



**The Academia and Foreign Policy Making:  
Bridging the Gap**

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## FOREWORD

The aim of the papers included here is to explore the relationship between academic research in the field of International Relations (IR) and the making of foreign policy. How do the two coincide and coexist? What are the requirements levelled upon research taking into account the shifting and complicated nature of the conduct of foreign as well as security policies? What does the relationship look like if seen from the perspective of practitioners and policy planners?

It seems, as such, that the scholarly community is faced with increasing calls for being useful and relevant, although the social and cultural distance between analysis and policy making remains formidable. The differences often seem to be larger than the commonalities and the two fields tend to approach world politics from rather different angles. In exploring the scholarly community and the field of policy-analysis as well as their particular approaches to the production and use of knowledge, questions are posed about the nature of the relationship between policy making and academic analysis in order to illuminate the nature of the nexus and the prospects for bridging the distance. Is the alleged 'gap' unbridgeable, as claimed by some, or can the two be brought closer to each other by adding to the commonalities, thereby also reducing the current rather dichotomous state of affairs?

The papers reflect interventions delivered at an afternoon seminar held at the Danish Institute for International Studies in April 2010, except for Hiski Haukkala who was invited and accepted to contribute to this working paper on the basis of a presentation delivered at the International Studies Association (ISA) convention held in New Orleans in February 2010. The backgrounds of those contributing are as follows:

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**Stephan De Spiegeleire** is Senior Scientist at the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. He has worked for think tanks on both sides of the Atlantic for over 20 years (10 years for the RAND Corporation; 3 years for the Belgian Defense Study Centre, the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik and the WEU Institute for Security Studies). His main research topic has always been new forms of defence and security policy, with a special focus on foresight, capability planning, strategic agility and security resilience.

*Pertti Joenniemi, Editor*



**Stephan de Spiegeleire and  
Pertti Joenniemi:  
THE THEORY-POLICY NEXUS  
IN THE SPHERE OF FOREIGN  
AND SECURITY POLICIES**

**Abstract**

The paper aims at probing the way the social distance between research and practice has been unfolding in the spheres of foreign and security policies. It is noted that the landscape has been changing considerably during the last two decades, and further changes seem to be in train. While inevitably non-exhaustive and idiosyncratic, the paper still attempts to capture some key features of a shifting and rather complicated picture by looking at the demand as well as supply of research. In conclusion, the paper also comments on the frequently used concept of a ‘gap’ by pointing out that the two spheres relate extensively to each other despite their dissimilarity in regard to the underlying principles and departures. The relationship appears to have grown increasingly tense and so close that rather than discussing and pointing to an alleged gap, there are reasons to focus on the very nature of the relationship, discuss the terms to be applied in devising it, but also to map and outline it far better than has been the case so far.

**Introduction**

As in all policy areas, governments also require various forms of analysis in the area of foreign and security policy. These can be grouped, as indicated by Fischer (2007), in four main categories: 1) foresight (“what might happen”); 2) contextual analysis (“what is happening”); 3) policy analysis (“what can we do”), and 4) evaluation (“how are we doing/did we do”).

Much of that analysis takes place within government, although at least since World War II, various governments have solicited expertise from ‘*outside*’ of governments in a more structured way. It was in the sphere of foreign policy that the first ‘think tanks’ appeared in the heady days after World War I. Especially in the Anglo-Saxon world<sup>1</sup>, there was a strong view that the new, more ‘democratic’ diplomacy would draw upon the best available knowledge in the academic world to create a more stable, less conflict-prone world. This sentiment, as noted by Higgott and Stone (1994), led to the creation of think tanks in the United States like the Brookings Institution in 1916 or the Council on Foreign Relations in 1921 and Chatham House in the United Kingdom in 1926.

The real breakthrough, however, came after World War II, when a number of governments started making an extra effort to ensure access to the diverse knowledge and skills of specialists who during the war had joined governmental efforts (typically as conscripts) to deal with international security issues and had started to return to their more ‘distant’ jobs in academia and the private sector. It is in the cauldron of the Cold War that new interfaces were welded between knowledge on the ‘outside’ and the ‘inside’. And quickly, the balance of focus started shifting from the sphere of more general ‘strategic’ studies (closely affiliated with the foreign policy elites) of the interbellum, to the more focused ‘defence’ research. As the then newly created Ministries of Defence started gaining more clout and resources whilst at the same time moving to ever more rigorous, analysis-based forms of decision making (in ways that Ministries of Foreign Affairs never had – and

<sup>1</sup> For an interesting treatment of the early French exception in this area, see Williams (2008).

in many ways to this day still do not), thinks tanks like the RAND Corporation in the US really started taking off.<sup>2</sup>

There are quite a few examples of applied forms of fundamental research in this era that have directly impacted the West's foreign and security policy and behaviour. Applications of *game theory* proved of enormous importance to issues ranging from nuclear deterrence to containment policy towards the Soviet Union through people like von Neumann, Ellsberg and Schelling – who all worked at RAND; *systems analysis* had a big impact on many aspects of US defence policy, especially after US Defence Secretary McNamara relied on RAND analysis to reform the US Defence Department; many areas of *social science* (in a remarkably integrated way – including even elements of psychology and sociology) influenced the US government's view of the Soviet Union.

Another, albeit different and far more recent, testimony to the links and co-constitutive relationship between theory and practice consists of the preparedness on the official side to utilize, employ and implement various ideas pertaining to “cooperative security” and “common security” towards the end of the Cold War period. Interestingly, the concept of ‘security community’ was initially rejected as far too idealistic in nature, albeit it has later gained in standing impacting profoundly for example the way NATO is being described and legitimized. These ideas and conceptual innovations, outlined in various think tanks as well as by individual academics, offered an alternative to the prevailing zero-sum thinking and therefore contributed to the demise of the Cold War more generally.<sup>3</sup> More recently the democratic peace argument has gained a considerable standing also in the sphere of

foreign and security policy practice (Siverson, 2000: 59-64; Villumsen and Burger, 2010), and constructivist research has in general challenged the traditionally rather objectivist and material understanding of security undergirding the policies pursued (Burger and Villumsen, 2007: 419). Intensive exchanges between scholars and practitioners have taken place in various forms with scholars having made a difference on various levels of policy making: Agenda-setting, formulation of the policies to be pursued as well as the very implementation.

Yet it is also to be noted that this landscape has changed significantly over the past few decades.<sup>4</sup> Our aim here is therefore to present a sketch of the current landscape, including the narrowness or broadness of the distance between the ‘thinkers’ and the ‘doers’, and to do so in particular in the area of international relations. This is warranted as there appears, in general, to be little systematic information about the more recent trends. There exists a small(ish) – mostly anecdotal – literature on the matter, which tends to be much heavier on pathos and prescription than on data. There exists, as such, a considerable number of texts problematizing the role of analysts but they have remained fairly light as to systematic empirics.<sup>5</sup> The extant literature is also subject to a clear US(/UK)-bias and there is virtually no systematic data on the actual situation in some of the smaller European countries.

Given the paucity of actual information on the current state of affairs, our account

<sup>2</sup> See Smith, 1966.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Evangelista, 1999, and Jones, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> For a recent overview, see Rich, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Among the more recent contributions, see for example Beecher and Gary, 1989; Del Rosso, 2009; Egeberg, 2003; Eriksson and Giampiero, 2006; Eriksson and Sundelius, 2005; Frieden, 2005; Haass, 2002; Ish-Shalom, 2006; Jentleson, 2002; Jervis, 2008; Leggold, 1998 and 2001; Levy, 2007; Lupia, 2000; Maliniak et al., 2007; Nincic, 2000; Nye, 2008; Peterson et al., 2005; Shapiro, 2005; Siverson, 2000; Wilson, 2007; Walt, 2005.



aspires to remedy at least some aspect of the prevailing situation, although it is to a considerable extent based on our personal experiences in this sphere in a number of different countries and in different think tanks in this field on both sides of the Atlantic over the past few decades. While thus inevitably non-exhaustive and idiosyncratic, the contribution is still intended as an attempt to capture at least some key features of a shifting and rather complicated picture. In addition to mapping and assessing relevant dynamics, our aim is also to point out spheres warranting concern and possible reorientation as well as further inquiry.

In probing what is frequently referred to as a 'gap', we propose to look at the interaction between 'theory' and 'policy' using the 'market' metaphor. While imperfect, this metaphor does allow us to identify the key components of the exchange of policy advice that takes place in this area. It invites us to focus on the demand of theoretically informed insight generated for example by changes seen as related to globalization and the unfolding of an international liberal order (cf. Ikenberry, 2009) or, for that matter, the broadening and re-focussing of security as a concept and a practice of relevant scholarship. Outlining the dynamics part of the two distinct spheres pertaining to production and consumption of knowledge allows us then to look into the exchange mechanisms conveying policy-relevant insights from the academics and the analytical community to policy makers. Our emphasis is particularly on the relationship between academic analysis and the practical conduct of foreign policy.

The division is, in reality, of course less steep or stable with policy relevant knowledge and analysis produced in both spheres, but handy for our purposes as the aim here is to target on the transmission from academic

theorists to practitioners. In that context, we will also devote some attention to the interfaces on both the demand side and the supply side, i.e. the question how both sides are currently structured to deal with each other under circumstances in which both fields – that of theory as well as the one pertaining to practice – are in a process of transformation.

### **The Sphere of Defence**

In comparing the various branches of government, defence has a far more intense relationship to scholarship than has the sphere of foreign policy. It might also be that the direct impact of 'outside' scholarship on policy is the highest in the field of national defence, although systematic comparisons appear to be lacking.

In this area, a number of European countries have quite strong institutional interfaces between research and policy. Many ministries of defence have developed various mechanisms to solicit knowledge from outside their ranks. A few European countries maintain defence analytical research capabilities (e.g. FOI, the Swedish defence research agency with some 1,000 employees; or FFI, the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment with about 360 scientists) at the edges of or outside of government but with a strategic relationship of confidence (with for instance Qinetiq in the UK with about 6,500 employees, or IABG in Germany with about 100 employees being entirely private, and TNO in the Netherlands with about 4,000 scientists of which about a quarter work in the defence area being public-private, but outside of government). In the period of privatization, there has been a clear trend present to put these institutions outside of government, as exemplified by the United Kingdom, which

split up its previous Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA, with about 9,000 scientist) into two parts: A (smaller) part remained within the MoD as DSTL; and the largest part was privatized into Qinetiq. Notably, most of the scientists in these organizations have a ‘hard’ science background (operations research, engineering, etc.), but recently there has been a growing influx of ‘softer’ sciences as well (human factors, economists, sociologists and political scientists). The close proximity to their customers can also be gauged from the fact that employees in these organizations typically have security clearances (which is rarely the case in the area of foreign policy research institutes).

Roughly speaking, we can differentiate here between what we could call an Anglo-Saxon model and a ‘continental’ one. The ‘Anglosaxon’ model, which includes (parts of) Scandinavia and the Netherlands is typically – and increasingly – contract-based with governments basically reluctant about institutional funding and insisting on demonstrably better value for money. In the ‘continental model’, most research is still being done by the MoDs themselves (often in various parts of the organization), but some countries still have a few smaller research institutions that tend to be less well-integrated in the policy making than the ‘Anglosaxon’ ones. This ‘market’ for defence research has traditionally been quite ‘liquid’, with significant amounts of funding available. But the current budgetary problems in all European countries are putting increasing pressure on these funds.

Although they are typically less well known than their foreign policy counterparts (primarily because (too) much of their work is not publicly available), all of these organizations can point to a large range of concrete instances where their research has a direct impact on decisions made at the governmental

level – whether they be in the area of acquisition, personnel or issues pertaining to doctrines. It is fair to say, however, that most of the research in these organizations is at what the military would call the ‘tactical’ and ‘operational’ levels, and much less at the strategic level. In this context there is, however, a growing demand in many countries for strategic-level analytical support to be noted.

The interaction between the supply and the demand side is also characterized by many quite intense feedback loops (across all levels) and much ‘open’ interaction with actual policymakers and operators. In short, the ‘defence’ market for research is a quite fluid, established and mature one in which (actionable) insights from various disciplines in the academic world regularly find their way to the ‘real world’ of practice. On the whole, their work is project-based and executed by multi-disciplinary research teams that tend to be fairly rigorous, objective, methodologically sophisticated, evidence-based and focused on the concrete needs of the end-users. On the down side, however, these communities are only now (slowly) starting to break out of their insular and ‘closed’ worlds and they have not always been very adept at playing the ‘broader’ political and policy games in their countries. We also have to point out that the linkages between these institutions across national boundaries – while they exist in various (bilateral, ‘mini-lateral’ and multilateral<sup>6</sup>) forms – still remain

<sup>6</sup> Most of these institutions have signed MoUs for collaborative work – some of which are intensely used, many not. Some interaction also occurs within larger multinational structures such as the NATO Research and Technology Organization, in which countries pool research resources to tackle issues of common interest; or professional organizations such as the Military Operations Research Symposium. Through these mechanisms, researchers working on similar topics do sometimes have the chance to interact with their counterparts from other countries. But overall, there is certainly much room for improvement in this area.

fairly weak. Various initiatives by the European Union (through the Framework Programmes, and to some extent also through research commissioned by the European Defence Agency) are starting to make some difference in this field, but the insularity of these research communities remains a formidable stumbling block.

Notably since 9/11 and subsequent terrorist attacks, all European governments have greatly increased their focus on homeland security. They have consequently also started to reach out to the research world and have in many ways replicated the market model that was built up during the Cold War. In fact, most of this research has been subsumed by the national defence analytical institutions that were described above, although it has also impacted and bolstered activities outside these institutions in the academic sphere.

The intelligence communities of various countries have proven much more ‘difficult’ customers than their defence or homeland security counterparts.<sup>7</sup> There clearly has been an upswing in commissioned research – mostly again from the same defence analytical research establishments described above – but the tight feedback loops that developed during the Cold War in the defence analytical world still appear to prove elusive. Whereas military customers or ‘research’ tend to be very open and involved at many stages of a research project (and often even afterwards in the form of evaluation), intelligence customers are far more reluctant to reveal their problems, provide the broader context of various issues, open up their methods to outside scrutiny, share their various hypotheses, provide feedback on real-life experiences with ideas

or to inform about and discuss solutions that research has generated.

Overall, these new ‘markets’ have certainly strengthened and added to the demand of research, but the increased financial means that have been flowing in do not in the end make up for decreases that have occurred in funding in the sphere of defence.

### The Sphere of Foreign Affairs

Although better known by the broader public (and politicians), the ‘market’ for (applied) research in foreign affairs is nonetheless infinitely much smaller and less developed than the ones described so far. It is arguably also experiencing more pressure in the sense of being plagued by changes that also entail declining budgets and reduced prestige. In fact, the status of foreign services as *primus inter pares* is no longer what it used to be owing to increased competition from other ministries and other actors such as enterprises and civil society actors having increased competence of their own to engage in international questions. Some of the power and influence has been flowing upwards with prime ministers and their offices engaging themselves increasingly into international and foreign policy issues. In sum, the changes and pressures have left the foreign ministries and diplomats puzzled about their role and functions in an increasingly post-sovereign world. Their standing may have increased in some spheres – perhaps most notably in the sphere of consular services – whereas it has declined in many others.

Changing circumstances have undoubtedly added to the discussion concerning the existence of a ‘gap’ among other reasons because such a state of affairs has been far more notable in the sphere of foreign affairs than in the domain of defence. It also seems that the

<sup>7</sup> Much depends here on how the interaction is structured. As an example – the NIC in the US provides a very elegant interface between the inside world of the intelligence community and the outside world.

‘demand’ for research in the ministries of foreign affairs tends to be less established and mature, much more diffuse, less focused and more poorly articulated than in the above-mentioned cases. Whereas defence customers (typically) come to the research world with rather concrete questions that need workable solutions (which capability should I invest in, how can I do this better and how do I save money here), this is only rarely the case in the foreign policy sphere. Here the research questions are often much more *contextual* in nature – what is happening in this part of the world; with this policy issue. The more *concrete* day-to-day problems (most) diplomats struggle with are of a very different nature – how do we get country x or person y to agree on this formulation; how can we signal this to country z; how are the dynamics in the international community on such or such an issue; etc. Crucially, these are rarely issues on which outside support is requested – even though there are many academic disciplines that could usefully be brought to bear on such questions.

It may further be noted that foreign services tend to be rather defensive in character due to power and influence moving away both upwards, horizontally to other state bodies and downwards to civil society. The upwards move also consists of the EU turning increasingly into a foreign policy actor as indicated in one of its aspects by the Union being on its way to establishing a foreign service of its own.

Obviously, the supply side looks quite different as well. On the plus side, foreign affairs think tanks are – immeasurably more than their defence counterparts – actively and visibly involved in the public debate of their countries and in meetings and conferences between themselves (often also with policymakers). But on the other side, much less

time tends to be devoted to focused research with actionable results or solutions that can be used by the ‘customer’. This may prove an increasing problem for the value proposition. Their ‘academic’ anchoring also tends to be weaker (most references come from policy journals and not from the more fundamental disciplines<sup>8</sup>) and narrower (mostly international relations interspersed with a bit of international economics and international law). And finally, the typical skillset in such think tanks tends to be fairly limited and focus on a fairly narrow set of qualitative research techniques and little or no expertise in quite applicable techniques such as modelling, game theory, public choice, social network analysis, textmining, visualization techniques, management theory, complex systems engineering or operations research. The methods applied are, in other words, quite established with little efforts of breaking beyond the prevailing pattern.

### Issues Pertaining to Demand

There are both signs of adaptation as well as contestation with the foreign policy establishments closing in the latter case their ranks in efforts of scoping and shielding themselves from the pressures for change that they are increasingly exposed to. However, over time adaptation will have to take place and the increasing talk about ‘old’ and ‘new’ diplomacy seems to indicate that an awareness concerning the importance of

<sup>8</sup> This should not necessarily be seen as a critique on the policy community – but the gap between ‘fundamental research’ and ‘applied research’ seems quite large in the social sciences, with ‘fundamental research’ being engaged in often arcane (at least to outsiders) discussions with tenuous applicability to real life problems and often dismissive of more ‘applied’ research; and policy researchers in their careers typically being increasingly frustrated with their ‘home’ disciplines and exploring (often atheoretical) research avenues.

opening up and thinking along somewhat different routes is taking root also in the sphere of foreign policy making.

There is increased openness in the sense of more emphasis being placed on analysis as indicated by the establishment, expansion and upgrading of entities for research, analysis and policy-planning within several foreign ministries. There is recognition, at least to some degree, that success in formulating and implementing policies increasingly hinges on the capacities to coin fresh ideas and obtain, utilize and manage information. The entry of new issue areas requiring special knowledge such as the challenge of globalisation, environmental issues, pandemic threats, terrorism, mediating in new type of conflicts, various questions related to branding, and more generally the medialization of politics caused by the information revolution seem to invite for closer interaction with scholars. The challenges posed by a more complex and fast-changing array of substantive issues compel practitioners reaching out, it appears, to scholarly expertise as indicated for example by the reports on globalisation prepared on the initiative of the Danish and Norwegian foreign ministries (Lunde et al., 2008; Udenrigsministeriet, 2008). Similarly, issues pertaining to development assistance have opened up channels of engagement and provided a platform for scholarly analysis and foreign policy practice to meet, thereby adding to the links between scholars and policy makers.

The relatively weak institutionalization of research and the lack of loops within as well as outside foreign policy establishments both imply that the ability to respond to a demand for precise, short and unambiguous answers delivered even at a moment's notice remains modest. At large, the nature of foreign policy practice tends to be haphazard as well as in-

cremental rather than systematic, reflective and foreseeing (Eriksson and Sundelius, 2005: 52). There is stress on collective and institutional responsibility, with this then also reflected in the incentive structures of the institutions of foreign policy. The difference in cultures imply among other things that 'in-and-outers' with a foot in both camps are not always welcome within the foreign policy establishments (Eriksson and Sundelius, 2005: 63).

There appears, in fact, to exist a considerable social distance due to the fact that a great amount of doubt lingers on concerning the question whether scholarly works are of any use to policy makers in the first place (Vogel, 2006: 33). The distance is well exemplified by expressions of dissatisfaction as to the contributions offered by the academic side, such as those deeming the contributions being "of limited value", "too abstract" or seen as "either irrelevant or inaccessible to policy makers". "Impenetrable" is one of the many expressions testifying to the existence of a kind of paradigmatic gap (Walt, 2005: 38). Research is not viewed as being sufficiently geared towards "specific regional development or applied issue-oriented puzzles" (Lepgold, 2001: 78). The low regard and aversion of more theory-driven research is also reflected in commentaries purporting the scholarly world as being too insular, inwards-oriented and self-enclosed. Practitioners assert that "much remains locked within the circle of esoteric scholarly discussion" (Newsom, 1995-96: 66). In general, the literature views academic theories on international relations and the practical conduct of foreign policy as being far apart and operating in rather different conceptual worlds. Joseph Lepgold (1998: 44) for one, has found reasons to speak of "two distinct cultures".

The distance also has temporal aspects in the sense that practitioners feel pressured to



make complex decisions ever more quickly, while research has a pace of its own and remains less time-sensitive (George, 1993: 9). This cleavage may have been aggravated due to such factors as globalization and media-driven policies. In addition to different temporal dynamics, there also exist diverse approaches as to the preferred length of presentations, with foreign services having a disdain for lengthy products with emphasis on theory rather than the applicable and practice-oriented conclusions (Walt, 2005: 24). It has also been noted that there is far more emphasis on oral rather than written presentations within foreign services than on the scholarly side. As noted by Nye (2008: 595), this appears to be the case for the part of the top policy world, these factors then undoubtedly adding to the diversity between theory and practice.

It may also be noted, as to the diversification of relevant actors, that genuinely strategic research issues typically transcend the competency of individual ministries and belong more naturally at the highest levels of government – either at the level of the heads of state and/or government, or at the whole-of-government level. Interestingly enough, the former often have fairly small research budgets (the bulk of the research money being apportioned to and by the line ministries<sup>9</sup>). Moreover, effective inter-agency processes typically remain quite complicated to set up – institutionally, politically and substantively. Whole-of-government efforts are structured differently in different countries, but are in most countries still relatively thin, weak and often stovepiped. So

<sup>9</sup> Even in the US, for instance, where inter-agency responsibility in the FSP-area clearly resides in the White House through the National Security Council (and in recent years also through the Homeland Security Council and the Economic Council), research money is overwhelmingly concentrated in the departments.

while there is little doubt that this ‘whole-of-government’ level will increase in importance and will require adequate analytical support and new ideas, it currently remains a relatively (and surprisingly) weak player in the market for foreign and security policy research.

On the demand side, many official (inter-departmental) analyses of the international environment (FR Livre Blanc, UK SDSR, NL Verkenningen) have started to acknowledge the growing uncertainty surrounding themselves. They have recognized the ensuing need to put more emphasis on the ‘analysis and anticipation’ functions of governments. A particularly interesting development here is also the re-thinking of the capability development processes, which to this date have drawn primarily on the ‘hard sciences’ for kinetic solutions, but which are also starting to look for ‘capability solutions’ based on social science research.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, there is a growing recognition that this increasingly uncertain environment requires ‘comprehensive’ solutions that transcend the individual stovepipes – whether we are talking about the so-called ‘comprehensive approach’ in failed/failing states or about things like ‘human terrain mapping’ in the area of defence (the idea that just like we need maps of the physical terrain in conflict areas, we also need to map the knowledge or the idea of ‘resilience’ in the area of homeland security). Also the private sector (the financial sector, (re)insurance, etc.) is increasingly looking for (reliable) broader analytical support on issues like political risk.

### Issues Pertaining to Supply

The diversification of actors is also impacted by the fact that the private sector has seen

<sup>10</sup> For a recent and comprehensive example, see NATO, 2011.

explosive demands for foreign and security policy research recently, e.g. (geopolitical) risk assessments for the big multinationals, for the financial sector, for insurance companies and foresight work for companies. The growth of the private sector oriented research implies that it is increasingly encroaching upon the traditional providers of scholarly work and policy advice, although the impact remains at the same time limited as also the output stays more often than not private. It does not reach the sphere of policy making, public discourse or that of the academia, as the knowledge produced is viewed as a commodity and exclusive property of those financing research.

The traditional 'supply' side of the knowledge-production in the sphere of foreign policy has proved fairly unsuccessful in tapping into this growing market and yet there are a number of bodies that straddle the private-public borderline. These 'advocacy think tanks' and schools of public policy interested and willing to engage in public issues have proliferated to a considerable degree, and their bridge-building is being complemented by various advisory bodies, working groups and commissions of enquiry.

The increasing diversity and difficulty in drawing strict borderlines are exemplified on the American side by the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute and the CATO Institute as well as the Brookings Institution. The Adenauer Stiftung, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Olof Palme Center, Club de l'Horloge or the European Council on Foreign Relations represent such a trend on the European side, although the ties between academia and policymakers seem somewhat less developed in Europe than in America. In general the field is quite proliferate; alone in the United States there are more than 1,200 think tanks, being quite heterogeneous in

scope, funding, ideology and location (Nye, 2008: 599; Haass, 2002).

In some cases the support for foreign policy-related research is philanthropic rather than private taking into account the background of the various entities. During the Cold War, philanthropic organizations on both sides of the Atlantic (Carnegie, Ford Foundation, Volkswagen Foundation, etc.) played a very active role in funding serious foreign and security policy-related research. They focused on a number of issues felt to be of primary significance in view of their philanthropic mission (e.g. Soviet studies, nuclear issues, arms control and general international security problems) and aspired to make sure that this research also reached policymakers. After the end of the Cold War, most of them moved largely on to other and new international policy areas themes such as health and education. They are therefore nowadays fairly small players in the sphere of FSP-related issues, although some of them continue to fund important ad hoc issues. Actually some signs indicate that foundations might be on their way back to sponsoring also foreign and security policy research on a more grand scale (Del Rosso, 2009). This is not much of a surprise taking into account the rather unprecedented surge in personal wealth and in philanthropy (witness the efforts of Bill Gates and Warren Buffet), but very little of that new money has found its way into the FSP-field.

Still another sub-category of importance on the private side consists of the media. Whereas the press is a major consumer of FSP research, its level of consumption is far from commensurate with its contribution to the financial health of the sector. Researchers in the FSP research community (especially in the think tank world) spend quite a bit of time writing opinion pieces and bigger articles in the more popular press as well as doing interviews on

radio and television – something they see partially as a part of their *raison d'être*, whether paid or not, and partially also as an opportunity to attract paying customers to their work. We note, though, that there is little or no research into the empirical reality behind this calculus.

### Concluding Remarks

It seems, in a broader perspective, that more knowledge is being produced and made available by a far broader array of suppliers. Furthermore, there are far more channels available for distribution and reaching across and it also seems that the recent institutions that supply, and use, scholarly analysis have become more differentiated (e.g. Wilson, 2007: 147). There are a few clusters of suppliers of policy inputs, they tend to be disconnected from each other, remain predominantly national in character, and there appears to be few if any efforts of building cumulative as well as transferable knowledge. The borderline between policy making and research seems relative strict particularly in Europe in the sense that researchers rarely have access to the field of policy whereas the practices in the US are considerably different. The interface is far stronger in the latter case already because of the 'revolving door' with people being recruited from research institutes or returning to such establishments after service in government.

The prime task of academic research is undoubtedly to produce ideas and insights into relevant issues with the help of theory and related concepts. Having in principle the responsibility to analyse and reflect rather than act, the duty of scholars is in fact quite different from concerns related to the applicability of the ideas and insights coined, albeit the difference is also precisely what makes academic research potentially valuable and a source of enrichment for foreign policy practice.

It is to be noted, however, that there exist within academia rather different views on whether one should remain detached, engage in bridge-building or adopt a critical stance vis-à-vis foreign policy practice. Among these views and approaches, the one pertaining to bridge-building seems to be the dominant one (Stern and Sundelius, 2002: 85) and also the main bulk of literature on the subject testifies to this. However, the issue is contested and those defending an independent and detached position (Girard, 1994; Hill and Beshoff, 1994) or a critical one (Booth, 1997; Smith, 1997; Wyn Jones, 1999) have a considerable standing in the debate. The independent school of thought stresses that policymakers seek power rather than knowledge and that engaging in bridge-building may thus endanger the intellectual integrity of academic analysis. The critics, in turn, argue that engagement with and loyalty towards foreign policy practice kills ingenuity, the predisposition of discovery of the hidden and neglected. Furthermore, it is claimed that it associates research with endeavours to predict in order to control and tends to lead to a "technocratization" with a focus on a rather narrow range of issues. In doing so it arguably forms an obstacle to alternative and thought-provoking views.

Interestingly, the academic voices advocating bridge-building and coining various proposals in order to narrow the distance between academic research and foreign policy practice appear to have grown in strength. Yet the argument has been that scholars have to ensure that they are working *with* rather than *for* practitioners. There has to be open communication, and the basic prerequisite is that the scholar engaging him- or herself has the main responsibility and freedom to see the research agenda, formulate the questions, design the methods, and develop the



theories in order for a responsible constellation to prevail (Eriksson and Sundelius, 2005: 67). Rather than being worried about a much-debated gap, the scholarly community seems more often than not to ponder on the consequences of engagement and research being applied in the sphere of practice (Villumsen and Burger, 2010: 2).

There also appears to be increasing flexibility to be traced in the sense that the various stovepipes that we have described have started to show signs of breaking down. On the supply-side, a number of changes have become apparent. The academic world is revisiting some of the cleavages that have fissured it for a long time, with more inter-disciplinary (and international) efforts than ever before. The development – and growing popularity – of dedicated policy analysis programmes at universities in a number of countries is starting to provide a more ‘natural’ interface between theory and practice. Even in more traditional political science programmes, the stigma attached to doing policy-relevant research may be somewhat more weak. Finally, the impact of some new (again interdisciplinary) theories and paradigms such as complexity theory or network analysis – and their applications to policy issues – may also narrow the social and cultural distance both within the research community and between that community and the policy world.

We set out here to explore the theory-practice relationship quite empirically and from a variety of perspectives taking into account the increasing plurality and diffuse nature of the field. However, in doing so we did not want to advance a kind of objectivist thesis premised on theory and practice standing unavoidably apart from each other in representing very different spheres of knowledge. Instead we endeavoured at depicting them, with research being part of a social world in the first place (cf.

Villumsen and Burger, 2010), as rather closely related to each other and, importantly, co-constitutive in character. The concept of the ‘gap’ is obviously a rather dramatic one and hence also helpful in spurring debate on the relationship and trends as to the research/practice relationship, but it is at the same time questionable both on empirical as well as principal grounds. As to the latter, the question to be addressed is not what to do about the assumed gap but rather how to relate and interact empirically connecting the two spheres to each other despite their dissimilarity as to the underlying principles and departures. The various issues pertaining to practice impact the scholarly world and vice versa and covering these processes hence informs about how knowledge works in society, how the science/policy nexus seems to be unfolding over time in the sphere of defence and foreign policy and how it plays itself out.

It may be added that the imaginary of a ‘gap’ could in a number of ways be decreasing, although it has not vanished and still frames a considerable part of the discussion waged on the theory-practice relationship. Research and policy remain to some extent detached from each other, although it also seems obvious that there is a considerable – and perhaps increasing – amount of contacts, interaction as well as cross-fertilization. The sphere of defence appears to be far more established and in some ways also more advanced than the foreign policy one in being linked to the scholarly world, but belts of transmission clearly exist in both spheres, although clearly weaker in the case of foreign policy. Knowledge also travels between the spheres of research and foreign policy and some improvements may be noticed, albeit the diagnosis carried out also points to deficiencies as well as the need of further debate that goes beyond the existence of an assumed gap.

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**Hiski Haukkala:**  
**THE TIME, SPACE AND  
STRATEGIES FOR SCHOLARLY  
ANALYSIS IN FOREIGN POLICY  
MAKING**

**Abstract**

This paper examines the policy-making and -analysis nexus from the vantage point of academic scholarly work. In the contemporary world also the scholarly community is faced with increasing calls for being useful and relevant. This is obviously so in the think-tank world but increasingly this is the case also in academia. But what is the actual space for academic expertise and policy analysis in the making of policy? How do the two coincide and co-exist temporally? The paper seeks to analyze the spatial and temporal aspects of providing scholarly analysis for the making of policy. Drawing from this, the paper concludes by sketching out two strategies, or roles, a policy-analyst may apply in trying to get her messages across to different audiences and in different contingencies.

**Introduction**

The relationship between the academic study of International Relations (IR) and the making of foreign policy is full of tensions. At first sight this is somewhat surprising as more often than not the two share the same goals and even normative agendas: The need for accurate information and knowledge and the drive to seek to improve the world in the process (Hill, 1994: 19). Yet to be frank the differences are often bigger than the commonalities. Despite sharing an interest in world politics and its events, the two approach them from radically different angles. It is not entirely far-fetched to claim that the two exist

in different spatial and temporal dimensions: Quite often the academics reside in their ivory towers at universities far removed from the centres of political power. In addition, the policy makers are living in the never-ending present moment madly rushing after the latest Macmillanian ‘event’, whereas scholars usually have the benefit of time and even hindsight on their side (Krasner, 2009a: 113).

But this has not always been the case. The interdependence between academic study and the actual practice was advocated by, for example, the father of modern realism, E.H. Carr (1974: 8).

Political science must be based on a recognition of the interdependence of theory and practice, which can be attained only through a combination of utopia and reality. A concrete expression of the antithesis of theory and practice in politics is the opposition between the intellectual and the bureaucrat, the former trained to think mainly on a priori lines, the latter empirically.

Also Hans Morgenthau considered speaking truth to power as one of the tasks of scholars (Myers, 1992). Perhaps the veritable golden era for scholars was the late 1950s and early 1960s when figures such Thomas Schelling, Herman Kahn and Henry Kissinger and the RAND Corporation in particular held sway in Washington D.C. Such was the policy makers’ thirst for policy advice – and their belief in the power of social scientific theories – that practically all “leading civilian strategists who were willing to be consulted were drafted” leading to a situation where their “intellectual dominance in the early 1960’s was nearly absolute” (Gray, 1971: 119). But the results were far from unequivocally positive. According to Gray, the scholars employed and overextended their welcome in policy circles: The end result was a serious of policy errors ranging from the Vietnam

War to US nuclear policies towards the Soviet Union that were largely due to the scholar-cum-decision-makers' erroneous conceptual premises and their mind-sets that were stuck in the rut of earlier strategic challenges (Gray 1971).

Since then, the level and quality of interaction seem only to have declined and the two worlds of academia and making of policy are increasingly diverging. As Joseph Nye (2009b) has noted, the walls surrounding the ivory tower have never been as high as they are today with very few scholars having an impact or presence in the making of policy (see also Nincic, 2000: 1).<sup>1</sup> Stephen Krasner – who has significant policy planning experience himself – has gone as far as to call the gap between academia and policy world essentially unbridgeable (Krasner, 2009a: 116). As a result, specialized think tanks have taken the place of academic scholars in the policy debates resulting in the more neutral viewpoint of the academia to be sidelined.<sup>2</sup> That said, the impact of think tanks should not be exaggerated either. True, their visibility in media is unrivalled but their actual impact on the policy process remains elusive and probably smaller than they themselves claim and seem to think (see Weidenbaum, 2009).

This paper seeks to analyze the difficult encounter between academia and policy making. It draws from research literature as well as my own experiences in three different roles as a university researcher, policy analyst at differ-

ent European think tanks as well as a Special Adviser at the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. As such, the paper seeks to tease out certain ways through which the encounters between academia and the world of policy making could be made easier to the benefit of both. The paper seeks to flesh out the ways how academia can be of use in the making of policy as well as pointing at certain structural characteristics that endow scholars with certain advantages and consequently also some special responsibilities vis-à-vis policy makers and indeed the general public. Finally, the paper sketches out two different roles, or strategies that scholars can play, as well as indicating the different fates and fortunes that await at the end of pursuing either of these options too consistently. But first, a few words about the differences between academic scholarship and policy analysis are required as the two most definitely are not the same.

### **Academic Scholarship vs. Policy Analysis**

Often academic scholarship and policy relevant policy analysis – let alone the actual making of policy – are seen as two different things (for a host of useful papers in this respect, see Nincic and Lepgold, 2000). Academic scholarship is seen to engage with theories, whereas policy analysis is seen as something more applied, at best a thick description and at worst a somewhat more sophisticated form of contemporary commentary than ordinary journalism. But although true to a certain extent, the issue is not as clear cut as this. To a degree, the clear dichotomy between academic and policy analytical work is a false one: All human thought is filtered through 'theories' if we take them to be pre-existing 'knowledge structures' in light of which to categorize and seek to un-

<sup>1</sup> But see Young (1972: 199) who already noted how in the debate the 'gap' between academic and intellectual communities and policy makers is often lamented.

<sup>2</sup> In the Finnish scene the situation is somewhat different. Not because purely academic scholars would be more active towards policy makers – they don't – but because Finland largely lacks a pure American-type think tank scene to begin with. Therefore even scholars with clear policy leanings tend to keep at least a foot in academia, alleviating the divisions so evident in the US debate at least to a certain degree.



derstand the world and its events (see Jönsson, 1990: 33).

The real difference between academic and policy-analytical work lies in the nature and the way we use these ‘theories’. We may note that usually in academic work we strive at a conscious and open application of our theories: Our starting points and theoretical commitments as well as the consequent conceptual moves are laid out openly for all to see and criticize. By contrast, often in policy-analytical work the ‘knowledge structures’ that inform the description and especially the prescription often remain hidden from the view – perhaps also from the authors themselves, it often seems: In academic work starting points are usually problematized where quite often in policy-analytical work the grounding assumptions are left unquestioned and the onus is put on political engineering (for example, premise: NATO enlargement is good for stability in Europe → how to best facilitate further enlargement?).

But there is in my view even more profound difference between academic and policy-analytical work. It deals with the very nature of the theories we employ. Academic research is, or at least it should be, about the truth or at least *truthlikeness* (see Niiniluoto, 1999) of our theories. It is about how accurately they describe and explain the world ‘out there’. By contrast, in the last instance policy analysis is about the relative merits of competing worldviews: Is democracy and especially its global promotion a good or a bad thing? Is the EU’s normative power a force for good or a force for evil? Is the rise of China a benign or a malign phenomenon for ‘the West’? To a degree, therefore, academic and policy-analytical work are two different beasts and they form largely incommensurable agendas: The former is an epistemic game dealing with the questions of truth and falsity of our the-

ories, the latter a normative game revolving around the question of what is good or bad for a certain group of people (or even universally): What is to be desired, what avoided, what perhaps even shunned?<sup>3</sup>

Yet it would be wrong to imply that the chasm between academic and policy-relevant work is entirely unbridgeable. What connects the two is the role of certain conventionalism in all human activities, science included (Chernoff, 2009: 374-375). There are always received wisdoms and accepted truths whether we are talking about a scientific or a policy elite community or even the wider society.<sup>4</sup> The social mechanism that connects academic scholarship and policy advice is that of communicative action: The need to convince others of the merits of the case one is making (Risse, 2000). That said, the factor that hinders effective cross-fertilization between academic and policy-analytical work is that they largely argue towards different audiences: Academic to the scientific community and policy-analysis to the policy elite as well as the wider public. Also the ways of arguing the case differ radically – but more of this will follow in a moment.

As a consequence, when engaging in seeking to give policy advice, an academic must be ready and willing to play simultaneous chess on two different chess boards – epistemic and normative – as well as keep the distinction between the two different games and respective audiences in mind. In addition, she will find

<sup>3</sup> I make this distinction for the sake of argument while being fully cognizant of the tricky nature of the fact-value distinction in social sciences.

<sup>4</sup> This should not be taken to imply that the author of this paper advocates relativism: Not all the claims we make about the world are equally valid. In science we have epistemic criteria along which we choose between competing theories; in the world of policy we have moral criteria that should help us to distinguish the good apples from the rotten ones. For a forceful argument along these lines, see Lukes, 2008.

out to her dissatisfaction that her trusted primary chess board of academic theories will not help her to answer a policy question with ease (although it might enable her to frame the issue in more analytical terms which in itself can at times be helpful). Finally, the very game of providing policy advice has its own set of rules and conventions that differ very much from academic standards and even departmental politics. It is to these peculiarities that we turn next.

### **The Time and Space for Scholarly Analysis in Foreign Policy Making**

My own experience of the policy-making process has shown that there is a dire need for accurate information and fresh ideas in the making of policy. Important decisions are often made in great haste and under large uncertainty concerning the possible consequences of the decisions taken (see also Bernstein et al., 2000: 52; Krasner, 2009a: 115). At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, civil servants and diplomats tend to think that they already ‘know’ pretty much everything there is to know about the given subject. This is especially the case when it comes to interaction with scholars who are usually seen as not being ‘in the know’. To a degree this attitude is justified, as the flow of information within foreign ministries and other governmental departments often far exceeds that of other public information in terms of speed and the level of detail. In any case civil servants are often better informed about actual contemporary facts on the ground compared with scholars. But foreign ministries are temporally fairly thin: In most ministries diplomats are rotating from post to post and rarely spend enough time on a single subject to be able to track, master and remember changes, even important ones, over time. Therefore

the scholarly competitive advantage stems from their area expertise and the possibility of cumulating knowledge over time: Putting the contemporary events into a wider historical context (more about time will follow later in this section).

My own country, Finland, like any country, has also some historical and cultural characteristics of its own that alter the picture somewhat. Finland is a small country with big egos. Here I presume Finland is not that different from other small countries where practically everybody who is anybody knows each other, meaning that disagreements over views and policies easily turn into personal tussles over turfs and prestige. What is more, the Cold War period of Finlandization and self-censorship, especially when it came to criticizing the great eastern neighbour, resulted in a somewhat truncated public space and relatively underdeveloped debating culture in foreign affairs (this state of affairs is, however, slowly changing). In addition, being an EU member perhaps constrains the space even further: The decision makers are engaged in constant negotiation both domestically and with other EU partners, meaning that most of the policies are in fact fixed and usually adopted in great haste and in reaction to EU-wide initiatives, making it difficult for a scholar to influence the process. Taken together, these factors result in a rather constrained space for a scholar to try to have an impact on policies to begin with.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to space we also need to think about time. As was already alluded to, scholars and policy makers reside in two different temporal dimensions. The practitioner is rushing after the ever present now, the essence

<sup>5</sup> The same would seem to apply also in the case of the United States where cumbersome inter-departmental coordination and fierce competition consume the best energies of officials. See Rodman, 2009.



of which has been well captured by Whiting (1972: 236): “For a bureaucrat, a ‘tomorrow’s’ problem can be taken up next week but today must still be devoted to yesterday’s [in foreign policy the word should perhaps be ‘today’s’] agenda. Unfortunately today is always with us; next week never seems to come.”

By contrast, scholars have ample time to contemplate on their hands. Usually the deadlines in academic projects are measured in months, even years, and not in hours. To a large degree, the existence of these different temporal planes is a factor hindering communication and interaction between the two worlds. For civil servants there is not enough time to consult scholars amidst the tumultuous events. Also the scholars might find that the policy maker simply lacks the time to listen attentively to their pet theories or major conceptual innovations. Instead, they want the scholarly insights to be translated into easily accessible and short slogans that entail a clear political strategy and enable direct political implementation (Wilson 2000: 117-118). But from an academic scholar’s point of view such an approach of course smacks of not just popular, but borderline vulgar, science (see Keohane, 2009).

This tendency to expect easily digestible sound bites from the scholars in fact highlights a deeper cultural difference concerning how to most effectively communicate the main points and findings. Academia is largely a game of written word where a full monograph is the mark of a woman. By contrast, the closer you get to the top of policy making the more you will find that it is based on an oral culture (Nye 2009a: 117). The hectic pace of decision making does not allow reading long papers or tractates but a concise one- or, at best, two-pager and its oral delivery in a few minutes is the rule. This is a game that academics are often ill-

equipped to play and they even seem to be somewhat intimidated by it.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, not only time but *timing* is of essence. Young and Mendizabal (2009) argue that policy processes are complex and rarely linear or logical: It is not enough for a scholar to simply present the decision makers with certain information and expect them to act accordingly.<sup>7</sup> Or, as Krasner (2009a, 2009b) has noted, the policy window is fairly specific and limited in time and requires the right input to be available at the right moment to the right person(s) in order to be effective (see also Nye, 2009a: 117).

Perhaps the classic case of timing is George F. Kennan’s Long Telegram from February 1946 that managed to set the direction for the US attempts at containing the Soviet Union in the Cold War and launched his career into policy planning and later scholarship. Yet despite its hard hitting style, the mere analysis of the unfolding Cold War and the sources of Soviet conduct together with some policy recommendations in the memo were not enough to ensure its success but its eventual impact came essentially down to its timing. According to Kennan (1969: 310), six months earlier the telegram would have been greeted with ‘raised eyebrows’ whereas half a year later it would have probably ‘sounded redundant, a sort of preaching to the convinced.’ Interestingly, Kennan’s words seem to indicate a certain inevitability in the eventual US policy of containment, regardless

<sup>6</sup> This claim is based on an observation made by being present in a room where the Minister for Foreign Affairs has been briefed by outside academic experts who often seem to have problems in getting to the point within the time allocated for them before the Minister’s patience has already been exhausted.

<sup>7</sup> For fascinating case studies concerning the complexities and outright paradoxes of foreign policy decision making in the different US administrations during the last forty years, see Rodman, 2009.

of his actions and recommendations. If this is the case, then we may ask what Kennan's actual role in the process was, after all? Was he the original source and inventor or simply just a catalyst or a facilitator for a policy that would have come about in any case? If the latter is the answer, then we may note that Kennan felt intense remorse in vain for his ostensible key role in launching the antagonistic logic of the Cold War on the US side (see Leffler, 2006) – it well could be that it would have happened anyway. But be that it as may, Kennan's example highlights the fact that it is very hard for a complete outsider to have a serious effect on the policy process, or at least one would need to be exceptionally well-informed and/or lucky to succeed in the task.

The question of time has also other interesting dimensions to it. The fact that scholars have the benefit of time and even hindsight on their side, endows them with some special opportunities and even responsibilities. If the policy maker lives in the world of never-ending present, then scholars should make good use of all the temporal dimensions: Past, present and future. In principle these different temporal dimensions allow three different functions that scholars could and even should play vis-à-vis the policy makers and general public:

1. *The past or 'Don't lose your head' function:* Because scholars have the time on their side they should act as the memory of society. Politicians often change their minds and decide to frame issues and policies in novel ways. This is their undeniable right. Yet there is no reason to think that they should always be allowed to do so with ease. For example, the way the Bush administration sought to rebrand the War in Iraq as being that of democracy-promo-

tion after the non-discovery of WMD in the country is a classic example of this tendency. Usually it is the task of journalists to keep an eye on these developments and expose them (Gans, 2010). Yet the increasing commercialization of media together with the shortening attention span of the general public (see Osnos, 2010) means that this task increasingly falls on the scholars. It is their – admittedly unthankful – role to remind politicians and the general public how things used to be argued and perceived and therefore insert a certain (temporal) perspective into our political debates.

2. *The present or 'Keep your head down' function:* The fact that policy makers are so seriously engaged with the present does not make them omniscient. In fact, the reverse is the case: Often bureaucracies are engaged in a business-as-usual mode where groupthink prevails (see 't Hart et al., 1997). Scholars, for being more detached from these processes, have the possibility to think outside the box also when it comes to contemporary issues. In essence, this entails pointing out when decision makers are about to engage in something problematic or even outright stupid.

3. *The future or 'Heads up' function:* These days public administrations and bureaucracies all over the world are almost obsessed with the future. Huge sums are being spent on developing foresight capabilities and different scenario exercises have become commonplace. Yet none of this actually guarantees that the policy makers get the future and its biggest challenges right. Although the unexpected is always anticipated this does not mean that people will actually see and realize it when it is coming their way. In fact for reasons already mentioned in the previous point, the reverse could easily be

the case (see also Bernstein et al., 2000: 58). Therefore scholars have a special responsibility to try to see and tell/warn people when something important, threatening or even outright dangerous is coming their way. It very well could be that the level of specific knowledge combined with certain detachment from the policy process endows scholars with a certain competitive advantage, also when it comes to thinking about the future. Even if this should not be the case (see the crushing critique of policy experts in Tetlock, 2005) they should at least be able to offer different takes concerning the future thus widening the menu available for decision makers.

Taken together, for a scholar time can be seen as a strategic resource: Something that can be played with and that can be used to the scholar's advantage if and when she chooses to engage the policy makers in a dialogue. At the same time, time is also a constraint; something a scholar should also be aware of. The policy window is likely to be short-lived and require readiness on the part of the scholar to make good use of it. The role of chance should also be taken into consideration: A scholar may 'luck out' and win the attention of a policy maker. But the reverse can also be the case: Even the best advice given at the most opportune moment may fall on deaf ears for various and most probably quite whimsical and accidental reasons. Therefore engaging in any of the three functions discussed on this occasion requires intentional agency on the part of the scholars: They must endeavour to set the agenda and seek to participate in the policy-making process. The scholars' agency brings in the question of different roles and strategies that can be employed by scholars that we turn to next.

### **The Roles and Strategies in Policy Analysis**

If the temporal dimension is tricky, then the actual roles available for a scholar are challenging as well. As was already noted, the actual space for policy advice is constrained, and especially radically dissenting voices are hardly ever appreciated. Also if we accept and keep in mind the fact that political debates are not principally epistemic but normative, then we need to ask the question whose world-views we are in fact talking about when giving policy advice. Essentially, two roles can be ascertained for a person interested in giving policy advice: That of a critic and that of a political technologist. These two roles come in fact rather close to Habermasian technical and emancipatory interests of knowledge (see Habermas, 2007).

Of the two, it is the critic's role that is more difficult. First, decision makers are human beings, and humans in general do not particularly like being criticized. Usually, the fate of a persistent critic is to be ignored, at worst even ridiculed. In any case, a persistent critic can expect to find oneself at the outer fringes of policy developments with scant opportunities for little else than voicing her general dissatisfaction with the present course of events. This is so because we already know from empirical studies that expert ideas usually influence only the methods of governments but not the ultimate goals they choose to pursue (Lindvall, 2009: 707). This was also acknowledged by Morgenthau who after decades of trying in vain to influence the US foreign policy was forced to concede how "power positions do not yield to arguments, however rationally and morally valid, but only to superior power" (quoted in Myers, 1992: 68). Keeping this in mind, a persistent critic risks at worst becoming a permanent outsider or a hermit,

or at best a tolerated court jester – harmless but at times at least entertaining (see also Neumann, 2008, who traces the genealogy of the critical intellectual to “the positions of the Holy Fool and the court jester”). A case in point could perhaps be Noam Chomsky whose endless flow of critical books and articles about the US role in the world are likely to have a much bigger impact on the European blogosphere than on US foreign policy.

This hints to the other possible audience for scholars, namely the general public. Especially in a democratic setting this should not be underestimated. Scholars are, after all, *public* intellectuals and they have the right and even perhaps the duty to seek to affect change in flawed policies through an open debate. That said, my own experience of the policy process nevertheless suggests that the impact of op-eds, television and radio appearances and intensive blogging is fairly peripheral to the actual policy process: The policy debate and decision making is not conducted in the public sphere but usually behind closed doors where the standard response to any problematic inputs is simply to ignore them.

Quite problematically, from a scholar’s vantage point that is, all of this seems to suggest that perhaps the most effective role available for a scholar in the policy-making process is the second one, that of a political technologist: An engineer to help the powers-that-be to execute their policies in a more efficient and successful manner with scant possibilities of making a difference when it comes to their underlying political agendas and objectives. This is indeed the way state bureaucracies often seek to use scholarly knowledge and outputs: As information to devise and execute better policies to achieve ends that have largely already

been decided in the political and bureaucratic processes.<sup>8</sup>

But how should we think about these two functions – a political technologist or a critic – in actual terms? We can see them either as fixed roles firmly rooted in the individual worldviews of scholars or more fluid strategies a scholar may employ to suit different needs and contexts. In this respect, Isaiah Berlin’s classical metaphor of people being essentially either hedgehogs or foxes is helpful. According to Berlin (1997: 436-437):

...there exists a great chasm between those, on one side, who relate everything to a single central vision, one system, less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think and feel – a single, universal, organising principle in terms of which alone all that they are and say has significance – and, on the other side, those who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some *de facto* way, for some psychological or physiological cause, related to no moral or aesthetic principle. These last lead lives, perform acts and entertain ideas that are centrifugal rather than centripetal; their thought is scattered or diffused, moving on many levels, seizing upon the essence of a vast variety of experiences and objects for what they are in themselves, without, consciously or unconsciously,

<sup>8</sup> For example, in recent years the Finnish government has devoted considerable political attention and resources to re-organize its use of so-called sectoral research, the role of which has been defined as policy-relevant “research that deals with society’s policies and services through which the Finnish state’s bureaucratic apparatus can enhance its knowledge of and ability to develop the society further”. Source: *Valtion sektoritutkimusta uudistetaan*, Press Release, 16 January 2007, translation from Finnish, available at <http://vnk.fi/ajankohtaista/tiedotteet/tiedote/fi.jsp?oid=180245>, last accessed 9 February 2010.

seeking to fit them into, or exclude them from, any one unchanging, all-embracing, sometimes self-contradictory and incomplete, at times fanatical, unitary inner vision. The first kind of intellectual and artistic personality belongs to the hedgehogs, the second to the foxes.

Following from this we may think of two roles – that of a political technologist or that of a critic – and two different mindsets – that of a hedgehog or that of a fox: Giving us in fact three different roles in which an academic may engage herself with the world of policy making: The first two are based on a hedgehog mentality of being rigidly either a political technologist or a critic with little chance of changing her basic attitude.<sup>9</sup> The last and perhaps the preferred option is to see the two as more fluid strategies that can be applied depending on the context and the issue at hand. Indeed, Neumann (2008) sees the role of an adviser or a critic as a dynamic process. For him it is possible to be both-and and not simply either-or when it comes to the choice of being an adviser or a critic.

My own experience indicates that Neumann is making an important point here. It is indeed foxes that have perhaps the best chance of earning the trust and respect of the policy makers themselves: At times a fierce critic, at times a helpful adviser. This last strategy is also the one that I have tried to pursue during my own career – admittedly with varying results when it comes to actually making a difference in the content of the policy.

<sup>9</sup> One should, however, keep in mind the possibility that a political change could actually reverse the roles of a scholar: An eager and able political technologist could be turned into a critic by the arrival of a new administration. This is a propensity that is perhaps more nuanced in a more partisan US setting than in the more consensual Finnish scene.

## Conclusion

This paper has discussed the role of an academic as a policy adviser. To a large extent implicit in its treatment has been the presupposition of an academic that remains essentially detached and independent from the actual policy process. Yet the first, and perhaps the only strong conclusion stemming from the previous narrative is that it is only by becoming part of the process that the scholar can in any meaningful sense seek to effect the policy process. In other words, a scholar must turn into a civil servant, bureaucrat, or perhaps even a politician to make a real difference – and even then the results are far from assured. Obviously the need to go into the policy process is stronger for political technologists, but interestingly Neumann (2008: 175) notes that at least in the US context a critic, too, may need to be an insider.

The second conclusion stems from the need for intellectual honesty. Regardless of the decision we take – whether to engage practitioners as an adviser or a critic – there is a need, at some point, to be open and frank about our motivations and underlying presuppositions – even if the audience is just ourselves. In our academic work we are of course supposed to spell these things openly in our reports (although a good deal of even political factors latently affecting our scientific thinking can still go unrecognized even by ourselves, see Kurki, 2009). Being open about these things in policy-analytic work is much more difficult. The underlying belief systems and worldviews that affect the way we relate to the world around us are resistant to change, and it cannot be taken as a given that we are even necessarily aware of all the things that inform our stances and reactions (see Haukkala, 2010: Ch. 3). But despite this it is all the more important that we at least engage ourselves in the process:



Externally, especially in works intended for public consumption, this amounts to quality control, enabling the consumers of our ideas to better decipher the agenda and motivations behind apparently ‘objective’ policy advice. All in all, it should make for better social science, more reliable and open policy analysis and advice and it might make us better human beings as well.

The third and final conclusion deals with the need to be prepared to exit. To remain too long in close proximity to power easily corrupts. In this respect scholars are perhaps particularly vulnerable. Sooner or later a scholar in government must make some stark choices: Risk losing intellectual integrity by starting to shade what one speaks to power in order to retain and perhaps even enhance the access to the decision maker that in a ministry is the equivalent of the air one breathes (for fascinating discussions of this theme, see Stein, 2009: 122-123; and Biersteker, 2008: 172-174; see also Keohane, 2009: 128, who warns scholars against losing their core scientific integrity in the process).

To a degree, Neumann seems to disagree with this sentiment, suggesting that it is possible – and even desirable – to enhance one’s critical faculties and room for manoeuvre while remaining inside the policy process. For him, the job of a policy adviser “can be made even more interesting if the adviser dabbles in criticism. There are clear limits to how far a state may accommodate their advisers’ criticisms, but it is equally clear that, in a number of countries, the preconditions are there for us to try and expand those limits” (Neumann, 2008: 176). Even a semi-authoritarian country like Russia is no exception to this rule. For example, the illustrious career of Andrei Illarionov shows that it is indeed possible to engage in hard-hitting do-

mestic criticism while being employed by the Russian government.<sup>10</sup>

That said, it cannot be denied that a scholar willing to enter government must also be prepared to exit – if she wants to remain a scholar, that is.<sup>11</sup> This is so not only in order to preserve our intellectual honesty but also to preserve our very capacity to act as useful counsellors in the first place. Already Gray (1971: 128) referred to this when urging scholars “to consider the consequences of a close relationship with the executive branch of government, and ask whether he has not been seduced by the attractions of access into a position which allowed scant time for fundamental reflection.” Stein (2009: 123) has summed up the issue very nicely:

...when we engage formally or informally in the policy process, we lose the time and the luxury to think as academics. The press of time is real, the pace intense. The opportunities to step back, reflect and learn shrink rapidly. At some point – more quickly than we might expect – we deplete the knowledge we brought with us from the academy even as we are learning about the world. We need to leave, go back to reading and listening, assimilate what we have learnt and subject our work to the criticism of our peers. Joseph Nye put it well in a conversation a decade ago when he emphasized the importance of ‘moving

<sup>10</sup> But eventually Illarionov of course had to leave both his post as well as Russia. Interestingly, and admittedly somewhat beside the point, it seems as if recently President Medvedev has assumed the role of Illarionov: An internal critic to the system he is at the same time (ostensibly) heading.

<sup>11</sup> Even Iver Neumann said when congratulating me on my new job as a Special Adviser that he hoped that I ‘would be back’ within two years. An e-mail exchange with Iver Neumann, 8 January 2009.

back and forth between thought and action and letting each fertilize the other' (Nye 1998).

The question of leaving has its local and cultural particulars as well. For example, in the United States the cycle between various presidential administrations and scholarship, although admittedly increasingly mainly only from think tanks, is an accepted feature of public life. By contrast, the country I know best, Finland, is based on a very different logic: The exchange of blood between the two worlds is very rare indeed – although things could be starting to change in Finland in this respect as well. In any case, a chance to serve in government with the expectation that you can go out and perhaps come back again someday is still practically unheard of. The expectation is that you must decide to become either a scholar or a civil servant; no sitting on the fence is encouraged. This particular feature raises the bar of excitement, entailing that you really have to mean it if you do it: There is necessarily no going back if you go. But also staying incurs its own costs on the academic prospects as policy and administrative experience counts for nothing in the academic competition. Nor are these features necessarily the particular feature of Finland alone. I presume (but do not know for certain) that the situation is very much the same all over Europe. This rigidity is a fact of life, but it is one that is to be regretted as it can be expected to inhibit and constrain interaction between scholars and practitioners well into the future. The bottom line is that the encounter between the two is easiest when the two share the same physical space. Therefore, scholars should venture beyond the academia for short stints in the government. And vice

versa, officials should be encouraged to breathe the freer air of academia as well. I think the remarkable career of Alyson Bailes alone discussed elsewhere in this publication proves that.

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**Alyson JK Bailes:**  
**THINKERS AND DOERS IN  
FOREIGN POLICY:  
A DISTINCTION WITHOUT  
A DIFFERENCE?**

**Abstract**

Those who make and execute foreign policy, and those academics and analysts who study it, have partially different skills, cultures and career disciplines. They both work, however, in a similar world of instant communications, international cooperation and shifting global power balances. Both need to recognize that foreign policy is no longer a monopoly of foreign ministries but includes other ministries and agencies, Prime Ministers and Presidents, international organizations, and non-state actors including NGOs and business. Within this framework, the ‘doers’ and ‘thinkers’ can interact in two main sets of ways. In the more traditional mode where their roles remain distinct, non-official experts can affect policy through providing information and analysis, risk assessment, ‘thought tools’ (new vocabulary to capture new phenomena), policy advice and criticism including whistle-blowing and committed campaigning, venues for debate, and elite training. Roles easily become blurred, however, in today’s society where individuals move in and out of office and the controlling role in policy does not always lie where it formally should. Academic and other non-state experts can then find themselves acting as proxies and mouthpieces for the authorities; steering the actions of influential non-state players like international business; taking advantage of ‘open’ elements in modern policy making such as consultation and response to public opinion; and – in corrupt or weak states – perhaps directly usurping the policy creation role. Overall, the interdepend-

ence between ‘doers’ and ‘thinkers’ in this sphere now looks more significant than the differences between them.

**Introduction**

In my own career I have migrated back and forward between official and academic or educational posts more often than would be permitted to the average European diplomat. The British Diplomatic Service, my primary employer from 1969-2002, is generous in allowing its employees to take career breaks, including academic sabbaticals, without losing official seniority. I myself worked five substantial stints outside the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, two of them being at think-tanks – the Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House) in London and the EastWest Institute in New York; and the others involving attachments to the British Ministry of Defence and the Brussels institutions. When I resigned, amicably, from the British service in 2002 it was to become Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI; and from there I moved in 2007 to the University of Iceland to teach security studies, trying my hand at purely educational work as well.

Perhaps it is because I have worked so close to, and across, the fence from both sides that the similarities and interconnections between policy and decision makers on the one hand, and researchers and academics on the other hand, strike me as so significant. I am more impressed by the interdependence between the two types of work than by their theoretical or empirical distinctness, and this is the theme I would like to explore – partly as Devil’s Advocate – in this essay. In its final sections I will offer a typology of ‘classic’ interactions between the two categories that do depend on their separate qualities; but will

then discuss ways in which these distinctions may break down, and the lines be blurred between both actions and actors, in a modern policy-making environment. First, however, I will broach the subject by way of some anecdotal examples and a reflection on the more personal qualities and challenges to be found in both the professions under discussion.

### **Diplomats and Researchers as People**

Among the consequences of my mixed career has been the fact that I have been both on the giving and the receiving end of official grants for research. Some examples will give the first hint of the interdependence that exists in practice between the motives and values of donor and recipient. In the mid-1990s I was Head of the FCO's Security Policy Department and could dispose of a modest fund for academic cooperation. One grant was given to the International Institute of Security Studies (IISS) to translate their famous annual Strategic Survey<sup>1</sup> into Russian for distribution in Moscow and other Russian-speaking localities. The idea was to make neutral and independent information on security relationships available to Russian officials and non-officials, from a source that they might be less disposed to suspect than they would the British Government as such. Obviously, though, we would not have selected IISS as partners if we did not respect the quality of their analysis and did not consider it pretty close to official assessments. It may be added that the responsible researcher at IISS at that time was a person who had served before, and would serve again later, in high government posts for another NATO country.

In a second example, when I was working at the EastWest Institute in New York a couple of years later, that self-styled 'think and action tank'<sup>2</sup> set up a support and policy advice programme for the Baltic States, where it channelled privately supplied funds into seminars and other events focusing on those states' ambitions for NATO and EU membership. The advice it gave could be quite tough, stressing how seriously the entry criteria must be taken and urging the three states to maintain solidarity with each other despite their intrinsic differences if they wanted a serious chance of acceptance. Both state and non-state Baltic representatives respected our advice and we had greater access at high levels in those states – from Presidents downwards – than many professional diplomats could claim. This was doubtless in part because Baltic leaders expected straight talking from EWI, with no preconceived bias and no motive except to promote sustainable reform. But it would hardly have happened if the Baltics had not known that EWI was also closely in touch with officials of the institutions involved, with national policy makers in the USA and elsewhere and indeed with influential private sector investors. EWI's analytical input might have been its own, but its policy-influencing function rested above all on its nature as a bridge from one official constituency to another.

In the third and final case, when I was Director at SIPRI the European Commission in Brussels offered us a large grant – initially provided by the European Parliament – for a 'pilot project' to explore how the EU's Community funds might be used to promote goals of WMD security and non-proliferation among Europe's neighbours. The decision to turn to SIPRI had something to do with our record

<sup>1</sup> For the latest (2010) version of this reference work, see <http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-survey/>.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.ewi.info/>.

of accurate, well-informed research and policy analysis in the areas of export controls and safe disposal of WMD materials, which were the chief fields for potential EU action. Yet we were not the only potential partners, and to execute the project we ourselves brought in literally dozens of other competent institutes and experts. I suspect that we actually got the mandate – and carried it out to widespread satisfaction – because the key figures in our institute were known to be familiar with the EU's own machinery and with the sometimes very delicate questions of competence and leadership that bedeviled the domain of WMD policy in Brussels at the time. Again, if the substantial value of our work lay in its independence, the ability to mobilize it for official and practical purposes arose from connection, familiarity, and the ability to communicate across the official/ academic divide.<sup>3</sup> The other moral of this case – which will be returned to later – is that the 'official' side of the equation is no longer limited to nation-states, but includes international institutions as important donors and partners.

### The Contrasts

While still at the level of personal experience, I have reflected on how the work and working conditions of officials and independent researchers differ in the field of international diplomacy. Here are some suggested elements of contrast:

- The average diplomat has to produce reams of text every day in the form of notes and reports (using various media), and usually at great speed with little time to reflect. When

properly trained, he or she will focus on key messages and give the recipients the option of taking decisions on the basis of an initial summary, if time is lacking to read the whole. The average academic produces far fewer words much more slowly, with time to polish, correct and deepen, and with a training that drives him/her to focus more on originality and accuracy than on brevity or bull points. The diplomatic message is 'published' and the reaction – or lack of reaction – produced in real time, while an academic book or article may not appear for literally years from the time of writing. In short, what the one regards as a good product may make a less good impression on the other and, in the worst case, can stand in the way of mutual respect;

- The diplomat works in a formal and hierarchical setting with politicians and/or parliaments at the top; he/she must bow to the dictates of these political masters and also to the force of events, which may at any moment undermine all assumptions, destroy the best-laid plans and demand radical changes of course. Resilience, flexibility and lack of fixed dogma – or as some would put it, lack of any really firm personal convictions – become essential for survival in these conditions. The academic usually works in shorter and/or more 'flat' hierarchical chains and has more autonomy, especially when teaching. Being one remove away from real-world events, he or she has some choice in how far to be driven by them and more chance to maintain analytical and/or ethical positions unchanged over the longer term. This can, of course, result in a drift away from reality; while the practices of educational hiring and firing can also aggravate risks of group-think and make true personal independence difficult to maintain;

<sup>3</sup> For access to the results of the pilot project study please contact the Non-Proliferation and Export Controls project of SIPRI, details at <http://www.sipri.org>

- The diplomat has to provide argument and evidence of a kind to justify the *actions* of his/her state or institution. The academic researcher is more focused on justifying *interpretations* and *theories*, where different types of proof will apply;
- The diplomat, if he/she wishes to remain in employment, cannot simply 'give up' but must persist in a given policy aim as long as possible in face of multiple setbacks. It is easier for an independent academic to abandon or change a theory, or even move from one area of work to a quite different one, without life-and-death consequences or even any damage to professional credit. This is partly because the scientific approach rests in part on the ability to test ideas to destruction and abandon non-viable ones;
- The diplomat in the course of a career will often be in the position of *training* younger colleagues 'on the job' by direction and example. If done well this also offers a rare opportunity for self-examination and trying to abstract some ideas on what good diplomacy is. The academic's job is to *educate* the young, a task that is often conducted at a greater personal distance, and does not necessarily address the whole personality and motivation of the student (although good teachers will also be aware of the power of example and self-exposure).

### **The Similarities**

For all this, there are also major commonalities between the life and work of diplomats and foreign policy makers, and independent academics and researchers, in modern circumstances. The first is that both jobs are *par excellence* about communication: Written and spoken, direct and remote, person-to-person and with larger audiences, including the me-

dia. They both combine the basic conveying of information with a need to elicit a human reaction to it: To influence and persuade, or at least – in an educational setting – to stimulate and illuminate the hearer. Secondly and mainly for the same reason, the manner of work of both is strongly influenced by the availability of technical means. I would wager that senior diplomats and senior academics have moved roughly in parallel, albeit at a speed some way behind the general public, in learning to do their own typing and word processing, to use e-mail and to surf the Internet. By now both will be well familiar with Google and the guilty secret of Wikipedia, will have a more or less informed concern about cybersecurity, and may be starting to wonder what Facebook and Twitter mean for them (or at least, for their clients and students).

Partly thanks to the availability of such means but more because of the trend in real-life international and transnational relations, both the doers and the thinkers and observers in foreign affairs today are likely to do a high proportion of their work in communities and frameworks spanning two or more nations. Today's research partnerships, academic mailing lists, and publication advertising practices are spreading ever further within and across continental boundaries, just as the professional diplomat's bilateral and regional alliances, international organizations and ad hoc coalitions are. Some large grant givers for research, notably the European Union, require academics to build a cross-boundary network of a given minimum size before applying for many of their funds. There is a parallel here to the fact that many of today's substantive, external and internal, security challenges can only be mastered by international cooperation and regulation from a bilateral up to a fully global scale. In both cases, successful practitioners have to learn the skills of mul-



tilateral communication, specialization, negotiation and compromise on top of whatever skills they need for the actual task in hand. For policy makers and academics working in the fields of finance and economics, defence and security, and many other functional sectors like aviation or disease, cross-sectoral relationships are also becoming more important as the power both of the private business sector, and of social actors and ordinary individuals, to create challenges and also to help solve them is increasingly recognized.<sup>4</sup> One corollary is that non-official ‘experts’ who fail to look beyond national boundaries, and/or who address only formal state actors in their analysis of international relations, risk losing the ear (and the money) of official players who have to operate in the new more complex frameworks whether they like it or not. Conversely, academics and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may enhance their value precisely by being able to bring in information, viewpoints and partners more freely, from a wider range of nations and sectors, than officials constrained by more formal alliances are able to do for themselves.

Last but not least under this heading, the political geometry of international policy work is shifting and broadening all the time: More rapidly for official players, but gradually for academics and educators as well. One aspect of the new more multipolar and co-dependent world system is that the dominant state powers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are having to adapt their own diplomacy and the institutional frameworks they use (International Financial Institutions, G8>G20, security coalitions etc) to the importance of rising

powers like China, India and Brazil, plus the better organized multilateral regions (e.g. South-East Asia). Another is that most leading Western educational institutions are adapting their programmes for Chinese, Indian, and other ‘rising’ nations’ students – not least because of the money they bring with them; are getting used to both collaborating and competing with professionals from such nations in their own fields, and are starting to explore the scope for official and private funding deals from such novel directions. Actual think tanks vary in how far and fast they have moved in this ‘multi-cultural’ direction, but the leading ones<sup>5</sup> will be found to have an increasingly varied, sometimes fully global, personnel mix. A different question is how far the actual methods, language, content and underlying values of international discourse – official or academic – have adapted to the habits and expectations of new national and sectoral arrivals on the scene. Some no doubt would not wish them to do so too far or fast, if it means diluting values that have been found important in the ‘West’ such as democracy, freedom of speech, respect for intellectual property or whatever. The reverse argument is that those qualities can hardly be tested for their true value, and more widely shared, without some openness to new partners and readiness for a two-way exchange with them.

The bottom line in any case is that both officials and academics must sooner or later *adapt* to the changes and new features in their global environment – widening their understanding not just of who does what to whom (in Lenin’s classic formula), but of the motives

<sup>4</sup> For a brief introduction to this topic see Alyson JK Bailes, *What role for the private sector in “societal security”?*, Issue Paper 56, European Policy Centre, Brussels; at <http://www.epc.eu/en/pub.asp?TYP=TEWN&LV=187&see=y&t=&PG=TEWN/EN/detailpub&l=12&AI=946>

<sup>5</sup> There is no official grading of the quality of think tanks, but a widely respected independent survey is provided by the University of Pennsylvania: 2009 version at [http://www.sas.upenn.edu/irp/documents/2009\\_GlobalGoToThinkTankRankings\\_TTIndex\\_1.28.10.pdf](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/irp/documents/2009_GlobalGoToThinkTankRankings_TTIndex_1.28.10.pdf).

for which and logic upon which they do it – if they are not to forfeit both efficiency and relevance. This fundamental dependency on an external context that is never static, never unambiguous and perhaps never fully knowable is one of the things that distinguishes social sciences from other disciplines, and it puts the foreign policy actor and analyst together on the opposite side of the fence from some other experts in for instance pure science, pure philosophy or religion.

### Who Are the Policy Makers?

Before turning to how the two sets of actors relate in practice, it is worth pausing again to define just who they are. In particular, the range of ‘official’ makers and executors of external policies, including foreign affairs, security and defence, is far larger than traditional analyses would allow for and rapidly expanding in modern conditions. First, within the traditional framework of a nation-state’s government, it is normal today – and not only in the more ‘integrated’ regions of the world – for many domestic ministries, agencies and services (e.g. police and customs), as well as foreign and defence ministries, to cooperate with networks of colleagues in other nations and the relevant international organs. Many diplomatic services now include seconded officials from such specialized backgrounds in their larger missions abroad. Since modern definitions of security now embrace issues like migration, transport, disease management, energy supply and so forth, it seems reasonable to view the overseas connections of these experts as constituting not just domestic affairs writ large, but a contribution of substance to the shaping and success of external strategies. To coordinate this wider governmental engagement, there is a steady trend towards the concentration of power

over external affairs at prime ministerial level: Whether this is reflected simply in political habits, or in the creation of formal committees and coordinating agencies attached to the PM’s office, as seen *par excellence* in the UK. Under different constitutions the same may apply to the presidential office, though some forces in the EU (like the way the European Council works) tend to push the national spokesman role down from the President to the Prime Minister where both exist.<sup>6</sup> It follows that academics analyzing or seeking to influence official external policies need both to observe, and communicate with, a much wider range of governmental actors than ever before.

Secondly and as already noted, the numbers, competences and scale of activities of multi-state international institutions are increasing in every field of international affairs and – albeit at different rates – in every continent.<sup>7</sup> The researcher who wishes to document and understand international transactions must at the very least consider how these bodies affect the choices open to and the decisions of individual states, and indeed all the major IR theories including Realism now give considerable attention to such questions. Fewer theories can help to explain how the institutions themselves work, above all in cases like the European Union where they have begun to exercise truly supranational powers. But researchers today can explore the subject by engaging with the institutions themselves: Through joining research bodies belonging directly to them (EU Institute of Security Studies, UNIDIR); by carrying

<sup>6</sup> This has happened notably in Finland; the power of the French President will be a harder nut to crack.

<sup>7</sup> Alyson JK Bailes and Andrew Cottey, ‘Regional security cooperation in the twenty-first century’ in *SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (OUP: London, 2006).



out funded research for them; or being given ad hoc access as information providers and advisers. Both the European Union in 2003 and 2008, and NATO in 2009-10, when preparing their respective new official security 'strategies' and 'concepts', set up open seminars where they sought out the views of non-official experts from many backgrounds. If this kind of openness is most developed in the Euro-Atlantic context, it is fair to note that the African Union, sub-regional African bodies, and ASEAN all have non-official networks of experts attached to them<sup>8</sup> and even the Russia/China-led Shanghai Cooperation Organization has a university institute dedicated to it in Shanghai.

Finally under this heading, the rising power of non-state actors in global affairs also has implications for what academics may need to study, and where they should turn to most effectively inject their findings and advice. Some non-governmental international institutions, notably the Red Cross but also the largest and best established reforming charities, have an influence almost equal to governmental groups not only on the handling of ad hoc crises but also in the shaping of international practice and legislation (*vide* the ICRC role in promoting treaties on rules of war and 'humanitarian' weapons issues). A group of such NGOs provided the platform on which the UN is now formally debating a new global Arms Trade Treaty. But it is the doings of less benign international networks like terrorist movements and international crime consortia that have attracted the really big numbers of academic watchers lately – the explosion in research on terror-

ism and anti-terrorism after 9/11 being the obvious, and now notorious example.<sup>9</sup> Over the longer term, the body of academic work devoted to non-state actors in armed conflict, and their role in post-conflict processes, may be judged even more significant. The roles of international business have been thrown into the forefront of concern by the recent economic crash, but have long been a subject for IR research in some more specialized contexts like 'war commodities' (conflict diamonds, etc), the role of extractive businesses in conflict-prone areas, the arms industry and the activities of private military and security companies. Anyone looking at energy, environmental, food or transport security will have to take business activities as an equally important or even primary field of enquiry alongside the roles of states.

In developed and relatively peaceful countries, business organizations also play a certain role as commissioners of research and providers of their own analytical models, a famous example being the World Economic Forum that organizes the Davos meetings and has an active Global Risk Assessment Programme.<sup>10</sup> Think tanks vary in their willingness to contemplate accepting funding directly from business, but few would probably now refuse to consider a private-sector co-sponsor for a suitable conference, while many university departments (for instance of regional studies) have relied on business sponsorships for some time. Last but not least, it is perhaps unnecessary to dwell on the huge power of the private media over how world events are not just reported, but understood and reacted

<sup>8</sup> Indeed, in the ASEAN context the use of academics for 'second-track' discussions, which may address sensitive interstate issues more openly than officials can, is particularly well developed. Such networks exist both among ASEAN countries and between them and interested Europeans.

<sup>9</sup> Notorious because so much was published on the subject by institutes and individuals with no expert background in it, and because so much funding was diverted from other research subjects to so little ultimate effect.

<sup>10</sup> The 2008 report of this network has been published at <http://www.weforum.org/pdf/globalrisk/report2008pdf>.

to, and the various ways academics may get drawn into working with them.

### **Interaction and Interpretation**

We now come to the ways in which non-official experts may interact with the makers and executors of external policy, and will first look at relatively traditional roles ranging from the most distant to the closest.

Curiously, academic research and teaching in the university discipline known as International Relations (IR) is one of the activities least likely to involve interplay with those who actually conduct such relations. It is built on theoretical approaches that require generalization, abstraction and (in principle) a stance of neutrality; moreover it is very largely retrospective, studying patterns far back into history – thus Thucydides is taught to students as a forefather of Realism. In my personal observation, selection processes for diplomatic services and related official posts do not give any automatic preference to students with such training, and I must confess that I spent the 33 years of my own, not unsuccessful diplomatic career without having heard of any of the leading IR theories at all.<sup>11</sup> However, it is right to note that academics engaged even in the most theoretical approaches to world affairs may be creating interactions of their own when they communicate and cooperate with their peers abroad or just have foreign

<sup>11</sup> This is not to say that diplomats never engage in conceptualization and abstraction: their political masters demand it when they introduce notions like ‘democracy promotion’ or ‘war on terrorism’, and many diplomatic services use goal-setting and performance assessment methods that require generalization about ‘national interests’. Risk assessment, attempts at extrapolation and forecasting, and the work of ‘policy planning’ staffs in those ministries that have them are further examples of official activities with a strong theoretical bent. The point is that the frameworks and discourse used here are not borrowed from academic IR but created by the officials themselves, by politicians and sometimes the media, or by those academics who are willing to trade in ad hoc policy labels and slogans – as discussed below.

students in their classes. The importance of this growing ‘multilateralization’ of academic study has already been noted above.

Academics who teach, and/or who engage in public ‘education’ through media and popularization work, are more likely to impact upon the actual conduct of international affairs even if they never engage directly with official cadres. At least some of their students will go on to be diplomats, other officials, international businesspeople or whatever, and some of the information and ideas they convey may affect public views that are channelled back to decision makers. Overall, however, their impact is likely to come second to that of media professionals reporting directly on the relevant topics and, indeed, to official actors’ own public pronouncements.

### **Conventional Interactions**

More direct and measurable impacts will be made by academics and researchers who do enter into contact with some or all of the range of potential actors listed above: Namely national governments, national oversight bodies (parliaments), defence and security services, private sector entities, NGOs and charities, social organizations, and state and non-state international institutions. The following are the types of interaction that most clearly preserve the distinctness of the academic partner’s status:

- Provision of expert information, reportage and analysis tailored or selected to meet the needs of active users, including the extreme case of research that is fully funded by state or non-state authorities and produced on a classified or, at least, unpublished basis. Since academics will rarely if ever possess more hard data for such studies than officials with full classified access, the added

value of the independent insights provided should lie in their impartiality, awareness of history and theory, longer-term view, and ability to project forwards. For smaller governments, help from academics familiar with foreign languages, cultures and histories that diplomats do not have time to acquire can be precious. The giving of evidence to enquiries (if unbiased) comes under this same heading;

- Risk assessment, forecasting and 'early warning' services, which could also include the design and facilitation of scenario games and exercises; this too has a fully funded and classified variant;
- Provision of 'thought tools' of a more generalized and abstract kind, such as new concepts, distinctions and vocabularies to help explain new trends and processes or express new policy goals: These can be extremely powerful if adopted by influential actors and/or carried widely into public discourse, as is seen perhaps most often in the United States. (Consider Fukuyama's 'end of history', Robert Kagan's analysis of Europe moving 'beyond power', the use of the 'asymmetrical threats' idea after 9/11 and the ideas on 'Arab democracy' pushed by certain US think tanks; or in Europe, the impact of the 'new wars' analysis and various interpretations of 'human security');
- Critiques and commentaries that focus on policies and solutions rather than the original phenomena, including suggestions for policy formation and improvement. The effect of these inputs will depend on their quality, on how united or dispersed the expert opinions are, but most of all on the receptivity of the policy process itself – which is of course driven and distorted by many factors other than academic logic. Groups carrying out less disinterested 'lobbying' often have more impact for obvious

reasons. However, as a minimum, such exposure to outside questioning should make politicians and officials more aware of the strengths, weaknesses and peculiarities of their own positions; and some policy shifts may owe their origin to subsequent *internal* debates.

A further set of functions performed by non-official experts can carry them closer to, or across, the line of active intervention in foreign affairs without blurring their actual identity. These include the provision of forums and meeting opportunities – including secret, back-channel ones – for groups of actors within one country, or from the home country and other countries, or between third countries for purposes of mediation. Whether the academics actively steer the proceedings or not, results may come from these off-the-record encounters that could not be achieved by other means. Experts who are more willing to serve the purposes of one 'side', whether that be an official or business or NGO entity, may go further to float ideas – e.g. new cooperation proposals – as 'trial balloons' towards audiences where their status helps gain them a hearing. When travelling abroad or working with foreign experts, and interviewing foreign actors for their research, they can pick up interesting information and insights that they are ready to share with their own officials as a kind of 'soft intelligence'.

With a further step towards commitment (to a particular country, institution or cause), academic experts can engage in whistle-blowing (exposure of abuses), conscious policy advocacy and campaigning both at home and abroad. This happens most obviously in the field of human rights and conflict studies and on armament issues, but can be influential in many other contexts, for instance environmental or health security and infrastructure

risk assessment. Experts considered reliable and helpful by the authorities (of their own or other countries) may be invited to join official delegations to international meetings. They may carry out proxy services by delivering messages or standing in place of officials in various contexts. (We can all think of countries whose academics are pretty much forced to promote the ‘party line’, especially if they want to travel.) They may provide training courses and lectures for their own country’s diplomats, or in an institutional setting like the EU’s virtual Security and Defence College. They can be sent to deliver training and instruction and other operational services abroad, most notably during conflict resolution and peace building but also for other reforming purposes – including the renewal of foreign ministries and international studies centres themselves.

### **Blurring the Lines**

So far, all the examples given posit a clearly defined official ‘actor’ and a distinct, independent, academic ‘knower’ or ‘adviser’. This model, however, is too simple and narrow to capture contemporary realities. Many other interactions can and do occur – by no means only in more ‘open’, westernized societies – where the questions of ‘who is who’ and ‘who does what’ both become increasingly blurred.

For a start, individuals can play different roles within a single life, just as I myself have done. It is common in some countries (US, France), and possible in most others, for a single person to move in and out of the ‘revolving door’ between governmental posts, advisory posts, research and education, and sometimes also parliamentary appointments and business work. While rules and/or social norms may exist that aim to avoid conflicts

of interest in such cases, it is a rare individual who will give up all interest or partiality in the official and political (or commercial) side of things while filling a temporary academic post, especially in mid-career. If the person’s main anchor lies on the academic side, it is likewise almost impossible to ask him/her not to note the potential value of certain official contacts and information for improving his/her funding and standing after returning to academe.

These examples of working on both sides of the fence still imply that there is a fence to be crossed. However, to close this account I will suggest that the distinction between official and non-official, or between the doer and the thinker or observer, is also being eroded in the new world environment and within the new understanding of what foreign policy or international relations actually consist of today.

Looking first from the non-official side: Persons with academic and/or NGO status may be employed directly and openly as agents of a particular government (or business entity) when their status and competence allows them to reach places and be heard by ears that diplomats or officials could not reach. An important line is crossed when and if, instead of conveying views and knowledge that they hold anyway but which happen to suit their employers’ purposes, they aim to persuade on the basis of a partisan position, to knowingly purvey misinformation and propaganda, or to deliver threats instead of warnings. A further extension of this role would be for academics to engage in ‘hard’ rather than soft espionage, feeding back to their masters information that was entrusted to them on the assumption it would not be so used.

A further trend that carries experts beyond the traditional two-way interaction with officialdom is linked with the shifting cross-sec-

toral balance of power, whereby many types of non-state actors have themselves become primary players in international transactions, as well as gaining leverage over official choices. To take an extreme example, a non-official thinker who effectively disseminates – through conventional or social media – an idea/ideology affecting the way his/her hearers behave in internal and external policy transactions has had a direct impact on world affairs in a way that makes the ‘fence’ metaphor irrelevant. If the message is one of hatred, he/she may actually be open to prosecution by the International Criminal Court.<sup>12</sup> (On the positive side, the impact of famous new-style philanthropists, environmentalists, and lifestyle gurus probably comes closest in importance.) Short of such personal exposure, an expert may choose to direct his/her influence and advice at any or all of the sources of non-state power already identified – business, NGOs, social movements, media – in order to influence the moves they make *within their own spheres of power*, as well as the roles they may play in steering official policies one way or the other. Experts who can use research results to persuade private businesses directly of the merits of energy saving, other climate-related restraints, the need for responsible behaviour in conflict zones, tight control of dangerous technologies, or other strategic and humanitarian desiderata are likely to have at least a *faster* and perhaps in the end a greater impact than they could achieve by going first to governments to persuade them to bring in new regulations on these subjects. In the first case, businesses’ financial self-interest may make them hard to persuade; but in the second, the same proposals are open to all the vagaries of

political process plus the risk that businesses will apply their ingenuity to non-compliance. Moreover, the whole point about business multinationals is that they have the power to change practice across national and regional boundaries far more easily than today’s international-legal systems can achieve a similar spread of enforceable regulation.

Finally, it is worth going back to the passing remark made above about the ‘receptivity’ of official-side policy processes to non-official inputs. External policy is made today in almost as many different ways as there are nations (and institutions), but it seems safe to detect a general trend towards the de-classification, de-professionalization and general ‘accessibility’ of the process as an effect of the spread of democracy, increased information flows and multi-lateralization. And while it probably remains true in Europe that external policies are more likely than internal ones to draw bi-partisan or multi-party support within the political classes, this does not mean that the broader public opinion will be equally supportive, or passive, or incapable of making itself felt. Recent examples could include a number of national decisions on troop withdrawals from Iraq that were driven by popular opposition, and the effect of German public opinion in slowing decisions in Spring 2010 over emergency economic aid to Greece. For countries in the West and North of Europe, it is commonplace for the government’s room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis new EU initiatives to be largely shaped by expected public reactions. Where policy becomes ‘democratized’ in this way, a number of new and potentially influential roles arise for non-official experts and think tanks: Not only may their pronouncements guide the popular (or business, or sectoral) attitudes that eventually constrain the politicians, but the political and official policy makers may

<sup>12</sup> The damage done by individual cyber-criminals, especially when taking part in politically motivated attacks, is another parallel, although few such actors have their training in international relations.



appeal to them from their side both to predict and help manipulate the course of the wider debate. Further, with the march of multi-lateralization and globalization, it is becoming increasingly common for states to import and adopt quite important features of their strategy from the international organizations they belong to, or from other states whose favour they seek or to whom they are indebted or subjected against their will.<sup>13</sup> This means that a thinker can have an influence on many states other than his/her homeland, not only by direct diffusion of ideas, but if he/she successfully influences the organization or state whose positions become thus replicated.

Even this is a rather conservative model because it assumes an orderly democracy where the eventual decision-making power – and the best intelligence – remains with the state and/or representative bodies theoretically holding it. In real life and perhaps even in a majority of the world's states, the true policy-making dynamic (for external as much as, or more than, for internal policy matters) will reside elsewhere: With competing centres of power including non-state contenders in a chaotic 'weak' state; with sectoral interests and lobbies of a commercial, dynastic, religious, provincial or other kind; with autocratic leaders or *éminences grises*; and in the few remaining communist states, with a party political apparatus parallel to the nominal government. Even in apparently democratic systems it is not uncommon for politicians to distrust officials and diplomats – shifting their reliance to personally chosen advisers, sending 'back channel' messages to counterparts abroad; and for politicians and/or officials to con-

spire in bypassing representative institutions and keeping the public in the dark. Many of these variations tend to reduce the scope for academics and other non-officials *lacking a power base of their own* to access and influence policy, just as they reduce the chance of true public debate or proper democratic control. It is however still possible, either that independent thinkers may influence the individuals holding power (and sometimes it is easier to catch the ear of a single autocrat!), or that free intellectuals may play a part in challenging the abnormal nature of the policy process and its results and thus helping inspire eventual reform.

Nothing in this depiction of complex and sometimes murky models of interaction is meant to imply that cooperation between thinkers and doers in external policy is natural or easy. For most of the time it is not, or is not even attempted because of the seeming obstacles. What the two parties seek and how they want to work can diverge both because of the real systemic differences between their worlds – as discussed near the start – and because of more adventitious conflicts of belief and personality. What this account has set out to show is simply that any single image of their interplay will not suffice: Because of the mixed nature of each side of the thinker/doer antithesis, and because of the new style and environment of much external policy making today. The poet TS Eliot wrote 'Between the thought and the action/Falls the shadow'. There is indeed much that is shadowy in the interactions described here, but to my mind it resembles the mystery of the intertwined Yin and Yang more than the gulf between two irreconcilable opposites.

<sup>13</sup> This idea is explored with examples in Alyson JK Bailes, 'Does a Small State Need a Strategy?', Occasional Paper of the Centre for Small State Studies, University of Iceland (text at [http://stofnafir.hi.is/ams/sites/files/ams/Bailes\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://stofnafir.hi.is/ams/sites/files/ams/Bailes_Final_0.pdf))



**René Dinesen:**  
**BRIDGING THE GAP -**  
**A PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE**

**Introduction**

My argument in this paper is the following: Is the gap between foreign policy making and academia unbridgeable as some would argue? No it is not, but it will take bold and innovative thinking on both sides of the gap to bridge it. Later, I will present three concrete proposals that I hope might help pave the way for greater mutual benefits from the cooperation between the Danish MFA and academic world. But before I go that far – and risk being that concrete – I want to touch upon some more general issues and to highlight the trend that policy makers seem currently more interested in what academics have to say than earlier, both in Denmark and around the world, and to elaborate on some more general observations concerning the much-mentioned gap.

**A Considerable Gap**

I took up the task of establishing the Strategy and Policy Planning unit in the Danish MFA last summer with the mission to strengthen Danish foreign policy by taking a longer-term, strategic view of global trends and make policy recommendations to both the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to the Minister for Development Cooperation.

Among our priorities, is also to liaise with the academic community. Not in any way to monopolize contacts or centralize existing contacts but to create platforms and facilitate cooperation, and we consider the cooperation with DIIS and the rest of the Danish and international academic community crucial for being able to provide better analytical frameworks for strategic thinking and for being

able to propose new initiatives and projects to the MFA and arrange brainstorming sessions for ministers and senior officials of the MFA etc.

Now, the gap between academia and foreign policy making obviously is neither a new nor a specific Danish issue. However, it is my view that the gap is greater in Denmark and continental Europe than in the Anglo-Saxon world due to among other factors the greater circulation of policy makers and academics in for instance the US. Although, in continental Europe, Brussels seems to be an exception, with an evolving community of think tanks developing around the EU institutions.

Nevertheless, even in the US, there seems to be a tendency among scholars to see the gap as growing rather than narrowing. Prominent academics such as Joseph Nye and Stephen Krasner recently pointed to this. According to Krasner – who has experience as both academic and practitioner as chief of Policy Planning in the State Department under Condoleezza Rice from 2005-2007 – the gap is simply unbridgeable.

Well I disagree. Actually, to my mind policy makers are currently more interested in what academics have to say than earlier. Let me elaborate a bit on this and give some examples. In the US, the Department of Defense recently launched its Minerva program that awards multimillion-dollar grants to political scientists to better understand areas of “strategic importance to U.S. national security policy.” In Norway, the Minister of Foreign Affairs launched an ambitious project – called Refleks – in 2008 inviting to research and public debate on Norwegian foreign policy interests in a globalized world.

Simultaneously, specialized think tanks are having a greater influence on policy making. This happens in the US but the trend is also evident in the EU where there has been

an explosive growth in the number of think tanks. Not only in Brussels because, we also see think tanks with a European agenda located in London, Paris, and Florence and recently also in Copenhagen with the establishment of the Centre for European Politics research centre at Department of Political Science at University of Copenhagen in 2007. Furthermore, since the establishment in 2003 we have had a very policy-oriented think tank at DIIS, while at the same time Denmark has maintained a strong position in the academic world, e.g. with the Copenhagen School of Security Studies as a prominent example.

### **Changing Conditions**

Inside the Danish MFA, things have also changed the last 5-6 years. While it used to be pure luxury to consider partnerships with think tanks and other parts of the academic community, this is no longer the case. Especially after the Globalization Analysis from 2006 – entitled “Diplomacy in a boundless world” – and its specific recommendations, more or less all units in the MFA have now become more aware of the importance of establishing and participating in networks with partners from the academia.

More recently, after the creation of the Strategy and Policy Planning Unit in 2009, we have started to have more frequent brainstorming meetings with researchers, including with the Heads of the DIIS research units, where they brief on their latest research and ideas, and experiences are exchanged. Furthermore, for several years the MFA – through the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research – have supported larger strategic research projects as well as individual Ph.D. and postdoc. projects. Also, each year on the Danish State Budget resources are allocated for

commissioned research by universities and think tanks on specific development issues. In 2010, this amounts to more than DKK 10m – or more than USD 2m.

The Ministry also funds a number of international think tanks such as the Paris-based European Union Institute for Strategic Studies, the British Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and Center for International Cooperation at New York University.

And also from my time at the Danish UN Mission in New York I have good experiences with fruitful cooperation with think tanks such as the Center on International Cooperation (CIC) at NYU, the International Peace Institute (IPI), Council of Foreign Relations, Brookings and East-coast Universities. We worked closely with them on arranging seminars and doing studies on issues such as peace keeping, global governance, the Responsibility to Protect and how to increase civilian capacity in peace building etc.

In more general terms, I would say that the gap between foreign policy making and academia is diminishing as a result of three distinct developments. First, the increasing institutional differentiation with new think tanks – as already mentioned – playing a larger role in policy making together with new transnational networks, NGO's etc. Second, I experience that other government actors than the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense are having a growing need for policy guidance and theoretical research, this applies to a wide range of ministries and directorates involved in the European policy making. Third, I see the gap is diminishing as the result of a growing complexity of international relations, new security threats and strategic challenges that increase the relevance of theoretical research and both a theoretical and practical understanding of these complex cultural, sociological, economic and political issues.

## Concrete Proposals

Now, this is not to assert that the gap already is gone or that it is about to disappear by itself. Nothing emerges by itself, except fluff, and the gap did not emerge by itself and will not disappear by itself. We still have a challenge in Danish policy making in bridging the gap, and both the policy makers and the scholars are to blame. However, bridging the gap is not just a question of new funding from the MFA, but of courage and innovative thinking on both sides.

Before I present some concrete proposals on how to bridge the gap, let me elaborate a bit on some general reflections on the gap. First, there is the question of time and of timing. While timing is of extreme importance in the policy world where important decisions are often taken in a hurry and with great uncertainty of the consequences, it is often of less importance to academics. To quote Robert Putnam: “better an approximate answer to an important question than an exact answer to a trivial question.” But there are of course several examples of academics who have timed their research with an open policy window and shown willingness to communicate their research to a broader audience. Take Robert Kagan with his “Americans are from Mars and Europeans from Venus” thesis on why Americans and Europeans see the world differently in 2002 or Francis Fukuyama – who recently held a lecture for the staff at the Danish MFA – and Samuel P. Huntington’s debate on *The End of History/The Clash of Civilizations after the end of the Cold War*.

A recent example of an academic idea becoming policy reality is the specific policy initiative “Partnership for Democratic Governance” of which Denmark is a member. The inspiration came from a paper called “Sharing Sovereignty” published by Stephen Krasner in 2004 in the “International Security” jour-

nal. In 2007, the idea was turned into reality and the partnership is now mandated to help developing countries with capacity gaps strengthen their institutions of political and administrative governance and core policy functions while simultaneously supporting service delivery to people. The “Partnership for Democratic Governance” is hosted by the OECD, supported by the UNDP and a number of countries such as Brazil, Canada, Chile, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the US and Denmark.

So while time and timing is of great importance for bridging the gap, secondly there is the question of understanding the different cultures. You can call it different mind-sets, different cultures, as Alexander George does, the terminology used is not that important in my opinion. However, the different use of language in the academic and policy making world is crucial. While an oral culture is often dominant in the top of the foreign policy world, the vast majority of academic research is in writing, and at the same time while academics strive towards linguistic clarity, in politics a deliberate use of linguistic ambiguities is not uncommon, rather it is often (maybe too often) a much-valued skill.

Adding to the gap is also the tricky question of being – at the same time – a policy advisor and a critic. On the one hand, there is no doubt that practitioners should be better at seeking knowledge from scholars and making sure that working papers and reports produced are not forgotten or lost inside the MFA, but on the other hand researchers also have to show a greater willingness to put knowledge at the disposal of policy makers, even though they do not always agree on the substance of the policies.

Thirdly and finally, there is the issue of direct applicability of research which, I think, is a demand from policy makers that keeps

frustrating academics. Just as practitioners are frustrated when they are presented with research that seems rather important, but do not have a clue on what to do with it. Now this mutual frustration is understandable, but translation from theoretical to applied research is possible and I am of course aware that both practitioners and academics are constantly trying.

Now enough of these broad (and almost theoretical) considerations, how do we actually bridge the gap? Well, here are three rather concrete proposals that I hope at least might pave the way for greater mutual benefits from the cooperation between the Danish MFA and the academic world.

*Number one* is a more continuous involvement of advisory panels consisting of Danish and international experts in the preparation of reports and strategies in the MFA: We did this when preparing the Globalization Analysis where international scholars such as Joseph Nye, Anne Marie Slaughter, Ngaire Woods and Danish experts such as Georg Sørensen, Lykke Friis, Ida Nicolaisen and Christian Friis Bach participated in the advisory panel. A similar panel was involved in the making of the report of the Danish Defence Commission in 2008. And currently in the MFA, we are working on a paper on the strategic relations between Russia and the EU in close cooperation with a panel of experts from Brookings, Carnegie, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and the German “Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik” (SWP). Recently, in my unit, we also produced a paper on new trends and challenges in development policy, focusing specifically on the emerging new donors such as China, India and others. We did this in an open process where we shared the draft – and our recommendations to the Minister for Development Cooperation – and met with Danish researchers and incorporated

their very useful feedback. The contribution of these panels has to my knowledge only been fruitful and very constructive and there is much to gain, I think, by a more consistent and closer involvement of these advisory panels in the work of the MFA.

*Number two:* I would like to see some kind of co-funding of Ph.D. students between the MFA and DIIS, where the Ph.D. student would be placed for months or a year in the relevant unit in the MFA to the shared benefit of both the Ministry and the student. We have already had a few very positive examples (e.g. Catharina Sørensen on EU matters). A way of realizing this would be to extend the Business/Industrial Ph.D. programme anchored in the Danish Ministry of Science to also include cooperation between the MFA and relevant research institutions. I know that several public institutions have staff members employed as business Ph.D.’s conducting research in the relevant policy areas and similarly I am sure that such an arrangement would contribute also to the knowledge sharing between the MFA and the Academia.

*Number three:* I could imagine a “summer school” for Danish Ph.D. and postdoc. students in the MFA – the Copenhagen Diplomatic Summer School – as another way of helping bridging the gap in a Danish context. Now, this is a quite new idea fostered only in my unit, but in cooperation with the academic community we will work to try to realize the idea already this summer. The idea would be for the MFA to host – on an annual basis – a two-day “summer school” with the participation of 20-25 Ph.D. students researching in foreign-policy-relevant areas and from a wide range of institutions, relevant staff from the MFA and, to the extent possible, also Danish ambassadors. The summer school should consist of meetings, workshops and joint brainstorming sessions on a number of perti-

ment issues identified in dialogue between the MFA and participating academic institutions. This would give the Ph.D. students the opportunity of briefly presenting their research and sharing their ideas and knowledge with the MFA, put the knowledge of the MFA at the disposal of the students and hopefully result in profitable synergies between the research community and the work of the Danish MFA.

Summing up, the gap between foreign policy making and academia is, in my opinion, not unbridgeable, but it will take courage, creative thinking and new and innovative ideas to bridge it. Our task as foreign policy makers and researchers is to make it happen, and I am convinced that we can.

