Exploring the third world of academic life: What can academics who study governance offer to politicians and public servants who practice governance?

Academics who study governance tend define themselves by their academic products - books, scientific articles and conference papers. For the academic community this is our first world - the world of research and publication. Increasingly, teaching is our second - the outstanding teachers among us are gradually beginning to receive recognition.

Of course it is known that in political science and public administration many academics also undertake advice and consultancy roles. They do work for public authorities and political parties. But nowadays, in most cases, these activities do not feature prominently in our professional personae. They take place in shaded corners - their nature and their influences remain largely unexplored. Advice and consultancy constitute a kind of underdeveloped or 'third world'- not regarded as a likely source of academic innovation.

What academics can usefully offer to the world of practice is therefore the crucial question to be analysed.

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