypes**, with beneficial repercussions not only in terms of ethical issues behind the research and its use, but also in relation to the **development of better practical solutions and services**. Indeed, stereotypical representations are recurring themes in the design and

implementation of policies; the planning of housing, education and health policies is often grounded on pre-understandings. The responsible use of research results helps practitioners and policymakers to adopt a critical perspective and to question this approach: it is necessary "to ensure migrants participate as active subjects in the research and to listen to their views, their representations of the city and how they experience it, with the aim of building services that are better suited to them," explained a healthcare practitioner during the Dutch PCE.

In order to maintain a critical and ethical approach in all phases of the QR-policies relationship, from the design to the use of results, **the basic questions to be asked are**:

> *"Who is behind this project? Who is the funder?*
> *What is the purpose of the research?*
> *Who owns the data collected?*
> *What do we intend to do with the data collected?*
> *What are the risks for the participants?*
> *Who reaps the benefits of this data collection?*
> *Is the research disseminated? If so, how and to whom?*
> *Are we recognising and valuing the participation of the associations that collected the data and the people who agreed to share their stories and experiences?"* **— Stakeholder, Rabat, Morocco**

1.5 Communicating research

In the QR-policy relationship, communication is discussed at two levels: the level of contents and the level of *communication flows*.

Contents

At the first level, the QR results offer to communicators life stories, experiences and information about complex contexts. Engagement through stories is a possible, practical use of responsible QR.

For **practitioners working in communication**, QR can be an opportunity to address migration policies and to encourage migrants to speak out; it can be an effective information channel and an opportunity to disseminate issues that are not sufficiently known by the public.

QR can form the basis on which to **overturn negative narratives**, providing a chance "to argue how in every migration path there is a complexity and not just a division between good and bad" (migrant, Amman). The **effect of fake news and stereotypical images of migrants and migrations** in the media - particularly on social media - is unquestionable. A lawyer attending the PCE in Milan, Italy, stated that: "Communication made people used to stereotypes. For years there has been a growing tendency to accept the human costs of forced migration".

The use of QR findings in communication can be improved by providing free **training to journalists**, by implementing **educational campaigns** and by using **art and video** as tools to give a voice to migrants, to disseminate QR results and to engage a wider audience.

> *"Artists produce 'educational material'. Art is accessible and can be disseminated to a wider audience. Combining art and research seems to be a good way of getting messages across and reaching people in a different way than by merely reading a research report"* — **Stakeholder in Morocco**

Moreover, research - and media studies in particular - can offer critical approaches for exploring the **multifaceted environment of social networks** and discussing one-way interpretations of reality, as evidenced by this testimony from a Tunisian university student in Tataouine:

> *"Sometimes the very first subjects who misrepresent the reality of migration could be the migrants themselves. Family members of migrants are encouraged to think that their relatives living abroad are making their dreams come true. Returning from Europe for the holidays, some migrants build and share their own narrative of personal fulfilment, overlooking what their real life is like. Sometimes, the migrant narrative is presented as a success story even though there are no successes at all. Social media plays an important role in spreading these stories."*

At the PCEs in each ITHACA country, the practitioners/policymakers asked the researchers to adopt a **more understandable**, **concise and simplified language**.

Communication flows

When QR meets policymaking, it requires **dedicated communication channels**. Currently, there is a dearth of **common platforms** on which academics and policymakers can exchange policy needs and research results.

The introduction of **local, national and international** platforms on which the various parties could meet would support a more effective dialogue between migration policymakers and researchers, and would facilitate **monitoring and follow-up** actions on the findings and enable collaborations to take place.

Organised and recurring meetings would prevent any so-called "**silo effect**" (characterised by a lack of communication or common goals between players within an organisation) and allow for dialogue to be opened up, avoiding a multidirectional flow of information and fostering cooperation between all players involved in the research-policy flow.

One example is offered by the Dutch PCE, mainly focused on the reception of LGBTI+ refugees. "It is rare for NGOs to speak to each other on a transnational platform," said one practitioner. "Most work is done at national or city level by activists, NGO workers, and volunteers. Imagine a platform that unifies the vast network of people that make up the first year for an LGBTI+ refugee: lawyers, social workers, therapists - how can these people work together? They should be able to access information from each other in the interest of the refugee's case".

KEY FINDINGS 2

Archives
Multiple meanings towards collaborative efforts

"An archive signifies custody, care, a relationship. It is like a padlock that closes or opens a door. By entering, you can discover what is inside; by closing, you cannot see what it holds. It is a memory pathway, a tool to hold together different stories that have something in common. Quoting Saverio Tutino, it is a "memory cradle", serving to make future generations aware."
— Archivist, Rome

The term "archive" is often used to mean a technical space, difficult to consult and inaccessible except to researchers, administrative personnel, and specialised professionals.
On the other hand, with regard to migration policies during the ITHACA PCEs, archival research demonstrates the potential of providing dynamic information, legal frameworks, policy documents, historical context, and fresh narratives capable of supporting science and policies **in the long-term**.
While the **research participants** emphasised aspects related to the "preservation" qualities of archives and the technical possibility of linking different sources and data for policies, the **practitioners** and activists raised the issue of opportunities and problems connected to their effective and efficient use and concluded that more respectful policies can be developed by using archives that gather together individual experiences and social contexts. From the perspective of **policy and decision makers**, the use of archives is potentially a powerful **decision-making tool.**

"Archiving is the most primordial step in any journalistic, anthropological, sociological, or research enterprise as, without a specific and thorough database, nobody can reach any conclusive results." **— Researcher, Tunis, Tunisia**

"Take the issue of housing: one primary question is how can an archive that keeps a record of migrants' housing status also cover information about issues such as health, education, employment opportunities, working conditions, legal matters, interactions with the local community. When unified in an archive, these elements could provide information, as well as monitoring of policies, revealing, for example, discrimination due to gender, age and ethnicity" **— Researcher, Athens, Greece**

Archives have strong communicative potential, thus being **a tool used to foster migrant agency**, as they are a "means of negotiation, documentation, and awareness-raising that contributes to the strengthening of civil society. Archives are perceived as an essential tool for studying migration, documenting migrants' journeys, supporting research, and mobilising in favour of migrants' rights," explained a stakeholder participating at the Amman PCE.
Regardless of where the PCE took place - from East to West, from Europe to North Africa - our results demonstrate the importance of **building and maintaining archives in a responsible manner.**

Given the power that archives have in preserving histories of migration and providing information on the base of which decision are taken, main issues to consider are:

- as culture and identity are shaped by memory and historical records, **who enters** (is allowed to enter) the records of the past and the present?
- **who shapes** the narratives and archives?
- as we can retain good practices and ways of handling emergency situations and turn them into opportunities for social cohesion through archives, **what** do we choose to keep?

As emerged from the international PCE held in Ifrane (Morocco) at the crossroads between research and policy making, **an archive that provides effective support to migration policies should be**: open, sustainable, accessible, user-friendly, plural, participative, multi-language, referential, transparent (giving recognition to the subjects), holistic (including metadata, contextual data), and responsible (giving recognition to individual and collective narratives).
It is clear that in order to develop archives that can be effectively used by policymakers, the **priority is to train professional archivists.**

Focus on the Mediterranean: Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia
Qualitative and archival research for *agency*

Jordan

The Jordan PCE focused on the role of archiving and narrating for the purpose of enhancing political and humanitarian actions. Independent archivists, Jordanian researchers and international institutions, activists and volunteers for refugees' rights and representatives from UNRWA all took part in the meeting. The main questions focused on the **value of agency**, raising fundamental questions: *Who talks about migrants and why? Who are the protagonists and mediators? How do power relations shape the production of narratives? In what way are migrants' unheard and invisible histories captured? Who benefits from these narratives and what is their impact on social representations and interactions between refugees and host communities?*
Researchers, archivists and policymakers have a huge responsibility to choose who is included and excluded from the database that shapes history and drives humanitarian and political decisions. Moreover, **as preserving memories through research and archives can be a way of affirming rights**, it is crucial for researchers and participants to share decisions on **how the research results will be used.**
"Being recorded means to exist. We want to be protagonists, not just reported by NGOs or governments," said one of the migrant participants.

Tunisia

Against a certain scepticism of the role played by research in shaping migration policies because of the scarce interest by policymakers, most of the participants claimed that qualitative and archival research can prove helpful for the **wealth of information** collected, its **innovation potential** in suggesting new solutions and in **raising awareness on the true conditions of migrants.**
They appreciate the effort of activist groups and believe that scientific research can help their effort. The weakness of a quantity-only based approach to the understanding of migration were identified, concluding that migration policies and strategies cannot be based only on quantitative information. **For example**, they identified the cause of the recent migratory wave from Tunisia, using an alternative entry route to Europe, is caused by a vast 'defeat' of young people's aspirations and hopes for a better life, issues better studied by qualitative than quantitative research.
Qualitative and archival research resulted as tools to give their voice back to migrants.

Morocco

The local and national PCEs held in Morocco emphasised the **importance of research in shaping inclusive migration policies.** It called for increased collaboration and communication among actors, the dismantling of discriminatory practices, and the recognition of migrants' contributions to Moroccan society.

While research is recognized as playing a potential crucial role in informing migration policies, a **greater collaboration and involvement of policymakers, as well as public institution employees**, in the research process **from the beginning** is recalled.

Often, migration policies are disconnected from the reality on the ground **because of lack of dialogue**, that should go in both directions, **not only in the planning of migration policies but also in their evaluation, once they have been implemented.** As stated by a participant: "Data collection must be done downstream but also upstream. Few studies tell us about how these public policies are implemented, and more resources are therefore needed to carry out longitudinal studies".

The creation of permanent, structured networks of migration researchers at national level to improve the organisation and pooling of research efforts and to centralise scientific production in this area was discussed. For the participants, conducting research in the most neutral, reliable and transparent way can foster positive forms of **agency, dismantling discriminatory laws and practices through scientific evidence.**

KEY FINDINGS 3

Enhancing research-policy relations

What factors can facilitate more effective collaboration between research and migration policies?
Three key areas emerge.

3.1 Coverage

Migration is a vast and multidimensional issue which varies according to the political, economic, cultural, and societal conditions of the host and origin countries, the individual motivations to migrate and the meaning given by governments to the *freedom of movement* involved in migration flows.
The use of qualitative and archival research in migration policies crucially depends on the **geographical dimension** in which it operates. The dialogue held by policymakers and practitioners/migrants with researchers in small towns might be more direct and frequent than the dialogue that takes place internationally. However, to design effective policies, QR and archival research offer **contextual** and **comparative tools** for thoroughly investigating the local features and extending them to national and international levels, covering the **global-local nexus**.
From the methodological perspective, one example is given by the manner in which ITHACA's PCEs were conceived and implemented: they started at local level and expanded their findings to national and international levels. In this way, commonalities and differences emerged and gave rise to practical recommendations.

3.2 Timeline

In order to enhance the research-policy relationship, **there is a need for synchronicity**, establishing a common programme from the outset. This would help both researchers and policymakers to gain a clearer understanding of the field and to make more informed decisions.
As migration is a long-term phenomenon, research should be addressed as an integral part of the political life of a city, region and state.
As one economist in Italy explained: "If politics is short-term, emotional, incapable of planning, it is also incapable of posing long-term questions to research. Politics is no longer based on values and interests, but on emotional states. Research must study, analyse, communicate migrations, demonstrating that policies should not be decided on the basis of dramatic events or extemporaneous reactions, but that we must look at them from a long-term perspective".

3.3 Togetherness

When research is to be used as a tool for collaboration, there is a need for **research and politics to come together** more often and more regularly, to ascertain the common aspects, the development steps and the ultimate goal.
"An effort must be made to reposition politics in line with research, but also with those who perform research. There is no ready-made project, but the tools, meanings and development steps constructed together. This requires efforts on both sides, a common recognition," clarified a practitioner during the international PCE in Ifrane. In this context, the degree of liberty of expression and democratic participation of citizens and civil society organisations differs substantially between European and other MENA countries involved in the PCEs, resulting in the limited possibility of constructing a real dialogue between researchers, migrants, practitioners and policymakers.
The need for **platforms** to facilitate regular consultations, joint working groups, and knowledge-exchange was mentioned at several meetings.
By establishing **open communication channels**, stakeholders can benefit from each other's expertise, insights, and perspectives, leading to more informed decision-making, policy formulation and evaluation.
Finally, in QR and archival research, policymakers and academics should always involve **migrants and migrant communities** in a collaborative effort, ensuring their voices are heard and integrated into policy discussions, services planning and decisions.

Recommendations to foster improved qualitative and archival research-migration policy relations

For policymakers

- Consider qualitative and archival research for a more substantive and nuanced understanding of the complexities of policy implementation.
- Before participating in research or using research resources, reflect on your role (policymakers might see research in instrumental terms, while researchers might investigate the intrinsic value of policy).
- Build a stakeholder map (including universities, research centres, foundations, CSOs, NGOs, journalists and communicators).
- Use the research results to deconstruct mainstream narratives.
- Think in an interdisciplinary manner: historians, sociologists, anthropologists, archivists, ICT researchers should work together with practitioners, policymakers and other interested parties.
- Maintain a critical approach, independently from the source.

For practitioners (public officers, NGOs, facilitators/communicators)

- Consider qualitative and archival research as an opportunity to formulate the "correct" questions in your daily work.
- Build a stakeholder map (including universities, research centres, foundations, CSOs, NGOs, journalists and communicators).
- Identify the power relations in the context in which you study/operate.
- Use the research results to deconstruct mainstream narratives.
- Think in an interdisciplinary manner: historians, sociologists, anthropologists, archivists, ICT researchers should work together with practitioners, policymakers and other interested parties.
- Maintain a critical approach, independently from the source.

For researchers

- Before participating in research or using research resources, reflect on your role (policymakers might see research in instrumental terms, while researchers might investigate the intrinsic value of policy).
- Build a research-related stakeholder map (including universities, research centres, foundations, CSOs, NGOs, journalists and communicators).
- Understand the (local, national, international) policy-making process in order to provide relevant and timely advice.
- Declare the analytical perspective you apply when reading through the narrations collected.
- Be specific: the more prevalent a specific topic is, the greater the likelihood of piquing the interest of the Government or other organisations.
- Think in an interdisciplinary manner: historians, sociologists, anthropologists, archivists, ICT researchers should work together with practitioners, policymakers and other interested parties.

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Contacts

Acknowledgements

Deliverable 6.12 - Annex 1

Reviewer comment	Changes
Karina Horsti *Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on the policy brief. It's great to see some findings of the project!* *[she commented mainly on Del 6.12] I suggest you reformulate the title [of D6.12]. First, there's a chance for misunderstanding that research would support certain policies. Second, qualitative research as a term is very broad. Also, later the term qualitative and archival research sound a bit like a mismatch. Would qualitative archival research be more appropriate here? Archival research can also be quantitative. Would an informative title work better? A title that would tell immediately what the brief is about.* *It would be good to be as clear and economic with language as possible. So, This Policy Brief provides answers…* *In addition, I think the English language could be edited. I'm not a native speaker so I'm not exactly sure, but editing might make it clearer.*	• **Title reformulated;** • **Suggestion on language changes acquired;** • **Text reviewed by professional translator.**
Marzio Barbieri *As for the second document, apart from a personal observation of mine that one can speak of racism even when everyone has the skin of one colour, and that it is not so ethical to 'represent' the minority at random, as long as it has a different colour, I have no particular notes.* *The only one is that the blue colour of the inserts is very difficult to read. I would darken it a little.*	**→ the observation regarding minorities was a quotation from one of the stakeholders, contextualized in the Policy Brief.** **Colour blue darkened, in compliance with the graphical inclusivity criteria**
Theodoros Fouskas *Please find the 2 reports with comments. Congratulations!*	**Mainly references added**