



ISA 2023 Roundtable

The Science of Foreign Policy: Can Foreign Policy Decision-Making Be Made More Scientific?

March 16, 1:45 - 3:30 pm, Ballroom Centre A, Le Centre Sheraton Montreal Hotel

Background: Many of the most experienced policymakers extol the “art” of foreign policy. This cliché suggests that many of the tools, training, and processes of foreign policy institutions are highly subjective and idiosyncratic. Yet advances in social scientific methods offer opportunities to upgrade the policymaking process, ranging from how information is collected and analyzed, to improving decision-making methodology.

Agenda: This roundtable will run from 1:45 pm - 3:30 pm. Each topic will have a 3-minute intro by a participant and then 10 minutes of discussion.

- The view from inside the bureaucracy (Dan Spokoyny, fp21)
- What does a culture of evidence look like (Alex Bollfrass, Center for Security Studies, ETH Zürich)
- Why the State Department needs social scientists (Jessica Lieberman, Office of Foreign Assistance, Dept of State)
- How can academics help answer the most pressing questions from policymakers in a fast-moving policy environment? (Jordan Tama, American University)
- What methods improve organizational learning? (Susanna Campbell, American University)
- What research agenda would support a culture of evidence? (Matt Malis, Princeton University)
- Building institutional capacity for evidence and/or methods of decision-making (Rachel George, Duke University & Council on Foreign Relations)
- How can we evaluate policymaking effectiveness? (Thomas Scherer, fp21)

Follow-up: To continue the discussion, look for many of the participants at the Bridging the Gap Reception Thursday 8:30 pm - 9:30 pm in the Perluette Lounge, Fairmont the Queen Elizabeth.

Summary: For a summary of the event, [subscribe to the fp21 newsletter](#), or follow [fp21](#) on [twitter](#) or [linkedin](#).