Public administration education in Italy: a statistical analysis

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1. Introduction

The paper presents a statistical analysis exploring public administration (PA) education in Italian universities. It contributes to the literature on PA education and training, developed in specific countries (Lewanski, 2000; Molina, César, 2000; Pollitt, 1996; Randma, 2001; Rhodes, 1996; Araújo, Alvarez, 2006; etc.) as well as in a comparative perspective (see for example Verheijen, Connaughton, 1999; Toonen, Verheijen, 1999 for Europe and Kettl, 1998; 2001 for the US).

The literature has classified European countries according to the nature of PA education in three clusters: a legal group of countries, where a strong emphasis is put on administrative law; a public group, in which the PA is recognized to have a unique public and political character; and, a corporate or managerial group focused on business management techniques (Hajnal, 2003). In most researches Italy belongs to the legal group of countries (Lewanski, 1999; Kickert, 2005).

The paper aims at verifying if the administrative law approach to university-based PA teaching is still prevalent in Italy, as well as the extent of development of other disciplinary orientations. The research also highlights the main specificities of PA education in Italy with reference to the disciplinary character, the geographical distribution, the type and level of PA programs, etc. It aims at describing how universities are adjusting curricula in relation to public sector modernization, by comparing the main faculties (economics and management sciences, law, political sciences, sociology, engineering, sciences of communication, social sciences) of all Italian universities.

A distinguishing element of the research is the simultaneous consideration and the comparison of different disciplines: economics, management, law, political science, sociology, sciences of communication and engineering, while existing literature often focuses only on single disciplinary areas (Wise, 1999).

The paper relies on original and exhaustive data, which cover the whole population of Italian universities and were collected between June and July 2007. The main source of information are the didactic programs (the so-called “Manifesto degli studi”) approved by the faculties for the most recent academic year (2007/08 or 2006/07).

Information from 204 faculties of 72 universities was gathered. 2,198 education programs at different levels were registered and classified.

Overall evidence suggests that the legal cluster, including but not limited to administrative law, is not the prevalent approach in teaching PA in Italy. The public cluster - mainly political sciences and public economy approach - is instead widespread in Italian universities. Furthermore, there is a strong, yet more recent, development of the managerial approach.

We find substantial variation within and between north, centre and south Italy. In general, an insuffi-
cient supply of PA programs is registered in southern regions, which also put a greater emphasis on doctoral education.
Two specificities of PA education in Italy include the prevalence of the juridical approach in public accounting programs and the major political science disciplinary orientation of programs in administrative science.

In the next paragraph we give account of the research methods and main steps. A short description of the university education in Italy is offered in the third paragraph. The results of the literature review, including the main historical specificities of PA education in Italy, are presented in paragraph four. The fifth paragraph presents the main results of the statistical quantitative analysis. These are commented in the last paragraph, which also highlights some areas for further research.

2. Research objectives, procedures and methodology

The aim of the research is to explore the state of art of university-based PA education in Italy, in several faculties.

The research questions include the following:
- Is the administrative law approach still prevalent in Italy?
- Which is the extent of the development of other disciplinary orientations?
- What are the main specificities of PA education in Italy?

To this end, the statistical analysis aims at answering the following questions:
- What levels and types of PA programs are offered by the different faculties?
- How are these programs distributed according to their disciplinary character?
- How are these programs distributed according to the different regions and administrative cultures they embody?
- How are these programs distributed according to the three clusters identified by the literature (public, legal and corporate)?
- How are these programs distributed, according to the specific topic dealt with (analysis limited to the corporate cluster)?

The first stage of research was based on a literature review, which has helped to identify and explore PA as an academic and scholar discipline in a comparative perspective. Furthermore, the main characteristics of PA and management education in different political and social contexts, as well as some historical drivers that have influenced the selection and training of the administrative élite in Italy have been explored.

The second stage of the research - descriptive statistics - consisted in the collection and analysis of PA programs taught in Italian universities. The whole population of PA programs was analyzed. The data were collected between June and July 2007 and draw on the information available in the official didactic programs of the selected faculties of 72 Italian universities, both public and private (see appendix). The six telematic universities were not included for homogeneity reasons.

The construction of a “PA program database” specifically designed for the purpose of the study in-
cluded the following variables:

- **Name of the education program**
- **Level of the program**
  - Undergraduate programs or "*Corsi di Laurea*" (1st and 2nd cycle, respectively Bachelor’s degree 180 and Master’s degree 120 credits) and courses or "*Insegnamenti*"
  - Professional graduate courses (1st and 2nd level Masters, 60 credits)
  - Research-based courses (doctorates or PhDs).
- **Region**
- **Name of the university**
- **Type of the faculty**: 1. Economics and/or Management; Law; Political sciences; Sciences of communication; Sociology; Engineering; Social (and human) sciences.
- **Disciplinary orientation or character**
  - Law, Economics, Management, Engineering, Political sciences, Sociology, Communication, Administration and governance of specific policy fields (local government, healthcare, cultural heritage, welfare, universities, security, etc.)\(^2\), Interdisciplinary, Other.
- **Education cluster**:
  - Public (includes programs which have a disciplinary orientation in Political sciences, as well as in Sociology or Economics).
  - Legal (covers programs which have a disciplinary orientation in Law).
  - Corporate (takes in programs which have a disciplinary orientation in Management as well as in Communication or Engineering).
- **Thematic focus or subject area** (only for the corporate cluster):
  - General public management
  - Planning, budgeting and control
  - Organization and human resources management
  - Accounting and finance
  - Accountability and social reporting
  - e-Government
  - Marketing and communication
  - Market-type mechanisms (outsourcing, PPPs, privatization, regulation, government-business relationships)
  - Other issues
- **Number of ECTS-credits**.

Only programs entirely dedicated to PA were taken into consideration. These were found in 186 out of 204 faculties. We did not consider generic programs where some courses (or courses where some lectures), are dedicated to PA, although we acknowledge the relevance of these programs.

Programs dealing with political aspects alone - such as the financing, the marketing and communication of political parties, etc. - were also left out of the study. On the contrary, programs dealing with the

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\(^1\) Only universities having at least one of these faculties were considered.

\(^2\) The courses belonging to this category are centred on a specific sector or type of organization instead of a disciplinary approach.
political-administrative boundary were considered.

We also did not include more specialized programs such as development studies (but did include local or regional government development policies), environment protection (either regulations or management), etc.

It is also worth explicating some terminological choices. Some studies have reported a shift away from the term “public administration” apparent in several countries (Kettl, 1999; Wise, Pitts, 2003), also supported by empirical data (Wise, 1999). “Public administration” is here used in a very wide sense, comprehending more bounded definitions such as those found in political science, public management, administrative law, etc.

For the sake of further analysis, the programs have been grouped in undergraduate; professional and mid-career training; and research programs (Wise, Pitts, 2003).

The seven types of faculty selected cover almost all the didactic supply on PA. Only in a few cases, this classification leaves out new faculties. It is the case of the recently-established cultural heritage faculties (two examples are the Macerata and the Lecce universities), which have the merits of being of an interdisciplinary nature.

It was decided to analyze the programs according to a detailed classification of their disciplinary character, which was identified independently of the faculty in which they are taught. Three technical criteria were adopted: we tried to have a moderate number of categories; a clear-cut distinction should be between categories; and we tried to use as much as possible the same categorization used in previous researches (mainly Hajnal, 2002; 2003).

At a second stage, the programs were grouped into the three well-known clusters. In general, the legal cluster included the administrative, public, regional and local law, etc. programs. The public cluster included the programs having a political science disciplinary orientation. The corporate cluster included programs classified under the management discipline.

The classification of the other programs was done on a case by case basis. Very often, programs in sociology and economics were classified in the public cluster, while communication and engineering programs went within the corporate one.

Finally, the counting of programs and courses was done according to their weight in ECTS-credits.

3. Briefly on university education in Italy

Italian universities have a long history, beginning in mediaeval times with the establishment of the university of Salerno in the IX century, and the university of Bologna in 1088. Other universities were founded in the following centuries: the university of Padova in 1222, and two years later the university of Naples founded by Frederick II, the university of Florence, founded in 1308, then the universities of Pisa, Pavia and Turin (Wikipedia, 2007).

Higher education is provided by universities, technical universities, university institutes, as well as by a
wide range of academies, higher institutes/schools and by a number of professional training institutions. Most of the existing university institutions were established directly by the State, while a limited number, originally set up by private entities, were later recognized by the relevant Ministry.

At the time of writing (2007), the university system includes 87 university institutions of different type. Italy has adopted in 1999 the so-called 3+2 system, although the adjusting process is going on even as of 2007. The first degree is the “Corso di Laurea triennale” that can be achieved after 3 years of studies. Students can then complete two more years of specialization or the “Corso di Laurea specialistica” (now called Magistrale). The five (3+2) years correspond to a Master’s degree and give access to third cycle programs (second level masters and doctorates). The “dottorato di ricerca” (doctorate) requires 3 or 4 years of work.

4. PA education: historical factors and international comparison

4.1. PA as an academic field of study

The literature acknowledges a strong relationship between the processes of PA reform and the features of the PA education and training system in a country and PA education and PA as a field of practice definitively correlate (Hajnal, 2002: 15).

Mosher (1982) considers the education system as the most important element of an evolving administrative culture, by which public service ethos, frame of reference and knowledge are transmitted. The nature and quality of the public service heavily depends upon the nature and quality of the system of education (Connaughton, Randma, 2002: 2).

There is a rich literature on the intellectual foundations of PA (Dahl 1947; Mosher 1956; Charlesworth 1968; Heady 1979; Guerreiro Ramos 1981; Daneke 1990; Riggs 1991; Bailey and Mayer 1992; Bogason, Brans, 2005). The discipline continues to be characterized by “the ahistorical, instrumental, voluntaristic, parochial, and state-centered nature of its approaches and explanations” (Baltodano, 1997).

Three fundamental elements influence, either directly or indirectly, the curricula of PA in different countries (Connaughton, Randma, 2002):

- The concept of the State and the State tradition, which is far stronger in Europe as compared to the United States. Furthermore, there is a wide diversity of State tradition within Europe, which have a direct impact on the development of PA education.
- The identity (crisis) of PA as a discipline, which is academic and professional at the same time and requires a variety of approaches to understand PA (Raadschelders, 1999). This diversity is its greatest strength and its most serious limitation (Denhardt, 1990). It also implies that the survival of PA as a distinct field of study will depend on the ability to develop techniques, concepts, rhetoric and vision which are of perceived use to governments and public servants (Pollitt, 1996; Kettl, 1998).
- The multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary character which, together with the continuous evolving nature of government and government-society relations, disallow the development of a unified body of theory. This lack of unity, especially evident in Europe as compared to the United States, is primarily due to historical and cultural paths of different countries. One clear indicator is the pre-
dominance of public law in European continental countries and its absence in the UK.

4.2. PA education: an international comparison
The national attributes of PA education systems are described below following the literature of different countries.

The review of the literature on PA as a scholarly field has highlighted many researches developed on a national basis and very few as truly comparative. Even less provide empirical quantitative evidence on PA education.

Exceptions include the two inventories of PA education in the EU states and Norway, carried out by the Thematic Network in Public Administration and transformed into a quantitative analysis by Hajnal (2002).

It is also worth mentioning, for the United States, the Peterson’s Guide of programs in PA, public affairs, public health, public history, and public policy. An analysis of the evolution of PA programs from 1980 to 1995 in terms of number of programs and students enrolled has been performed by Wise (1999). Qualitative comparisons can be found in Wise and Pitts (2003) and Connaughton, Randma (2002).

Wise and Pitts (2003) offer an interesting comparison of PA as an academic field in different countries. For many countries, the roots for PA are found in political science as for the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, and Taiwan, even though, other disciplines have contributed to the development of the field over the last fifty years. The linkage between the study of PA and business is less frequently found in Australia and New Zealand, where the former is mostly taught in departments of politics. Administrative law is the dominant influence on the development of PA in parts of Western Europe (Germany, France), most of Eastern Europe, Japan and Korea. Evidence of influence from administrative law is also apparent in the United States, but in contrast there appears to be little link to law in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

In the United States, PA as an academic modern discipline tracks back to both academic political science and law as a separate study in the 1910s. It arises in a political controversy between democratic control of government and competent achievement of governmental ends (Williams, 2003).

It is worth mentioning the Training School at the Bureau of Municipal Research (1911), affiliated with Columbia University, the City College of New York (1916), Georgetown University (1920), the School of Citizenship at Syracuse University (1924), the University of Michigan, and the University of Chicago (1916). Many early academics were affiliated with political science, although disciplinary boundaries were not strong in 1900, so they could easily be published in multiple disciplines. This early training and academic focus formed the core of the subsequent discipline (Williams, 2003).

In the last generation, PA has been replaced with fields of study like implementation, public management, and formal bureaucratic theory and few of the top political science departments offer courses in the field (Kettl, 1998).
PA as a subfield within political science has two problems: it has methodologically lagged behind; and the subfield’s theoretical work seems not to define it. As PA has sought respect within the discipline, it has risked distancing itself too much from practice, with “reinventers” often looking outside PA for answers to government management problems.

The management of intergovernmental programs, contracts, loans and regulations has not received attention proportionate to government’s growing reliance on them (Kettl, 1998). Nowadays, a better identification of the mission of PA education represents a challenge due to the increasing weight of non-governmental partners in performing several public tasks, the globalization process and the growing presence of participatory elements in the policy process (Kettl, 2001).

The three fundamental approaches to PA teaching in the United States (i.e. the PA, the management and the public policy paradigms) give a clear frame of reference but are unable to address these challenges (Hajnal, 2002). Nonetheless, PA has become more, not less important, to political science (Kettl, 1998).

In Canada, there is much disagreement about whether the study of PA can properly be called a discipline, largely because it is often viewed as a subfield of the disciplines of political science and administrative science (or administration). The study of PA has evolved primarily as a subfield of political science. The broad field of administration is divided into public, business, hospital, educational and other forms of administration, which are considered to be more similar than different (Kernaghan, Siegel, 1995).

There is, however, increasing recognition of PA as a separate field of study, which is reflected in the creation within universities of schools of PA which combine elements of the two earlier approaches. PA is taught as an interdisciplinary subject by political scientists, economists, sociologists and others. Nowadays, schools or faculties of PA exist at several universities across Canada; the oldest and largest of these include the Queen’s University of Victoria and the École National d’Administration (Québec) (Kernaghan, 2007).

PA as an academic field of study in Europe, notably England and Germany (Max Weber), started as a separate scholarly field in the 1890s, but it was first taught in continental universities in the 1720s. It has developed as an academic field in the past four decades (e.g. in Italy, Finland, Germany, Belgium and the UK, new programs in PA were established between 1955 and 1970) (Yan, Brans, 2004).

PA in continental Europe has predominantly been a legal study. Following the World War II and the development of the welfare state, other disciplinary perspectives entered the study. The French, Germans, Italians, Dutch and the Scandinavians developed a conception of PA with its intellectual roots in philosophy, law, sociology, economics, political science, history and so forth.

This marked a resurrection of the separate study of PA in the form of a more social science oriented field of study. Therefore, in Western Europe it is a relatively young field of science (Stillman, 1999) and it does not represent a regional model of its own due to the variations in administrative culture and the stronger dominance of a legal orientation and analysis of the use of public power in Southern
Europe in comparison to Northern Europe, and across the English Channel to a British tradition of pragmatic analysis (Connaughton, Randma, 2002). In the United Kingdom, PA is still more a North American satellite than a core European state (Pollitt, 1996).

In the Iberian Peninsula, PA was taught in law faculties until the middle XIX century in Portugal and until the second half of the XX century in Spain. Although we can track the origins of the studies in the Old regime and connect them to the political science approach (Spain) and basically the French influence (Portugal) (Araújo, Alvarez, 2006: 9-14). In the 1970s, there is a methodological opening (sociology, economics, political law, bureaucracy and personnel management) and a stronger influence of administrative sciences (linked to political sciences and sociology) rather then administrative law. A further development has been the analysis of public policies and studies on public management.

Currently, PA education in Spain is an ill-defined interdisciplinary field based in political science, economics, law and sociology. Issues such as administrative reform, modernization, participation, performance, etc. appear as transversal matters gathering specialists with any of those backgrounds (Ballart, 2007).

Researches have highlighted that the European dimension of PA education is underdeveloped and that very few universities have courses in European integration and comparative PA in their core curriculum³. This evidence contrasts with the relevance of adequate administrative capacities as a key requirement for EU membership.

The creation of new PA programs in the states of Central and Eastern Europe as well as the increasing interactions between administrations across Europe could give the discipline a further impetus to develop its own identity and approach (Connaughton, Randma, 2002).

Future perspectives of the PA as a field of study in Europe are bounded by uncertainty and the “membership” of the European countries to the three clusters established by the literature is becoming more and more questionable.

Figure 1 gives an overview of the developments since the II World War, which appear as a shift of several countries from the predominant legal area towards the political science or the management areas (Hajnal, 2003).

A relevant area of future research would be the development of PA teaching in countries still considered to belong to the legal cluster: mainly Italy, Austria, Germany and Switzerland on the one hand,

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³ We refer to the two inventories of PA education in the EU states and Norway, carried out by the SOCRATES-sponsored Thematic Network in Public Administration (TNPA, now EPAN), which analyzed the general composition of some PA programs with the aim of highlighting to what extent the European dimension of PA studies was included in core curricula and compulsory courses. Cfr. Verheijen, Connaughton, 1999; Verheijen, Nemec, 2000. The focus of the TNPA national reports undertaken during 1998-2000 is on comprehensive accounts of the development of PA programs within the national context with specific reference to courses with a European and comparative dimension. The reports list courses but the references to theory courses are vague and there are also very limited references to the national literature. For subsequent elaborations see Hajnal, 2002.
and some post-communist countries on the other. Will these countries remain in the legal area or will they change the patterns of their education systems? If so, which influence will be the strongest: the Anglo-Saxon (and in part Nordic) or the continental Europe one? Furthermore, will the growing weight of European Union administrative structures impose a certain degree of convergence?

5. **PA education in Italian universities: the results of the quantitative analysis**

The research explored the university-based PA education in Italy. Information from 204 faculties of all 72 Italian universities was gathered. 2,198 education programs of different levels were analyzed and classified.

Universities and faculties are distributed in geographical terms as shown in Table 1. Although universities are allocated evenly between north, centre and south, central Italy universities have fewer faculties. Nonetheless, the distribution of programs (in terms of credits) follows a different pattern.

The supply of programs regarding PA is greater in north Italy, especially if compared with the south\(^4\) (Figure 2). Most of the programs are distributed among Lombardia (20%) and Lazio (15.9%) regions, followed by Toscana (10.7%) and Marche (7.5%).

This can be compared with the number of civil servants (Figure 3). According to the annual report on PA of the National statistics institute, during 2002, 36% of them worked in northern regions, 22% in the centre, 41% in the south (Istat, 2005: 41). Although with a high level of approximation, it can be observed an adequate supply of PA programs in the north, a weak development in the central regions and an absolutely undersized situation in the south.

186 faculties out of 204 - distributed among economics, law, political science, sciences of communication, sociology, engineering and social sciences - have programs in PA (Figure 4).

The program levels (Bologna system) included undergraduate programs (Bachelor’s and Master’s degree) and courses; 1st and 2nd level Masters; and PhD programs (Table 2).

All the programs were classified in several categories regarding the level, the type (undergraduate; professional training; and research programs); the disciplinary nature (law, economics, management, engineering, political science, sociology, communication, interdisciplinary and governance of specific policy fields) and the education cluster: public, legal or corporate.

A further categorization for the corporate cluster distinguished the programs in terms of subject area in: general public management; planning, budgeting and control; organization and human resources management; accounting and finance; accountability and social reporting; e-Government; marketing and communication; market-type mechanisms.

For the sake of exhaustiveness, all types of programs were considered. It should be noticed however that these are of a different nature and weight. For instance, a single course of 5 credits in public management has a different relevance of a PhD program of 180 credits in the same topic. Therefore, the

\(^4\) If not specified, “south” is intended to include the two islands of Sardinia and Sicily.
calculations were performed by considering the credits, instead of the number of programs.

Undergraduate programs - Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees - were considered (and counted) separately from single courses. In several elaborations we chose the more detailed information on courses.

5.1. The levels and types of PA programs

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of the 2198 PA programs by level. Pre-graduate courses have more credits (45.1%) as compared to professional training (28.6%) and research-based education (26.2%).

There are 1846 undergraduate courses in PA in Italy, taught inside bachelor’s or master’s programs (Bologna system): we counted 191 of this kind.

There is a prevalence of II-level master programs (Master Philosophie) over I-level masters, which, together with the high number of enrolled students in the master’s degree, represent an indicator of the failure of the so-called Bologna system in Italy.

There are 38 doctoral programs in Italy. Of these, 22 are developed around political science and public economics issues; 10 regard administrative and public law; and 6 are in managerial issues.

The amount of PA programs taught in economic faculties is larger than programs taught in political sciences and law faculties (Figure 5). This result is quite interesting but it doesn’t take into account the disciplinary character of the programs, which will be considered in the next paragraph. In other words, the over 37% of PA programs taught in economic faculties includes also course and programs in administrative or public law.

An important data is represented by the nearly 5% of the programs organized jointly by different faculties. Again, this is something different from the interdisciplinary character of the programs. Only 21.7% of the interfaculty programs have an interdisciplinary character.

The programs can be distinguished in pre-graduate, professional and mid-career training, and research oriented. An overview of their distribution across the faculties is given in the Figure 6. Professional training is very often organized jointly by two or more faculties and it is prevalent in communication faculties, where we didn’t find research-based programs in PA. On the contrary, research or doctoral programs have a significant weight in law, political sciences and economic faculties.

In the framework of undergraduate education, it is worth distinguishing between single courses and degrees (either Bachelor’s or Master’s programs). The existence of specific degrees in PA could exemplify a more sustainable or “institutionalized” interest in the topic. It is the case of political sciences faculties (39.3%), as well as economics (33.1%) and law (16%) (Figure 7). Figure 8 shows the allocation of programs in north, centre and south Italy. Southern universities are distinguished by a greater emphasis on research-based programs as compared to professional training.

5.2. The disciplinary character of PA education programs

While information on faculties presented in the previous paragraph is interesting, it is even more so to
describe PA programs in terms of their disciplinary character.

What we find is a more balanced picture, with law-oriented programs counting for 31%, economic and management counting together for 29.7% and political sciences and sociology at 11.2% (Figure 9).

The distribution of PA programs inside the disciplinary areas is not homogeneous. A greater detail is given in Figure 10. It is easy to detect that law-oriented programs concentrate on the pre-graduate area, while professional and mid-career training is quite underdeveloped in this disciplinary area. This may be explained by the fact that Italian civil servants are mostly graduated in law and want to develop other kind of competencies.

It is also worthy to mention the high rate of 1st and 2nd level masters focused on the administration and governance of specific policy sectors and characterized by a special kind of interdisciplinarity developed around policy problems.

Finally, if we consider the weight of PhD programs as an indicator predicting the development of the disciplinary area, we can notice that economics and law are well placed ahead, followed by political science and management.

Figure 11 analyses Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees according to their disciplinary orientation. It is worth of note that, while the political science approach prevails as in the previous figure, other disciplinary areas such as sociology or even law and economics seldom recognize PA as a specific degree topic.

Another area of analysis is the relationship between the type of faculty and the disciplinary area. A general overview is given in Figure 12.

The faculties of law and sciences of communication are the most homogeneous. Juridical programs in PA are the most present in the different faculties and play a central role in the faculties of political sciences and of social sciences.

The analysis of the disciplinary character of PA programs by geographical area (Table 3) highlights the major weight of juridical programs in almost all regions, with the exception of Lombardia, Campania and Sicilia, which have a strong presence of economic programs; Toscana and Calabria with an emphasis on managerial programs; and Abruzzo where the relevance of the political science approach is registered.

5.3. PA education clusters

This paragraph is focused on the distribution of PA programs according to the three clusters identified by the literature: public, legal and corporate. As already mentioned, Italy is classified by the literature among the legalistic group of countries. Our research shows that the public cluster is the prevalent one in Italy (Figure 14).

This data, however, should be put in opposition to the information regarding the disciplinary orientation (Figure 9). The final result consists in law being the predominant disciplinary area (at 31.1%); but
not the main cluster, which is the public one with 41%.

This can be easily explained by considering the high homogeneity of the legal cluster (matching with law) and the high fragmentation of the other two clusters, especially the public one, split into several different disciplines.

A closer look suggests some other differences in the composition of each cluster. While in the legal cluster there is a prominence of pre-graduate programs, in the public cluster there is a strong relevance of PhD programs and in the corporate cluster the emphasis is on professional training (Figure 15).

However, pre-graduate education inside the legal cluster takes place through single courses, while it is more “structured” into B.A.s and M.A.s in the other two clusters, in particular in the public one (Figure 16).

It is also worth to analyze the clusters by considering their relative weight inside the three classical geographic areas. A north-centre-south comparison shows a greater weight of the public cluster in the south and in the north, and an equilibrated interest towards the three clusters in the centre. The corporate cluster is strong in central Italy and particularly weak in the south (Figure 17).

At a greater detail, there is also a difference between the 20 Italian regions, as shown in the next map (Figure 18 and greater detail in Table 4).

It doesn’t seem to exist an association between administrative cultures and traditions on the one hand, and educational clusters on the other. Lombardia and Veneto are often considered in the historical literature as regions which embody the Austro-Hungarian derived Rechtsstaat tradition. We should therefore expect to find the dominance of the legal cluster. Nevertheless, the public cluster includes over 44% of PA programs in Lombardia, compared to the 34% of law; and 35% in Veneto (compared to 35,1% in law).

The Piemonte and Sardinia regions, both characterized by bureaucratic Napoleonic traditions, show differentiated situations. In Piemonte we find a harmonized picture with the prevalence of the corporate cluster (at 42,9%). In Sardinia the legal cluster is decisively predominant at 69,7%.

Finally, the weak-State model inherited by Lazio and Sicily and similar to the Vatican State and the Two-Sicilies realm is characterized by a greater weight of the public cluster.

A further analysis of the corporate cluster with reference to the specific subject areas of the programs has highlighted the strong presence of programs dealing with public management in general (over 50%), followed by programs in strategic planning and control and programs in marketing and communication (Figure 19).

Perhaps most noteworthy is the group of programs in innovation processes, entirely based on professional training programs or master. Professional training is also prevalent in the other main groups,
with general public management programs including 49.4% of masters and programs in strategic planning and in marketing and communication each including 63% of masters.

5.4. Specificities of PA education in Italy

The disciplinary approach adopted in teaching issues such as accounting and administrative sciences merits a further analysis.

We would expect accounting (public, regional or national) to be taught mainly in economic faculties and adopting a managerial approach. However, 70% of programs in accounting are characterized by a juridical approach.

Programs entitled “Scienza dell’amministrazione” include only undergraduate courses and one Bachelor’s degree at the faculty of political sciences of the University of Palermo. 80% of the courses pertain to the political science disciplinary area (therefore to the public cluster) and are mainly taught in this kind of faculty. Nonetheless, there are nearly 20% of the courses taught according to the legalistic approach.

6. Key findings and areas for further research

PA as an academic field of study is going through a strong evolution in Italy. It can be affirmed that Italy is at the beginning of an important shift from the legalistic approach. It is not possible however to identify the direction of this evolution, although the continental European approach, based on political and administrative sciences, seems to exert a stronger influence in comparison to the Anglo-Saxon and partly Nordic managerial approach. On the one hand, there is empirical evidence that the public/political science cluster is the prevalent one, on the other the management/corporate cluster is experimenting an accelerated and sustainable development.

The role of the main faculties. Findings from the statistical analysis highlight the strong development of PA programs in faculties different from the law faculty. The greater commitment in PA programs is registered in economic faculties (over 37%) and political sciences faculties. In these, especially political sciences faculties, we found a greater presence of BAs and MAs, while the law faculties supply tends to focus on single pre-graduate courses. A relevant difference between these three main faculties is the level of homogeneity: extremely high in law; and scant in economics and political sciences.

The disciplinary orientation. As far as the disciplinary orientation is concerned, juridical programs in PA are generally prevalent (31%) and widespread also in economic and in political sciences faculties. Surprisingly enough, PA programs approached by a management perspective amount to nearly 13% and are placed between the economic (17%) and the political science approach (9%). The management approach seems to be particularly strong in central regions. However, if we aggregate the disciplinary approaches in clusters, as suggested by the literature in the topic (Hajnal, 2003), we find that the public cluster, mainly based on political science, is the main one (41%), both in terms of quantity of programs and in terms of emphasis on doctoral education.

Geographical differences. The geographical comparison of the 20 Italian regions has highlighted the underdevelopment of PA programs in south Italy, concerning mainly undergraduate and professional
training.

*Other specificities* of PA education in Italy include two topics: public accounting on the one hand, and administrative sciences in the other. The former is commonly dealt with adopting a legal approach (70%) and the weak position of the managerial approach is highlighted. Administrative science is mainly approached by political science (80%), although law plays an important role (20%).

*Areas for further research.* Given the dynamicity of the scenario, this statistical analysis represents a static, yet complete, photography. Therefore, it should be updated in the mid-term in order to monitor the development of the different disciplinary approaches and clusters.

Furthermore, the research could benefit of other information such as the number of enrolled students. Data regarding student placements and career success, and regarding the relative success of PA graduates in securing government employment would also be valuable.

The database could be usefully expanded in order to consider also professional training institutes and academies operating at the national and regional levels. The main of them, at the national level, include the National School of Public Administration (SSPA), the High School of the Ministry of Economy and Finance (SSEF) and the High School of the Ministry of the Interior.

Other important areas of further research include the comparison with other countries, especially with Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Greece, in which PA education is experimenting similar evolutions.

7. **References**


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8. Reseña biográfica

Denita Cepiku (MSc, PhD) es director del Observatorio Italiano de educación académica en Administración Pública, miembro de Junta del doctorado en Gestión Pública y Governance de la Universidad de Roma Tor Vergata. Es miembro del comité editorial de Mecosan: Healthcare management & economics Journal; co-presidente del panel “Territorial governance” y miembro de la Academia de Gestión
Europea (EURAM); miembro del grupo de estudio en “PA and Teaching” del Grupo Europeo de Administración Pública (EGPA); miembro de la Asociación Italiana de Economía Sanitaria (AIES).

Sus intereses de investigación incluyen las redes del sector público, Gestión estratégica en Administración Pública, Administración Pública y enseñanza, gestión del cuidado de la salud (Gestión de calidad, innovación, asociación de los sectores público y privado).

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9. Tables and figures

Figure 1: PA curricula in Europe. A move away from legalism

Source: Based on information from: Hajnal, 2002; Seibel, 1999; Toonen, Verheijen, 1999; Ballart, 1999.

Table 1: Geographical distribution of universities

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<th>Geographical area</th>
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Figure 2: Geographical distribution of PA programs

Figure 3: Geographical distribution of civil servants (% on data per 1,000 inhabitants, Istat, 2005)
Figure 4: Distribution of faculties by type (nr & %)

Table 2: PA teaching programs by level

<table>
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Figure 5: Distribution of PA programs by type of faculty
Figure 6: The distribution (%) of program types across faculties

Figure 7: Undergraduate programs by faculty
Figure 8: The geographical distribution (%) of program types

![Geographical Distribution Chart]

Figure 9: The disciplinary character of PA programs

![Disciplinary Character Chart]

Figure 10: The disciplinary character of PA programs by type

![Disciplinary Character by Type Chart]
Figure 11: The disciplinary orientation of undergraduate degrees

Figure 12: The disciplinary character of PA programs by faculty

Figure 13: The disciplinary character of PA programs by faculty

Table 3: The disciplinary character of PA programs by geographical area (%)

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eco.</th>
<th>Mng.t</th>
<th>Pol. scie.</th>
<th>Soci- ogy</th>
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Figure 14: PA education clusters

![Diagram](image14.png)

Figure 15: PA education clusters by program type
Figure 16: Undergraduate degrees by disciplinary cluster

Figure 17: PA education clusters: internal distribution by geographic area

Figure 18: PA education clusters: regional distribution
### Table 4: PA education clusters: regional distribution (%)

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**Figure 19: Subjects taught in corporate programs**
Figure 20: The disciplinary orientation of accounting

- General public management: 50.0%
- Strategic planning, budgeting and control: 14.2%
- Accounting and finance: 2.4%
- Organization and HRM: 5.1%
- Accountability and social reporting: 0.4%
- E-government & ICTs: 8.5%
- Innovation processes: 7.7%
- Market-type mechanisms: 1.2%
- Other issues: 0.3%
- Marketing and communication: 10.8%
- Accounting and social reporting: 0.4%
- Other issues: 0.3%

Figure 21: The disciplinary orientation of courses entitled administrative sciences

- Public: 80.4%
- Corporate: 0.0%
- Legal: 19.6%