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While dedicating nearly half my life to Israeli public service in multiple arenas, I have evolved a holistic view about the importance of using creative policy tools and methods in governmental and international decision-making processes.

My earliest first-hand experience in critically analyzing the public impact of various policies in the Israeli national and healthcare fields occurred during my mandatory military Critically analyzing the several medical malpractice cases and political scandals I uncovered and reported on as an IDF Radio correspondent, I learned the immense cost of inadequate and ill-managed policies. Already cognizant of the media’s power to produce tangible change, I soon realized that even when the “watchdog of democracy” bites, it remains on a leash. While my reporting indeed led to several administrative and policy reforms, legal procedures were still indispensable for affecting change.

Later, dealing with the most sensitive cases and controversial topics in Israeli society while clerking at Israel’s Supreme Court provided me ample opportunities to hone my legal and reasoning skills. The power and irrevocability of the court’s rulings amplified the need for comprehensively examining policy and social considerations, including regarding third parties and future litigants. However, the court had the power only to express dissatisfaction with a specific policy, and only rarely could overrule government orders or legislation. Its inability to propose or effect alternative polices significantly hindered reaching optimal results.

Determined to effect positive change within the Israeli government, I joined the Prime Minister’s Civil Service Cadets Program. During the two-year training course, I acquired methodological, academic, and practical tools participating in field trips, personalized workshops, and joint projects with senior policymakers in the public, private, and non-governmental sectors. Encouraged by the successful implementation of some of my policy recommendations by the Israeli government, I decided to further “export” public policy techniques to Israel’s economic diplomacy strategy.

Persuading my colleagues and supervisors at the Israeli Foreign Trade Administration (FTA) about the need to apply concrete public policy design methods in the more ambiguous world of diplomacy was the highest hurdle. Fortunately, with my wide-ranging responsibilities and professional discretion as Manager of the FTA’s Latin America Department, I was able to lead its first policy experiment: remodeling the international implementation of Israeli government’s 2014 decision to strengthen economic ties between Israel and Latin America. Applying SWOT analysis, quantitative indicators, measurable objectives, and periodical assessments led to an immediate increase in the bilateral trade volume. Subsequently, the FTA adopted this new regional cooperation model in its activity in Africa and other emerging markets.

My new position as a Special Project Manager in the Americas and the Middle East was created in recognition of the organizational need to further master the delicate art of policy adjustment. Here, I discovered my passion for analyzing the sophisticated ways in which economic and commercial incentives could overcome diplomatic and ideological barriers, eventually serving as a lever for peace.

The thirteen diplomatic Economic and Trade Missions I directed on two continents taught me invaluable lessons about the vital role of street-level bureaucrats in implementing policy, the constant need for policy calibration, and the meaningful impact of effective framing. Comprehending the (sometimes too) long path between policy planning and execution reinforced my aspiration to pursue a hands-on, on-the-ground diplomatic post overseas. I had the honor of being appointed Head of the Economic and Trade Mission of Israel in Romania and Ukraine on the fastest internal promotion track in the FTA’s history.

In my current position, I have initiated knowledge sharing and fostered regional cooperation in Eastern Europe through G2G dialogues, multi-national joint task forces, and roundtables with policymakers, senior officials, and top management of leading global corporations and international financial organizations. The tailor-made business strategy and information-gathering projects we conducted for companies and government agencies enriched and diversified Israeli exports to Romania and Ukraine. Furthermore, in 2019, the Mission to Romania recorded the highest number of successful Israeli foreign trade transactions for a single mission in one year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the world of economic diplomacy, facing waves of recession and a fog of uncertainty, to rethink its role in the international arena. Unquestionably, the enormity, dynamic nature, and unprecedented complexity of the pandemic’s impact require that diplomats craft new policy tools and rapidly revise their implementation methods.

Such a challenge should be addressed with reverence, not through gut feelings and populism. This is a crucial moment for the academic world, especially in public policy research, which should serve as a beacon of sound, data-based, in-depth, and original thinking. I am confident that my extensive professional experience, coupled with my academic capabilities has well prepared me to undertake extensive research that can potentially make a significant global impact.

When in academia, I always aspired to make a difference beyond the classroom by using legal, theoretical or policy analysis methods. A multidisciplinary student initiative I led as a member of Tel Aviv University’s Special Program for Outstanding Students resulted in changing the curriculum of the Medicine and Law course at the university’s medical school, thereby modifying the training of Israel’s future doctors. Inspired by courses I attended at Harvard Law School and Harvard’s Kennedy School, I conducted a research on Israel’s problematic food safety mechanisms, which subsequently became a policy paper submitted to Israel’s Ministry of Health. Recently, my academic paper on Israel’s participation in the OECD initiated an important debate on interministerial communication.

The Blavatnik School’s distinctive vision for improving governments around the globe through question-driven research, and its multidisciplinary and innovative approach, can provide the keys to preparing me to affect data-based change on a larger scale. I am convinced that the Center’s stimulating guidance can enable me to further contribute to the policy analysis of international relations, and, hopefully, to assist my own government achieve peace and stability in the region. Undoubtedly, the incomparable abundance of academic projects and the unique intellectual community at Oxford University will profoundly enhance my professional, academic, and personal growth, and my ability to help generate meaningful changes.