The Academic and Policy Worlds: Reflections On A Divide

An INTERNATIONAL STUDIES QUARTERLY ONLINE symposium

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Published Online, 29 June 2017 v1.0

Introduction

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The field of international studies has, from its birth, been animated by two impulses that are often in tension with one another, if not engage in outright contradiction. On one hand, international studies scholars have sought to produce academically, "scientifically," defensible claims about pressing global challenges: war, inequality, injustice. On the other hand, international studies scholars have sought to influence policy in directions more conducive to preferred outcomes, such as the creation and strengthening of international organizations, the promotion of human rights and sustainable development, and the production of stable and accountable governments. These impulses are often in tension with one another because, arguably, of the different standards upheld in the academic and policy domains: academic knowledge must meet standards of theoretical and methodological rigor that pass muster primarily with other academics, while policy-relevant knowledge provides feasible options that make practical sense to a variety of stakeholders. The "gap" to be "bridged" is therefore no mere failure of commitment or desire on either side; it is directly linked to the different constitutions of the academic and policy worlds.

Michael Desch and Paul Avey (2014) bring some academic tools to bear on this gap, conducting a survey of policymakers to determine what it is that they want from academic international studies scholarship -- and what they claim to find and not to find in that scholarship. In this Symposium, three academics whose research and careers cross between the academy and the policy world use Desch and Avey's results as an occasion to reflect more broadly on the gap between these worlds. Susan Peterson uses the TRIP survey (2014) results to argue that policymakers may actually be getting more from academic scholarship than Desch and Avey conclude, even though the median ages of those scholars producing policy-relevant work is increasing and younger scholars are increasingly turning to theories and methodologies that may not appeal to policymakers as much. Catherine Weaver argues that the organization of the international studies field, especially in the United States, helps to perpetuate the gap between the academic and policy worlds: academics are disincentivized from producing the kind of scholarship that is most helpful to policymakers. James Goldgeier reports on an initiative to help bridge the gap between academics and policymakers, by working with scholars interested in speaking to the policy world in order to equip them to be more effective in doing so. Goldgeier also seconds Weaver's point that the sociology of the academic field, and the evaluation systems that we use to measure our successes, needs to change if the field is to be policy relevant in the future.

Desch and Avey conclude with a reply in which, among other things, they suggest that we cannot be complacent about a half-empty (or half-full) glass of mixed results about policy-relevance, because the water in the glass might be evaporating. If we want the the academic and policy worlds to continue informing one another, a certain about of deliberate reflection is in order. This Symposium seeks to be a contribution to that reflection

"You Can't Always Get What You Want": What Policymakers Learn From International Relations Scholars

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Amid the teeth-gnashing by international relations (IR) scholars who worry that their discipline is becoming irrelevant, Paul Avey and Michael C. Desch wisely decided to ask policy officials whether and how academic research matters to their work. Avey and Desch's survey provides much needed evidence to support the growing consensus that the IR field is not giving policy makers what they want. Where Avey and Desch examine the demand side of the academic-policy relationship, data from the Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) Project (2014, TRIP website) allow us to scrutinize the supply side. The TRIP Project houses the results of four major surveys of IR faculty over eight years, as well as data (on methodology, issue area, paradigm, policy recommendations, and 23 other variables) on every article published in the field's twelve leading journals from 1980 to the present.[1] At first glance, TRIP research suggests that Avey and Desch are right—IR scholars are not producing the kind of research that policymakers say they want. But the data also suggest that the authors may be overstating the size of the gap between theory and practice—in fact, policymakers may be getting more of what they need than Avey and Desch suggest.

The policymakers in Avey and Desch's study echo a number of critiques of the discipline. First, critics claim, the field is overly abstract (Gallucci, 2012; Nye, 2009; Walt, 2005). Such critics, however, often describe and disparage the IR field of the 1980s-90s and do not consider recent changes, including some that have led scholars to lament the death of grand theory (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2013). One possible test of such claims examines the percentage of articles in the major journals that explore features of IR or IR theory but include no significant empirical content. Rather than increasing, these theoretical ("analytical/ non-formal") articles peaked in 1995 at 24% of all published work and have declined since to less than 10% in 2012. The dreaded paradigm wars are in retreat as well (Lake, 2013): While 57% of U.S. faculty surveyed by TRIP in 2011 described themselves as realist, liberal, or constructivist, 26%—the largest single group of respondents—said their work did not fall within any major theoretical school. This trend is accelerating: 55% of 25-34 year olds describe their research as non-paradigmatic compared to just 21% of 55-64 year olds. The trend is even more striking if we look at published IR articles: 65% were non-paradigmatic in 2012 compared to only 39% in 1980. When U.S. officials look to the academy for consultants, they draw heavily on realists (22% of consultants are self-described realists), but the largest group of academic advisors (26%) calls their work non-paradigmatic.

[1] The journal article database is not yet complete. The data presented here is based on 5,154 articles (issues 1, 2, and 3) from 1980-2012, or more than 72% of all IR articles. The survey data reported here includes the results of the U.S. survey in 2011.

Second, policymakers in Avey and Desch's study seem none too happy with what others have called the "mathematicization" of the field (Miller, 2001). In reality, IR scholars are not overly mathematical in their approach: 56% of U.S. respondents in 2011 described their work as qualitative, while only 23% said their primary approach was quantitative, and a scant 2% used formal models. Qualitative methods have declined over time, however; in 2006, 69% of respondents used case studies and other qualitative approaches.

As Avey and Desch note, IR scholars share policymakers' views on the most useful methods for informing policy debates—with area studies and case studies leading the way and formal models and quantitative analyses bringing up the rear—but this consensus does not always inform academic publications. Between 1980 and 2012, 36% of articles used statistical approaches and 11% employed formal models, but only 34% used qualitative methods despite the dominance of these approaches in the discipline. Quantitative approaches have gained ground steadily until they outpaced qualitative methods in 2001. This trend will only accelerate: the median age is 46 among scholars whose primary approach is statistical, compared to 52 for those who use either qualitative or formal methods.

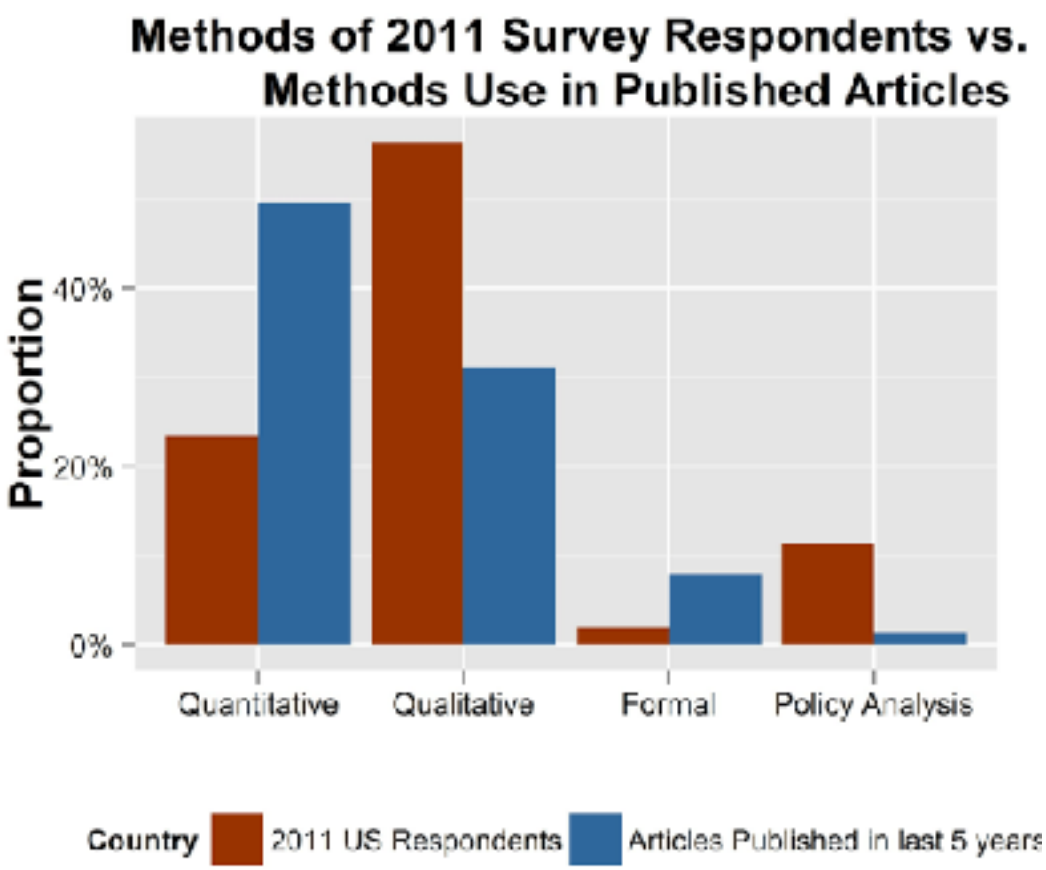

Figure 1

If policymakers are not getting what they want from IR scholars in terms of research methods, they may be getting at least some of what they need. Among IR scholars who have consulted within two years of the 2011 survey, 55% primarily use qualitative methods, and only 21% primarily employ statistics. Despite the overrepresentation of formal and quantitative methods in published research, in other words, US government officials rely on qualitative scholars roughly in proportion to their representation in the discipline.

Finally, Avey and Desch join a chorus of voices (Gallucci, 2012; Kristof, 2014; Walt, 2005) suggesting that contemporary IR research is not sufficiently problem-driven. TRIP data show that IR scholars in the U.S. want their research to matter to policymakers: 92% say there should be more links between the academic and policy communities. Nevertheless, in 2011 only 23% described their work as applied, down from 31-35% in previous surveys. Even these numbers overestimate the policy relevance of most published work in the discipline's leading journals. Only 9% of all articles from 1980-2012 contain policy prescriptions, and this number has declined from 16% in 1980 to less than 4% in 2012. Policy analysis also is retreating: there is a significant gap between the percentage of scholars who say they do policy analysis and the representation of this method in top journals; and the median age of scholars using policy analysis is 62 compared to 50 for the rest of the field.

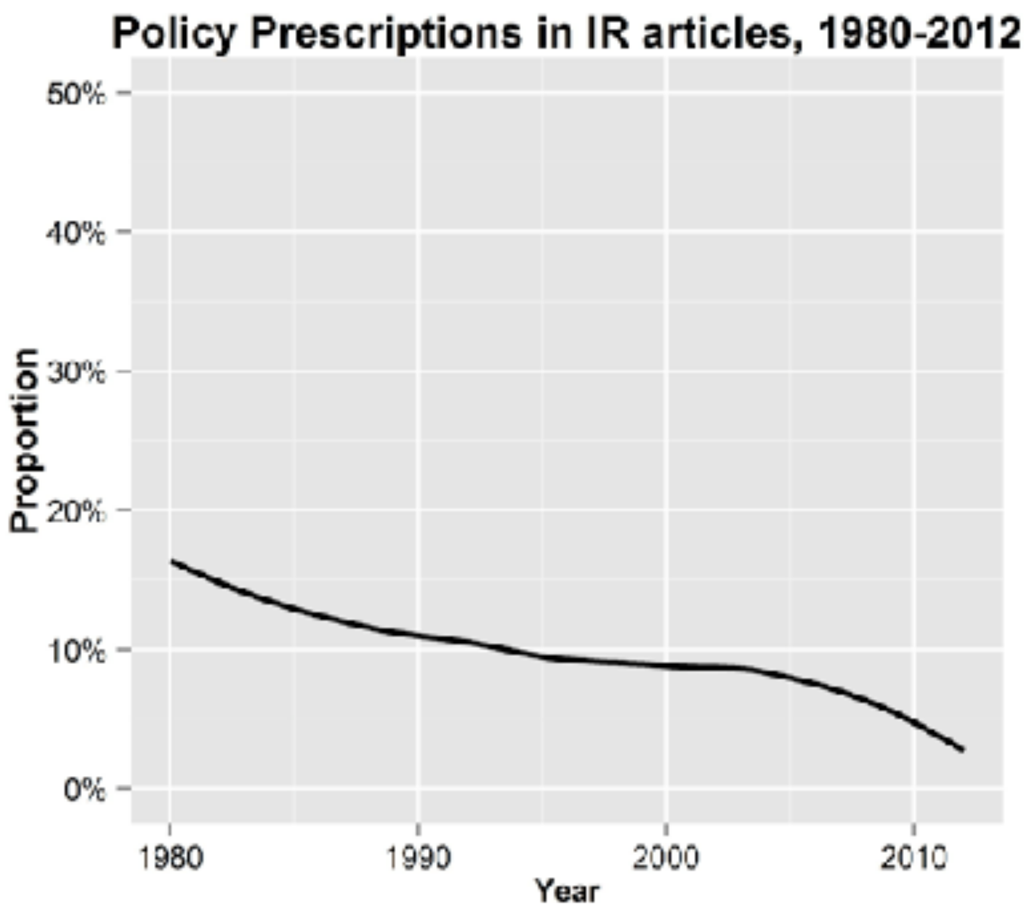

Figure 2

In short, evidence of the gulf between the theory and practice of IR is mixed. Scholars, especially younger faculty, are relatively uninterested in doing applied research, and very little published work contains explicit policy prescriptions. At the same time, purely theoretical articles make up a small percentage of research, and a growing percentage of scholars and published works eschew paradigmatic analysis. While IR publications disproportionately use statistics, the field is not nearly as quantitative or formal as some scholars claim and policymakers fear. When officials turn to the academy for advice, moreover, they favor scholars who are qualitative and non-paradigmatic. Similarly, not all the news from the policy side is bleak: 69% of policymakers believe that academic arguments provide useful intellectual background; more than 70% find academic books and articles useful or somewhat useful in their work; and 72% use scholarly arguments at least a few times a month with 45% using them a few times a week or more. Even if most IR scholars do not intend their work to be policy relevant, and policymakers complain that it is not, it's clear that officials are getting some of what they need—if not all that they want—and that IR scholarship is influencing policy.

MIND -- AND MEASURE -- THE GAP

Catherine Weaver
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Paul Avey and Michael Desch's 2013 survey of 234 senior national security policymakers produces empirical evidence to further a now vibrant discussion on the academic-policy divide. The catalyst for their investigation is a puzzle revealed by the most recent iteration of the TRIP (Teaching, Research and International Policy) survey of IR scholars (Maliniak et al, 2012). The 2011 TRIP survey shows little evidence of substantive engagement by US IR scholars with the policy world.[2] More troubling is what Avey and Desch find on the other side of the divide: the low perceived utility or influence of IR scholarship from the perspective of senior policymakers.

The divide between the so-called "eggheads" of the Ivory Tower and the "wonks" of the DC Beltway is not new.[3] But it is all the more puzzling in light of the revealed preference of the large percentage of IR scholars to engage in policy-relevant research.[4] Moreover, with the exception of the Congressional attacks on NSF funding for political science, we can also easily find examples of the policy world's demand for IR research in recent initiatives like the Department of Defense Minerva Initiative and the USAID Higher Education Solutions Network. So if academics want to have more engagement with policy, and policymakers want to derive more utility from academic work, what perpetuates the divide? Through their survey, Avey and Desch provide some informed (if not terribly surprising) reasons for why policy makers do not find contemporary IR scholarship useful: (1) the discipline's bias for formal modeling and quantitative work clashes with policymakers' preference for qualitative area studies and historically-informed case studies; (2) there is a clear disconnect between the regional expertise that policymakers need and that which academics currently offer; and (3) time demands on policymakers preclude opportunities (and incentives) to slog through the typical jargon-laden peer reviewed academic article.

But let's turn the question back towards the Ivory Tower for a moment. What can we hypothesize about why we, as scholars intrinsically interested in engaging policy, are in practice so reluctant to do so on terms amenable to those working in policy? Ultimately this boils down into another rather obvious, but as of yet untested claim: IR scholars may be intrigued by policy engagement, but are poorly incentivized to devote scarce time and resources to endeavors that do not mesh with our profession's expectations and norms for

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[2] In TRIP's 2011 survey of 3,464 IR scholars in 20 countries, only 11% of respondents reported that their research was primarily "applied" (versus "basic research) and 15% reported their research was both, but leaning towards applied. In this instance, the TRIP surveyors defined basic research as "research for the sake of knowledge, without any particular immediate policy application in mind," whereas applied research "is done with specific policy applications in mind." (Maliniak et al, 2012: 37). When asked about the academic-policy divide, 37% reported that they thought the gap was growing, and 39% reported it was the same as 20-30 years ago. Only 23% think the gap is shrinking (Ibid: 66). At the same time, 90% think there should be a larger number of links between the academic and policy communities (Ibid: 67). Finally, 54% reported that assigning greater weight in personnel decisions to publications in policy journal would have a beneficial impact on our academic discipline, but only 26% thought that providing stronger incentives to contribute to blogs and other popular media outlets would have a similar beneficial effect (Ibid: 69).

[3] For a multi-disciplinary take on this issue, see the "Puzzles versus Problems" symposium in *Perspectives on Politics* (Mosser, 2010).

[4] 33% reported that policy relevance motivated their research (Maliniak et al, 2012: 38) and nearly 50% have consulted or worked in a paid or unpaid capacity outside of academia.

hiring, tenure and promotion. We do not engage in policy relevant work because the risks are high, the payoffs are uncertain, and demonstrating our "impact" in the policy world is inherently difficult.

This academic-policy divide exists, and in fact may be growing, because of how we currently train and socialize our graduate students in doctoral programs in the U.S. Simply put, our students are not well versed in how to speak to policy makers and they are not encouraged to pursue research and publication paths that would invite those conversations. Area studies and careful case study work, so prized by policymakers, is increasingly eschewed by IR scholars. Avey and Desch themselves implicitly describe this work is "unsophisticated" and not "cutting edge." PhD students face inordinate pressures to tech-up in the fanciest methods *du jour*, publish in top academic journals, and get out of grad school as fast as possible. This certainly precludes time for learning additional languages critical to area studies, extensive fieldwork, or engaging in interdisciplinary coursework. More critically, pursuing a publication in *Foreign Policy,* writing op-eds, or spending time maintaining a serious policy analysis blog represents a tremendous opportunity cost for a young scholar hoping to land in the pages of *International Organization* or top university book press before she enters the tight academic job market.[5]

Then of course come the tenure, promotion and merit review processes. How many political science or IR departments in the US – and their higher administrations – formally give credit for non-peer reviewed work, even if it lands in the hallowed pages of *Foreign Affairs* or the *New York Times*? How many external reviewers are prompted to discuss (in positive terms) the policy relevance of a young scholar's work? Tenure and promotion processes, particularly at RU1s, arguably discourage such scholarship. Ironically, I have to confess, this seems to hold even for policy schools, where op-eds and policy reports are often seen as the profligate icing on the cake of *real* research.

Moreover, in a discipline so obsessed with the mantra that "only things that can be counted, count," some departments have reverted to practices of ranking publication outlets according to their perceived status or influence in the discipline, relying on "objective" indicators such as journal impact factor scores. As the top IR journals (defined as those with the highest impact factor scores and – critically – *peer reviewed*) show increasing signs of quantitative bias in what they choose to publish, this reifies incentives to select research questions based on the method that will get an author into a top journal rather than choosing a method and outlet best suited to answering an important research question that might peak the interests of policymakers. The result is an increasingly inward-looking discipline that values influence within its inner circles more than its sway with external audiences. The divide widens.

How then, in the face of such strong professional norms and incentives, do we encourage the kind of scholarship that satisfies the policymakers in Avey and Desch's survey? Merely talking about the academic-policy divide will not resolve it. We cannot rely solely on efforts to expose the academic-policy divide in hopes of shaming IR scholars into reorienting their research and publication strategies or rely on efforts to entice them into the policy fold through lucrative funding opportunities. More proximate logics of consequences and appropriateness will inevitably prevail.

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[5] The TRIP survey indicates that 88% and 86% of respondents, respectively, report that publishing a single-authored peer reviewed journal article or university press book is most important to advance their academic career (Ibid: 58). Interestingly, the TRIP survey also reveals that 66% of respondents think contributing to a blog should count as "service" and 29% think it should count as "research" (Ibid: 64).

Cynically, but pragmatically, I argue that installing value (and thus incentivizing) policy engagement in IR requires constructing the means to *measure* policy influence in a manner commensurate to how we measure scholarly influence. That, of course, begs the obvious question: how do we begin to empirically observe and measure policy influence and impact? One relatively easy way – through various metrics such as twitter followers and "retweeting" volume, blog activity, and media citations -- may be less indicative of influence than self-promotion, with no guarantee that policymakers are actually listening or acting upon scholars' insights pushed through those channels. Grant activity may be another imperfect, but measurable signal. Are scholars not only winning grants, but also being actively solicited, by public sector agencies or think tanks for contracted work and future grant submissions? Can scholars in turn trace the impact of that work into the policies and practices of their "clients"? Is their work not only known in the policy circles (which may be a residual of a whole bunch of things), but discernibly "in demand"? And, if so, how do you measure that demand in a market of ideas?

Finally, the most direct measure of a scholar's impact or influence on policy might be the testimony of policymakers themselves, elicited directly through polls or review letters, or indirectly assessed through serious mention of scholars and their work in policy speeches, testimonies, and legislation. Gathering such data would be onerous and subject to a host of arguments on sampling criteria and measurement criteria. Moreover, which policymakers have sufficient status and credibility to evaluate scholars' work (especially since policy practitioners are arguably even more silo-ed in their areas of work than academics are)? How should they evaluate academic scholarship for policy relevance and impact? How many citations or mentions does it take to add up to some benchmark of policy impact or influence, and in what venues?

More questions than answers abound here, but clearly I think breaking down the gaps between academia and the policy world requires serious dialogue on how we might observe and measure policy influence or impact (both of which should be distinguished from mere "presence," which can all too easily conflate aggressive networking with actual effects on policy). This goal of measurement ironically entails much more *qualitative* attention to the memetic processes through which scholarly ideas attract attention, gain traction, and shape policy making at all levels. It also requires much more attention to the *sociology* of our own discipline, and an open and honest discussion of the professional norms and incentives that deter transgressions outside our IR's ivory tower walls.

Addressing the Challenge – From Above and Below

James Goldgeier
American University

The survey conducted by Paul Avey and Michael Desch is extremely important not simply because it highlights a gap between academia and the policy world that we knew existed but because it suggests that policymakers do want input from academia. The demand exists – for mid-range theories, knowledge about specific cases, and deep understanding of particular countries and regions. Therefore, what can we do about the supply? Can we help academics who wish to connect with the policy community learn to translate their work for a different audience?

Our Bridging the Gap project, housed at the School of International Service (and like the Avey/Desch project funded in large part by the Carnegie Corporation of New York), hosts an annual International Policy Summer Institute (IPSI) for professors explicitly interested in and committed to making their research findings directly useful to those working in foreign policy. We share with Avey and Desch the belief that some demand from policymakers exists, and we start with a simple question: how can academics make their work more relevant?

Being more relevant does not mean that academics must stop producing the work the survey suggests policymakers do not find useful. Academics who write for highly specialized audiences, at times applying research methods of little interest to policymakers, can apply their expertise and knowledge to produce additional work in different formats and for a variety of outlets that appeal to policymakers. Academics also should understand that being policy relevant does not necessarily mean that the National Security Advisor will call. One can develop relationships with or write pieces that will be read by members of the State Department Policy Planning Staff, desk officers, Congressional staffers, and intelligence community analysts and succeed at contributing to the broader debate.

Being policy relevant also does not mean dumbing down one's work. A policymaker will reach out to an academic precisely because the scholar possesses deep expertise about a topic of interest. It does, however, mean being able to illustrate how this expertise sheds light on a problem and providing guidance on how to address it. Policymakers typically want to know how to respond to a particular challenge. Informing them that X% of cases turn out a certain way is unhelpful; advising them that the case they are facing is likely to proceed in a certain direction because of particular underlying factors and offering prescriptions they can follow is a more useful approach.

How do we try to improve the supply? IPSI is a week-long, participatory workshop designed to be short on abstractions and long on practical knowledge and training to support scholars as they pursue theoretically grounded, policy-relevant research. Participants are introduced to the foreign policymaking process in Washington. Sessions feature the inter-agency process, the role of the intelligence and defense communities, Congress, impact of the news media, and other avenues through which U.S. foreign policy is developed and carried out. Guest speakers from House and Senate committees, executive branch agencies (including State, NSC, and DOD), the Intelligence Community, and NGOs, as well as from leading newspapers, policy journals, media outlets, academic blogs, and think tanks, advise participants on how to develop and communicate research to different audiences in Washington.

Consistent with our theme of bridging by doing, attendees receive instruction on blogging, op-ed and policy memo writing, briefings, and media relations from a range of experts. They then prepare and are critiqued on their written policy pieces, briefings, and on-camera interviews. Graduate schools do not train their doctoral students on how to write or speak in these different formats, nor are they often supportive of their young scholars' interests to be more relevant.

We have been delighted by the enthusiastic response from our attendees – professors willing and even eager to give up a week of their summer to attend. Moreover, we are surprised and heartened by the reception from the IPSI 'instructors' we have hosted from the policymaking and policy journal/magazine worlds. This, to our minds, confirms a desire (on both sides) for pragmatic means to narrow the divide between political scientists and the policy world.

Younger scholars have more and more opportunities to write for a broader public and policy audience. Outlets like *The Monkey Cage*, hosted by *The Washington Post*, and Twitter are transforming the mechanisms for inserting ideas into the mix. In addition, the Bridging the Gap book series, launched recently by Oxford University Press, will enable scholars with innovative, groundbreaking manuscripts to publish theoretically grounded, policy-relevant scholarship with a leading university press. If we can train our scholars to write in ways that policymakers understand and appreciate, we can develop the supply with hopes of responding to and further increasing the demand.

As we work to augment the supply of policy-relevant scholars to meet the needs of policymakers interested in tapping into academic expertise, we must also work to ensure that departments and policy schools do not penalize young scholars for attempting to translate their expertise to audiences beyond their academic peers. Avey and Desch have highlighted through their rankings study that current incentives privilege publications cited by other academics, rather than those utilized by policymakers. So how do we move the institutions?

Presidents and provosts today are eager to demonstrate the value their colleges and universities provide to society in order to help combat growing questioning from state legislatures, Washington policymakers, alumni, students and parents regarding costs. University leaders in general hope their faculty will pursue high impact research and often become frustrated by academic departments that do not share this goal. Presidents and provosts will need to advocate for broader definitions of the type of work that counts toward tenure in those departments and schools that currently seek to reward scholars' productivity solely through peer-reviewed academic publications and disincentivize faculty from pursuing theoretically grounded, policy-relevant research. With pressure from university administrations and aspirations of the younger generation of scholars to pursue broad impact, the change that Avey and Desch seek in the academy is achievable.

BUT IF YOU TRY SOMETIME, YOU (MIGHT) GET (SOME OF) WHAT YOU NEED: A RESPONSE TO GOLDGEIER, WEAVER, AND PETERSON

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Virginia Tech University
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In our piece "What Do Policymakers Want From Us?" we reported the results of a one-of-a-kind survey of 234 current and former senior national security policymakers. We focused on when and how they use social science research to inform their decision-making. Our results, as Susan Peterson suggests, are "mixed:" On the one hand, policymakers regularly follow international relations scholarship, find some of it useful, and wish that more of it was. On the other hand, as our data, in combination with the Teaching, Research, and International Politics (TRIP) results make clear, it is less useful to policymakers than it could be and seems to be moving in a direction that will widen, rather than close, the gap between the two realms.

This is both an intellectual puzzle (why is it happening?) and a policy challenge (presumably we scholars would like to be relevant to policymakers). The thoughtful responses to our piece by James Goldgeier, Catherine Weaver, and Susan Peterson provide us with the opportunity to think further about both of these issues.

On the first, Weaver zeroes in on a plausible explanation for why this is happening: most of the incentives in the Ivory Tower do not encourage relevance. In a related piece, Peter Campbell and Desch (2013) looked at academic rankings – particularly the gold-standard National Research Council's assessment of graduate programs – which shape the incentives most scholars face. They found these rankings systematically ignore policy relevance. Further, they demonstrate that if instead of looking at publications in scholarly journals, citations by other scholars, the number of Ph.D.s awarded, how quickly students came through the pipeline, and how many of them went on to strictly academic jobs, we ranked programs based on factors associated with policy-relevance such as presence in national media, publication in leading policy journals such as *Foreign Affairs* or *Foreign Policy*, number of faculty who won a prestigious Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellowship that gave them a year to work in Government or some other applied setting, or number of faculty who testify before Congress, the ranking of the top 50 political science departments in the United States would change dramatically. These are by no means the only, or even the best, measures of policy-relevance, but they certainly suggest that the Ivory Tower's incentive structure is a big part of the problem.

The second issue, then, is what should we do about the widening gap? James Goldgeier and his colleagues in the "Bridging the Gap" project have taken one approach through their innovative International Policy Summer Institute (IPSI) seminars. In them, young scholars get a remedial education in accessible writing and plain speaking, along with some helpful tips on net-working and an introduction to the folk-ways of the Beltway, to help them translate their scholarship into Beltwayese and figure out who to speak it to in the corridors of power. The strength of this approach is that it might reform the Ivory Tower from within by convincing young international relations scholars that they can adhere to the norms of academia and still speak to a broader audience; a potential weakness is that it ignores the real and enduring tensions between these two realms and depends upon those scholars most sensitive to the field's incentives and with the least ability, in the short-term, to change them. Will the seeds IPSI is planting take root or is the soil of the field becoming so inhospitable to policy relevance that it will only survive through outside pressure?

Susan Peterson's piece raises a related point. While the situation could be better, she notes that policymakers are nonetheless "getting more of what they need" than we (and policymakers) allow. If true, the issue remains where the trends are going in the field. If the modal mind-set among the intellectual leaders is to "let a thousand flowers bloom," then perhaps we should just make our peace with policy-relevance being the purview of a subset of scholars and let the rest cultivate their own gardens around the Ivory Tower. The neutral description of this approach is a "division of labor," the pejorative is "balkanization." Unfortunately the TRIP data indicates a secular decline in scholars' willingness to offer policy prescriptions and a graying of those scholars interested in undertaking policy analysis in the leading journals. Complacency about the current situation is thus unwarranted because the water in the half-full glass seems to be evaporating.

Weaver's solution is to change the incentives scholars face. While in principle, this makes excellent sense, as Campbell and Desch also argued, in practice, measuring policy relevance is not a straight-forward exercise. Yet measurement is critical not only for crafting incentives but also to assess the degree to which important efforts like IPSI are succeeding and if the trends are indeed moving away from policy-relevant scholarship.

We have good data in political science about one plausible measure of declining policy-relevance – does scholarship offer explicit policy recommendations – from Lee Sigelman's 2006 *American Political Science Review* article on the 100th anniversary of the discipline's flagship journal. The TRIP journal survey of international relations journals since 1980 offers a similar assessment of a wider swath of publications in the subfield.

To be sure, these measures by no means exhaust the way that scholarship could be policy relevant nor are they without their own limitations. In the absence of a better alternative, though, they are useful as a first-cut at assessing policy relevance. But ultimately, if scholars wish to change the incentives for policy-relevant work, particularly for young scholars, much more work needs to be done to explore the various aspects of "policy relevance" and to find ways to track and explain changes in it in international relations scholarship.

We are grateful to our interlocutors both for their insightful comments on our piece and also for providing us (and the rest of the sub-field) with the opportunity to think further about this vital issue.

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