Public administration education: the case of Macedonian Universities  

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Abstract

Public Administration (PA) Education presents an indispensable necessity for all the modern countries, especially for countries with the young democracies and with less functional PA. At this paper, we have briefly compared approaches in different systems of education for PA, with a focus on PA Education in Macedonian Universities. The Paper highlights the main specifics of PA in Macedonia with a short description of the Education programs in PA. Specifically, how these institutions contribute with their work in preparing the professional staff to work in PA, and how they meet the real demand in this segment. Finally, a survey was conducted with the representatives of several institutions (randomly selected at local and central) in Macedonia, on the employment of new staff and their cooperation with the PA educational institutions, as well as fruitful recommendations is drawn up on this regard.

Keywords: PA education; Macedonian Universities; PA programs;

1. Introduction

The research highlights the main specifics of PA education in Macedonia with reference to the PA faculties. It aims describing how the faculties are able to prepare students to work in PA, who will be able to apply the law and serve the citizens. But, in addition today's educational system is intended to prepare students with the skills with which they will quickly and easily adapt to new market conditions. Thus, the quality of the public service heavily depends upon the nature and quality of the system of education.

By analyzing the competition for employment in Macedonia, the most required profiles are those in the field of computing (17.5%), then business administration and finance (9.9%), the education sector (9.5%), public administration (9.2%) etc.!

In Macedonia, PA Education continues to be important among others due to the possibility of employment at governmental institutions and the equitable representation of ethnic communities in the PA.

2. PA Education Systems: An International Comparison

PA education systems are described below following comparison of PA as an academic field in different countries. For many countries, the roots for PA are found in political science (United States, Canada, New Zealand

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and Australia, and Taiwan), even though, other disciplines have contributed to the development of this field. Administrative law is the dominant influence on the development of PA in parts of Western Europe (Germany, France), most of Eastern Europe, Japan and Korea.

In the United States, PA as an academic modern discipline tracks back to both academic political science and law as a separate study in the 1910s. It arises in a political controversy between democratic control of government and competent achievement of governmental ends (Williams, 2003). Many early academics were affiliated with political science, although disciplinary boundaries were not strong. In the last generation, PA has been replaced with fields of study like implementation, public management, and formal bureaucratic theory and few of the top political science departments offer courses in the field (Kettl, 1998). The three fundamental approaches to PA teaching in the United States (i.e. the PA, the management and the public policy paradigms) give a clear frame of reference but are unable to address these challenges (Hajnal, 2002). Nonetheless, PA has become more, not less important, to political science (Kettl, 1998).

In Canada, the study of PA has evolved primarily as a subfield of political science. The broad field of administration is divided into public, business, hospital, educational and other forms of administration (Kernaghan, Siegel, 1995). There is, however, increasing recognition of PA as a separate field of study, which is reflected in the creation within schools of PA. Nowadays, schools of PA exist at several universities across Canada; the oldest and largest of these include the Queen’s University of Victoria and the École National d’Administration in Québec (Kernaghan, 2007).

PA as an academic field of study in Europe it has developed between 1955 and 1970 when new programs in PA were established in Italy, Finland, Germany, Belgium and the UK (Yan, Brans, 2004). The French, Germans, Italians, Dutch and the Scandinavians developed a conception of PA with its intellectual roots in philosophy, law, sociology, economics, political science, and history. In Western Europe it is a relatively young field of science (Stillman, 1999) and it does not represent a regional model of its own due to the variations in administrative culture and the stronger dominance of a legal orientation and analysis of the use of public power in Southern Europe in comparison to Northern Europe (Connaughton, Randma, 2002). In the United Kingdom, PA is still more a North American satellite than a core European state (Pollitt, 1996).

In the Iberian Peninsula, PA was taught in law faculties until the middle XIX century in Portugal and until the second half of the XX century in Spain. Although we can track the origins of the studies in the Old regime and connect them to the political science approach (Spain) and basically the French influence (Portugal) (Araújo, Alvarez, 2006: 9-14). Currently, PA education in Spain is an interdisciplinary field based in political science, economics, law and sociology. Issues such as administrative reform, modernization, participation, performance, etc. appear as transversal matters gathering specialists with any of those backgrounds (Ballart, 2007).

2.1. PA Education in Post-Communist Countries

Under communist regimes PA education was geared to provide for the communist party system. Two orientations prevailed, namely highly theoretical Marxist theory of ‘scientific socialism’ and a continental law approach taught in law schools geared to state regulations. At the beginning of the 1990s, the term ‘public administration’ was quite unknown. However, recently, countries have responded in different ways to try to meet the new challenges of educating public servants (Connaughton, Randma; Jabes, 2000; Wright Nemec, 2003).

In Bulgaria, PA programmes started to develop in the 1990s, first in newly created private universities, later followed by state universities. The development and delivery of PA programmes have been strongly influenced by the requirements of the Bulgarian state and other legal regulations regarding the discipline. The state requirements foresee the interdisciplinary character of PA curricula by mixing of the courses of Law and Economics with governance-related courses.

In Czech Republic, development of PA as a field of study started after the political changes in 1989 when the universities began offering programmes in “PA and Regional Science” or “Public Economics and PA”. PA programmes are mostly taught within the faculties of Economics or Management, which influence their respective curricula, with a few exceptions where the PA programmes have a broader social science focus (e.g. Charles
University). The role of universities in the pre-entry preparation of public servants is fully recognised by the government and universities are actively involved in training existing public servants.

In Estonia, development of independent PA programmes started in the 1990s in public universities, later followed by a few private universities. PA programmes has taken a broad social science approach by combining different fields such as Political Science, Law and Economics into an interdisciplinary curriculum.

In Hungary in 1978, the College of Public Administration was created which up to now awards Bachelor’s degrees in PA. Since the 1990s, in the development of PA Administrative Law, Public Management, Political Science, Economics, Public Policy continued to be a disciplinary domain for PA programmes (e.g. Budapest University of Economic Sciences and Public Administration).

In Latvia the first Department of PA was opened at the University of Latvia in 1994. In addition, there are BA and MA programmes in “Regional Development and Administration” at the Latvian University of Agriculture. In both cases, the PA programmes are based in faculties of Economics and Management. PA programmes in Latvia predominantly focus on managerial approach to PA strongly influenced by the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

In Lithuania the founder of the modern PA programmes has been the Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) where the PA programmes were launched in the 1990s. The first PA programme at KTU has followed an interdisciplinary approach to PA, whereas the other programmes have a strong emphasis on Political Science (e.g. Vilnius University) or Law (Vytautas Magnus University).

In Poland the key player in the PA education is the National School of Public Administration that was launched in 1990. Polish PA programmes can be divided into two strains according to their dominant disciplines: first, there are law-based programmes, and second, PA education is also provided in the faculties of Political Science. PA programmes in private universities are taught from a legal perspective but they are more interdisciplinary in nature.

In Romania the Ministry of Education stated in 1999 that the curricula of the PA schools would be built on four domains: administrative sciences, law, economics, and social and political sciences. Currently the following faculties offer PA programmes - law, economics, political science, history and philology. There is a clear trend from law-related curriculum to interdisciplinary studies. However, law still dominates most PA programmes.

In Slovak Republic in 1977, the first faculty designed to educate individuals for public service was established in Banská Bystrica. In 1986 the curriculum of “Economics of Non-Producing Services and State Administration” was launched. It remained a unique institution offering PA education before 1989. Most PA students participate in programmes developed on the basis of Economics and Management.

In Slovenia the School of PA was established already 1956. By now this school is a part of the University of Ljubljana, and it is the only one in Slovenia which offers a curriculum in PA. Historically, the dominant field in the PA curriculum has been Law. Such a focus has gradually changed, as courses of economics and organization theory have been included into curriculum by giving it a more interdisciplinary perspective.

3. PA Education in Macedonia

The establishment of modern PA education in Macedonia was marked by establishing of South East European University-SEEU (2001), whereas earlier there weren’t similar education programs in this field. Until then, the PA was taught within the Law faculties, through the subject of administrative law, while there was no special multidisciplinary branch of the PA. Some years later the PA study programs were opened at “St.Kliment Ohridski” University in Bitola, and several years after at SUT branch in Kumanovo (2008).

Throughout this paper, the following institutions of higher education are examined:
- Public Administration and Political Sciences Faculty, at SEE University-Tetovo;
- Faculty for Administration and management of information systems, at St. Kliment Ohridski University-Bitola;
- Public Administration Faculty, at State University in Tetovo.

It is important to emphasize that all these institutions of higher education at their academic programs for PA, have multidisciplinary general curricula designed for PA and State, but have not yet specialized programs for specific areas at AP.
The comparative European PA dimension has become more important in PA curricula as well as in everyday-life over the last years. Due to the Macedonian integration to the European Union (EU) a comparative approach to the PA is becoming crucial for preparing future civil servants.

In addition, a table is presented with data on the number of the students which are enrolled their studies in the field of PA, including the first, second and third cycle.

Table 1. The number of students enrolled for study in PA at the universities in Macedonia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>PAPS Faculty, SEE University Tetovo</th>
<th>PAMIS, Sv. Kliment Ohridski Bitola</th>
<th>PA Faculty, SUT Kumanovo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001/02</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/03</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/04</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Student Service/ Registry Office in the aforementioned faculties, December 2011

From the above data, we can conclude that PA Education programs that are provided under the PAPS Faculty at SEEU, estimated to be more serious and with specific commitment to literal PA education given the: number of enrolled students; establishing of graduated students in the state institutions (local and national); NGOs and the international organizations in the country; the teaching staff with academic and practical experience; the projects realized in the context of Center for Research in PA viii and the staff engaging in the international projects for the training of civil servants.viii

Several PA graduates have already made very fast careers by reaching the positions head of departments, policy advisers to ministers, head of government commissions and so on. Others have been successful in getting admitted to Master’s and PhD programmes.

PA graduates are highly appreciated in the Macedonian labour market because of following reasons:
- There is a shortage of highly qualified civil servants, and universities have proved to offer graduates with sound professional knowledge and skills;
- The open civil service system enables graduates in PA to apply for mid-level and even senior civil service positions;
- Central government organizations offer more interesting jobs and challenges to PA graduates.

Regarding what we have mentioned above, for the needs of this paper a survey was conducted with managers of the institutions (Director, inspectorates, municipalities, ministries etc).

Table 2. Survey conducted with managers of public institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do graduates for PA have employment priority in your institution?</td>
<td>No 25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is there a need to establish cooperation between your institution with PA faculties on education and training of the staff employed?</td>
<td>No 28 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you think that the profilization of PA programs, graduates for PA will be better accepted in your institution?</td>
<td>No 18 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the survey results, it can be concluded that during the process of selecting the candidates for employment, there is no priority for the PA graduates, although the representatives of the institutions state that should make a
good selection of the new staff with vocational performances, referring to PA graduates. They emphasize that there is a lack of cooperation among the PA faculties and the public institutions, thus clearly demonstrate the need for a greater cooperation throughout training of the staff employed in the public institutions. Finally, it appears as a prerequisite requirement for the labor market needs, in the future within existing PA faculties to be opened of specialized areas (as public, business, hospital, educational and other forms of administration).

4. Conclusions

It should be emphasized that a considerable number of the total PA graduates has chosen to work in the public sector; however, most of them have chosen to work in private sector. It is highly appreciated as salaries in the public sector have remained lower than those in the private sector, provided that qualifications needed from two positions in different sectors are similar.

Those PA graduates who have chosen to work in the private sector, have also been successful in their jobs and made fast career in their respective organizations.

Another fact that affects the insufficient engagement of graduates in PA is a result of extreme political influence over employment in state institutions, given the that the selection of candidates for employment in government competitions depends entirely by compiled lists of branches of the political parties in power. If it continues further political influence, may occur within PA institutions of commit of erroneous individuals without the vocational education and without the necessary skills, while remaining outside the system the really professionals.

However, PA Education should continue to be important activity of the universities in Macedonia, and in the future must promoted specialized programs for PA Education in different areas.

References

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Connaughton B., Randma T. (2002), Teaching ideas and principles of Public Administration: Is it possible to achieve a common European perspective? EPAN Fifth Annual Conference, Granada, Spain, 4-15 June.

1 КАКО до повсеместно високо образование – Скопје: Центар за истражување и кренрање политики. 2009. p.27

2 It is worth mentioning the Training School at the Bureau of Municipal Research (1911), affiliated with Columbia University, the City College of New York (1916), Georgetown University (1920), the School of Citizenship at Syracuse University (1924), the University of Michigan, and the University of Chicago (1916). Cfr. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_administration

3 The interdisciplinary approach is followed at Sofia University and the New Bulgarian University

4 Public Administration reform capacity-building in the SAP countries, ARCADIS 26 April 2004, p.23-26

5 Under this Faculty, maintained undergraduate, Masters and Doctoral Studies. For more information about academic programs see at: http://www.seeu.edu.mk/en/future-students/academics

6 The program mainly focuses on the profiling of students for a successful manager in the Information System, among others develops the second cycle program titled “Public administration”. For more see at: Panovska-Boskovska V. (2011), Faculty for Administration and management of information systems, Bitola, p.3; http://www.famis.edu.mk/w3/mk/studii-na-famis/postdiplomski/ja-post.html

7 For more see at: http://www.seeu.edu.mk/en/research/projects

8 A considerable number of staff has been continuously involved as experts in training of Public Servants at central and local levels, through the projects of the OSCE, USAID, UNDP, European Commission and Other International Organizations.