

European Perspectives for Public Administration (EPPA)

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** Draft version – comments are very welcome**

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Abstract:

There have been several and repeated attempts trying to review the 'state of the art' and to formulate future directions for Public Administration, and this may even be a sign of a certain lack of maturity of the field. But it is also an indication that we should try harder. This paper presents first findings from an internet-based survey amongst European Public Administration scholars about how our colleagues and peers see the most important challenges, but also the most needed developments in the field in the next decades. The survey is not representative, but invited participants to comment on a number of (more or less) controversial statements about the development of our field, so it allows a qualitative and discursive analysis of important positions and contradictions. The survey is the first part of an ongoing project to develop common European Perspectives for Public Administration (EPPA).

1. The Project

This paper is a 'workshop report' about an ongoing project trying to map and define 'European Perspectives for Public Administration' (EPPA)². In this project, we aim at taking stock of important developments and problems in our field of study and research, and at the same time to start a debate about a distinctively European vision. In Public Administration, here always understood as the academic undertaking of teaching and research, there have been several and repeated attempts trying to review the 'state of the art' and to formulate future directions, and this may even be a sign of a certain lack of maturity of the field.

The paper proceeds in four steps. In the next section, we give a short overview about preceding attempts in this area and explain our main concerns. We then sketch our own approach, using an internet-based survey amongst European Public Administration scholars and researchers. Therefore, we distributed the invitation to participate in the survey among all EGPA members and the participants of the 2015 EGPA Annual Conference. In the main section we present very first findings from this survey, and we close with a preliminary conclusion and suggestions for future activities and research.

Obviously, our field of studies has had and still has different names: Public Administration (PA) is probably the oldest one, and it carries, at least in some quarters, a connotation of old fashioned bureaucracy, formalism, rule fixation and dusty files. In the 60ies it became so unfashionable, 'the backwater of the profession', that a number of scholars in the US, supported by the Ford Foundation, invented and defined a new field, or at least new schools of Public Policy (PP), more quantitative, more academic and more prestigious, more concerned with outputs and outcomes than with structures and processes. About 20 years later Public Management (PM) emerged as the new concept, again more modern, more inspired by the private sector, more dynamic and resource oriented (see Jann 1991 for a brief narrative of these developments). But even this innovation did not last forever - which

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innovation does? - so Public Governance (PG) has been the most recent addition, more network and civil society oriented, even more modern and up to date, and so on. By now we have schools, departments and degrees of PA, PP, PM and PG.

So what's in a name? Obviously, we can identify scholars or papers and books which more or less clearly belong to one of these traditions. But what is their association, how do they relate to each other, and is it at all possible to define or even defend borders and distinctions? We will not be able to resolve this ongoing debate in this paper, with all its intricate connections to different disciplines and traditions, but we want to clarify how we have approached these confusions.

We start with the observation of different disciplinary and even national traditions, which as ideal types look something like this:

1. Public Administration and Public Management belong to two different disciplines, one inspired and dominated by Political Science, the other by Generic Management. This we would call the Traditional Teutonic Type, still prevailing in most parts of Germany, where a professorship in Public Management will never be filled by a social scientist, but has to come from '*Betriebswirtschaftslehre*' (BWL), a specific form of teutonic Management teaching, which looks at itself as a special subfield of Economics and is always situated in departments of Economics. Here most of the old stereotypes of Christopher Pollitt still hold.

TABLE 1: ALLEGED DIFFERENCES OF CHARACTER AND FOCUS BETWEEN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (Pollitt 2016, 6)

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (PA)	PUBLIC MANAGEMENT (PM)
Old-fashioned, traditional, introverted	Modern, outward-looking
Static - hierarchies and procedures	Dynamic – leadership, innovation
Focus on following rules – compliance and accountability	Focus on managing resources – efficiency and performance
Focus on machinery of government	Focus on multi-stakeholder governance

2. Another ideal type we would call the Traditional US Type. Here Public Administration is the more generic term, and Public Management is a subfield of the overall field. Professors of PA may either be social scientists or more traditional management scholars (but usually not economists), and the department may be called PA, PM, PP or PG, but the more generic term is PA, which includes management as one obvious function of PA, but which is not identical with PA.
3. The third is the Northern European Type. This ideal type of PA is closely related not only to Political Science but also to Organisation Theory (OT), in the March/Simon/Olsen tradition. Since management is seen, as a subfield of OT, as established in modern business schools, there is no specific field of PM. PA is only defined by its material object, and management is an obvious function of public organisations.

4. This is also true for the fourth ideal type, which we would call the inclusive European Type. Here both PA and PM mean the same and there is no real theoretical or practical difference between both terms. This is the position which Christopher Pollitt has taken for many years (most recently and distinctively in Pollitt 2016), and where professors may be called one or the other, but the name does not signify anything about disciplinary or theoretical background. In this tradition, many well know professors of Public Management are social scientists by training and orientation (besides Pollitt there are Geert Bouckaert, Walter Kickert, Steven Van de Walle etc.).

Obviously, there are many more facets to these debates, amongst others the tradition of 'administrative sciences', or how types are embedded in different faculties (see EGPA 2010), there are all kinds of combinations and subfields of these ideal types, and still a lot of confusion. But for our study we have used the fourth ideal type. We do not neglect differences between PA and PM in certain countries, but we use the more general term of Public Administration for our survey. Whether our respondents would prefer and identify themselves with Public Management is therefore more of an empirical questions, but we did not include this distinction in our questions.

2. The Predecessors

The cyclical need to reflect on the discipline or the field of research is driven by a series of reasons and tensions, which have to do with assumptions, theories and models, which appear to be unfit for addressing, let alone solving, (re-) emerging problems. These existentialist questions have driven scholars from different disciplines and fields of research again and again to organise reflections within the community of Public Administration. From this point of view, it is useful to study the past initiatives.

2.1 Antecedents of Reflections on the Futures of the Field

Minnowbrook is a small city in the Adirondacks, in upstate New York, where Syracuse University has a conference centre. In this very location, the twenty-yearly milestone conferences in 1968, 1988 and 2008 were organised to reflect on the future of PA from an USA perspective. The 'Minnowbrook'-process, initially, was dialectic, based on small groups, within a specific (USA) context, and paper driven. After a turbulent debate about an agenda for the conference, the 'Savage'- statement was accepted on the objectives and the way to realise this. The ambition was "through the demonstration of a compelling manifest expertise, assert an authority of legitimacy and thereby influence the course of the future inquiry and endeavour in Public Administration" (quoted in Marini, 1971:7). Apart from a national and international political context, there were other elements that were significant. First, several disciplines had 'revolts' and were about to shift too. There was 'new' sociology, 'new' history, 'new' political science. A combination of young intellectual revolts and confrontational politics, also at universities, added to 'turbulent times' (Waldo, 1968).

Minnowbrook I (1968): The two major drivers for this first conference were that "neither the study nor the practice of Public Administration was responding in appropriate measures to mounting turbulence and critical problems" (Waldo, 1971:xiii). Second, there was a worry about the youth and age of those producing research and teaching in PA, especially in 1968, where generation gaps and capacity for the future were at stake. All this sounds familiar today. The Minnowbrook I Perspective reflected and helped to catalyse a 'new' Public Administration. It also helped to set new agendas for new topics and focused on adaptation, capacity and organisational development, normative and empirical theories, comparative Public Administration, policy-making, and rationality, e.g., the failure

of PPBS triggered debates about the inadequacy of traditional theories. Relevance and the 'recovery of relevance' were key topics.

These debates were embedded in the specific context of the Vietnam War and the student revolts. Frederickson's conclusion of Minnowbrook I is coined in the term 'New Public Administration'. "The classic answer has always been the efficient, economical, and coordinated management of (the) services (...). The rationale for Public Administration is almost always better (more efficient or economical) management. (...) New Public Administration adds *social equity* to the classic objectives and rationale. (...) New Public Administration adds this question: Does this service add social equity?" (Frederickson, 1971:311). This results in academic PA to be beyond POSDCORB, and to shift to become a 'change agent'. The Minnowbrook I perspective is, according to Marini (1971:353) a shift for Public Administration to post-positivism, relevance, adaptation to turbulence, and use of new organisational forms with a client-focus. However, what Minnowbrook I missed was the emerging economics literature focusing on public choice and in its wake the new competition of public policy analysis.

Minnowbrook II (1988) was again driven by an awareness of a changed world with a PA which was not fit for that purpose. There was a new awareness of the prominence of interdependence and interconnectedness of policy issues, private-public organisations, and nation-states, combined with a cultural diversity in a variety of forms (workforce, public, world). This pushed the participants to conclude that problems ultimately cannot be solved but only can be *ameliorated*, that the public administrator is a central actor taking several new roles "beyond efficient and effective administrator, including facilitator, negotiator, and ameliorator" (Bailey and Mayer, 1992:viii). This required "a new paradigm, a new view, a new orientation" (*ibid.*). One of the new topics was the focus on feminist views on and in Public Administration.

Even if Minnowbrook II built upon its previous version and for some could be considered as a further development of New Public Administration, there were significant differences and concerns. As a consequence of interconnectedness "every solution creates its own new problems" (Bailey in White, 1992:160). As a further consequence, "public administrators face a dynamic and fluid web of interconnected problems with a feeling of 'constrained hopefulness' about government's role in solving them" (Guy in White, *ibid.*). The 1988 version of Minnowbrook was influenced by post-modern thoughts: "Critiques of positivism, interconnected problems, and feelings of constrained hopefulness are manifestations of society's movement into the postmodern era, an era in which institutions such as science and government are losing their legitimacy. "Stories about the power of science and government to solve problems are no longer universally believed" (White, 1992:160). But what Minnowbrook II missed was the emerging New Public Management, and its ever stronger belief in best practices and generic solutions.

Minnowbrook III (2008) combined critique with a historical perspective and new topics. A whole range of emerging questions included 'black public administration', PA in Asia, Global PA, the role of networks, and the impacts of markets. But the main topic that surfaced was the impact of globalization on the field of Public Administration. This included "increased studies in comparative public administration, more public policy research across international boundaries and the increased role of international organisations in governance" (O'Leary et.al, 2010:282). A second focus was on collaborative governance. This included two shifts. On the one hand a shift from "performance management to democratic performance governance" (Moynihan, 2010). On the other hand it could mean that government is not the only or even not the most important actor: "Governance forms and functions are evolving and manifest themselves and their connectedness to others through networks, contracts, and a range of information technology innovations. (...) Emerging from these governance

changes is a field of public administration practice that is becoming more professionalised than in the past in terms of systems, processes, and tools. (...) This is one indication that while governance has become more global, diverse, and represented by complex governing arrangements and value, it also has departed from the long dominant norms embedded in Western notions of democratic governance" (O'Leary et.al., 2010:284-285). It was even suggested that this could become the topic of Minnowbrook IV in 2028. The third major topic was the role of information technology.

Again, the most crucial topic was relevance. David Rosenbloom summarised five pro-active steps for the field of Public Administration: aggregate knowledge in the sense of making it cumulative; maintain public administration's methodological and epistemological pluralism; maintain public administration's value diversity; continue to promote disciplinary boundary spanners; and monitor relevance (Rosenbloom in O'Leary et.al., 2010:290-291). But while Minnowbrook III was all about globalization and collaboration, significant missing inputs were international scholars and perspectives, and particularly the European voice.

Also in Europe, there have been attempts at mapping and focusing the field. The most prominent is The Bielefeld Project (1985). The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Bielefeld hosted in 1981/82 a research group from eight countries and a range of disciplines, called "Guidance, Control, and Performance Evaluation in the Public Sector". The purpose was to "develop conceptual frameworks which help to understand the structured complexity of relationships within the public sector as a device to redefine situations for the actors concerned" (Kaufmann, 1986:3). Even if there was a strong German component, the ambition was to be interdisciplinary and international. A key message from the conclusions is that complexity needs to be taken into account, and that growing complexity needs growingly complex theories and solutions. After looking at trends and issues, but also shortcomings of current approaches, some of the problems, such as e.g. the 'state vs. society', or 'performance' and 'quango's' were redefined, and there was a special focus on 'co-ordination'. The conclusions were at the same time to specialise, to create a new division of labour but also to co-ordinate efforts.

Other Initiatives to 'take stock' of the field of PA in Europe were undertaken by the European Group for Public Administration (EGPA), on the occasion of its 40th anniversary within the IIAS-family (IIAS was founded in 1930), resulting in an anthropological book on the community of PA in Europe and European PA, taking languages and different PA cultures into account (Bouckaert and Van de Donk, 2010). ASPA, on the occasion of its 75th anniversary published an overview or key topics with timelines and major 'events' and trends (Guy and Rubin, 2015). And finally Pollitt recently (2016) published an enhanced and advanced 'taking stock' of the field of PA and Administration in which he looks at theories, methods and approaches, the community and its relation with practice. He also identifies future trends such as fiscal austerity, technology, demography, climate, and complex interactions.

2.2 Lessons and the need of establishing European Perspectives

When these past efforts of 'taking stock' or 'substantial reflections' are analysed, there seems to be a set of common denominators, assumptions and expectations:

1. Public Administration research and teaching runs too much behind the facts; however it should also be in front of the facts, it should not just push realities but also pull realities;
2. Public Administration is too much dominated by one discipline; however, it should be much more taking several disciplines into account and result in an equilibrated approach;
3. Public Administration is thinking too much in causal terms; however, it should also, as a social science, think in teleological terms;

4. Public Administration is often pretending to be disconnected from time and space; however, it should take actively and positively context and culture into account;
5. Public Administration research is still relevant for practice; however, it should anticipate its future relevance for public administration.

Even though these undertakings offer many inspirations, we are convinced that this discussion needs new inputs, and that we need a distinctively European view. Our basic question is how we as researchers and teachers will and should deal with the changing role of public administrations and the public sector in Europe. Our aims are to define the role of Public Administration (as an academic undertaking) in the future university and the academic world, to take alternative cultures and futures into account, to take multi-disciplinarity seriously, and to strengthen the European voice in the world. We are therefore pursuing four interrelated questions:

1. Keeping an eye on the disciplines: What can we learn and how can we cooperate across the established disciplinary boundaries, which seem to become ever more imperative and un-impregnable?
2. Keeping an eye on the future: How can we learn trusting utopias and distrusting dystopias, learning to think beyond short-term problems and solutions, but trying to be as realistic as possible?
3. Keeping an eye around us: How can we take different cultures seriously, avoiding a 'one solution fits all' approach, while at the same time keep learning from each other?
4. Keeping an eye on practice: What can we teach and how can we help, what are the practical lessons for teaching and research of all this?

The first topic is thus about re-emphasizing the existing and necessary contributions of economics, law, psychology, political science, history, anthropology, and other relevant disciplines in the field of Public Administration. How can we establish new forms of cooperation and learning, and how can we avoid or at least diminish academic silos and established misunderstandings? The second topic focuses on the fact that academic Public Administration has been for many years very Anglo-Saxon oriented, for example basically ignoring the contributions of public law and different national cultures. How can we enlarge this parochial view? The third topic asks how utopias and dystopias appeal to public administrations and to Public Administration. How should we deal with them in academic teaching and research? Just ignoring them, does not seem to be a very convincing option. The fourth topic is finally about organizing the accumulation of knowledge in Public Administration. How can we strengthen comparative research and teaching and how can we integrate different disciplines and scientific approaches with public administration practices?

But why European perspectives? There is a difference between European Public Administration (EPA) and Public Administration in Europe (PAE). It is necessary to distinguish between these two approaches. The one, EPA, takes the contingencies and features of Europe into account. It starts from the European specificities and moves to the general and generic levels. The other (PAE) is about applying general knowledge to the European sphere of public administration. Both approaches invite for comparative research and learning from other practices.

There are specific problems in Europe, which need to be addressed, especially by European scholars. Studying the functioning of the European Institutions and their policies, and their interactions with the Member-Countries, is one of the most significant topics where European Public Administration needs to increase its relevance and its capacity to be part of the solutions. At the same time, Europe is about an ethno-linguistic and cultural diversity. There are 23 official languages in the European Union. To

bring unity in diversity in a context of 'requisite variety' becomes an important assignment for Public Administration.

Transformations of public administration systems in Europe is a combination of causality and path-dependency as a push factor, but also and even more of a teleological drive as a pull-factor. Defining this 'telos' should be part of the role of Public Administration to develop possible futures. The European Union moved from a chapter in foreign policy to a chapter in domestic policy and politics. Therefore, Public Administration also needs to move from Public Administration in its separate Member-Countries, to Public Administration in Europe, to ultimately European Public Administration. This needs the broad umbrella of European Perspectives for Public Administration.

3. The Survey

Following our research interests in the assessments and interpretations of these broad developments and the prescriptive and normative discussion of challenges and changes following from these developments, we decided on a broad qualitative survey with mainly open questions. This design was intended to allow us to get a more comprehensive, open indication of what our peers and colleagues define as their main concerns and their possible reactions and solutions about future challenges Public Administration in Europe, compared with the more standard proceedings of closed, multiple choice questions and answers. The survey is not representative, but invited participants to comment on a number of (more or less) controversial statements about the development of our field, therefore it allows a qualitative and discursive analysis of important positions and contradictions.

A first draft of possible questions and the overall design of the questionnaire were prepared in the beginning of 2015 and were distributed as a pre-test to a limited number of colleagues in July 2015. Following from this pre-test we decided to refine our questions and to start each of our main areas of interest of future challenges: disciplines, futures, cultures and practices with a clear thesis of our own, asking our respondents whether they agree, and if not, why not? We ended up with seven closed questions (yes/no or multiple choice) and 23 open questions, and additional five questions about the personal background each participant.

Concerning the possible respondents and the population of our survey, we decided to rely on the membership of the European Group of Public Administration (EGPA), and furthermore targeted the participants of its 2015 Annual Conference in Toulouse, France. It is very difficult to get an overview or even to decide through objective criteria who belongs to the broad population of researchers and teachers seriously engaged in Public Administration, so we settled on this kind of 'self-selection'. We assume that somebody who joins EGPA and/or its Annual Conference is at least moderately interested in the field, its problems and its future destiny, and might therefore be interested in answering our questions. Furthermore, EGPA is the only platform, which connects colleagues and peers all over Europe and has done so for many years (actually 2015 marked the 40th birthday of EGPA). Since we also assume that (nearly?) everybody who is engaged in PA research and teaching by now uses the Internet daily for her or his work, and is familiar with it, we further decided on a web-based questionnaire. The technical implementation of the survey was outsourced to a small research company in Potsdam (A&O).

In total, the questionnaire and two reminders were sent to about 500 contacts after the EGPA Conference on the 28 August 2015, of which in the end 68 completed the survey. Of these participants in the survey, again roughly 40% of our questions were answered. Most participants (about 75%) are senior academics, teaching and researching PA at the level of professor (full and assistant), another 15% hold a PhD, and 10% were PhD candidates (the future generation). About a third has been in the field since 1995 or longer. The academic background is quite diverse, with the majority coming

equally from Political Science and Public Administration, 12% from Management and about 10% from law, overall from about 10 different European countries.

Obviously, as already mentioned before, this kind of survey and especially this kind of participation does not have and does not claim any representativeness at all. But the 'raison d'etre' of our undertaking was not to obtain a representative view of what colleagues and peers think about our field of study and its future challenges and chances, but to get a broad overview and to map central concerns and perspectives as comprehensive as possible. We aim to start a comprehensive discussion, not to summarise it, and we are therefore interested in the diversity and variety of different views and suggestions, not on statistical medians, averages and ranges. Since we have received a large number of answers and statements to our open questions (usually the length of a paragraph) our approach is more similar to a collection of semi-structured interviews than to a classical survey - even though unfortunately we did not have the chance of follow up on questions, like in a real interview situation.

In order to analyse and to better organise and understand this wide-ranging collection of answers, ideas and concerns we have used a professional software for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis (MAXQDA). The software has helped us to mark, organise and search relevant information in our data with a number of different, specifically developed codes and concepts, and thus retrieve much more contextual and supplementary information than would be possible by simple quotes or word counts. We present these findings as a kind of 'collage of quotes', trying to give both an impression of the amazing variety of views and concerns, which at the same time should lead to a unique picture of our field, if looked upon from some distance.

4. The Results

4.1 General Challenges

The first question we asked was a very general and perhaps somewhat suggestive one: Will Public Administration, as an academic field of research and teaching in 2035 look very different from 1995? The idea was to find out whether our colleagues and peers expect major changes in our field in the next twenty years, and 1995 was mentioned to stress that twenty years are a long way to look ahead, but looking backwards it seems at the same time a rather short, comprehensible time span.

More than 85% of our respondents expect PA to change, and we will look at these anticipated changes in more detail in the next sections. A typical explanation would be

"Much of what we accepted as collective wisdom in the 1960s was being challenged in the 1990s and again the views of the 80s and 90s are under increasing scrutiny. The field cannot possibly stagnate."

But still 15% of our colleagues do not expect major changes, and the reasons they give are interesting and thought provoking (the quotes are from different respondents, they are added together to give an account of major arguments):

"Of course there will be differences (mainly in the eGov direction, transparency), but I am afraid that human character will not progress so much that we could talk about a very large difference. -- Handling politics and production of complex services will not change qualitatively. -- The object of what and how we seek to explain public management phenomena will not fundamentally change. -- Contemporary western democracy has proven to be a durable institutional framework ... And I don't see that being fundamentally challenged in

Europe, consequently the context and values of PA won't either. Instead they will simply turn in circles: market, community, authority."

Here an important caveat for change is hinted at, the conservative and stabilizing effect of institutions, which sometimes gets lost in the dominating concern with administrative reforms, which has been the hallmark of academic PA and especially Public Management for many years. It has been observed before that there has been for some time a lack of appreciation for the inertia of institutions, social structures and established ways of life, as well as an overly generous and optimistic view of the capacity of governments and/or leaders. Also markets and even civil society change and correct political and administrative arrangements, to restructure public organisations, by skilfully measured doses of law, regulation, power or monetary incentives. It could be that it is especially the management-discourse, being closest to economics, which quite often lacks this concern and respect for institutional stability - we will return to this question in the end of our essay.

One of our colleagues sums up this view and hints at some of the changes, which we still have to expect and to deal with and which are further developed and discussed in our survey:

"I think the field will largely address the same fundamental and practical issues as we do today (and have done for over 100 years), but the availability of data will be better and the demands for scientific rigor will be higher."

4.1.1 Challenges for PA Research

Better and more data, and more scientific rigor are indeed some of the main challenges which most of our respondents identify for PA research in the next twenty years. Not, as one could have expected, problems of theory or theoretical foundations, or relationships with practice, or new substantive challenges, even if all of them play a role, but concerns with the **methodological foundations** of our research were mentioned most often. Typical comments were:

"To make the field more methodological robust; a lot of research findings nowadays in EU PA are rather anecdotal than robust -- many [of our] arguments lack extensive empirical support -- methodological advancement (qualitative and quantitative) -- produce credible causal evidence of our claims. Our main problem today is that very little public policy is shaped by insights from PA."

Looking more closely at methodological challenges - and opportunities - **newly available (big) data** are mentioned most often:

"New European data bases coming online are superior to anything else out there --information transparency of the public sector as basis for empirical research -- to make better use of data which are produced by administrations and to cooperate with the public sector in this endeavour -- collecting 'Big Data', that will in time be internationally comparable -- to understand how to use internet and 'big data' for PA research."

Areas mentioned in this regard, but less frequently, were the use of **experiments** and more advanced and informed **comparative research**:

"We need to make experiments our main tool of investigation in order to produce causal claims that in a credible way can inform public policy -- finding a common base for comparative research -- create conditions facilitating continued, high quality comparative work."

The next important item is the everlasting problem of **interdisciplinarity** (we will return to this):

"The next big challenge is placing decision-making into more scientific frames, with the more interdisciplinary view -- cross fertilization with other disciplines -- developing PA ... interdisciplinary and not (only) multidisciplinary, (which is) usually even asymmetric with one discipline too dominating, regardless of being policy analysis, law, management etc. -- we (will) need to collaborate much more closely with other disciplines outside of social sciences in addressing issues of governance, especially as we start to acknowledge the complexity in addressing societal challenges (e.g. security, climate change and its social consequences, mobility, poverty, demographic changes, ...)".

The last comment already lists the main **substantial challenges** addressed in our survey. Migration is mentioned most often (the survey did run last summer during the upcoming European refugee crisis), but also current issues (and usual suspects) like climate, demography, poverty, security and others were mentioned. Austerity was also cited, but not as frequently, and interestingly very often in connection with concerns for less funding for universities, students and research, indicating that this is a problem, which our respondents experience directly.

About the same emphasis, which is put on newly developing social problems as challenges for PA research, attention is paid to more general **theoretical concerns**. Typical challenges mentioned are:

"Strengthen the theoretical base -- More emphasis should be given to theoretical and philosophical study to earn a more respectable status in basic research -- compose into consistent frames (at least relatively so) knowledge in the field which is still mostly layered, or juxtaposed -- not to lose sight of the fundamental issues and questions -- the link of PA with key philosophical questions -- The challenges are improving theory-building and connecting the discipline to broader theories in sociology as well as political theory (e.g. rationalism, structuralism or post-foundationalism) -- In terms of theory we must be more open towards the broader social sciences - in particular cognitive and social psychology".

While most of these comments point towards interdisciplinarity, also in theoretical directions, there is also the opposite concern:

"We need to stop to import theories ... from other fields, and place a greater emphasis on developing and refining PA theories, of both context and behavior within and vis-à-vis public organizations".

And there are also some relevant warnings:

"However, our ... task as researcher is not getting carried away with fashionable topics. The last point can be done by testing theories, replication of research and to slow down the growth of new concepts (in other words: not coming up with a new concept but trying to embed our research in more broad theoretical streams)."

Finally, again with about the same frequency, challenges concerning the relationship between **research and practice** are mentioned:

"Bringing practitioners and researchers together and make research relevant for practitioners -- Dissemination [of research] into practice -- Reinforcing the dialogue with practitioners".

Apart from these well-known slogans, balancing "rigor and relevance" are seen by some of our colleagues as a much more demanding challenge. "Contrasting demands of the world of practice and

academia" are identified, and an "arm's length distance in respect to practical public administration, politics, business interests" is demanded. Finally, the demands of the modern academic world may work against this ideal of practical relevance:

"Maintaining a tight coupling between research and practice and pursuing intellectual innovation is challenged by the incentive systems in the academic world (the need to publish to progress in academic career, and the need to repeat already expressed arguments in order to be published) pushing towards decoupling and conservatism."

Summing up, the main challenges for PA research identified by our respondents are more surprising by the issues which are not or not hardly mentioned than by those most prominently cited. Most common is the concern for more methodological awareness and rigor, perhaps not very surprising when you ask academics about their subject. A little less prominent, but still quite frequently noted are concerns about interdisciplinarity, theoretical foundations and practical relevance. In contrast much less stated are classical concerns of Public Management, like performance, efficiency and effectiveness. They are cited by some of our respondents, but even less than political concerns like democracy, participation and diversity. Even though a number of our participants have a background in law, issues of public law and public administrations are only mentioned very few times.

4.1.2 Challenges for PA Teaching

We also asked our respondents about the main challenges PA teaching will face in the next 20 years. Here the most common concern was the **attractiveness**, both the attractiveness of our programmes for potential and talented students, and at the same time the attractiveness of the public sector and public management as promising careers in general. Main concerns were for example:

"The attractiveness of the discipline of PA for talented students -- to attract talented, and motivated, persons to undertake a full training (MPA, PhD) -- PA is often regarded as dusty. We need to place a greater emphasis on its great relevance, especially with regard to solving the most hard-pressing topics facing EU societies nowadays. Why do we leave the debate about nudging to economists and psychologists, for example?"

At the same time

"Degrees in public administration do not seem to be appealing for students, today. In some countries, a career in public administration is not considered as a good opportunity for different reasons: governments are cutting expenditures (recruitment is limited) and often public administration is de-legitimized (not dynamic, difficult careers, not meritocratic but bureaucratic, difficult to develop new ideas...)."

As one colleague summed it up, our main challenges therefore are

- to attract the brightest students to the field;
- to prepare students for the working life;
- to become better in convincing governments they should hire PA graduates".

All three challenges depend on and influence each other. If we do not convince bright students to study PA, or if they do not learn usable knowledge, we will not be attractive to possible employers, but if career chances in the public sector are slim or are not seen as overly attractive, it becomes hard to appeal to bright students - and so on. This may explain some obvious differences in Europe. In

countries where job opportunities in the public sector are offered and are attractive, like the Scandinavian countries, Public Administration as a field of study and research is attracting bright students and is thriving.

What can we do? Some of the problems seem to be homemade and have to do with our own incentive systems:

"The quality of teaching is under pressure, with incentive systems rewarding research over teaching (no one makes career anymore by being a good lecturer)... [The] 'value' of teaching needs to be increased in comparison to other outputs (articles, research & third party funds). ... Otherwise quality of teaching may not be secured since there are no incentives to focus more on teaching".

Apart from that, there is not much consensus about the direction we should take. Concerning our curricula the same challenges and cleavages which were discussed concerning research strategies crop up again. Some argue that we need more **interdisciplinarity** and more **methodological rigor**, while others see the solution in a stronger disciplinary **self-reliance**. While most agree that our success in teaching depends on being **relevant** for practitioners and future academics at the same time, it is not clear how to achieve that. Here are some contradictory suggestions:

- "Getting insights on governance [from] other disciplines (...) as well as getting ... our own students to address other disciplines -- We need better integration with the broader social sciences. We need to provide our students with a much stronger ability to apply quantitative research designs and experimental methods -- Becoming methodologically more advanced while at the same time creating sufficient theoretical foundation (not merely data-driven)".
- "Public Administration Research and Teaching Network have to invest in ... a new culture of Public Administration. I mean that Research and Teaching Network, universities and other teaching Institution, individual, researchers and professors should focus less on abstract frameworks, methodology rigor, techniques -- Teaching needs to spend more efforts on public governance, stakeholder interests and mediating forces in society; Teaching needs to give less focus in rationalistic maximizing performance tools".
- "The ... challenge is to maintain [our] own specificity and identity because the interdisciplinary approach determines an evaporation of frameworks -- Development of [a] distinctively EU public administration theory and methods of inquiry, rather than one that follows (normally) US models -- defending [ourselves] as a unique area of research (and not only being part of political science, law, economics...) - showing the relevance of Public Administration to students".
- "There is an increasing decline of public administration, public policy and public management teaching programmes ... Students are opting for generic management degrees. The challenge for public administration is [to] enliven the discipline and engage with the practitioner communities on the relevance of public administration scholarship", but we have "a poor track-record of the field in showing its merits and influence".

Some argue that we should be more concerned with "ethics, diversity, and social equity", but as one of our colleagues warns us,

"Public values ... should be at the heart of our teaching. And we will find that we do not agree on what the core Public Values should be".

"The main challenge is to establish the credibility of public administration teaching so that the numbers of civil servants and public managers taking university courses in public administration rises steadily year by year, and does so because the courses are seen to be worthwhile investments in the capabilities of the public sector in all European countries".

We can probably all agree on this summary, but the question how to achieve this is still elusive. But this may also be an artefact of our survey, since we asked, at least in this first general part mainly after challenges and not after solutions. This should change in the further parts of our survey.

4.2 Disciplines

The first substantive area of our questions concerned the many disciplines of Public Administration. Here our again somewhat suggestive assertion was:

In recent years, disciplinary barriers and silos (i.e. between political science, management, law etc.) within Public Administration have become ever more imperative and impregnable and have enhanced established misunderstandings in the field.

Again about 60% of our respondents tend to agree, but that of course implies that about 40% disagree, and again their explanations are interesting and relevant. Typical comments are

"PA is and always will be a multidisciplinary field, it is one of the major strengths of the field -- the barriers between the different disciplines are shrinking -- much of the field has developed positively by incorporating many relevant theories from economics, management, organisation theory, sociology etc. in recent years -- there has been a convergence between disciplines, and PA is at the forefront here -- there are a growing number of PA conferences to which people from Law, Management, Political Science now present work".

Our survey is not representative, so we cannot decide how many of our colleagues share this optimistic view, but obviously not everybody is complaining and there is evidence that PA research and teaching has in recent years embraced and even enhanced **mainstream social science theories and concepts** much more than this used to be the case (this is also the conclusion of the most recent state of the art report about Political Science and Public Administration in Germany, see Bogumil, Jann, and Nullmeier 2006). Maybe the situation in Europe is even more promising than elsewhere, at least two of our respondents observe

"while I agree [to the original assertion of more fragmentation], this is less so in Europe than in the US -- certainly in the US public administration and political science operate as adversaries especially in the sub-field of public policy".

There can be no doubt that **specialization** and following from that **fragmentation** are typical results of academic professionalization and success. The more research and teaching, the more specialisation. Our next questions were thus asking how we should deal with these developments, and how we can enhance learning and collaboration across disciplines. First of all, nearly all of our respondents agree that specialization is necessary and even welcome:

"We cannot avoid specialization; we should rather avoid fragmentation -- The pursuit of specialized and depth of knowledge is not the problem, but rather it is the presumption that other viewpoints are invalid that is the problem. Only when faculties accept the notion that both depth and breadth of knowledge are needed can we get past the emphases on silos of knowledge -- we need both specialization and fragmentation, but we need also coordination and generalists".

But how do we achieve and strengthen breadth of knowledge, coordination and generalists? Here the central answer is, not very surprisingly for students of organisations, **institutionalisation**:

"In the structure and power distribution of the academy, we need strong institutions centred on PA (schools of PA, university departments, institutes, research centres), counteracting the trend (...) towards PA scholars being in a relatively marginalised position within academic loci dominated by disciplines (law, economics, political science), disciplines which are sources for PA research, but in themselves may tend to dominate and confine PA to a marginal field of application. It is very important to foster and grow a strong sense of community in scholars (and practitioners) of PA all over Europe."

Traditional "cross-disciplinary collaborations and joined enterprises - shared conferences, guest journal editorships drawn from other disciplines -- providing cross-disciplinary publications and scholarly outlets to encourage works going beyond specialization and fragmentation" are mentioned several times, but this is probably not enough. We need to create "organizational incentives to multidisciplinary perspectives, e.g. through the creation of multidisciplinary research organizations with a focus on the public sector" and a "strong core".

Here again, practical concerns and teaching could be the nucleus of these kinds of centres:

"The meeting point lies in teaching -- The major instrument of institutionalisation of our discipline is education, study programmes. The main focus should be in the integrative role of Public Administration. Instead of multidisciplinary programmes where each discipline uses its own disciplinary autonomy without much collaboration between teachers, there should be more INTER-disciplinarity where the structure comes from Public Administration (e.g., strategy, HRM, performance, coordination, governance) but other disciplines (psychology, political science, economics, law) approach the theme from their point of view. In a way, a matrix structure of themes of Public Administration and contribution from other disciplines ... Public Administration should lead the contribution coming from other disciplines because Public Administration is the owner of the programme."

Our next question stresses learning across established disciplinary boundaries. How can we create and enhance new forms of **cooperation**? Here two central approaches are most prominent, the central barriers to overcome are "terminology and methodology". Terminology first:

"Collaboration is hindered first by language and labels. We fail to see that similar (yet different) research is going on in other disciplines, in part because we label theories that are quite similar with different names. We miss the common threads and end up arguing about the label rather than the core ideas. -- Concepts already used in other contexts are considered as new... simply because literature from another field of study was not considered -- sometimes we use apparently similar concepts with different technical meanings and aims".

But there are also warnings that we should "slow down the growth of new concepts (in other words: not coming up with a new concept but trying to embed our research in more broad theoretical streams)". The other obstacle to collaboration and mutual learning mentioned again (see above 3.1) are different methods:

"Give up on the concept of specific PA-theories and methods and instead embrace a broad application of the methods and theories available to the social sciences. -- Discussion about the methods used in ... different fields and how they can complement each other. -- Working across disciplines implies to work with multiple methods and theories. An important element in a strategy would be to enhance the quality of qualitative research - in order to have conversations about methods which are open for mutual learning."

Finally, homemade obstacles of the academic system and especially **academic publishing** are mentioned again several times:

"A powerful force for segmentation however is the impact factor calculation in journals. Those with more narrow disciplinary scopes seem to have higher values. -- Change the American dominated journal based assessment and reward system that predominates and public management is enslaved within -- the myopic and entrenched peer system needs to come down -- use reviewers from different sub-disciplines to ensure discussion between the sub-fields."

Finally we asked which disciplines are crucial for research and teaching of Public Administration, and which disciplines need to play a more dominant role between now and 2035 (a normative question). The answers are not very surprising, but confirm established 'stake-holders'.

Table 3 2: Crucial Disciplines

Rank	Crucial Disciplines		More Prominent in the Future	
	first ranked	total ranks	first ranked	total ranks
1	Political Science	Political Science	Political Science	Management
2	Management	Management	Management	Political Science
3	Law	Sociology	Psychology	Sociology
4	Sociology	Law	Sociology	Psychology
5	Economics/Psychology	Economics	Law	History

It should be noted that the differences between the two 'top dogs' (political science and management science) are rather small, as they also are between the 'second tiers' (law, sociology and economics). 'Also runs' were amongst others psychology, history and anthropology, which each were ranked several times, but only psychology and history made it into the list of the need for 'more prominent disciplines' in the future. Interesting is the fate of law, which even gets assigned less relevance in the future. This is probably an artefact of our respondents, which come, as usual, mainly from northern and Anglo-Saxon Europe.

4.3 Futures

In the second substantive area of questions in our survey, we aimed to gain an understanding about future perspectives in the field of Public Administration and about how we as a discipline should react in facing the futures. We started this part of our survey questionnaire again with a provocative statement:

Public Administration is stuck in short-term problem and solution thinking. We need utopias and dystopias.

About half of the survey participants commented on our statement and their reactions can be separated in two strands, again about half agreed and the other half disagreed. Comments stressing the importance of integrating the future, utopia and dystopia in PA research were:

"Utopias and dystopias allow to get out from this short-term thinking by having a broader perspective and enrich creativity. -- Short-term problem solving is important, but we must not lose long-term perspectives. Dreams may be an engine to improve society, if they are well managed -- (...) we need analytically informed research about futures".

But the second strand of comments shows how concerned other respondents are about a potential decrease of the relevance of short-term problem solving and solution thinking in the field of Public Administration. Typical comments are:

"Short term is needed and fitting for today's society. We often do not act fast and short term enough -- We need better theory and testing, not stories – Great theories are for the ivory tower. "

Even though our survey does not claim to be representative these two strands of comments to our introductory statement hint at two dichotomous spectrums in PA research strategies. While some of our colleagues are convinced that short-term problem solving is overall important, other PA scholars express the need for more long-term problem thinking.

To follow up on this introductory statement we asked whether we need more relevant **short-term problem solving**. The answers can be categorised in three groups. The first group goes along with the reaction to the above-mentioned statement and underlines the importance of more short-term problem solving. Our respondents give different reasons for that

"Yes – it enhances the perception that PA can actually improve the world and find solutions to actual problems. -- yes, to increase the visibility of our discipline -- Yes public policy is dominated by policy based evidence-making rather than evidence based policy making. It needs more relevant robust applied practice research as opposed to theoretically based high ranking journal centered research -- We definitely need more mundane but rigorous empirical research on how things (tools, programs, reforms) work or not."

In contrast, the second group of answers emphasised problems of short-term problem thinking and highlights the need for more **long-term thinking**:

"No, I think that this is exactly the difference between public administration and private sector management -- The major challenges in society will need more long-term thinking -- (...) we too much emphasize short term problems and their solutions that in a long time are the very cause or root of the problems. -- I think the job of public admin is not to contribute to instant problem solving, but to show how and why institutions matter for problem solving, how institutions and organizations work, how they shape problem solving and decision making (...)."

One colleague raised an important question about the need and balance of short-term and long-term problem solving strategies:

"(...) the crucial question is the relevance of our research for practitioners. What do we want? Do we want to be their consultants or do we want to explain their behavior? Both directions have their advantages and disadvantages. Maybe we should also think about how we can bring them together."

This fundamental question leads to the third group of answers in relation to short-term and long-term problem solving. Most of our respondents are convinced that the ideal research strategy for PA implies a mixture of short- and long-term problem solving.

"(...) a good mix is necessary -- We must be able to provide solutions to the problems faced by civil servants, but mostly help them redefine the frames of these problems to escape short-termism. But solutions would come from strong theory– building activity."

The combination of both dichotomous approaches seem to be particularly important in dealing with **crisis**, as two respondents pointed out

"There may be policy problems which require short-term problem solving such as a crisis and

there is a place for short term problem solving as not every event is predictable. However, events which lead to a crisis are usually complex and avoidable. A crisis usually demonstrates the lack of long term problem solving. Long term planning and attempting to address wicked policy problems should be a priority, but may not be politically salient as politicians want immediate solutions within election calendars -- Crisis management requests short-term problem solving and long-term solutions."

In a next step, we were interested in **research instruments**, which could be used to enhance realistic future visions beyond short-term problem solving. Not surprisingly, the research instruments most often mentioned overlap to some extent with the mayor challenges of PA until 2035. The instruments mentioned most often are comparative research and interdisciplinary projects and collaborations:

"To create multi-group research projects that can activate comparative researches. -- Cross-country and multidisciplinary research strategies to address longterm, wicked policy problems. -- Discussing beyond disciplinary boundaries. -- Interdisciplinary in topics, methods, profile of researches etc. & international (cross-cultural) collaboration."

In this vein, respondents also mentioned the necessity to combine practical and theoretical knowledge in interdisciplinary projects

"To mix theoretical and practical aspects into interdisciplinary projects cross-disciplines collaborations with academia and practitioners.-- Combination of fundamental (and generic) research and cooperation/inspiration between researchers and practitioners."

Besides comparative research and interdisciplinary collaborations, big data and in particular the use of **big data in mixed methods research designs** are frequently mentioned as a tool to create realistic future visions:

"to learn how to use big data analytics -- Collect big and complex data sets. -- Ambitious mixed methods research (...). Mixed methods implies the use of rigorous observational data, including 'big data', experimental studies and advances qualitative methods, including ethnographic work -- As much data as possible – discovery of patterns in data – predicting the future along non-stop monitoring for changes and adaptation -- More mixed methodology combining quantitative series of data analysis and qualitative in depth understanding/interpretation."

Apart from these frequently mentioned instruments the current publishing strategies within the field of PA are criticised again and the following innovations are suggested:

"First, a place to publish in an open form. Journals are outdated for this mission: academically indexed Youtube video's of researchers commenting, blog's, etc? -- (...) rapid publication of shorter research pieces in PA journals".

Others underline the importance of philosophy to create **realistic future visions** and to overcome short-term problem solving

"foundational philosophical debate may stimulate long(er)- term thinking, and hence also research designs orientated to more fundamental issues (a drawback is reduced accessibility of research outputs so derived to 'standard' outlets of publication). -- political philosophy --

Theoretical and philosophical research could show the way for the overpowering role of administration in all social life (in all organisations and management/leadership)."

With regard to teaching strategies for the futures of PA again **comparative studies** and **interdisciplinary approaches** were mentioned most often. One of our respondents pointed out the idea of a coherent and interdisciplinary concept of teaching:

"PA teaching should align itself with other disciplines, such as management, anthropology, sociology. Develop business and society modules to enhance the importance of PA in societal change processes. Work across disciplinary boundaries. Work with practitioners and policy makers to develop joint curriculum. Add value to society so have courses of greater relevance to societal problems. Predict future skills needs for public servants and align curricula according to these skills gaps. Work with HR Directors in PA agencies to determine what they need for the future."

Other issues that were raised are the integration of future topics and future scenarios in teaching strategies.

"Integrate 'future topics' (like the city of the future for instance) in current curriculums/seminars. Train students to look more ahead than backwards -- add scenarios and make more interactive research with the students. – More courses in (...) future studies – “Scenarios (look at a crystal ball)."

Furthermore, **case based teaching** should still play a role in teaching futures. This can be illustrated with the following statements:

"This could involve using case study type of teaching which engages students in design thinking; working on potential cases could be a strategy to facilitate this -- Case-studies approaches. Best practices."

On the contrary, case study teaching and the usage of best practices was also criticised:

"Case based teaching and best practices are counterproductive to this, I think. Combining theoretical concepts and project work are preferred strategies."

Finally, a quite controversial statement implies that teaching strategies are systematically/naturally biased by the interests of an “old generation” of teachers and therefore do not involve the needs of future scholars in the field of PA.

"The future matters for today’s students more than it does to their teachers who have shorter futures! Those teachers have a selfish stake in the present state of knowledge which may inhibit their capacity to encourage more future-orientated work."

To sum up, the participants of our survey clearly express the need to improve both short- and long-term problem and solution thinking. The main strategy identified to improve our discipline’s fitness for the future is the rigorous application of an inter- and multidisciplinary as well as comparative perspective in research and teaching. A little less prominent, but still often cited are comments about integrating the surfacing issue of big data in our research.

4.4 Cultures

The third section of our internet-based qualitative survey dealt with the interplay of different European traditions and cultures. We collected our colleagues' opinion on this pressing matter and specifically their suggestions about how we as the European PA community should react. We started again with a suggestive statement

Public Administration in Europa does not take different cultures and traditions in Europe sufficiently into account

About two thirds of our respondents agreed with this statement, but the other third gave interesting reasons for their disagreement. One comment raised the important issue that there is not a lack of recognition of cultural differences but instead a lack of **EU-wide solution** thinking:

"I think different cultures are recognized. Moreover, there are EU-wide problems, which require EU-wide solutions (e.g. climate change). This needs EU-wide research whilst taking into account cultures and traditions."

Whereas other respondents emphasized that this situation results from shortcomings in our theories and methods.

"I think this is a result of the weaknesses of our theories and the failure to integrate context into the theories. -- We talk about different cultures all the time. We lack a sufficient way to analyse differences, trends, convergence (...)"

When we asked how the European community of PA scholars can take the notion of different cultures seriously, avoid 'one fits all' approaches, and ensure mutual learning, comparative research was mentioned most frequently as 'the' strategy to **embed and acknowledge cultural diversity** in our studies: "Comparisons are the key to appreciating diversity". Respondents asked to "take comparative PA research to a new level (away from country case studies to more advanced statistical methods)" and emphasized the need for the PA community to "be culturally sensitive and truly comparative."

This demand seems to be related with the challenge of "stopping the Anglo-Saxon domination and giving more attention to other parts of Europe":

"Some parts of Europe are totally beyond the scope of the mainstream European PA scholarships, e.g. especially some larger countries in Southern and Eastern Europe. The 'European perspective' is very much influenced by the studies of a few core EU countries which have great PA scholars. "

Another approach, often mentioned along the need for "real comparative work" is the requirement to extend "cross-national projects, programs and initiatives (...)" and to foster "contacts between researchers from different countries (...) in order to recognize different cultures and solutions" as well as "all forms of 'mobility', including long-term mobility of scholars in countries other than the home country (...)"

Again interdisciplinary work was raised as an issue, especially the need of "being open to introduce historians, anthropologists in the research teams"... Respondents stressed the necessity to change the current PA curricula and to pay "more attention for developments in Europe", "international perspectives" as well as "introducing intercultural awareness in our curricula".

In a second step, we asked more concretely for suggestions how to embed cultural diversity in our research and teaching. Not surprisingly, our respondents again emphasised that both could only be achieved with comparative research as was already stressed. Concerning 'research', comparative projects/research/work were mentioned most often as well as approaches to embed cultural diversity in PA teaching. In order to embed cultural diversity in our research some of our respondents stressed methodological approaches such as "cross-country experiments" and "in-depth interviews" as favourable strategies. Additionally others suggested the development of "specific cultural sensitive instruments /methodologies" as well as the awareness of the necessity "(...) to replicate findings made in one country in other countries and based on that, research on causes for differences in the replication".

Exchange programmes were mentioned most frequently to enhance the nexus between cultural diversity and PA teaching. On the one hand, that implies "Erasmus-like programmes for teachers" as well as "more guest lectures" including "invitations of lectures/speakers from different cultures". On the other hand, students should be encouraged to do "Europe wide excursions (...) to widen their scope". Furthermore, it should be an aim for PA institutes to "recruit more diverse students".

Summing up, most comments in this section underlined the necessity to intensify comparative research in terms of practicalities, approaches and methods, interdisciplinarity and the improvement of exchange programmes for scholars and teachers as well as for students to enhance the integration of cultural diversity in European PA.

4.5 Practices

In the last substantive area of our survey questionnaire we were interested in the relationship between PA research and teaching and practitioners in public administration as well as in the usefulness of our disciplinary output for European citizens.

Again, we started this section of the survey with a suggestive assertion:

Public Administration research and teaching do not deliver sufficient useful knowledge for practitioners and citizens

Even though about 57% of our respondents tend to agree with our view, another 43% disagreed and gave some fruitful input. Some respondents criticized our "**utilitarian view of science**":

"Because the question is framed in an outdated fashion. Knowledge is not produced in a way that it can be packed and delivered to practitioners. It is produced by interaction. Maybe there is not enough interaction, or public administration is not good enough in facilitating interactions..."

Another respondent expressed his or her concerns about the role of PA as a discipline

"I am not sure that we should do this, we are no consultancy firms..."

In contrast, other comments did not agree with our sceptical view about the usefulness of our research and emphasised that the PA community can deliver **useful knowledge** to practitioners.

"We can always do better, but at least in my country the knowledge transfer has been improved a lot during the last years. -- When there is at least some basic receptivity, in my experience PA knowledge is perceived as useful – though PA scholars are less prone to

furnish policy advice than other scholarly communities."

As a follow-up to this introductory statement, we asked our survey participants about suitable strategies to improve the matching of supply and demand between PA research and teaching and practice and citizens. The most frequent mentioned tool for PA research was the improvement of a **dialogue** and the development of **networks**. Both approaches were mentioned often as the most promising strategies:

"Improve dialogue – Bring well educated graduates into practice and to increase the understanding of PA research in practice (...) – How can we develop communities of exchange (...) -- Both environments should not be as isolated as they currently often are. The dialogue and each other comprehension is basic, even if sometimes difficult. (...) -- Establish communication (conferences, workshops . . .) between researchers and practitioners and stress the necessity of knowing each other better. – Closer links with the EU Public Administration."

And even more, some respondents stressed that practitioners should be **actively involved** in research projects:

"Include practitioners in different phases of the research (probably in the earlier phases – model construction) so that the theories/models then tested are already sensitive to specific issues found in practice. -- Thinking about some research projects as being co-created by researchers and practitioners."

Additionally to these illustrations, some respondents criticised again the current publishing strategy in PA research. We as European PA community should ask ourselves: "(...) do we publish in the right papers?" Additional suggestions to better address practitioners and citizens were:

"Publish results in practice-oriented journals -- We need to value more articles close to practical problems. Theory should be more seen as a way to contribute to real problem solutions -- Work more with writing newspaper articles, policy papers and giving speeches in order to disseminate our best research, and picking up relevant topics for on-going and future research. -- twitter, write 'practitioner' article, practitioner points in journals, more active attitude of journal editors in promoting research articles, for instance, I very much like the PAR approach."

Also in the context of teaching PA **dialogue and network** approaches were mentioned most frequently:

"Inviting them to participate and accept our students for internships, doing research on themes relevant to more communities. --Invite practitioners as guest lecturer for special topics that are challenging for practice. -- Encourage students for practitioners internships."

In addition to these frequently mentioned ideas it was stressed:

"Practitioners from policy communities and government should be involved or consulted in the design of programmes and research".

Furthermore it was underlined that it should be an aim of PA teachers to "Convince that public organisations need generalists, not only professionals (e.g. civil engineers, accountant) (...)"and they should "Connect and dialogue with public managers about an initial training of their new members." Finally it was pointed out that it should be an aim for PA teachers to

"(...) give our students the tools that are necessary both to solve practical problems and to understand their conceptual context. Just one side is not enough to find efficient solutions, unfortunately."

To sum up, it seems that 'dialogue' and 'networks' are the ultimate strategy to break through the barriers between the PA research and practitioners as well as between scholars of PA and the European citizens.

5. The Conclusion and further steps

The need to take stock of the Public Administration production of knowledge and its quality (i.e. the academic field), which makes it relevant for the practice of public administration and public administrators (the field of practice) requires a periodic questioning which is critical and future oriented. This exercise should also take the European setting into account, which is not only a context, which defines contingencies, but should also impact the content and the agenda of PA itself. The European Voice and View has been remarkably absent in these debates, and this paper (and its underlying project) want to correct these deficiencies.

This paper therefore starts with a brief overview of existing and prominent 'taking stock' exercises (Minnowbrook et.al.) and identifies a number of current themes, pinpointing recurring problems and controversies of the field. Starting from this 'backward view' we aim at a 'forward view' asking our colleagues and peers about where and how they see the major challenges, but also opportunities and ways forward for the development of PA in the next twenty years. For this, we conducted an open survey within the European community of PA, focusing on the many challenges, disciplines, futures, cultures, and practices, from which we present first findings here. For this undertaking we do not distinguish between Public Administration and Public Management, but use both terms as identical, as is by now common in the inclusive view of the field.

Summing up, the main challenges for PA research and teaching identified by our respondents are more surprising by the issues, which are not or hardly mentioned than by those most prominently cited. Most common is the concern for more methodological awareness and rigor. A little less prominent, but still quite frequently noted are concerns about interdisciplinarity, theoretical foundations and practical relevance. The attractiveness of the field is seen as the major concern for teaching. In contrast much less stated are classical concerns of Public Management, like performance, efficiency and effectiveness. They are cited by some of our respondents, but even less than traditional political concerns like democracy, participation, accountability and diversity.

On the disciplines side, there is an awareness that multiplicity is needed and need to be organised. A combination of sufficient specialization and co-ordination of disciplines will be necessary to tackle complex problems and issues. Political Science and Management Sciences remain high on the PA agenda - they are the most prominent stakeholders. Obviously, 'big data', comparisons, and theories are on the agenda to remain relevant for practice. Even though a number of our respondents have a background in law, issues of public law are hardly mentioned, but this may be more an artefact of the typical Northern-European bias of academic PA and our survey. The (re-) integration of law into current PA-discourses remains an open and ongoing concern of the field.

On the futures side, a pragmatic focus on short-term problems as a driver for research is part of staying relevant. However, the long-term and future focused strategy is clearly recognised and expected to be developed. The participants of our survey clearly express the need to improve research approaches,

short- and long-term problem and solution thinking in coherent research strategies. On the cultures side, there is a realization that cultures and traditions should be more taken into account for the PA agenda. This implies also that a European voice should distinguish itself from an Anglo-Saxon voice and has implications for the comparability of research itself. Finally, on the practices side there is a major concern to stay relevant, even if there is uncertainty of how to stay or increase this relevance. Since this will not happen automatically, this relevance needs to be organised using the main vehicles of dialogues and networks with practice and with academics as the ultimate strategy to break through the barriers between the PA research and practitioners as well as between scholars of PA and the European citizens.

All in all, the survey surprises - at least us - by the diversity of different opinions and evaluations expressed, i.e. on many issues of disciplinary foundations, methodology, research, teaching, future orientation and relevance we have a wide variety of diagnosis and therapy. But at the same time we are also surprised and reassured by the underlying optimism of our peers and colleagues. Yes, the field is under pressure and needs to reorganise and reassert itself, but we seem to have both the resources and the ideas to achieve that. As the most promising way forward to further PA, the establishment of truly inter-disciplinary schools and institutes is identified, i.e. we should take organisation theory seriously and invest more in our own organisation and institutionalization.

This is only the very first step on a longer way, because the overall purpose of this exercise is to contribute to establish European Perspectives for Public Administration (EPPA) as a periodic effort to keep PA relevant and guiding for the practice of public administration in Europe. The next steps will be to develop the four pillars, disciplines, futures, cultures, and practices, in substantial debates and dialogues and to perpetuate and institutionalise this dialogue.

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