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**Changes in HE policy and governance: How did HE research respond?**

In this presentation I will discuss the relationship between academic research and policy making from a political science/public policy perspective. I will start with a presentation of how the nexus between academic research and governmental policy making can be understood. This will allow me to make some general observations about the connections/disconnections and multimodal links between the two: ranging from the instrumental, substantiating, strategic, “problem-identifier”, legitimizing, to the symbolic use of research in policy making. In this I will present assumptions about how the nexus research – policy making changes, and how these changes may affect the development of research fields.

From this general point of departure I will reflect on the way in which the nexus academic research – policy making has played out in higher education policy. My main interest here goes out to the tradition in higher education research of focusing on *vertical* higher education policy and governance interactions. This started in the 1980s with research on the changes in the (formal) vertical policy and governance linkages between the ministries of (higher) education and the higher education institutions, to which gradually the European policy and governance level was added. In essence this change meant a shift from a bi-level to a multi-level governance and policy focus in higher education research. A more recent challenge to the research – policy nexus can be argued to stem from the emerging *horizontalisation* of higher education policy and governance. What does this do to the link between policy making and higher education research and what kind of challenges and opportunities for new research arise?