Public Policy Education Goes Global: A Multidimensional Challenge

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August, 2006
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Explanatory note:
This note was initially drafted as a rapporteur's commentary to a session entitled "MPP Programs emerging Around the World" at 2006 Spring Conference of the American Public Policy Association and Management (APPAM) in Park City, Utah. It is being shared on the LKY School's working paper series site, with permission by the conference organizers, to stimulate discussion in advance of the publication of the conference proceedings. The conference had as its theme "Charting the Next 20 Years of Public Policy and Management Education." The full range of briefing papers for the conference can be found at http://www.appam.org/conferences/spring/parkcity2006/.

There is little doubt that globalization, however defined, has hit the field of professional policy education in the twenty years since APPAM's Hiltonhead conference on the future of policy education first took stock of a largely American landscape. Despite the title of this session, the relevant development is not merely the accretion of public policy schools and programs around the world. It is the recognition of international dimensions of the policy education enterprise that, if taken seriously (and participants in this discussion argued that it must), promises to change the way we conduct business on multiple levels. This report of the lively discussion generated in the wake of Iris Geva-May and her coauthors' stimulating conference paper[1] explores why and how.

[1] Iris Geva-May, Greta Nasi, Alex Turrini, and Claudia Scott, "MPP Programs Emerging Around the World", available at http://www.appam.org/conferences/spring/parkcity2006/2006Spring_paper_session6B.pdf

Emerging programs at the center of the discussion

Discussion during the session revolved around six ‘emerging’ programs that had representatives present, including four that usefully supplemented the conference paper’s survey of broad trends in Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Some key information about these six programs is captured in the table below. Though diverse, it is worth noting that these are hardly small programs, with all reporting continued growth – quite rapid for some. Clearly, international programs will be increasingly visible on the scene. With that in mind, we turn to the discussion of the similarities, differences and wider significance of these programs. Areas explored by the group fell broadly into two broad categories: the relationship of the emerging programs to their political and governance contexts; and the process by which the programs produce their graduates.

How high is the demand for policy education internationally?

The six programs examined have complex relationships with the ‘demand’ side of policy education. One way of dividing these programs is into those that primarily cater to civil servants from their home country setting (Victoria and Monterrey) and those with a broad international makeup (the rest). The former group has the advantage of a well-defined market for their graduates. The proximity of the political and civil service employers and funders of these enterprises – “they’re right in your face,” as Claudia Scott put it for the context of Wellington as a capital city – results in frequent feedback and powerful, if at times conflicting, demands on those designing curricula. The Australia-New Zealand School of Governance (ANZSOG), a coalition of programs of which Victoria serves as a constituent campus, has an activist governing body comprised of government stakeholders and investors claimed by Scott to be “strongly interested” in program details.

One example of this interest is the way in which New Zealand’s early, enthusiastic experimentation with New Public Management (NPM) reforms created a demand for increasing product differentiation; a Master in Public Management program was launched with the hope that it would be a “superior product” both to the MPP – due to its perceived better fit with managerialist approaches and the NPM blurring of public-private boundaries – and to the MBA alternative which ignored the public sector context entirely. Another example is the same institution’s Master in Strategic Studies program, intended to cater to “the entire public sector – customs, defense, social welfare etc.” In

Descriptive overview of some of the programs discussed during session[2]

(1) Institution / City / Country / website	(2) Programs offered / Duration	(3) Average number of students per intake	(4) Faculty	(5) Student composition	(6) Key partnerships	(7) Curriculum emphasis (self-described) or other features
Public Administration & Healthcare Division / SDA Bocconi School of Management / Bocconi University / Milan, Italy	● MPM – 1 year ● MIHMEP- Master of Int. Healthcare Management Econ. and Policy ● CLAPI LS - M.Sc. in Econ. and Management of Public Administration and Int. Organization – 2 years	● MPM – 30 students ●MIHMEP – 30 students ●CLAPI LS – 100 students ● About 150 students in Italian language programs	12 professors, 30 teaching fellows, 20 practitioners, and 30 short term visiting professors	International Programs: 20% Europe; 25% Eastern European; 30% USA and Canada; 10% Latin America; 10% Asia; 5% Africa. Domestic programs: 90% Italian; 10% Europe	CLAPI LS has a double degree with Sciences Po (Paris) and with the MBA at the University of Geneva. Exchanges with 13 European; 5 US; 5 Latin American; 1 Japanese; and 3 Australian Universities.	Curriculum emphasis is on public and healthcare management in all programs. Pedagogy is similar to US schools with extensive use of case studies and field research activities. Extensive use of guest speakers.
Escuela de Graduados en Administración Pública y Política Pública, Tecnológico de Monterrey / Monterrey, Mexico www.itesm.mx/egap	MPA / MPP: Part time: 2.5 years; Full Time 1.5 years	40 of both every year	20 (from 6 countries)	80% Mexican, 10% Central America, 5% North America and 5% Europe	Exchanges with KSG (Harvard), Georgetown and UA Barcelona	Mexican and Latin American Studies. Similar to KSG program with ample use of cases
Hertie School of Governance / Berlin, Germany / www.hertie-school.org	MPP – 2 years	currently 50, from 2007 on: 80 per year.	12 core faculty + 10 adjunct and visiting	45% German, 20% Eastern Europe and CIS, 15% Western Europe and North-America, the rest: Latin America and Africa	Exchanges with SIPA (Columbia), LSE (London), Sciences Po (Paris), GPPI (Washington), Maxwell (Syracuse)	Similar to US programs but with focus on EU politics and European politics, strong integration of law, emphasis on the historical dimension of governance and the European welfare state
KDI School of Public Policy & Management / Seoul, Korea http://www.kdischool.ac.kr	● MPP ● MBA ● Master in Asset Management ● Master in Foreign Direct Investment ● PhD	MPP – 50, MBA – 75; both two years	32 resident faculty (of which 29 Korean) 7 adjunct and visiting faculty (all from overseas)	60% domestic 40% various countries from overseas	Exchange programs with SPEA (Illinois), Truman (Missouri), Sanford Institute (Duke), among others	Similar to MPP programs in the US, perhaps biased toward economic policy courses
LKY School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore / Singapore / www.lkyspp.nus.edu.sg	Master in Public Administration – 1 year Master in Public Policy – 2 years Master in Public Management – 1 year (executive masters)	MPA – 60 full time, 20 part time MPP – 60 full time MPM – 25 full time PhD – just being launched this year	25 (from 12 countries)	20% India, 20% China, 15% Singaporean, 35% other Southeast Asia, 10% other	Exchanges with Kennedy School (Harvard) and SIPA (Columbia) for MPM and MPP students	Similar to US programs, but with extensive use of Asian examples and case studies

[2] With thanks to Greta Nasi, Vidal Garza Cantú, Gregor Walter and Taejong Kim for contributing information on their respective institutions.

contrast to what?, one might ask. As in the U.S., product differentiation may not lead to better, or substantively different, products; the difference between the MPA and MPM in New Zealand, for instance, was ultimately “just an artifact,” according to Claudia Scott.

The second category of programs caters to a highly diverse set of students from a wide international catchment area – as in the case of the LKY School, the Hertie School, Bocconi and KDI. Demand for the graduates of these programs is not necessarily weaker than those in the first category – no severe unemployment problems are noted among graduates (knock on wood) – but it may well be more amorphous, diffuse. Countries in both Asia and, perhaps to a lesser extent, Europe are in the early stages of defining the identity and professional roles of public policy school-trained graduates; in several Asian languages, the very term ‘public policy’ does not convey a well-defined image, and calls for (at times annoying) elaboration even for some obviously relevant potential employers. In this second category, programs enjoy greater freedom and flexibility in developing curricula while drawing on a range of potential models. This comes at the cost of some existential *angst*, since there is only erratic feedback from the environment about whether the chosen model bears more than a passing relation to actual needs.

The issue of the political environment in which the policy schools are emerging bears mention. One of those perennial philosophical questions about the business of professional school education in public policy was raised at the plenary session of the conference. To what extent do policy well-trained ‘technocrats’ serve or impede democracy and public participation? Peter deLeon was referring to the American context, but his question may have an even greater poignancy in some international settings. Europe is developing supra-national institutions not reputed for the warmth they generate in the hearts of the proverbial man on the street; European political science journals are filled with anguished talk of a ‘democracy deficit’ in the EU. The growth of schools of governance and public policy, and of their graduates seeking to staff the halls of the European project, is in a sense part and parcel of this historical moment. The relevance of the democracy question to Asia, where pre-financial cirisis theories of the ‘development state’ emphasized technocratic elites insulated from popular pressures, also stands out.

John Ellwood’s opening address prodded the audience to consider the increasing political marginalization of policy analysis (properly construed) in the United States. The question of how firmly institutionalized professional policy analysis in what David Weimar and Aidan Vining call the ‘objective technician’ mode is also relevant to the global policy programs, but shows a different face. Not for the first time, one could read this as Americans lamenting the decline of something for which actors in several other corners of the globe are struggling to gain a toehold; many countries – not least where schools of public policy themselves are not firmly institutionalized – are grappling with the issue of how to boost the capacity and influence of professional analysts within a politically neutral civil service. Like the question of the democracy-policy analyst interface, such questions will be with us for some time to come, and the emerging program contexts casts them in a stimulating new light that invites comparative analysis.

How similar is the 'production process' of graduates? (1): Curriculum

A second set of questions concerned the educational process experienced by graduates. Given that international programs are 'emerging' in a diverse set of countries, what do their curricula look like? How similar are they to American programs, and – since there would seem to be no obvious reason why they *should* be similar – what accounts for the way they look? What is the relationship of their curriculum to different national 'cultures', whether writ small (administrative traditions) or large (foibles large as continents)?

On first blush the programs fit within the typical range of program configurations found in the U.S. This is not very surprising since all were established in the past twenty years, in at least two cases (Monterrey and Singapore) with initial technical assistance from the Kennedy School. They offer the same broad range of degrees, and in fact report sharing the growing American problem of 'product over-differentiation' as they strive to define a market niche in the somewhat uncertain environments noted above. Program duration ranges from one to two years, dictated as much by local custom and context as a clear pedagogical rationale. In some cases, as in the Singaporean MPP, programs have been lengthened to two years in order to synchronize with partner institutions in an international network. Most of the programs are housed in autonomous schools reporting directly to the university administrations – a trend noted also for the U.S. setting. The core curricula also appear broadly similar, with the same (and equally interminable) debates about the proper mix on the margins of economics, quantitative analysis, politics and management courses.

Just behind the surface lurks greater, and more interesting, variety. The case of NPM-oriented curriculum at the Victoria University of Wellington has already been noted. The Australia-New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) of which it is part developed a cross-cutting focus on "decision-making under uncertainty" which has served well as a common idiom facilitating discussion among its mid-career civil servants from New Zealand and different Australian states. In a country that vaulted its way to first world status with probably the fastest growth in the number of engineers in human history, the Korea Development Institute has a strongly economics-focused curriculum and two perhaps unique degrees among schools of public policy: Master in Asset Management and Master in Foreign Direct Investment.

Faculty in Singapore and Mexico have adopted a set of core courses that in terms of their titles might be delivered anywhere in North America, but they have since focused much attention onto developing Asian / Latin American content for these curricula. Both programs market themselves as heavy users of the case method, and both are rapidly building up their case catalogues to supplement the rather slim international offerings available in that department. One syllabus in public management in the LKY School has incorporated a number of Asian case studies alongside U.S. cases – often in the same session, explicitly designed to facilitate comparative analysis.

Yet the marriage of curriculum structure and pedagogical delivery, set against the backdrop of diverse governance contexts, remains uneasy. Sometimes this expresses itself in the kind of philosophical questions which often leave discussions hanging, not least because the significance of the question remains unclear. In Singapore, faculty have asked each other for years: Are we an 'Asian school of public policy'? Or simply 'a school of public policy in Asia'? What would make the difference? Sometimes the uneasiness boils down to the frequently expressed dissatisfaction heard among faculty (and sometimes students) with available textbooks, case studies and syllabi. It is a situation likely to fuel continued experimentation, even innovation in curriculum matters.

One example of an innovative process and outcome in curriculum design is found in the Hertie School, launched in 2005. It went through an actual application of that usually hypothetical question, 'What if we could start over and redesign this enterprise from first premises?' Its initiators held extensive consultations with presumed employers of future graduates to examine what skills sets they would be looking for. They systematically reviewed curricula around the world. They took stock of emerging trends and needs in the region. The outcome was a curriculum that is far from a carbon copy: it builds in core courses in administrative law and extensively covers international, intergovernmental affairs: "How could we *not* have done so in the European context?" asked Gregor Walter. Its courses also reflect a substantive emphasis on Europe's politics and welfare state model.

Curricula in the emerging programs thus have strong structural similarities with those in North America. But national administrative cultures exert an important influence on them, as does the comparative freedom from path dependence afforded designers in emerging environments. This makes the programs important sites of curriculum innovation with broader relevance to the field, a point picked up below.

How similar is the 'production process' of graduates? (2): Partnerships and networks

A second set of issues actively discussed in the session concerned the way partnerships and, more broadly, a process of harmonization is influencing the educational experience on offer in these schools. All of the programs noted have some important cross-national dimension to their degree programs – something that in itself would be more remarkable if it were not so obviously needed in the contemporary world. These partnerships take several, sometimes overlapping forms.

One type is partnership is of a contractual nature: an international program seeks in an established North American counterpart advice, validation and a ready host to whom students may be sent for international exposure. This type of cooperation, if successful, is presumably no longer needed within a few years, and morphs into some other form below.

A second type is a range of more equal partnerships involving reciprocal exchanges of students and sometimes faculty. These 'bilateral' exchanges can be highly popular with both administrators eager to demonstrate they are on board the 'globalization express' and students seeking, literally, to go places with their education. Hence they have proliferated in recent years – at least on paper. The problem is that a fair number *remain* paper (or rather promotional) rather than truly operational partnerships, with little value realized for students or the institutions involved. Real partnerships – all agreed in the discussion – are capacity-intensive, demanding both the negotiation skills of an entrepreneur and the accountant's attention to detail; no wonder they have spawned a growth industry in 'academic diplomacy'. This can be a costly affair. One discussant noted that perennial problems of semester cycles and transfer credits had led his university to shut down some of its partnerships. More substnatively, some question whether programs are not losing something valuable in these exchanges: namely the ability to a create coherent, sustained sequence of courses that lead to a skills-set justifying the title 'master in [anything]'. So if 'support' for the theory of partnerships is unmistakable, challenges do remain on both the 'mission' and the 'capacity' sides of the fabled strategic triangle.

The third type of partnerships poses even greater challenges while promising greater potential benefits. We might call them ‘multi-lateral networks’: multiple institutions working together to harmonize procedures, curricula and academic cycles, and to build what Eugene Bardach terms ‘interagency collaborative capacity.’ They do so to increase the frequency, reduce the (long-run) frustrations and transaction costs, and add to the value of all types of student and faculty exchanges (while in some cases adding even more to the promotional value of the partnership). These complex partnerships bear some examination. Europe is the contemporary world’s undisputed heavyweight champion in the area of developing supra-national institutions (not that it is incapable of tripping on its own shoestrings). This movement has created opportunities for university (and public policy school) harmonization as well. The 1999 Bologna Declaration, described in the companion paper to this session, harmonized standards, transfer credit rules and semester cycles across 29 countries in Europe in a way that should fundamentally change the landscape of inter-university exchanges and integration. Faculty from schools in the thick of these developments – Bocconi and the Hertie School – were animated as they conveyed the possibilities to the others – most importantly, any student should be able to complete a semester or year at any of the universities in Europe.

Similar multilateral partnerships have gone intercontinental as well, with the only difference being that the schools must themselves do more of the legwork of harmonization. One such partnership is the ‘Global Public Policy Network,’ with three founding members in Science Po (Paris), the London School of Econmics, and Columbia University. It aims to link at present several policy and international affairs programs in a network enabling students to earn a dual degree by attending any of the partner schools in the second year. This network is laying the groundwork carefully for more regular exchanges and a possible extension of the network to Asia. Some networks are probably also springing up more informally between schools that have long exchanged students.

No prizes for this prediction: the frequency and intensity of exchanges will have significantly increased in ten years’ time. More than ever, these partnerships will demand much work and creativity in order to realize promised gains. But beyond practical challenges, they raise questions: How will partnerships change the experience of studying public policy compared, say, with the situation twenty years ago? Where, given the rapid pace of their development, are these programs and partnerships taking the field?

Not just 'exotic dots on the map': The broader questions posed by emerging programs

On the theme of partnerships, one faculty member of an 'emerging' program posed an intriguing question, which was followed by a few seconds of uncomfortable silence:

> *How do programs in the U.S. view their international partners? What do they want out of us? Are we just exotic dots on the map for them…?*

Evidently not. One of the strongest conclusions one can draw from this discussion is that international programs are challenging the field of professional policy education as a whole, in least three ways.

Need to reorient pedagogical models

The growing prominence of international programs is occurring at the same time that many – perhaps most? – U.S.-based programs are seeing continued rises in the percentage of students from foreign countries. In some programs, as many as half of each cohort is taken up by international programs, and a figure of one-third is not at all uncommon.

One might wonder how well this fact is being taken on board in our classrooms and pedagogical strategies. I am aware of one prominent American program in which the core course in the politics of policy analysis is taught with literally all featured examples and case studies drawn from the U.S. context, despite the fact that at this school over 45% of each cohort is non-American. Undeniably, foreign students will have an interest and a need to learn about the U.S. setting. Still, one wonders if this degree of near exclusive focus represents a well thought-out, satisfying answer to our shifting spectrum of customers, not to mention – and here John Ellwood's plea for more international affairs content rings true – the challenges of the 21st century.

Intriguingly, international programs face the same challenge of coping with diversity in the classroom. The form the challenge takes can vary, but as noted above, most international programs are even more 'de-centered' from any one national context and student body than the American programs. Far from muting the problem of pedagogical delivery, this fact can bring it to a fever pitch, as we are confronted by the issue every time we walk into a classroom with (as in a recent LKY School case) 21 nationalities represented, none comprising more than 15% of the class. Essentially we in the emerging programs are drawing from the same – often too well-worn – bag of pedagogical tricks – academic cultures are surprisingly isomorphic around the world –

and the bag often doesn't seem to offer a solid solution to some of the practical problems of classroom management and course structure faced in this changing landscape. As Jeffrey Straussman noted in his conference paper,[3] "[p]rograms that draw students from around the world first acknowledge that the presence of, say, 20-30 percent of students from other countries changes something—but we are not sure exactly what." We might look for implications of this diversity in at least two places: delivery and content.

In terms of delivery, one of the difficulties that may be accentuated in such a setting is the diversity of academic preparedness and English ability. Almost all programs, in the U.S. and abroad, are selective, claiming to admit only well-prepared students with high degree of quality control. But the truth is that the higher the international content, the more difficult it is to evaluate student qualifications,[4] including (despite standardized testing) English proficiency. The question of where to draw a line in the sand on TOEFL scores, for instance, can be much harder than one might think, given that English ability and the relevance of a student to the professional program setting do not always correlate, and because TOEFL results can themselves sometimes be misleading, as acknowledged by a number of faculty and administrators at the conference. Thus, the problem of diverse levels of academic preparedness in the same classroom cannot be totally 'solved' on the recruitment side; whether heeded or not, it calls for a re-think of what works in terms of course structure and classroom management as well – again, even in the most selective programs.

Part of its answer in America and beyond may well lie in new approaches to delivering content in the classroom. Michael O'Hare's conference paper[5] made a case for a 'coaching' (Theory C) over a 'telling' (Theory T) approach to teaching; and Robert Frank[6] suggested that we may be trying to "teach too much" in many classes, cramming in frameworks, readings, methods and tools with little thought to what skills can be successfully mastered or shifts in perspective sustained. The emerging programs are of course not 'creating' this delivery challenge. But they will likely serve as important

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[3] "Public Management, Politics and the Policy Process in the Public Affairs Curriculum", available at http://www.appam.org/conferences/spring/parkcity2006/2006Spring_paper_session6B.pdf . Quote is from page 7.

[4] Not that assessing U.S. students' true appitutdes and learning before *or* after attending university is very easy, as argued by Professor James Wilkinson in a controversial talk recently; see www.unimelb.edu.au/speeches/menziesoration.html.

[5] "Pedagogy for Policy Analysis and Management", available at http://www.appam.org/conferences/spring/parkcity2006/2006Spring_paper_session3A.pdf

[6] "Do We Try to Teach Our Students Too Much?" Available at http://www.appam.org/conferences/spring/parkcity2006/2006Spring_paper_session4A.pdf

‘proving grounds’ for different solutions to common challenges, given that they are on the sharp end of the diversity issue.

Another part of the response to the diversity issue may lie on the content side – on what we think we should be teaching.

Need for a comparative approach in theory

If part of the diversity described above is national, this has an interesting effect. What happens to a class when there is no national center at all (as will be the case in a number of the programs noted)? Assume we had the perfect approach to teaching these highly diverse cohorts. Still, what would we teach?

This question is just beginning to dawn on many of the practitioners who shared views at the conference, and was mentioned only briefly during the session discussion. My own sense is that this issue, if taken seriously, has great implications both for ‘emerging’ and U.S.-based programs, and that answers will be sought in at least two areas.

First, the growing diversity of students and relevant country contexts encompassed by our course material suggest the need for an enhanced focus on comparative analysis and lesson drawing across policy contexts and time. Not by chance, one of the main textbooks in a colleague’s ‘political and organizational analysis’ core course in the LKY school’s MPP program was Richard Rose’s *Learning from Comparative Public Policy: A Practical Guide* (Routledge, 2005). To give another anecdote from Singapore, the MPM degree program for relatively senior civil servants from around Asia has an ‘attachment’ program within Singaporean ministries, following which students write an ‘analytical paper’. For five years, faculty have struggled with the question, what learning is this paper aimed at facilitating? The main answer that emerged is that it should help train students to think systematically about the opportunities and difficulties of policy transfer across institutional contexts. But clearly this ‘answer’ is a beginning, not an end point, for searching out – even creating and synthesizing – relevant theories and frameworks that will come back to inform our work in the classroom.

Another area of content-based experimentation that follows from this challenge is harder to define. It relates more broadly to the ever increasing relevance and importance of theoretical development in public policy and management within a comparative, cross-country frame. In my own public management courses, I often employ the strategic management framework elaborated in Mark Moore’s contemporary classic *Creating Public Value* (1995, Harvard University Press). But as relevant and useful as this framework is as a diagnostic tool for a broad range of management settings, the more substantive analysis and case studies offered in Moore's book end up being difficult to deploy in the diverse classrooms mentioned above – so grounded are his examples in the political context and traditions of bureaucratic accountability of the U.S. What does it mean for public managers to act strategically within governance contexts that confront practitioners – whether theoretically, ideologically or very practically – with claims of a significantly different relationship between bureaucrats and politicians, for instance? The demand for different answers to this and similar questions – including answers that translate well into classroom and executive program settings – probably outstrips the current rate of comparative work in the field, and this itself is bound to fuel both dissatisfaction and innovative production. Stay tuned: some of the most interesting comparative theory may well emerge in the coming years from the international schools.

The institutional challenge

That leads to a final issue, perhaps also going back to the original 'exotic dot' question. How will emergence of programs around the world be reflected in the institutional arrangements and professional associations that are meant to facilitate our joint learning, including APPAM itself? Some observers have questioned, at least anecdotally and in private, how effectively the field's professional associations have served as fora for addressing the issues and research that have great salience for the 'emerging' programs. This may be inaccurate, or it may be changing; certainly, such relatively new journals as the *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis,* a number of informal comments during this conference, and the international partnerships described above, all gave a clear sense that the demand for 'all things international' in the field is growing. But the very awkwardness of the terms used in this rapporteur's report – with all programs collectively outside of the U.S. variously described as 'emerging' or 'international', for instance (both of which fail to serve as very satisfying labels) – underlines the "collective hand wringing" the field is experiencing, to use Jeffrey Straussman's description. How and to what extent we will need to develop different capacities or discourses to adapt to the internationalization of the field is an open question that went beyond the session's discussion. But the overall conclusion seems clear: rather than being a specialty topic – 'what's happening in public policy education outside the U.S.?' – the 'emergence' of international programs may have just begun to shape the contours of the field of professional policy education as a whole.