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Identity and Europeanization: A quantitative analysis of European Public Administration curricula

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Abstract

The paper gives an overview of a statistical analysis exploring Public Administration university programs in twenty-four European countries. The two basic questions of the research involved are (i) the disciplinary character of program curricula, and (ii) the degree, to which they reflect to the growing globalization of the administrative praxis by emphasizing subjects of an “international” character.

With regards to the first question multivariate statistical analyses identified three distinct clusters of countries. The three groups correspond to the three classical European approaches to the study of Public Administration: a number of Continental European countries are characterized by a broad and significant political science component; the Nordic countries put a stronger emphasis on Business Administration, while most south European countries and a number of post-communist countries are distinguished by the predominance of Law in program curricula. The dynamic aspect of the picture is such that in the process of reforming/creating their constitutional and administrative frameworks newly independent post-communist countries have switched from their legalist tradition to the managerialist strand, while the rest of them – having a less abrupt development path in their constitutional and administrative transition – are still characterized by the predominance of Law. Mediterranean countries, on the other hand, seem to be gradually switching from the Legal approach to the Continental “mainstream”.

With regards to the global character of program curricula analyses offer two general insights. First, both comparative and – especially – European subjects are surprisingly under-represented in program curricula. Second, there is little variance with regard to the global character of programs: the majority of countries are located in a relatively narrow interval regarding their degree of Europeanisation/globalization..

1 European Public Administration education in perspective¹

The disciplinary identity of the study of Public Administration², and, more specifically, the question of how higher education programs preparing students for working in the public sector should look like in the coming years has become a subject of permanent interest among faculty as well as the wider academic public on both sides of the Atlantic (Kickert-Stillman 1999, Perry 2001, Morton et al. 1998, Verheijen-Connaughton 1999, Newland 1996, Verheijen-Nemec 2000). This increasing interest can be attributed to a number of factors shaping the societal context of Public Administration education.

With regards to the United States – according to Kettl (2001) – the re-formulation of both the mission and the means of public affairs (hereinafter: Public Administration) education poses an urgent challenge due to such contextual factors as the increasing weight of non-governmental partners in performing various governmental tasks, the set of issues customarily denoted by the simplifying notion of “globalization”, and the growing presence of participatory elements in the policy process. Approaching the problem from a primarily U.S. perspective he argues that the three major, “received” approaches of studying and teaching public affairs – that is, the (public) administration, the management, and the public policy paradigms – are unable, either individually or combined, to address the challenges emanating from the changing expectations against public administration personnel and their education appropriately.

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² Throughout the paper the term Public Administration, when capitalized, refers to the study of the field whereas in the lower case it denotes its practice.

In the European context the picture is, of course, somewhat different. Beside the above contextual factors giving shape to the problem of how Public Administration education should develop three additional ones are worth mentioning (Raadschelders-Rutgers 1999, Kickert-Stillman 1999b, Verheijen-Connaughton 1999).

First, the way public administration as societal praxis and as an academic discipline is perceived is subject to a number of deep and persistent controversies. This remarkable lack of a unity in how public administration as a discipline is understood – especially in comparison to the United States – is primarily due to the varying historical and cultural development routes characteristic of the different countries of Europe. A key determinant of these controversies is the historically rooted differences in the concept of the state, whereby the clearest “indicator” of these differences has been the presence of the body of Public Law in the Continental countries on the one hand, and its absence in the UK (and other, non-European Common Law countries) on the other. The disciplinary status of the study of “government in action” is, in turn, significantly influenced by such historical roots: while the fundamentally legal approach to the public administration is still dominant in a number of national administrative cultures, multi- and interdisciplinary conceptualizations, often informed by U.S. approaches, is becoming dominant in other European countries.

Second, the very process of European integration creates a variety of further requirements against doing, studying, and teaching public administration. The growing weight of EU administrative structures (as opposed to traditional national and sub-national ones), the increasing frequency of everyday interactions between the wide variety of administrative entities across Europe, and the Europe-wide mobility of capital and labor all require – indeed: enforce – some degree of a convergence between various administrative cultures and modes of operation.

Third, the gradual accession of Central and Eastern European countries to the EU constantly poses new quests for, and questions related to, a “European” approach to Public Administration. The administrative physiognomy and traditions of these countries, in certain respects exhibiting common characteristics while at the same time clearly lagging behind the administrative capacity required by the successful implementation of the *acquis communautaire*, have to be moved closer to the European standards. However, this presupposes the identification of what actually these European standards are.

Contemplating over the above, no wonder that in the past years joint initiatives of European Public Administration education institutions – the EU-funded Thematic Network for Public Administration (now European Public Administration Network), in co-operation with the Network of Schools and Institutes of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee) – devoted a significant amount of effort to diagnosing the present of, and to envisaging a desirable future for, the European Public Administration education field.

Unlike in Europe, in the U.S. the three fundamental approaches to Public Administration – the administrative, the management, and the policy approaches – seem to give some relatively clear frames and points of reference for the debate, even if, as Kettl (2001: 214) notes, they are unable to fully resolve it. The difficulties into which the same debate runs on the European side of the Atlantic reflect a degree of additional ambiguity in regards of, first, what actually public administration does (i.e. its substance) and, second, the related but not identical question of how this problem complex is/should be studied and taught in higher education institutions (i.e. its disciplinary status).

Not intending to contribute to the former question involving issues of the “grand theory” of Public Administration, the present study focuses on the latter one. The diversity of disciplinary character among European academia is tremendous. In order to be able to outline the ideal European Public Administration program of the coming years it is inevitable that the problem be formulated and interpreted within a more-or-less standard and accepted intellectual frame of reference. This, in turn, requires that sufficient information be available on what actually Public Administration education in the different European administrative cultures means.

2 The research question

The research, the main results of which are presented in this article sought to answer the following two questions:

- (1) First, what are the overall characteristics – and what cross-country patterns can be identified – with regards to the disciplinary content, or orientation, of Public Administration university programs in Europe?
- (2) Second, what are the overall characteristics, and what cross-country patterns can be identified with regards to the “globalized” character of – that is, the extent to which European and internationally comparative subjects are represented in – program curricula?

Beside the theoretical relevance of these questions the work undertaken by the European network of Public Administration education institutions (TNPA/EPAN) had already revealed also a practical need for strengthening the basis of deeper co-operation in the Public Administration education field, e.g. aligning program requirements, elaborating joint curricula, and increasing reliance on exchange programs, etc. Consequently, in 1998 and 1999 TNPA/EPAN performed a large scale fact-finding exercise in over thirty countries of Europe. The main result of this work was a number of country studies and analyses of the national Public Administration education field in the given countries, and two Inventories of Public Administration programs in Western and Eastern Europe (Verheijen-Connaughton 1999 and Verheijen-Nemec 2000, respectively).

Previous analyses of these two Inventories reached a number of important conclusions (Verheijen-Connaughton 2000 and 2001), such as

- European countries can be grouped into distinct sets on the basis of such characteristics as the dominant disciplinary (i.e. interdisciplinary vs. legal) character of Public Administration, and the extent to which the disciplinary identity – both academic and institutional – of Public Administration is established;
- subjects extending beyond the traditional scope of (national) public administration – that is, the internationally comparative subjects and those tackling the EU as an administrative entity – are reflected in the curricula only to a surprisingly little extent.

3 The method of the study

At the initial stage of the study there were no readily available data on European Public Administration programs suitable for quantitative analysis. Furthermore, original data collection would have required resources far beyond the resource constraints of the research. Thus, the initial – and technically most complicated and time-consuming – phase of the work involved the creation of such a data set on the basis of already existing qualitative data. The key input used for this was the two Inventories with regards to the two halves of Europe – West and East – mentioned earlier. These Inventories list all Public Administration programs in about 30 countries, and provide lists of the courses taught in each of these programs, along with some additional information, such as whether courses are compulsory, elective, or specializing courses, and their “amount” as measured by the number of credits, contact hours, or semesters.

As noted above, a key peculiarity of data collection was that, lacking the relatively well-institutionalized structures characteristic, for example, for the U.S. (Kickert-Stillman 1999b), the very meaning of Public Administration as an academic field of study is inherently uncertain, variable, and evolving. For example, in a number of European countries university programs entitled Public Administration (let alone Public Policy or Public Management) do not even exist, while in another set of countries other – Law, Political Science, Public Economics, etc. – programs are perceived as ones educating *par excellence* public administration professionals.

The core methodological idea behind the study is to use these course lists to characterize each Public Administration program – and, in a next phase, each country – in terms of its disciplinary orientation and its “degree of Europeanization” (hereinafter the term is used to describe the extent, to which program curricula reflect to the growing importance of the supra-national, primarily European, dimension and context of public administration). The five main steps of how these descriptive information were converted into quantitative data suitable for statistical analysis are as follows:

1. Definition of the categories used to describe programs

Two category systems had to be created, one for measuring the disciplinary orientation, and another one for measuring the degree of Europeanization. Each category was defined in a brief (about two paragraph long), written format to ensure their homogenous interpretation throughout the subsequent work.

Disciplinary categories defined were as follows

- Category 1: Law
- Category 2: Economics
- Category 3: Management
- Category 4: Political Science
- Category 5: Other, incl. interdisciplinary social science
- Category 6: Research methods, quantitative and analytical skills, and computing
- Category 7: “Pure” Public Administration and Public Management
- Category 8: Administration and governance of specific policy fields

This categorization is assailable as would have been any other one. It is necessary to draw the attention to one substantial issue here. Most of the above disciplinary categories represent one, or a set of established scientific discipline(s). In case of a number of courses, however, it is not possible to assign a traditional discipline to the course, since they are defined much more by a problem than by a distinct disciplinary approach (“Issues of social security” would be a good example here). This ambiguity is reflected in the disciplinary category system as well (e.g. Category 6 and Category 8). Beside considering the substantive usefulness of various alternatives two technical criteria were observed: (i) that the number of disciplinary categories should be kept on a moderate level, and (ii) that the categorization of individual courses into the two category systems had to be as unambiguous as possible.

The other category system, which is used to measure the degree of Europeanization was as follows:

- Category 1: EU-related
- Category 2: Subjects with an internationally comparative focus.
- (Category 0): (None of the above two – this in practice doesn’t need to be registered/analyzed)

2. Creation of a Public Administration program data base

In this step all relevant program data have been entered into an MS Access® relational data base an application specifically designed for the purpose of the study. The initial data base included the following variables: country; name of the education institution(s) in the various countries; name of the program(s) offered by the various institutions; the title and “amount” of the courses belonging to the various programs, and the name of the course group or course block, if any. In addition, a “weight” measure has been calculated and entered reflecting the probability, with which the given course is assumed to be taken by students.

3. Categorization of each course into the two category systems

In this phase two questions were asked and answered with regards to each course in each program: First, which of the eight disciplinary categories does the course belong to? Second, which – if any – of the two “Europeanization” categories does the course belong to?

In order to control and limit the errors inherent in the subjective, judgmental process of answering these questions various measures were taken. The task was performed by two experts working independently, both of whom were sufficiently knowledgeable with regards to concepts and approaches used in Public Administration education in the international field. The task was performed so that the experts could see only the course title and the name of the course group, if any. Discrepancy between the classifications performed by the two experts was 15% with regards to the “Discipline” and 7% with regards to the “Europeanization” category system. In a subsequent phase courses that were rated differently by the two experts were jointly reviewed once again, one by one. As a result it turned out that much of the difference was due to different operationalizations of the various categories by the two experts, or to simple typing errors during the classification process. After these problems were corrected and agreed upon, respectively, there still remained about 5%, the status of which were inherently ambiguous; however in our view this seems an acceptable “measurement error”, especially if one considers the large sample size ($n=6372$ courses).

4. Transforming categorical data into numerical data

In this final phase eight “D” (D1-D8) and two “E” (E1-E2) variables were calculated for each program in the data base. These reflect the proportions of Disciplinary Categories 1-8 and the “Europeanization” Categories 1-2 within each program curriculum, respectively. For example, variable D1 refers to the percentage ratio of the first disciplinary category (Law) for the given program, while variable E2 marks the percentage of comparative subjects within the given program, and so on. The calculations were performed so that the resulting percentages reflect the “amount” (credits, contact hours, or other measures of “amount”) of the individual courses as well as whether the course is compulsory or elective (i.e. the variables’ values reflected the calculated probability, with which the given course is taken by the student). As a result 155 Public Administration programs from 24 countries have been registered and “measured”, containing altogether 5687 courses.

5. Transforming the program data base into a country data base

The primary unit of analysis of this study is the country, although at some points reference was made to individual programs as well. Therefore data had to be aggregated from the program level to the country level. For this purpose mean values of the D1-D8 and the E1-E2 variables were calculated for each country. In these calculations unweighted averages were used since no data on program size, e.g. on the number of students or graduates, were available.

Aggregating program level data into country level data was justified since the data base contained no statistical sample, but the whole population of Public Administration programs existing in the different countries. Still, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to illustrate the importance of the “country” variable in explaining program characteristics, with “country” as categorical variable (factor) and the D and E variables as dependent variables. These analyses, together with various types of contrasts applied, suggested that programs belonging to the various countries differ substantially with regards to both the D1-D8 and the E1-E2 variable sets (the multivariate test was significant at the $p<0.001$ level for the D variable set and $p=0.02$ for the E variable set; univariate tests showed a significance of $p<0.001$, as well, with the exception of D5 [$p=0.256$], E2 [$p=0.003$], and E1 [$p=0.361$].)

The most fundamental problems occurring in performing these steps were related to the fact that data collection for the Inventories were not designed and performed with the goal of statistical analysis in

mind. However, such technical issues are only mentioned in the paper as far as it is necessary for the understanding of what principally happened, or if they affect either the scope or the relevance of the study.

The above problem is reflected by the fact that a number of countries – with some key ones among them – had to be excluded from the analysis. Among them were Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom, and Russia (due to incomplete or missing program data), Germany (due to the very narrow operationalization of the term “Public Administration program”)³, and Slovenia was also excluded because its only one program was very different from all the other programs, and such outliers distort the results of many multivariate analyses on a large scale. Finally, a sign of warning is necessary regarding Denmark. On the basis of feedback received on the earlier version of this paper from Danish academics (Mouritzen 2002) it seems that, for the purposes of this study, the validity of Danish data might be questionable as well.

Two general principles served as hoped-for remedy against biases and inconsistencies of data, on which subsequent analyses were carried out. First, the Inventories were reviewed and discussed by professional forums of distinguished academics and practitioners of the field. While some of the country reports received criticism most of them were accepted and thus to some extent “approved”; in this sense they hold a degree of authority. Second, deciding the inclusion or exclusion of countries in or from detailed analysis caution was a central guiding principle. That is, in case a doubt emerged regarding the data content of the Inventories – be the subject of doubt the interpretation of the term “Public Administration program”, the selection of programs, or the comprehensiveness of course lists – the country at hand was rather omitted from the quantitative analysis. Unfortunately, the price paid for this increase in the validity of data was – as noted above – that some of key countries were not included in the analysis.

³ The actual decision of what programs to include in, or exclude from the Inventories was basically made by the individual country rapporteurs in an autonomous manner, with only rather general support from the Terms of Reference used for the country reports: “Public Administration programme is defined as an academic degree programme of at least one year, the primary focus of which is governance” (Verheijen-Connaughton 1999 p. 415). Consequently it couldn’t be taken for granted *ex ante* that the Inventories reflect to what Public Administration education in the various countries really is.

4 Analysis

4.1 Overall characteristics of Public Administration programs

The below table presents the average values of the D1-D8 and the E1-E2 disciplinary variables in the examined 24 countries, and the variance of the given variable:

Variable	Mean	Variance
D1 (Law)	20.5	12.2
D2 (Economics)	13.9	6.7
D3 (Management)	13.8	8.6
D4 (Political Science)	13.9	8.4
D5 (Interdisciplinary/Other Social Science)	10.2	4.5
D6 (Methodology and Computing)	11.0	4.9
D7 (Public Administration and Public Management)	11.6	6.4
D8 (Specific policy fields)	5.1	3.9
E1 (EU related)	4.0	2.9
E2 (Comparative)	7.4	4.4

Table 1: Mean proportions and variances of various disciplinary categories in European Public Administration programs
(in %, unweighted average of countries, n=24)

Regarding the disciplinary orientation of countries, it seems that on the whole Public Administration programs in Europe are truly multi/interdisciplinary. Obviously D1 (Law) seems to be a key variable in that both its weight (almost 20 percent) and its variance is by far the largest (the same is true for relative variances which are not presented here). The weight of the other disciplinary categories are relatively close to one another, D3 (Management/Organization Theory) being the largest. Only D8 (Specific policy fields) is distinguished by its low weight.

In the “degree of Europeanization” dimension the minimal weight of both international and – especially – European subjects is eye-catching. We will come back to this issue in some of the bellow paragraphs.

4.2 Disciplinary landscape of Public Administration education: cross-country patterns

Hierarchical cluster analysis using squared Euclidean distance measure and the between-group linkage method was used to identify characteristic groups of countries. The cluster analysis identified three distinct groups – or as they are called in this procedure: clusters – of countries. These groups are shown in the below table (the groups were given a more descriptive – but simplifying – name; for the ease of reading and interpretation in presenting the results these labels are used from the outset).

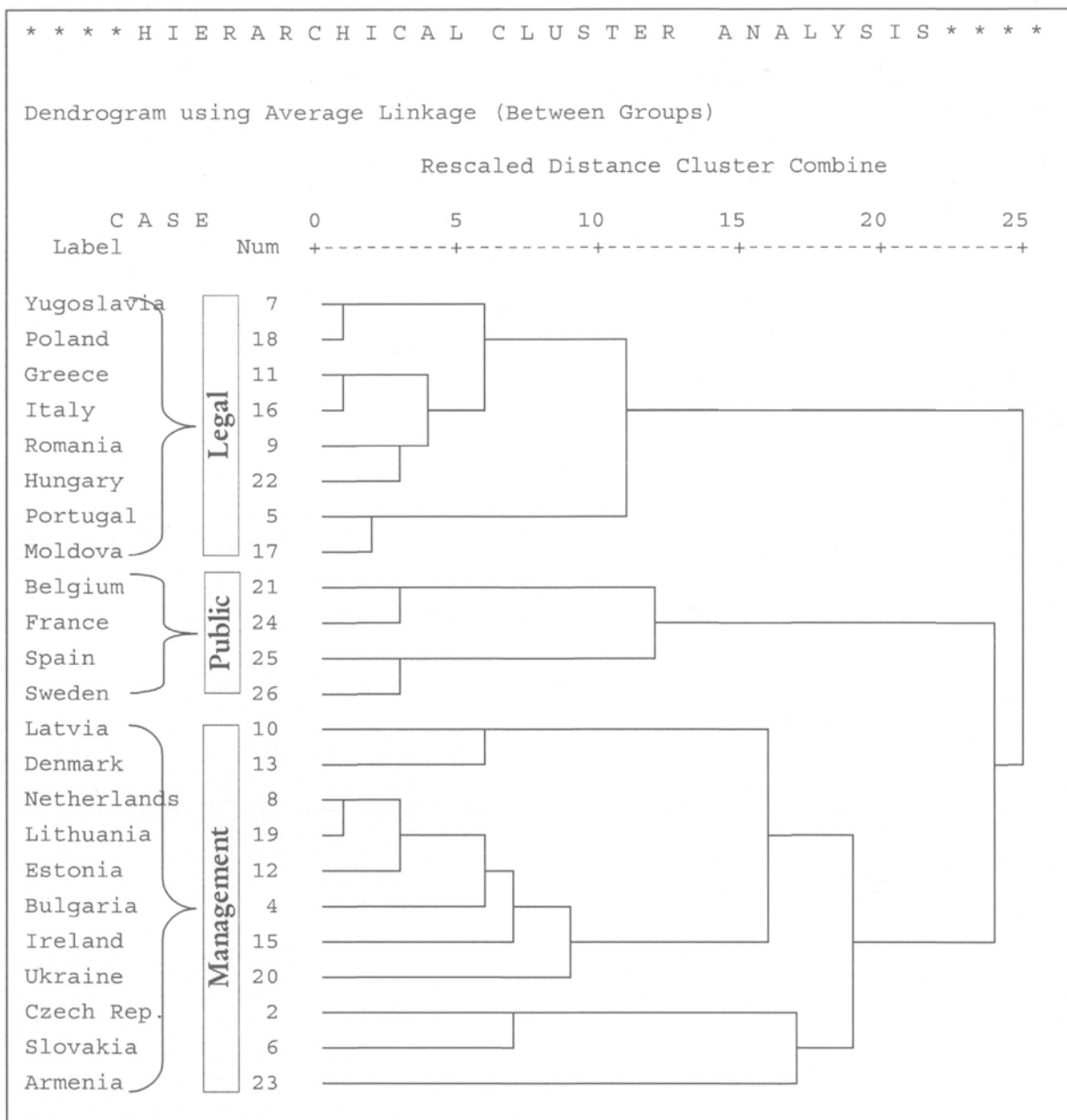


Figure 1: Cluster membership of countries

(Dendrogram of a hierarchical cluster analysis of countries performed in the D1-D8 variable space, n=24)

The question of how these groups differ can be answered by examining to what extent the various disciplines are represented in the three groups. This is shown in the below table.

Variable	Management	Public	Legal	Mean for all countries
	cluster			
D1 (Law)	12.5	16.1	33.9	20.5
D2 (Economics)	15.7	14.7	11.1	13.9
D3 (Management)	19.5	5.2	10.1	13.8
D4 (Political Science)	11.3	29.0	9.9	13.9
D5 (Interdisciplinary/Other Social Science)	9.0	9.6	12.2	10.2
D6 (Methodology and Computing)	11.8	10.2	10.3	11.0
D7 (Public Administration and Public Management)	13.2	12.4	8.9	11.6
D8 (Specific policy fields)	7.0	2.8	3.5	5.1

Table 2: Mean proportions of various disciplinary categories in the three clusters of countries (in %, unweighted average of countries; characteristic dimensions and values marked)

As the table shows not all of the eight (D1-D8) disciplinary variables are “important”. D2, D5, D6, D7, and D8 (“Economics”, “Other social science”, “Methodology”, “Pure P.A.” and “Sectoral issues of Public Administration”, respectively) do not differentiate the groups from one another in a strong and meaningful way. For the sake of simplicity these three dimensions are omitted from subsequent discussion.

In the “management” cluster – typically corporate – management elements are consistently over-represented. That is, the problem of Public Administration is approached primarily as a “production problem”, from the viewpoint of the business enterprise. This group is also distinguished by its little emphasis on Law.

The next cluster – entitled “public” – mostly includes countries belonging to the Continental Public Administration tradition. This group approaches Public Administration as a unique problem field requiring an approach distinct from the business or the legal one. Actually, it emphasizes the uniquely “public” or “political” character of its subject. Accordingly, Political Science (including Public Policy) approaches are emphasized the most. (Business) Management subjects are strongly under-represented in this group.

The “legal” cluster, not surprisingly, stands out with its 34% proportion of Law subjects. It is further characterized by the relatively little presence of some other disciplines, especially of Management/Organization Theory. This group includes the many of the former Socialist countries: Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Furthermore, most Mediterranean/Southern European countries such as Greece, Italy, and Portugal are also here, along with Moldova.

The legal group has two special characteristics compared to the other two groups. First, it is the geographically most coherent and continuous block; except for Portugal practically all its members are adjacent to one another. Second, as analyses not presented here show that it is the most coherent and stable cluster, that is, these countries differ from the other ones to a high extent.

4.3 European and international subjects in program curricula

As already noted the main finding regarding the E1 (degree of Europeanization) and E2 (international and comparative character) variables is that their value is surprisingly low, and that they exhibit little variance – and, within that, little variance that seems meaningful – across countries.

Nevertheless, there are some straightforward points to start with. The overall mean value is E1=4.05% for the “European” subjects and E2=7.66% for “comparative” subjects. The lowest and the highest scoring countries are as follows⁴.

Country	E1
Armenia	.00
Ukraine	.90
Moldova	1.10
Slovakia	1.58
Latvia	1.96
...	...
Ireland	6.00
Italy	6.45
Estonia	6.93
Sweden	9.86
Overall mean:	4.05

Table 3: Weight of „European” subjects in program curricula: Lowest and highest scoring countries (%)

Countries not mentioned until now are well “in the middle”, between 2.0 and 6.0%. Regarding the degree of internationalization (E2) the patterns are the following:

Country	E2
Czech Republic	.79
Bulgaria	2.81
Portugal	2.91
Slovakia	3.94
...	...
Armenia	10.24

⁴ Yugoslavia was originally on top of the list, but further analysis revealed that this is due to the strongly “outlying” nature of the Postgraduate Program in European Law at the University of Belgrade consisting 63% of European Law subjects. As soon as this – presumably – small program was omitted the value of Yugoslavia’s E1 decreased to 0.25%.

France	10.84
Spain	10.91
Belgium	12.06
Sweden	22.76
Overall mean:	7.66

Table 4: Weight of comparative subjects in program curricula: Lowest and highest scoring countries (%)

Countries not listed in the table are in the 4-10% band. Beside the circumstance that non-accessing countries of Central and Eastern Europe or those lagging behind in the accession process are often characterized by little presence of European subjects it is hard to discover any meaningful cross-country patterns regarding the E1 and E2 variables; it seems evident that the “openness” of Public Administration education doesn’t correlate with either its disciplinary character and dominant administrative culture.

5 Discussion and conclusions

In this closing section some broad interpretations and conclusions are drawn on the basis of the analyses and findings presented above. While some of these seem to be relatively well-founded and robust, others, especially due to lacking data in some key countries – most of all, Germany and the United Kingdom – require a degree of “spirit”.

5.1 The three clusters: meaning and membership

The three clusters based on the disciplinary content of programs identified earlier coincides with the three basic, traditional approaches to be found in Europe. The position of individual countries within this tri-polar field also resembles to what one could expect on the basis of previous work (Raadschelders-Rutgers 1999, Kickert-Stillman 1999b).

The simplest case seems to be that of the Legal cluster which corresponds to the traditional, legalistic public administration culture. While this public administration paradigm – relying on the parallel concepts of the “strong state” and Public Law – used to be predominant throughout Continental Europe until about the Second World War the geographical scope of its predominance has continuously decreased since then. Still, the paradigm, which conceives of the fundamental activity of public administration as the execution – or implementation – of legal regulations is still powerful in a number of countries. The legalistic administrative culture views the public administration as a well-running machine executing detailed legal regulations. The empirical findings coincide with *ex ante* expectations in that this Weberian (Weber 1980) view of public administration is, on the basis of previous accounts still clearly decisive in most of the Mediterranean/Southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal), in a number of former Socialist countries (Newland et al. 1999, Hajnal 1999), as well as in the German-speaking world (Raadschelders-Rutgers 1999, Seibel 1999), the latter of which could unfortunately not have been analyzed in this research.

The gradual shrinking of the geographical scope of Legal approach throughout the second half of the twentieth century was due to the emergence of a more interdisciplinary approach to Public Administration relying on a broader scope of related disciplines, such as Political Science, Policy Science, Administrative Science, and some other closely related, interdisciplinary fields of study. The emergent paradigm aimed at answering the new challenges posed by the unfolding welfare state against the government. The new approach manifested itself in higher education programs first in France then, to a varying extent, in a number of Northern and Western European countries (Toonen-Verheijen

1999). In the view of the analytical results presented above the specialty of this approach is its emphasis on the uniquely political, public character of its subject – as opposed to either the Legal or the Management approach. Belgium, France, Spain, and Sweden are in this group. This historically new paradigm gradually appeared in certain Mediterranean countries as well, where to some extent it succeeded in replacing the traditionally strong legal Public Administration tradition (Lewanski 1999, Ballart 1999). Still, as analyses presented above show in the Mediterranean/Southern European region this “paradigm change” has not worked out fully yet, except for Spain.

The third, “management” cluster approaches the problem of running the public sector relying on the concepts of Business Management. That is, problems of public administration as well as concepts and solutions capable of treating them are perceived as fundamentally similar to those of corporate management. This approach seems to be identical with the one often denoted as “Anglo-Saxon” or New Public Management, which has been dominating the agenda of Public Administration for at least the last ten-fifteen years. According to the results of this study in Europe the New Public Management paradigm is influential mostly in Ireland, and the Nordic countries. It is quite remarkable that – in addition to the Baltic states strongly influenced by Scandinavian Public Management concepts and practices – a large number of former communist countries are members of this group.

5.2 Post-communist countries

Examining the former communist – or transition – countries it is interesting to observe that, with very little exception, the following rule is effective:

- countries which have already had a sovereign statehood prior to the transition belong the legal cluster, while
- countries having gained their independence only in the transition process can all be found in the management cluster.

What is the explanation for this remarkable coincidence? The Public Administration culture characteristic of the former communist world had a strongly legal character; the Continental Public Law approach was traditionally dominant already in the communist era (Newland et al. 1999). This Soviet type administrative tradition can be conceived as the classical, Continental Public Law approach infused with a strong and strict disciplinary specialization and fragmentation serving the purpose of Party control over the academic communities. In the daily practice this leads to “idolized red tape and constipated rule elaboration and enforcement” (Newland et al. 1999 p. 221) exacerbated by a relative isolation, both intellectual and physical, from the western world.

With a number of important modifications – related primarily to institutional and procedural requirements of democratic accountability and the rule of law – it is this administrative culture that is still to be found in transition countries having a relatively continuous development path leading from socialism to capitalism and liberal democracy. However, countries (re-)establishing their sovereignty and independent statehood only in the process of system change all faced the same fundamental problems:

- First, public administrators “inherited” from the past were neither capable nor trusted to complete the new tasks required of them. While as noted above the overly legalist public administration culture was – and still is – a problem throughout the post-communist world this gap in capabilities was exacerbated, especially in former Soviet republics, by the “Byzantine” style Public Administration based on strict obedience to, and reliance on, commands “from above”. In such an environment the expedience, let alone efficiency, of policy decisions and of how Public Administration organization were operated/managed clearly belonged to a realm of issues lying outside the competence of a public administrator.
- The problem of trust, again, was even more present in former Soviet republics (of which Armenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, and Ukraine are included in this research) where a large proportion of administrative cadres were of Russian nationality.

- Third, training and education in the field of Public Administration was very limited, sometimes non-existent, in most transition countries due to the general playing down of the field, and – in the case of the smaller former Soviet republics – to the tendency that higher ranking cadres were educated “up” in the capital cities of larger republics. Both of these two problems were especially relevant and urgent in the case of public managers.

As a result of the above factors, quick establishment of large scale and effective Public Administration training and education was of utmost importance in newly independent post-communist countries. Lacking relevant and sufficient institutional and professional capacity this process had to be based on direct application of foreign theoretical approaches and experience. These inputs usually came in the form of bilateral or multilateral technical assistance programs transplanting ready-made “products” based on the academic and professional practice of the donor country (Gajduschek-Hajnal 2002). Since the United States (and in the case of Baltic states the Scandinavian countries) are among the largest donors no wonder that theoretical approaches and the day-to-day administrative cultures of these countries dominate the field of Public Administration education of most newly independent states.

There are two exceptions to the rule: Moldova and Bulgaria. Moldova is, despite being a newly independent state, in the Legal cluster. However, unlike most newly independent states its single one Public Administration education facility, the Academy of Public Administration in Chisinau was launched without substantive Western assistance, on the basis of existing resources (Newland 1996 pp. 387-388). Bulgaria on the other hand had already been in existence as a sovereign state long before the transition. The fact that it still belongs to the Management cluster can be attributed to the circumstance that after the Bulgarian university sector underwent a radical, even anarchic, change a great number of new education institutions were founded. These institutions often lacked sufficient material resources or faculty (Tanev 1999), and often relied on curricula adapted from western university programs, all these factors leading to the consequence of radical re-arrangement of the Public Administration education field.

5.3 The European and “global” character of Public Administration curricula

It is surprising how little Public Administration curricula in general show either the increasing Europeanization of public administration as a profession and a daily practice, or its internationalization/globalization. To some extent this can be – if not justified, but – explained by the inherently “national character” of Public Administration; i.e. by the fact that the traditional subject of interest and point of departure in this field of scientific inquiry is, unlike e.g. the natural sciences, the diverse reality of various national administrative systems.

Still the lag between how public administration is (expected to be) exercised on the one hand, and how it is taught on the other seems too large to be sustainable. Current efforts to increase the global and/or European component of university curricula thus are urgently needed and will probably be supplemented by a “demand-side pull” of the daily practice, especially in the accessing countries.

5.4 Future trends and further questions

The above conclusions pinpointed more or less explicitly two dynamic processes taking – or having taken – place in the Public Administration education field: first, the gradual replacement of the traditional legalist administrative culture with a more interdisciplinary one emphasizing the public and the political moment in western and south European countries, and second, the radical and rapid switch in newly independent post-communist states from the legalist to the management paradigm in their university curricula.

An obvious and key common element in these two processes is that both involve a move away from legalism; it is however the direction which they point to that predominantly differentiates them. It is not the author’s intention to discuss at this point the arguments supporting or disaffirming the identity, originality, and general applicability of the managerialist – or New Public Management – paradigm in Continental European university curricula, let alone administrative practices. It is briefly noted however

that the enthusiasm of the early nineties regarding the above points of discussion has more recently been increasingly replaced by a more skeptical view (Kaboolian 1998, Gow-Dufour 2000).

The co-existence of these two trends – leading from a similar past to different futures in the two halves of Europe – poses a number of interesting and important questions: why is it so that (Continental) European influence in countries which in part aim at accession to the European Union are so moderate compared to the Anglo-Saxon (and in part Nordic) influence? What future can be foreseen in transition countries still pursuing the legal paradigm? Can it be expected that Mediterranean countries belonging to the legalist group (Greece, Italy, and Portugal) will make a move toward the Continental European “mainstream”? And, maybe most importantly, what future can be foreseen with regards to the German (and Austrian, Swiss) Public Administration education?

It would be overly superficial to endeavor answering these questions on the basis of data and analytical results presented above. Still, two more general statements can be made with some certainty. First, on the longer run the way Public Administration is taught influences the day-to-day reality of public administration, which in turn reinforces the already existing patterns in the education realm thereby creating a degree of stability, even inertia in the system. Second, the traditional, legalist culture seems to be so deeply engraved and entrenched in the administrative cultures of the respective countries that their quick replacement by either the “public” or the managerialist paradigm seems improbable; this would necessitate at least such a sharp and abrupt change in the external environment of Public Administration as it did in the newly independent post-communist countries. In sum, it is an incremental, rather evolution than revolution type development that can be expected in the group of “hard core legalists”.

This remark leads forward to a last and more general question relating to the relationship between Public Administration university programs and the day-to-day culture of public administration as a field of activity. In countries characterized by an organic development it seems relatively straightforward that Public Administration education and Public Administration as a field of practice definitely correlates (the relationship between the two is probably bi-directional, nevertheless the question of causation is not discussed here). However, in transition countries with a less organic development the problem faced is that the former (i.e. pre-transition) set of values and corresponding operating practices of Public Administration still prevail in the practice. But these values, attitudes, and the operating routines implied by them are dysfunctional under the new regimes oriented toward the capitalist economy and the liberal democratic state. This creates a permanent or possibly even growing tension potentially leading to sway the pendulum of reforming Public Administration education backwards from its present, maybe overly emphasized managerialism. It is a question to be answered by the future where a more permanent equilibrium between the two poles will be formed in these countries.

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