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Public Administration Education in Universities in Türkiye: Representative of the New or Safeguard of the Old Administration?

Türkiye’de Üniversitelerde Kamu Yönetimi Eğitimi: Yeninin Temsilcisi mi Yoksa Eski Yönetimin Koruyucusu mu?

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MAKALE BİLGİSİ

Anahtar Kelimeler

Kamu yönetimi eğitimi,
Yönetişim,
Aktör çoğulculuğu,
Tarihsel kurumsalcılık,
Kamu yönetimi müfredatı

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’deki kamu yönetimi bölümlerinin uyum derecesini tanıtmak ve kurumsal bir yaklaşım ile bu yeteneği etkileyen olası faktörleri belirleyerek Yeni Kamu Yönetişimi yaklaşımının alandaki hakimiyetini yansıtmaya yeteneğini incelemektir. Bu amaçla, makale yönetim ve aktör çoğulculuğu gibi göstergelerin kamu yönetimi alanındaki önemli değişimlerin güçlü tezahürleri olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Daha sonra, bu terimlerin Türk üniversitelerindeki Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi ile Kamu Yönetimi Bölümlerinin müfredatlarına yansımada derecesini değerlendirmektedir. Ardından, bu bölümlerdeki kurumsallaşma düzeylerini inceleyerek ve akademik personelin güç ve isteklerini, müfredat uyumunun derecesini etkileyen faktörler olarak titizlikle değerlendirmektedir. Üniversitelerdeki ilgili bölümlerin web sitelerinden toplanan verilere dayanarak, çalışma hipotezleri test etmek için iki set bağımsız değişken oluşturmakta ve her bağımsız değişkenin müfredat üzerindeki etkisinin büyüklüğünü ve önemini değerlendirmek için bağımsız örneklem t-testleri kullanmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bulgular, üniversitelerdeki kurumsal gücün ve aktörlerin güç ve istekliliğinin, bölüm bağlamlarında müfredat değişikliklerini şekillendirmede temel belirleyiciler olarak ortaya çıktığını önermektedir.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to introduce the degree of adaptation of the departments of public administration in Türkiye and with an institutionalist approach to identify the possible factors that affect this ability to reflect the New Public Governance approach dominance in the field. For this end, the article asserts that indicators such as governance and actor pluralism serve as potent manifestations of the significant shifts occurring within the field of public administration. It then proceeds to evaluate the extent of the reflection of these terms in the curricula of Political Science and Public Administration and Public Administration departments in Turkish universities. Subsequently, it examines the levels of institutionalization within these departments and scrutinizes the power and willingness of academic staff as factors influencing the degree of curriculum adaptation. Based on data collected from the websites of the related departments in universities, the study constructs two sets of independent variables to test hypotheses. It then employs independent sample t-tests to assess the magnitude and significance of each independent variable’s impact on the curriculum. So, the results show that institutional power in universities and the ability and willingness of actors become the most important factors in changing the curriculum in departmental settings.

Since the late 1980s, the Western world has witnessed tremendous changes not only in the economic, social, and political spheres but also in the administrative field. These experiences in the Western world have inevitably affected public administration globally, leading to its restructuring based on new approaches such as market orientation, neoliberalism, new public management and governance. In this process, the reshaping of the structure, functions, and service delivery methods of public administration has been widely discussed. All these changes have prompted departments of public administration in universities worldwide to reorient their capacities to educate future administrators who are well-equipped to understand these developments and implement the necessary changes. The core element of this reorientation has been the updating of departmental curricula in accordance with the developments in the field of public administration. But studies show that the adaptation of curricula in universities that reflects the new foundations of New Public Governance (NPG) on concepts such as governance, decentralization and pluralism is still very poor. A similar situation is also expected for the Turkish case. Similarly, studies show that the reflection of these transformations in the education programs has not been uniformly applied across all universities. Based on the institutionalist approach, we argue that the explanation for the divergence in the level of adjustment among departments is found in the sociological agent/structure compositions. Institutions are shaped by the values and ideologies of the actors that form them, but once established, the foundational values and ideologies become normative traditions that are passed on to incoming actors. By their nature, institutions resist change, which is often the result of a parallel change in the composition of the actors involved. Therefore, when considering public administration departments as institutions and academic staff as actors, we should expect the magnitude of adaptation to be closely related to the level of institutionalization of the department and the power and willingness of its academic staff.

Based on these discussions, the aim of this paper is, first, to evaluate the degree of reflection of the NPG in the curricula of the departments of Public Administration and Political Science and Public Administration in Turkish universities. Furthermore, our second aim is to examine the level of institutionalization of these departments and the composition of their academic staff as factors affecting the degree of reflection. Arguing that governance and actor pluralism are strong indicators of the major changes taking place in the field of public administration, we develop a dependent variable for each department by identifying the percentage of course names that contain either of these indicators in the curriculum for the academic year 2019-2020. We believe these variables help to identify how much transformation in the public administration is reflected in the curricula in Turkish university departments.

To test our hypothesis, which suggests that the institutionalization level of the department and the structure of the academic staff influence the degree of transformation, we incorporated two sets of independent variables into our model. The first set comprises department and university-level variables that we believe measure the level of institutionalization. These include the year of the department's and university's foundation that measured the age of the institution; the name of the department and its faculty, its language, and the percentage of academic staff whose area of expertise is public administration, which measures the strength and homogeneity of the department's identity. Whether the department changes its name, whether it is in a public or private university and the percentage of selective Public Administration (PA) courses as indicators of institutional flexibility. To measure the structure of the academic staff, we include variables such as the mean year the academic staff earned their PhDs and the percentage of professors, associate professors, and assistant professors in the academic staff. Our study involves testing the magnitude and significance of the means of each cited independent variable on the dependent variable by using independent sample t-tests.

We believe this study is a first step in understanding the factors affecting change in departments and, as such, provides a possible roadmap by clarifying the major obstacles and opportunities for departments, not only in public administration but also in other fields, to introduce new developments in their educational systems. Our study also opens a window for the investigation of the effectiveness of each of these variables with larger data sets collected from different countries.

1. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Any change in the political, economic, social, and cultural environment where public administration operates generates transformative effects on public administration. Particularly with the increasing impact of globalization in the 21st century, service delivery has diversified, and alongside the state, service provision has begun to be carried out in collaboration with non-state actors. Furthermore, the increasing complexity, wickedness, and global nature of the problems faced by governments have compelled public administration to undergo change, leading to the restructuring of public administration for problem-solving. In this context, the dominant paradigm of traditional public administration until the 1980s gave way to New Public Management in the 1980s, and subsequently, the focus shifted to governance in the 1990s and New Public Governance in the 2000s

(Dunleavy and Hood, 1994; Osborne, 2006). Within this framework, the role, position, responsibilities of the state, and its relations with non-state actors have been redefined, and the principles, values, methods, and processes predominant in public administration have shown variations. Governance and actor pluralism have become indispensable aspects of the New Public Governance of today.

The paradigm that emerged in the late 19th century and prevailed in public administration until the late 20th century was the traditional public administration (TPA) approach. Built upon the distinction between politics and administration and influenced by Max Weber's ideas, TPA embraced a bureaucratic model based on hierarchy and meritocracy for much of the 20th century (Robinson, 2015, s. 5). The fundamental elements of traditional public administration can be outlined as follows: dominance of the rule of law, focus on the application of established rules and guidelines, central role of bureaucracy in policy-making and implementation, commitment to incremental budgeting, and dominance of professionals in service delivery systems (Osborne, 2006, s. 378). In traditional public administration, services provided through political input and bureaucratic oversight are crucial. The role of managers is limited to ensuring adherence to rules and appropriate procedures. The definition of public interest is made either by politicians or experts. Therefore, public contribution is either minimal or absent (Stoker, 2006, s. 44). The traditional public administration (TPA) paradigm reached its peak in the post-1945 welfare state era, particularly in the United Kingdom, where the state aimed to meet all social and economic needs of its citizens (Osborne, 2006, s. 378). Accordingly, demands on the state in areas such as mass citizenship, education, and healthcare significantly increased. To cope with these demands and fulfill the promised welfare responsibilities of the state, administrative interventions were standardized (Stoker, 2006, s. 45).

However, over time, the emergence of governance issues on one hand and developments in the economic, social, and political environment on the other hand posed challenges to traditional public administration. Criticisms from academic and political circles further added to these challenges (Osborne, 2006, s. 378). It was acknowledged that the traditional public administration paradigm could not provide effective theoretical guidance for contemporary state management, leading to new avenues of inquiry. This paved the way for the emergence of the New Public Management (NPM) approach. The New Public Management refers to a series of new approaches to public management and administration that emerged in countries such as the UK, USA, New Zealand, and Australia in the 1980s. The NPM model emerged in response to the limitations of traditional public administration to adapt to the demands of a competitive market economy. At the heart of NPM is the containment of costs, the incorporation of principles and methods prevalent in private sector management into public administration, and the establishment of competition (Robinson, 2015, s. 5). NPM emerged as a "marriage" of two different intellectual currents: institutional economics (drawing from theories such as public choice theory, transaction cost theory, and principal-agent theory) and managerialism. Compared to traditional public administration, NPM signifies a profound change in the management of the public sector (Hood, 1991, s. 5-6). Nowadays, issues such as not only budget preparation but also budget management, contracts with private sector service providers, contract culture for personnel, which may or may not be renewed for specific periods, entrepreneurship, risk-taking, and accountability for performance have come to the forefront in public administration (Bovaird and Loeffler, 2003, s. 6).

The NPM aims to eliminate the bureaucratic aspect of the Weberian traditional public administration model. It declares the departure of large, multi-purpose hierarchical bureaucracies and the arrival of lean, flat, autonomous organizations guided by a tight central leadership cadre (Stoker, 2006, s. 45-46). Its basic elements can be articulated as follows (Hood, 1991, s. 45): Transition to professional management in the public sector, clear specification of performance standards and measures, result-oriented approach, disaggregation of public sector units into smaller parts, an emphasis on competition in the public sector, prioritization of private sector management techniques, and prudent use of resources. NPM, whose primary objective is to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in public administration, has envisioned reducing or eliminating the differences between the public and private sectors to achieve this goal. Since its inception, NPM has had significant effects on the public sector. However, as NPM has matured and its practices have become more widespread, its weaknesses and downsides have started to emerge, leading to criticisms. Attention has been increasingly drawn to the theoretical weaknesses of NPM, and the paradoxes, contradictions, and unintended (sometimes adverse) effects it has created have become topics of debate (Hood, 2000). In fact, it has been noted that NPM reforms aimed at creating "a better-performing and less costly government" have resulted in higher costs and more complaints after implementation (Hood and Dixon, 2015, s. 265).

The disappointment with NPM, the perceived lack of success of its reforms, and the intensified criticisms have led to a breakaway from NPM. Considering the emerging negatives and criticisms, there has been a call for a more comprehensive theory of public administration. The need has been expressed to move away from the dichotomy of 'administration versus

management' and to address theories of public administration studies and practices in a more holistic and integrated manner (Osborne, 2006, s. 380). New approaches that place citizens at the center of reforms instead of privileging the market and the private sector as the main components of reform have started to emerge. These new approaches not only offer an alternative model of public administration but also provide a new and different perspective that emphasizes the role of citizens in policymaking and co-producing public services (Robinson, 2015, s. 9). In this context, emphasis has been placed on New Public Governance as a new theory. New Public Governance (NPG) emerged as a new theory following the perceived failures of both traditional public administration and NPM. Proposed by Osborne (2006; 2010), it is considered a new model for the delivery of public services and implementation of public policies, positioned as an alternative to TPA and NPM (Osborne, 2010, s. 7). New Public Governance is based on both a plural state, where multiple interdependent actors contribute to the delivery of public services, and a pluralist state, where multiple processes inform the policymaking system. In this context, it seeks to understand the development and implementation of public policy, focusing more on the management of inter-organizational relationships and processes (Osborne, 2006, s. 384) in terms of governance and multiplicity of actors.

The concept of governance has a long history and is deeply rooted in public administration literature. Governance is concerned with the processes through which public policy decisions are made and implemented. It is a result of interactions, relationships, and networks among different sectors such as government, public sector, private sector, and civil society. Governance involves decisions, negotiations, and various power relationships among stakeholders to determine who gets what, when, and how. Therefore, governance determines how services are planned, managed, and regulated within a political, social, and economic system (UNDP, 2015, s. 5). Governance comprises rules, structures, and procedures that empower stakeholders to influence decisions affecting their well-being. In this context, public governance refers to the rules, structures, and procedures that empower stakeholders related to a public issue or policy to influence decisions. The NPG, rooted in organizational sociology and network theory, emphasizes the governance of inter-organizational relationships and processes, where trust, relational capital, and relational contracts serve as fundamental governance mechanisms, rather than focusing solely on organizational form and function (Osborne, 2006, s. 383). Unlike previous approaches, the NPG views citizens as co-producers and emphasizes citizen empowerment and increased citizen orientation (Wiesel and Modell, 2014, s. 178). In this context, it advocates for expanding arenas of empowered participation that bring together public and private sector actors in continuous dialogue and supports more direct forms of civil engagement (Torfing and Triantafyllou, 2013, s. 14). It focuses on achieving public service delivery through more collaborative systems, as opposed to the efficiency logic under competitive market conditions emphasized by NPM. In this regard, it emphasizes the increasingly broader and proactive participation of citizens as co-producers (Wiesel and Modell, 2014, s. 179-180). Separately it emphasizes collaboration rather than competition to address complex policy issues and dilemmas in administrative management processes. Within the framework of collaboration, it aims to enhance negotiation among different levels of public authorities. It also seeks to encourage interaction between public and private sector stakeholders, striving to establish networks, partnerships, and relational contracts accordingly (Torfing and Triantafyllou, 2013, s. 15). In the NPG, the output of the political and administrative system is not limited to prohibitions, permissions, and authoritarian decisions related solely to public services. Additionally, it includes new governance tools that involve and empower stakeholders in solving public issues and producing services (Torfing and Triantafyllou, 2013, s. 14-15). To ensure control over these processes, NPG emphasizes not only constitutional and political accountability but also multiple forms of accountability based on various standards conducive to institutional learning (Torfing and Triantafyllou, 2013, s. 14, 16).

The transition from traditional public administration to New Public Management and then to New Public Governance entails changes in the fundamental duties, roles, and responsibilities of public institutions. Each new era brings new methods, principles, values, service delivery approaches, and management/governance logic for public institutions and administrators. Reading, understanding, and keeping up with these changes, as well as identifying emerging needs and meeting evolving expectations, are among the expected attributes of public administrators. Acquiring competence in this context primarily begins with the education process. Considering that the new era is governance and multiple actors focused, public administration is expected to be open to multiple stakeholders and to embrace thinking, working, and delivering services together in partnership consciousness. However, achieving this collaboration is not straightforward. Therefore, the question of how public administration, as an academic discipline, will contribute to enabling such collaboration becomes crucial (Bovaird, 2002, s. 350-351). The answer to this question determines both the role of public administration and the shape of public administration education. Consequently, it will define how prepared and open individuals studying public administration education will be for this change and collaboration.

2. EDUCATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: MAKING ADAPTABILITY POSSIBLE?

In order for public administration and public services to become more qualified, it is important for public administrators and civil servants to have an appropriate education. In order to meet this educational need, programs at undergraduate and graduate levels are being opened and educational activities are being carried out. Public administration education encompasses aims such as training public administrators, restructuring public organizations, delivering public services in line with needs and expectations, and enhancing the life standards and quality of citizens, making it significant. However, public administration education inherently contains various challenges. Deciding how public administration education should be conducted and, determining the methods and courses to be followed in education are not topics easily decided upon. Additionally, the ever-changing nature of public administration, both as a field of practice and as a discipline, may create new areas of debate for the purpose and especially the content of public administration education.

Despite ongoing discussions regarding the definition of public administration (Jones, 2012, s. 126), its research focus (Güler, 1994; Şaylan, 2000; Üstüner, 2012) and educational scope (Knox, 2019, s. 108; Gül et al., 2010; Denhardt, 2001) indicate that advancements in public administration (Rosenbaum, 2007, s. 12-14) significantly influence both the discipline and its educational framework. As a consequence of all these developments, it becomes essential for public managers and officials to keep pace with these changes and to develop new behaviors and patterns. To achieve this, future public administrators and officials must be educated in a way that enables them to meet new developments and needs effectively. Public administration programs are responsible for educating and training these individuals. Therefore, it is necessary for their curricula to be formulated in a way that enables students to develop the skills required to acquire these competencies (Lopez-Littleton and Blessett, 2015, s. 4). The areas in which future public administrators will develop knowledge and skills are determined during their education. Therefore, the courses taken and the concepts learned during this educational process have a significant impact on the delivery of public services and the implementation of public policies (Rice, 2004). Academic programs in public administration must consistently anticipate and respond to developments in the field if they wish to maintain their appeal to students and suitability for employers (Verheijen and Connaughton, 2003, s. 848-849). Given the magnitude and speed of change in every field and considering the necessity for future public administrators to be prepared for these changes, the development of public administration education remains among the important topics.

The relatively huge literature on public administration education mainly focuses on its two different aspects. First, relatively new, there is a growing literature on the incorporation of new learning techniques within the education of public administration, such as the incorporation of artificial intelligence or application techniques within the courses, mutual designing of the courses etc. (Kamukapa et al., 2024; Elliott et al., 2021; Şahin, 2024; Hejka-Ekins, 1998). On the other hand, an important number of studies, which our study is also based on, mostly focusing in undergraduate or graduate programs' curricula, investigate the convergence of public administration (PA), public policy and/or public management education in different countries in the world. Within this literature, the field is dominated by research that concentrates on Anglo-American, English-speaking countries and frequently searches the magnitude of convergence within the programs in these countries (e.g. Allison, 2006; Clark and Pal, 2011; Clark et al., 2014; Wu and He, 2009). A relatively new emerging literature focuses on the capacity of the public administration (PA), public policy, and/or public management programs in former socialist or Middle Eastern countries to converge their education to their western counterparts and the possible causes of their diverging trends (Haase et al., 2018; Staroňová and Gajduschek, 2016; Andreescu et al., 2021).

Studies that relate different paradigm shifts in the practice of public administration and its education are relatively poor (Azizuddin and Hossain, 2021; Karkin and Gürses 2022). These studies indicate the poor capacity of the departments to reflect the requirements of NPG (Van Dijk and Thornhill, 2016; Karkin and Gürses, 2022; Üstüner and Yavuz, 2018). Furthermore, these studies signal that there is a resistance to reviewing and updating the curricula to reflect the changing needs in the fields. In the Turkish case, Karkin and Gürses (2022) state that in Türkiye, no matter how hard the challenges that the governments face, public administration departments are confronted with structural, organizational, and legal problems. A similar result is found by Üstüner and Yavuz (2018), who state the poor capacity of departments of public administration to meet the needs of the public sector in Türkiye.

Present studies provide valuable starting points for our research. First, methodologically they follow a similar data collection technique, which constitutes the ground of our research. The common ground of these studies is their analysis of department curricula to understand their adaptation capacity (Clark and Pal, 2011; 2015; Karkin and Gürses, 2022; Üstüner and Yavuz, 2018; Azizuddin and Hossain, 2021). Second, they provide information on the possible factors that may affect the capacity of

the departments to adapt their curricula. By stating that teachers of the departments are found to be persistently reluctant in updating the curriculum to make it relevant to the present time and needs Van Dijk and Thornhill (2016) indicate the possible role of the staff in making change possible. Staroňová and Gajdushek (2016) state that the ability of the departments to converge with western programs in Central and Eastern European countries is affected by factors such as the origin of the program, the nature of its financing etc.

However, these studies lack a comprehensive theoretical framework, which this research addresses using historical and sociological institutionalism. We argue that both institutionalist approaches provide a powerful answer on the factors that enable or prevent change in the education of public administration. Institutions can be conceptualized as both structures that shape actions and interactions among individuals and as boundaries drawn by human hands. They influence the behavior and interactions of individuals by determining the type of information available to them and affecting the incentives individuals face (Ferris and Shui-Yan, 1993, s. 5). Various approaches attempt to examine and explain the effects of institutions, which can be categorized under institutionalism. Institutionalism fundamentally focuses on rules, arrangements, and structures that impact political outcomes and shape political behavior. It encompasses a range of methodological approaches that emphasize institutions. These approaches vary significantly in how they define institutions, their objects, their logic of explanation, and their approaches to dealing with change (Schmidt, 2014, s. 1).

One of the approaches within institutionalism is historical institutionalism. According to this approach, policy and structural choices made at the inception of an institution have a lasting impact on its behavior throughout its existence (Peters, 2000, s. 3). In historical institutionalism, ideas, rules, and processes become “embedded” within the institution, making change difficult. Decisions taken initially within an institution continue to influence policies and practices years later. Members or employees of an institution often cling to the political values and norms established in its early days, resisting attempts at change over the long term (Hoefer, 2022, s. 72-73). Therefore, historical institutionalism emphasizes the continuity of policies and practices within institutions and draws attention to the conservatism inherent in institutional structures (Peters, 2000, s. 3). Therefore, historical institutionalism emphasizes that the older and, more established an institution is, the more challenging change can be within that institution. In other words, newer structures may be more open to change, while older and more entrenched institutions tend to be resistant to change. In our study, departments of public administration at universities are defined as institutions and are naturally expected to resist change. Separately, according to sociological institutionalism, identity and norms play important roles in shaping individuals (Farrell, 2018). Within this respect, the strength and homogeneity of the identity established by the institutions is a further aspect that affects change. The stronger and more homogeneous is the identity, the harder it is to change.

However, this does not mean that change within institutions, in our case the departments, is impossible. In this regard, historical institutionalism draws attention to the role of actors and suggests that institutional change can occur alongside changes in the actors involved, who in our case are the academic staff of each department. Historical institutionalist approaches (Collier and Collier, 1991; Pierson, 1993; Thelen, 1999; Hall and Taylor, 1996) argue that while rational expectations play a significant role in the founding stages of institutions, once established, organizations develop their own lives and shape the perceptions of actors within them. Scholars like Pierson (1993; 1996), Thelen (1999) and Panebianco (1988) suggest that stable change within organizations often occurs at a critical juncture that disrupts existing institutional rules and allows for new ones to take hold. The presence of a critical juncture alone may not directly lead to change within organizational structures, but it presents an opportunity for change. The realization of this change within organizations depends closely on the presence of a sufficient number of actors within the organization who possess the will and readiness to embrace change.

According to historical institutionalists, individuals are both rule-following conformists and rational actors who consider their own interests. How a person behaves depends on the individual, the context, and the rules (Steinmo, 2008, s. 126). Historical institutionalists focus on how individuals and groups define their interests and examine how political actors are both constrained by institutions and how they create and change institutions (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992, s. 10). Institutional analysis emphasizes that specific contexts influence how actors define their identities and interests, but it also highlights that those actors, through their actions, attempt to transform these contexts. Therefore, historical institutionalists view actors and institutions as mutually constitutive. Actors are influenced by institutions and can consciously adapt to them, but they can also diverge from institutions, restructure them, and effect changes (Jackson, 2009, s. 8-9). From the perspective of historical institutionalism, institutional change is possible when powerful actors have the will and ability to change institutions. When actors agree on the need to address a problem and believe that new ideas will genuinely solve it, creative adaptations for change can emerge (Steinmo,

2008, s. 131). It emphasizes that actors and institutions change over time in an “iterative or dialectical” manner (Jackson, 2009, s. 9). So should the education and academic staff of PA departments in universities.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND ITS EDUCATION IN TÜRKİYE

Universities in Türkiye have a strong tradition of PA education beginning with the modernization policies of the Tanzimat period of the Ottoman Empire and continuing into the Republic period (Aykaç, 2012, s. 58-59). The administrative science, which originated in France and commenced in the Ottoman Empire during the latter half of the 19th century, retained its effect on public administration science and education until the 1950s. The impact of administrative science, albeit being disrupted by the German public law-oriented approach, remained apparent in the initial quarter of the Republic (Keskin, 2006, s. 3). Following the 1950s, a significant step contributing to the shift towards Western-style modern public administration education in Türkiye was the founding of the Turkish and Middle East Institute of Public Administration (TODAİE). Founded in 1953 under the auspices of the United Nations, TODAİE is recognized as one of the world’s first institutes of public administration. Its establishment aimed to address the educational needs of public officials in Türkiye and Middle Eastern countries, shifting its focus solely to the education of public officials in Türkiye (Mihçioğlu, 1988). In the early years of both the Faculty of Political Sciences and TODAİE, teaching activities were primarily conducted by foreign experts, particularly Americans, and English-language sources were followed. As years passed, education in public administration continued to be delivered by scholars who had completed their higher education in the United States. This situation has been influential in establishing and developing an Anglo-American management approach in public administration education in Türkiye from the outset (Mihçioğlu, 1988; Balta, 2012, s. 46). During the era of the Mülkiye Mektebi or before the Faculty of Political Sciences, the emphasis in public administration education was primarily legal-oriented; however, this changed over time, with an increasing influence of Anglo-American trends in public administration. In other words, starting from the 1950s, both research and teaching in public administration began to be influenced by non-legal-oriented approaches (Güler, 1994).

During the 1960s and 1970s, public administration research and education became more widespread, particularly with the return of academics with doctoral degrees received from foreign countries to Türkiye in the 1970s, leading to an increase in the number of trained professionals (Ömürgönülşen, 2004, s. 53-54). In the 1980s, there was a rise in institutional diversity, and public administration departments began to be established within universities. From the 1990s onwards, this growth accelerated, and public administration departments were opened in many universities outside major cities, where public administration education commenced (Kaya, 1995, s. 254-255). Over time, with the increasing number of universities, the number of departments offering public administration education and the number of students studying public administration have also increased.

Recent developments in public administration have necessitated educational changes in universities in Türkiye as well. This study argues that this change is not uniform across all universities and claims that the two key factors influencing this change from a historical institutionalism perspective are the institutional powers of universities and the capacity of actors to bring about change. The method and data used to test this claim are detailed in the next section.

4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The emergence of New Public Governance (NPG) has necessitated changes in public administration education, particularly in university programs worldwide. Yet, we argue that the departments in the Turkish universities are very poor in reflecting these changes. Furthermore, based on a historical institutionalist approach, our study argues that the ability of public administration departments to transform their education is strongly related to the level of institutionalization of the department and the power and willingness of the academic staff to implement change. We test our hypothesis using original data collected from departments of public administration in Turkish universities. To this end, we have collected data from a total of 100 out of 129 undergraduate departments of Public Administration and Political Science and Public Administration. Although most of the data necessary for this analysis is publicly available on the websites of each department and the Higher Education Board (Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu, HEB), related information for some universities is absent, reducing our number of cases to 100.

The dependent variable of our study is the magnitude of adaptation of the educational systems of the departments of Public Administration and Political Science and Public Administration to the perception of the New Public Governance. Within this respect, it is the capacity of the departments to place the new and novel courses in the curricula as to be demanded as a result of changes and transformations that have repercussions over the societies (Karkın and Gürses, 2021). To track the magnitude

of reflection in the educational system, we have focused on the names of the courses in the curricula of these departments for the academic year 2019-2020. Although some research conducts deeper content analysis of the courses serviced by the department, we believe such a measurement is not convenient to our purpose in the Turkish context. In the Turkish case, class content is mostly organized only by the academic instructor of the course, so it is mostly free of institutional structures and power relations. These are reflected in the formulation of the curricula, which are officially decided by the department and confirmed by the faculty the department belongs to and the Education Commission of each university. As such, we believe the name of the courses is a more valid measurement of the capacity of the department to reflect the NPG in their education.

Based on the existing literature, Karkin and Gürses (2021) formulate six dimensions for analyzing curricula in the Turkish departments. Among these dimensions, arguing that governance and actor pluralism (civil society) are strong indicators of transformation in public administration education (Straussman, 2008; van Dijk and Thornhill, 2011), we developed a variable for each department by identifying the percentage of course names that contain references to governance and/or actor pluralism in all public administration courses within the curricula. For instance, courses are classified as modified if their titles incorporate terms such as "governance," "administrative reform and governance," "governance of civil organizations," or "recent approaches to public administration. We believe this measure serves to identify how much NPG is reflected in the curricula of the departments in Turkish universities.

In their study, Staroňová and Gajduschek (2016) find that whether the department is formed from an existing program, it is in a private, public university; the name of the faculty and characteristics of the instructors affect the nature of the curricula. Developing the factors identified by the authors, we incorporate two sets of independent variables into our model to test our hypothesis that the institutionalization level of the department and the power and willingness of the academic staff are effective in understanding the degree of adaptation. The first set consists of department and university-level variables that we believe measure the level of institutionalization. These variables are selected to measure three different dimensions of institutionalization.

First, we incorporated variables that measure the age of the institution, as change is harder among older institutions. These variables are the year the department and university were established. Older institutions typically have a more established educational tradition, which is expected to act as a strong restraint to change. The second set of variables measures the homogeneity of the institution's identity. These variables include the name and faculty of the department, its language of instruction, and the percentage of academic staff with a public administration degree. In Türkiye, the departments teaching public administration are named either departments of Public Administration or departments of Political Science and Public Administration. We expect the latter to be more prone to changes since their academic staffs come from diverse academic backgrounds. A similar situation might occur in faculties of economics and administrative sciences compared to faculties of political sciences (Staroňová and Gajduschek, 2016). Change is also expected to be higher in departments that teach in English, as it is easier for their academic staff and students to follow international developments in public administration. Regardless of their educational track, we believe that as the number of academic staff with expertise in Public Administration increases, so does the homogeneity of their identity. The third set of variables included is the variables that measure flexibility/junctures that may facilitate change. These variables are whether the department's name has changed, whether it is in a public or private university and the percentage of elective courses within public administration courses. In the Turkish context, we have observed that some departments have changed their names from Public Administration to Political Science and Public Administration. We believe this name change can facilitate curricular changes, as it may provide an opportunity for departments to update their courses. Therefore, a change in the department's name may support changes in the curriculum. Furthermore, we anticipate that privately funded universities will be more responsive to changes due to their economic concerns, which drive them to be more competitive. Within this group of variables, we also included the percentage of elective courses within public administration courses as a possible institutional opportunity, since it is expected to be easier to introduce changes in elective courses than in obligatory ones.

To measure the power and willingness for change among the actors, namely the academic staff, we incorporate several variables into the model. First, we consider the mean year in which the academic staff earned their PhDs. Younger academic staff are expected to be more influenced by NPG during their graduate education and more prone to change, while experienced academic staff are expected to be more supportive of older educational traditions. Recognizing that the relative influence of each actor is a function of their academic titles, we also include the percentages of professors, associate professors, and assistant professors within the academic staff to measure the power of the actors. We expect departments with higher percentages of staff holding senior academic titles to be more resistant to change due to their longer experience in the field.

The limited number of cases (100) makes the data unsuitable for regression analysis of so many variables due to problems of degrees of freedom. As an alternative, we test the effectiveness of institutional and actor-related factors by comparing the differences in their mean scores on the dependent variable. The normal distribution test results (with all variable significance close to 0,00 in their Kolmogorov-Smirnov score) indicate that all the variables incorporated into the model are significantly close to a normal distribution, so the significance of the differences in means is tested through independent sample t-tests. The results concerning the significance of the mean differences in curriculum changes with the identified independent variables are provided below.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The most interesting result of the study is the relatively poor sufficiency and capacity of the departments educating public administration to reflect the major concepts associated with governance and actor plurality dominating the NPG. This confirms the first hypothesis of our study. As can be seen in Table 1, only 6.52% of the curricula of the departments have course titles that reflect important concepts of transformation in public administration education such as governance and multiplicity of actors. The number of universities where neither of the two concepts is included in the course titles is 19 out of 100, while this number is only 8 for departments where more than 15% of their course titles include these concepts. One possible cause of this situation may be the incorporation of these concepts as distinct parts within the syllabi of the courses. However, the fact that these concepts are not included in the course titles and may only be covered within the syllabus signifies the low importance given to governance in Turkish universities.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic of the Percentages of NPG Courses in the Departments

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
NPG course %	100	0,00	30,00	6,51	5,65
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Even if identifying the factors that may be effective in explaining the incorporation of governance concepts and their significance in the departments' curricula, which is the second aim of our study, becomes difficult given the low skewness of the dependent variable for each university department, the comparison of the means of the categories we have created for each possible independent variable still indicates possible obstacles in the education of governance and possible strategies to overcome these obstacles. The comparison of the means of the categories we have created and the results of the independent t-tests for each independent variable are cited in Table 2 and Table 3 for institutional strength and Table 4 and Table 5 for actors' power and willingness. The scores used for testing the significance of the difference of means are highlighted in grey for each variable in Table 3. Certain variables show marginal significance values that are just below the 0,05-significance threshold, necessitating careful interpretation. This caution is especially crucial given the potential impact of skewed data distributions and the limitations imposed by a small sample size. Transparency in addressing these constraints is critical to maintaining the integrity and credibility of the research findings. Our study argues that the first obstacle to transforming PA departments curriculum is the institutional strength of the departments. To test this hypothesis, we have included in the analysis nine different variables measuring three different dimensions. Two variables, category means measuring the age of the institution; the year of foundation of the department, and the university are statistically significant with scores of 0,031; 0,004, respectively. For both datasets, the year 2008 has been used to create two different categories, since their scatterplots indicate a dramatic change with 2008. The data indicates that the mean of the departments founded after 2008 is 8,43 while it is 5,36 for departments founded before 2008. The difference in means seems to be higher for universities founded after 2008. Their mean of courses containing governance is 10,21 compared to 5,20 for universities older than 2008. The data strongly supports the argument that adaptation and change are more possible in younger departments and universities whose tradition is not so strong.

The results of the variables that measure the strength of the identity of the department, namely the name, language, faculty, and the percentages of academic staff earning a degree in PA, partly support our argument. For departments named Public Administration and Political Science and Public Administration, we see that reflection in the latter is higher, with a mean of 6.88% compared to 5.13%. Yet, this difference, with a significance of 0.207, is not significant. This supports some scholars' argument that different names of the department do not coincide with curricular differences. Similarly, when we compare the two faculties, namely the Faculty of Political Sciences (FPS) and the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences (FEAS), we observe that the mean for the latter is considerably higher than for the former, with 8.35% compared to 6.26%. With a significance of 0.232, this variable also fails to be significant. A similar result is obtained for the percentages of academic staff earning a degree in PA. Although slightly insignificant with 0.092, change is more probable when their percentage is lower than 40%, supporting the negative relationship between homogeneity of the department and adaptation. The language of the

department is significant, with a score of 0.043. The results support that adaptation in departments teaching in English, with a mean of 9.66%, is considerably higher than in departments teaching in Turkish, with a mean of 6.15%. Besides indicating the heterogeneity of actors, such a result may also have two interdependent causes. On one hand, teaching in English may provide the opportunity for academic staff to introduce recent debates, which are mostly in English, to the students. On the other hand, the necessity for academic staff in departments teaching in English to have a high competence in this language requires them to graduate from English-speaking departments, enabling them to follow recent debates in the field.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Institutional Factors and Percentages of Governance Courses in Departments

Variable name	Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Department name	Public Administration	21	5,13	4,94	1,08
	Political Science and Public Administration	79	6,88	5,81	0,65
Faculty name	FPS	88	6,26	5,52	0,59
	FEAS	12	8,36	6,53	1,89
Finance of the university	Public	82	6,02	4,96	0,55
	Private	18	8,80	7,90	1,86
Language of the department	Turkish	87	6,16	5,54	0,59
	English	12	9,67	5,70	1,65
Change in name of the department	No change	81	6,89	6,00	0,67
	Change	19	4,92	3,56	0,82
Year of found of the department	>= 2008	34	8,43	7,48	1,28
	< 2008	65	5,36	3,97	0,49
Year of found of the university	>= 2008	25	10,21	7,52	1,50
	< 2008	73	5,20	4,08	0,48
PA selective course%	>= ,65	30	8,17	5,95	1,09
	< ,65	70	5,81	5,42	0,65
% of staff with PA degree	>= 40	61	5,67	5,09	0,65
	< 40	38	7,62	6,20	1,01

Three variables that measure flexibility/juncture—change in the name of the department, the finance of the university, and the percentage of the selective courses within all PA courses—are very close to significance with values of 0.067, 0.167, and 0.056, respectively. These results first support our suggestion that the change in the department name from Public Administration to Political Science and Public Administration has provided an opportunity for departments to adapt their curricula. The mean score of departments that changed their names is 6.89 compared to 4.91 for those that did not change their names. Still, when compared with newly founded universities and departments, we observe that the capacity to change is relatively lower. Although insignificant with a value of 0.167, the data shows that private universities are more favorable for adaptation, with a mean of 8.80, than public universities, which have a mean of 6.01. It seems that adaptation is more possible when the percentage of selective courses in public administration is higher than 65%. This is probably due to the flexibility of the department to introduce selective courses, which is proposed by the instructor, is more easily than naming obligatory courses, which is a departmental decision.

Table 3. Independent Sample t-test Results for Variables Measuring Institutional Strength

Variable name		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Department name	Equal variances assumed	,186	,667	-1,269	98	,207	-1,76	1,38
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,394	36,10	,172	-1,76	1,26
Faculty name	Equal variances assumed	,746	,390	-1,204	98	,232	-2,09	1,74
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,058	13,23	,309	-2,09	1,98
Finance of the university	Equal variances assumed	5,917	,017	-1,916	98	,058	-2,78	1,45
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,435	20,04	,167	-2,78	1,94
Language of the department	Equal variances assumed	,079	,779	-2,051	97	,043	-3,51	1,71
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,005	14,01	,065	-3,51	1,75
Change in name of the department	Equal variances assumed	4,733	,032	1,377	98	,172	1,98	1,44
	Equal variances not assumed			1,874	45,40	,067	1,98	1,05
Year of found. of the department	Equal variances assumed	20,955	,000	2,675	97	,009	3,07	1,15
	Equal variances not assumed			2,236	42,98	,031	3,07	1,37
Year of found. of the university	Equal variances assumed	14,310	,000	4,190	96	,000	5,01	1,20
	Equal variances not assumed			3,174	28,97	,004	5,01	1,58

PA selective course%	Equal variances assumed	,000	,984	1,934	98	,056	2,36	1,22
	Equal variances not assumed			1,862	50,58	,068	2,36	1,26
% of staff with PA degree	Equal variances assumed	,937	,335	-1,701	97	,092	-1,76	1,38
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,625	67,33	,109	-1,76	1,26

The overall results help us identify the possible obstacles and opportunities within institutional designs in adapting education to new developments in the field. The age of the university and the department appears to make change more difficult, as the institutionalist approach argues, by creating a stronger institutional identity and tradition that shapes the actors. Similarly, if we evaluate the faculty and department names and the language of instruction as indicators of a more homogeneous institutional identity, we can suggest that departments with stronger institutional identities resist change more. On the other hand, the flexibility of the departments seems to provide opportunities for the actors to facilitate change.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Actor Factors and Percentages of Governance Courses in Departments

Variable name	Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PhD year mean	>= 2008	51	6,07	4,50	0,63
	< 2008	44	7,10	6,78	1,02
% Professor	>= 31,00	32	7,80	7,62	1,35
	< 31,00	67	5,76	4,22	0,52
% Assoc. Prof.	>= ,10	58	5,12	4,10	0,54
	< ,10	41	8,25	6,84	1,07
% Assist. Prof.	>= ,75	24	5,27	4,56	0,93
	< ,75	75	6,79	5,86	0,68

The second set of variables analyzed concerns the power and willingness of actors to perceive change within the institutions. To measure the power and willingness of actors, we have included 4 variables in our analysis: We believe that the average year that academic staff members earned their PhDs should indicate their willingness to adapt their curricula, and the percentages of professors, associate professors, and assistant professors should indicate the power relations within the department. The categorization of each variable has been conducted according to their scatter plots.

Among these variables (see Table 5), while the percentage of associate professors is significant with a value of 0.011, the mean of the PhD year of the academic staff, percentage of professors, and assistant professors are insignificant with values of 0.399, 0.165, and 0.249, respectively. Still, the difference of means can provide us with information on the possible relationship of these variables with our dependent variable. The data indicates that when associate professors comprise more than 10% of the academic staff, with a mean of 5.12 compared to 8.24, adaptation is less probable. Associate professors are more likely to resist change than other academic staff. This is an interesting result given our expectation that the earlier the education of the academic staff, the harder adaptation would be. Although slightly insignificant, the data indicates that when the percentage of professors exceeds 31%, change is more probable (with a mean of 7.79 compared to 5.75), while the percentage of assistant professors has no considerable effect. When the mean of the PhD year of the academic staff is less than 2008, change seems more probable. The overall evaluation of the results concerning the experiences of the academic staff indicates a complex relationship that has to be further examined in detail with larger data.

Table 5. Independent Sample t-test Results for Variables Measuring Actors' Power and Willingness

Variable name		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
PhD year mean	Equal variances assumed	4,093	,046	-,873	93	,385	-1,02	1,17
	Equal variances not assumed			-,848	72,85	,399	-1,02	1,20
% Professor	Equal variances assumed	13,126	,000	1,715	97	,090	-1,95	1,14
	Equal variances not assumed			1,415	40,35	,165	-1,95	1,20
% Assoc. Prof.	Equal variances assumed	10,296	,002	-2,831	97	,006	2,04	1,19
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,609	60,19	,011	2,04	1,44
% Assist. Prof.	Equal variances assumed	,946	,333	-1,161	97	,249	-3,12	1,10
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,321	49,51	,193	-3,12	1,20

6. CONCLUSION

Public administration operates, serves, and exists in a dynamic environment. Changes and developments occurring in this environment sometimes indirectly, sometimes directly, affect public administration and shape it. In this process, public administration implements measures to address the need for change and adapt to new conditions. Legal regulations are enacted to meet emerging needs, structural and institutional reforms are implemented, and training programs are provided to personnel. Such steps are evaluated as short-term solutions. In addition to these, long-term, more fundamental, and comprehensive change is possible through developing new behavioral patterns and thought patterns. Future-oriented change will shape the process of public administration education. In the education process where future public administrators are trained, the content, program components, and curriculum of public administration education gain importance.

Program curricula are created when departments are established and shaped according to the conditions and needs of the period. However, developments over time, changes in the economic, social, political, administrative, technological, and cultural environment, often expose departments to new conditions and requirements. The important point here is whether departments adapt their curricula in line with new conditions and needs. With the emergence of governance, the rate of change in the environment in which public administration operates has become very high, forcing departments to make revisions in public administration education that take this change into account and to develop the educational content. Our study shows that the first adaptation in the curricula of the public administration of Turkish universities is very low. Second, the results support our argument that while adaptation in the curriculum of some departments occurs more easily and quickly, adaptation in some

departments follows a slower pace. Especially when viewed from an institutionalist perspective, we see that its institutional strength is an important obstacle against institutions' capacity to adapt. However, the actors in the institution exhibiting an attitude towards adaptation can still make it possible. More precisely, in Türkiye older departments in older universities with more homogeneous identities tend to resist change, while institutional flexibility and capacity and willingness of the academic staff facilitate change. In this context, in terms of departmental curricula, the institutional powers of universities and the capacity of actors to make changes emerge as two fundamental determinants that affect change. It is important to keep in mind that this study is a preliminary step to analyzing the factors affecting change and needs to be further developed with a larger data set from different universities in the world that would make it possible to run regression analysis to control the possible relationship of each of the independent variables included in the study and to also make possible more generalizations.

This study contributes to the literature by enhancing previous arguments with a systematic institutionalist framework, supported by empirical results. Yet, the results should be evaluated as a first step in this attempt, which we believe should be developed with the incorporation of more cases around the world so that the effect of the suggested variables can be tested more properly.

AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

Declarations of Research and Publication Ethics: This study has been prepared in accordance with scientific research and publication ethics.

Ethics Committee Approval: Since this research does not include analyzes that require ethics committee approval, it does not require ethics committee approval.

Author Contributions: The authors of this research have contributed equally to the study.

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