Teaching Public Policy
to Undergraduate Students:
Issues, Experiences, and Lessons in Turkey

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Abstract
The study of public policy is getting increasingly important around the world in the field of public administration. As an assessment of this development by examining undergraduate courses in Turkey, this article shows the historical development and current status of undergraduate-level public policy courses in Turkey. To this end, data were collected by content analysis of public policy course syllabi and by evaluation of the archival documents regarding the teaching of public policy in Turkey. Finally, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the past and current instructors of the public policy courses. This article discusses the Turkish public administration system in general as well as the future prospects of public policy teaching in Turkey, including the improvement of the existing courses and the discussion of the relevance and impact of such courses on the students and faculty of the public departments.

If the function of advising the emperors, kings, and sultans in the past can be considered a traditional kind of public policy analysis, then the study of public policy is almost as old as the history itself (Goldhamer, 1978, pp, 7–27). In its modern sense, as a multidisciplinary, multi-method, problem-focused, and
action-oriented discipline (Parsons, 1995, pp. 1–16), the field of public policy is relatively new compared to the other social science disciplines.

Public policy is an interdisciplinary branch of economics, sociology, political science, history, anthropology, and public administration. The field of public policy analyzes how decisions that affect communities are prepared and executed (Lavender, 2009, p. 67). It has been discussed that policy studies and public policy are closely related to political science or are, as Speckhard argues, “both bane and blessing to traditional political science” (Speckhard, 1982, p. 502). In short, public policy is a melting pot that contains public administration and political science.

There is no universal definition of public policy. Nevertheless, there is widespread agreement that public policy includes studying the process of making choices and the results of those choices (Smith & Larimer, 2009). According to Dye, public policy is “whatever governments choose to do or not do” (1987, p. 1). Similarly, Anderson (2010, p. 6) defines public policy as “the behavior of some actor or set of actors, such as an official, a governmental agency, or a legislature, in an area of activity.” Seligman (1955, p. 126) argues that public policy defines the politics regarding the function and reasons of processes. Political, social, and economic problems are considered in the broader measure of public policy. On the other hand, Dye and Gray (1980) conclude that socioeconomic factors, rather than political factors, are the main determinants of public policy. Therefore, public policy escapes easy definitions; however, generally, in Turkey, public policy focuses on the dynamics of both political and socioeconomic factors in its evaluation and methodology.

Studies on the research and teaching of public policy are quite limited in Turkey (Robins, 2009, p. 289). In a pioneering study, Orhan (2007) provided a list of the public policy courses in Turkey as of 2005. This article contributes to public policy literature by examining and explaining the diffusion of public policy teaching in a non-American setting. The nature and the rate of diffusion of public policy courses in Turkey also show the reasons and the processes behind the globalization of public policy studies.

Literature Review

It has been widely accepted that policy sciences started in the middle of the 20th century (Smith & Larimer, 2009). As DeLeon indicates, the policy sciences approach has been primarily ascribed to Harold D. Lasswell’s works from the late 1940s and early 1950s, particularly his article, “The Policy Orientation,” that is the opening chapter of Lasswell and Daniel Lerner’s book, The Policy Sciences (DeLeon, 2006, p. 39). Indeed, Lasswell, in this book chapter, defines public policy and discusses the characteristics of the policy sciences that were new at that time.

Smith and Larimer (2009) argue that policy sciences are problem oriented, multidisciplinary, methodologically and theoretically sophisticated, and value
oriented (as cited in Lasswell, 1951). Public policy became an important notion for general education courses in the social sciences in 1950s (Seligman, 1955). Similarly, Berry suggests that today’s major challenge and opportunity is to improve and encourage high-quality public affairs, administration, and policy education (Berry, 2011, p. 2).

As Seligman argues, the basis of public policy discussions has been the increasing interplay between society, the economy, and the government, along with bad actors on the international stage and compounded by the dilemma of freedom and national security (Seligman, 1955). Thus the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War witnessed the creation of public policy studies.

After the 1970s, public policy studies developed in the academia. For instance, Policy Studies Organization (PSO) was founded in 1971 and its journal, Policy Studies Journal, was established in 1972. Another public policy association, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), was founded in 1979. Its journal, the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, came along in 1981. Today, both of the associations and journals are active and organize many conferences and workshops in the United States. For instance, since 1979, APPAM has been organizing research conferences; according to APPAM’s website, each year it hosts over 160 sessions where more than 1,000 participants present their papers related to public policy (APPAM, 2010).

The growth of public policy studies is accompanied by an increase in the topic’s teaching. Since the early years of the discipline, scholars have discussed the question of how future public administrators will be educated as well as the quality and content of public administration and policy education. Many scholars examined the curricula of public administration schools in terms of public policy orientation. For instance, Lasswell argued that “public administrators were to be educated in this approach through taking courses in a range of traditional academic disciplines, and also through a mix of historical case studies, simulation exercises, and professional on-the-job training” (Lasswell, 1971; cited by Allison, 2006, p. 63). Similarly, Wildavsky (2007, pp. 25–27) demanded public policy schools to connect politics, economics, and organizations. Other scholars wanted to see public policy as a professional as well as an academic field, so that it could be considered a professional practice like medicine, law, or management (Geva-May & Maslove, 2006).

Certification and standardization of undergraduate education of public policy is essential since many undergraduate degree holders seek a job rather than pursue a graduate program. As Berry (2011, p. 4) suggests, under the new (business) model, almost all public affairs and administration programs have pressures to improve their undergraduate programs: “The transition is likely to impose some tough choices on us about what curriculum we offer, how we deliver our classes to students, and how we maintain high quality in a rapidly changing environment.” In this new environment, students must learn not
only how to do policy analysis but also the politics of the policy process (Foster, McBeth, & Clemons, 2010).

As the field of public administration has been changing due to globalization, government reforms, and increasing governance practices within intergovernmental networks, research and teaching in public policy also adapted itself to these changes. The Cold War period and social equality demands during the 1960s and 1970s provided a rich agenda for public policy studies, such as ambitious welfare state initiatives, national defense issues, and new economic and budget processes (Geva-May & Maslove, 2006). For instance, advanced planning and decision-making techniques used in government, such as the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS), emphasized the importance of quantitative skills. To meet this demand for analysts, between 1967 and 1971 public policy analysis programs were established in the Harvard Kennedy School, University of California–Berkeley’s Graduate School of Public Policy, Carnegie-Mellon University’s School of Urban and Public Affairs, and Duke University’s Institute of Policy Science and Public Affairs (Allison, 2006, p. 64).

During the 1980s and 1990s, public policy studies continued to increase in number, particularly due to governance practices and the growing number of think tanks in the United States. Furthermore, since the 1990s, public affairs, administration, and policy education “began a move toward mission-based accreditation and kept curriculum requirements in key areas, but encouraged our schools to link their purpose, their curriculum, and their outputs” (Berry, 2011, p. 2). During this period, in addition to the public policy programs in the United States, programs in Europe and Canada began to flourish under the departments of public administration and political science (Geva-May & Maslove, 2006). Moreover, the New Public Management (NPM) movement, which gained momentum in the 1980s with its main themes of decentralization, performance measurement, private sector style of management, and contracting out, among others, emphasized the importance of public policy education as an analytical tool focusing on “policy design, decision styles and intergovernmental cooperation” (Hood, 1991, p. 3). Finally, the transformation in Eastern Europe and its universities during the 1990s and beyond opened a window of opportunity for the diffusion of public policy research and teaching (Geva-May & Maslove, 2006).

As the practice of public administration changes, the content and technique of what is taught about public administration must also change (Schultz, 2010, p. ii). This argument is also true for public policy education. For example, a panel at the 1999 APPAM Conference was named “The Changing Public Policy Curriculum.” The main issue of this panel was “the exogenous forces shaping public policy training are changing and the public policy curriculum must change with it” (Lynn, 2001, p. 162). Increasing demand for policy analysis and policy experts necessitated the transformation of some public administration or public affairs schools into public policy schools or programs (Geva-May &
Maslove, 2006). However, according to Kettl (2001, p. 216), this demand has not been successfully satisfied, since the public administration/affairs schools were slow or unsuccessful in adapting to the needs of the new system parameters in the post–Cold War era.

Foster et al. (2010) have argued that, since the 1990s, public policy professors have been challenged to teach public policy courses either from a traditional positivist approach that stresses rationality, neutrality, and economics or from a post-positivist approach that stresses politics, partiality, and democracy. They maintain that this kind of choice is false and limiting since the ideal way to teach a practical public policy analysis course is based on mixed methodologies, including both positivism and post-positivism. What they suggest is the case method that includes both approaches.

As public policy research and education became a global phenomenon, differences began to exist between different schools of public policy. For example, there are big differences between American and European universities in terms of public policy research. Universities in the United States do research and practice in addition to teaching policy analysis within their research centers. Almost all public policy programs in the United States have a research center focusing on different levels of government and different policy fields, such as education, housing, health, environment, and so on (Geva-May & Maslove, 1996). As DeLeon (2006) states, almost all public administration and policy programs in the United States hire faculty members who not only teach but also do research. Moreover, public policy schools in the United States are closely related to business and foundation support and are less dependent on government funding than their counterparts in Europe and Canada. These institutions also have connections with different levels of governments. Faculty members can work for a government unit, or senior government officials can work for universities (Geva-May & Maslove, 2006).

Contrary to the American style just described, public policy research and teaching is a more recent phenomenon in Europe and Canada. Canadian and European programs are much more likely to include a course on the theory of public policy and/or public administration. In Europe, public policy is usually under the departments of business, political science, or public administration. Only few of them provide core courses in public policy and policy analysis (Geva-May, Nasi, Turini, & Scott, 2008). European-style public policy analysis is also more comparative, thanks to the different administrative structures in the European Union and intra-European academic exchange programs such as Erasmus. While the American schools are more practice oriented, with a focus on internships, most of the programs in Europe do not train students outside of class and are more theory oriented.

Another difference between the American and European approaches to public policy is the tools they use to coordinate and standardize the educational
systems at the local, regional, and state level. The European Union uses a government-oriented strategy, such as the Bologna Declaration document that was signed by the European ministers of education in 1999. The American system works in a more associational track; the bulk of responsibility for coordination is on the shoulders of professional associations such as the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). Currently, there is a convergence between the two systems, exemplified by the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation’s (EAPAA) accreditation of schools and programs (Geva-May et al., 2008).

European approaches to public policy education are more theoretical and thus more qualitative. They focus on legal studies, historical narratives, and documentary research rather than on game theory or meta-analysis. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, are used in most of the public policy courses in the United States. Morçöl and Ivanova’s study, which builds upon previous studies, pointed out that quantitative methods are predominant in master’s and PhD-level public policy and qualitative courses (7% and 15% respectively), although the trend is moving toward more qualitative research (Morçöl & Ivanova, 2010, pp. 269–270).

Finally, Cloete and Rabie (2008) compared the South African practice of public policy teaching to international practices. They reported that public policy education in South Africa is less sophisticated than its international counterparts. In addition, there is more emphasis on descriptive qualitative approaches and less emphasis on quantitative approaches in policy analysis courses and processes. Furthermore, policy monitoring, evaluation, and cost-benefit analysis were not considered as important factors. They concluded that “these defects in the public policy analysis community detrimentally affect policy analysis education and training, and result in a public policy analysis capacity-building system that is not at the required international level” (Cloete & Rabie, 2008, p. 68).

The review of the literature shows that both research and teaching of public policy has been taking root in government and research centers throughout the world, although to different degrees. Public policy's increasing global recognition and its exportation to new countries needs to be analyzed with a critical eye. Analyzing examples from developing countries may help us answer the question of whether the study and teaching of public policy study is just “widening” (i.e., increasing in number) or “deepening” in terms of analytical power and potential as well. As an attempt to answer this basic question, the rest of this article examines the historical development and current status of undergraduate public policy education in Turkey.

**Methodology**

The study universe includes all the public administration departments in Turkish universities where undergraduate-level public policy courses are being taught. An analysis of graduate-level public policy teaching is beyond the scope of this article.
There are 165 universities in Turkey as of March 2011. Out of these 165 universities, 57 have public administration or political science departments. Out of these 57 departments, 20 departments listed public policy courses in their undergraduate curricula. Within these 20 departments, basic information categories, such as the course descriptions, were available through the websites of relevant faculty and departments for only 11 courses. All 11 of these courses provided syllabi either online or by e-mail exchanges with the instructors. The content of these 11 syllabi were analyzed as one of the data collection strategies employed by this study.

In addition to these 11 syllabi of current courses, two syllabi from the very first public policy courses in Turkish higher education offered by two senior faculty members during early 1990s were also included in the overall analysis, but not the content analysis, due to lack of detail in these two old syllabi.

As a second data collection method, a total of 13 in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with past and current instructors of undergraduate-level public policy courses. Out of these 13 interviews, seven of them were conducted with the instructors of the courses, the syllabi of which were analyzed via content analysis. The remaining six interviews were done with the initial instructors of the very first public policy courses taught in Turkey in early 1990s and the part-time faculty who teach public policy in different institutions than their own. Almost half of the interviews (six in total) were conducted face-to-face, while the other seven interviews were done via e-mail and telephone. Data obtained from literature review, content analyses, and these 13 interviews were used for triangulation purposes in order to obtain a better picture of public policy education in Turkey.

The interview questions probed several processes during the creation and development of public policy courses in Turkish universities. While the first two questions inquired how the course was first offered and which actors and processes were influential in its offering, later questions asked about the courses’ coverage, the instructors’ expectations of the students (exams, participation, homework, etc.), course status (mandatory or elective), the language of instruction (Turkish or a foreign language), theory and practice ratios in course content, and so forth. The final two questions asked the instructors to provide their views and suggestions regarding how to improve their classes in particular, and undergraduate-level public policy teaching in Turkey, in general. The interview questions are presented in the Appendix to this article.

**Findings**

Analysis of the archival documents shows that the diffusion of the public policy studies in Turkey dates back to the PhD studies of few Turkish public administration faculty in American universities during the early 1970s. In addition, a book written during the 1980s on agriculture policies (Ergüder, 1981) includes partial translations of the public policy literature of the time. After a long period
Table 1.  
List of Syllabi Analyzed by Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the Course</th>
<th>Instructor (in alphabetical order)</th>
<th>Institution (where the course was or is taught)</th>
<th>Time of Instruction (since)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>Cengiz Ekiz</td>
<td>Abant Izzet Baysal University (Bolu)</td>
<td>2010–2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Public Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Gökhan Orhan</td>
<td>Balikesir University (Balikesir)</td>
<td>2006–2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Methods of Policy Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Hasan Engin Şener</td>
<td>Akdeniz University (Antalya)</td>
<td>2008–2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy Processes and Analysis</td>
<td>Hüseyin Gül</td>
<td>Süleyman Demirel University (Isparta)</td>
<td>2007–2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy and Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Hüseyin Özgür</td>
<td>Pamukkale University (Denizli)</td>
<td>2004–2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>Mete Yildiz</td>
<td>Hacettepe University (Ankara)</td>
<td>2005–2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Public Policy: Public Praxis or the State at Work and Regional Policy and Governance</td>
<td>Mustafa Kemal Bayırbağ</td>
<td>Middle East Technical University (Ankara)</td>
<td>2006–2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Musa Eken and Özer Köseoğlu</td>
<td>Sakarya University (Sakarya)</td>
<td>2007–2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>Ulaş Bayraktar</td>
<td>Mersin University (Mersin)</td>
<td>2006–2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Yeşeren Eliçin Arikan</td>
<td>Galatasaray University (Istanbul)</td>
<td>1998–1999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aThis course was different from the other undergraduate public policy courses since it is a seminar, characterized by a practice orientation. After the presentation of the basic public policy theory during the first 3 weeks of the semester, students analyze public policy cases during the rest of the semester. Therefore, this course’s syllabus was not analyzed.
### Table 2.
**List of Interviewees and Their Institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent (in alphabetical order)</th>
<th>Institution (where the public policy course was taught)</th>
<th>Current Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argun Akdoğan&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Middle East Technical University (Ankara)</td>
<td>Public Administration Institute for Turkey and Middle Eastern (Ankara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birgül Ayman Güler</td>
<td>Ankara University (Ankara)</td>
<td>Ankara University (Ankara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cengiz Ekiz</td>
<td>Abant Izzet Baysal University (Bolu)</td>
<td>Abant Izzet Baysal University (Bolu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gökhan Orhan</td>
<td>Balikesir University (Balikesir)</td>
<td>Balikesir University (Balikesir)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Göktuğ Morçöl&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Middle East Technical University (Ankara)</td>
<td>Pennsylvania State University (Pennsylvania/USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan Engin Şener</td>
<td>Akdeniz University (Antalya)</td>
<td>Akdeniz University (Antalya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hüseyin Gül</td>
<td>Süleyman Demirel University (Isparta)</td>
<td>Süleyman Demirel University (Isparta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hüseyin Özgür</td>
<td>Pamukkale University (Denizli)</td>
<td>Pamukkale University (Denizli)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa Kemal Bayırbağ</td>
<td>Middle East Technical University (Ankara)</td>
<td>Middle East Technical University (Ankara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Özer Köseoğlu</td>
<td>Sakarya University (Sakarya)</td>
<td>Sakarya University (Sakarya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonay Bayramoğlu&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Akdeniz University (Antalya)</td>
<td>Gazi University (Ankara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turgay Ergun&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Public Adm. Institute for Turkey and the Middle East (Ankara)</td>
<td>Public Adm. Institute for Turkey and the Middle East (Ankara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulaş Bayraktar</td>
<td>Mersin University (Mersin)</td>
<td>Mersin University (Mersin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeşeren Eliçin Arikân</td>
<td>Galatasaray University (Istanbul)</td>
<td>Galatasaray University (Istanbul)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Part-time instructor  
<sup>b</sup>The very first instructors of the first public policy courses being taught in Turkey in early 1990s.  
<sup>c</sup>First instructor of the public policy course at Akdeniz University.
of silence, the early 1990s witnessed the beginning of undergraduate-level teaching in public policy in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the Middle East Technical University (METU). Simultaneously, a master’s-level course was offered in the Public Administration Institute for Turkey and the Middle East (PAITME), an institute established by the Turkish government with the help of American experts in 1950s.

In 2000, there were no required public policy courses in the ideal undergraduate curriculum recommended for the public administration departments by the Turkish Higher Education Agency (Şaylan & Sezen, 2000, pp. 75–76). The findings from the examination of curricula suggested that the 2000s witnessed a dramatic increase in the teaching of public policy courses in the public administration departments of Turkish universities, as can be seen in Table 1. This development was evident not only in the increasing number of public policy courses taught but also in the increased number of public administration faculty who were teaching public policy courses and attending specific workshops about public policy.

The findings of the interviews indicated that the increase in public policy teaching is caused by multiple factors. First, Turkish public administration faculty who received their MA and PhD degrees in American and European universities were instrumental in the process of transfer. Most of these faculty members received public policy courses during their graduate studies. After their graduation and return to Turkey as university faculty, they proposed adding the public policy courses into the undergraduate programs of their departments and became the instructors of these newly created courses. These faculty members, however, showed the tendency to teach these new public policy courses in a way that emphasized their area of specialty. For example, if a faculty member specialized in environmental policy, the practical part of the public policy course leaned toward environmental policy. This situation can be termed as a problem of “policy specialty-centrism” or “speci-centrism,” that might affect the homogeneity and/ or standardization of the content of public policy courses in the long run.

A second reason for the diffusion of public policy courses in Turkey stemmed from the sabbatical studies of Turkish public administration faculty members. In one such example, a faculty member who visited the United States for his sabbatical studies during the early 1990s returned to Turkey with the idea of teaching a similar course in Turkey. It should be noted that this faculty member took public policy courses during his PhD studies in the 1970s, as well. Therefore, in this example, these two factors converged.

A third factor that encouraged the diffusion of public policy teaching in Turkey was the applicability of the public policy framework to the analysis of recent changes in the Turkish administrative system. One of the interviewees explained that her interest in public policy was a pragmatic recognition of its analytical power. Although she thought that the area of public policy studies was ideologically
oriented, it nevertheless provided a beneficial and powerful tool to study global changes in public administration systems and their reflections in Turkey. In other words, the public policy field presented a window of opportunity for new and exciting academic research in public administration.

As a fourth factor, second-generation transfer agents were influential in the transfer process. In other words, students of the first generation of transfer agents, who were mostly acquainted with the public policy studies in foreign universities, increased diffusion by offering public policy courses when they got hired as new faculty. Members of this second generation of public policy instructors earned their PhD degrees in Turkey, where they were introduced to the topic of public policy while taking doctoral-level courses.

Encounters with the European educational system and institutions seem to be a fifth and final factor. The findings from both the content analysis of syllabi and interviews indicated that the Socrates-Erasmus Exchange Program\(^7\) contributed

**Table 3**

*Factors of Diffusion in Public Policy Teaching*\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Graduate Education in the U.S. or Europe</th>
<th>Sabbatical Studies in the U.S. or Europe</th>
<th>Second-Generation Diffusion Agents</th>
<th>The Analytic Power of Public Policy</th>
<th>European Exchange Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akdeniz U.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ankara U.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balikesir U.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal U.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galatasaray U.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacettepe U.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mersin U.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METU</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAITME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamukkale U.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakarya U.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Süleyman Demirel U.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Categories are not mutually exclusive.
to the creation and diffusion of public policy courses through revision of the curriculum in many departments. These revisions created a window of opportunity for the first- and second-generation transfer agents to propose the teaching of public policy courses in their respective departments.

Although these factors are not mutually exclusive, as Table 3 shows, one factor (graduate education in the United States or Europe) was dominant in the introduction of public policy courses in Turkey. The overall findings from content analysis and interviews regarding the factors of diffusion are presented in Table 3.

The findings of the content analysis indicated that, out of the 11 courses whose syllabi were analyzed, more than half of them (six courses) were elective. While three courses were being taught in English and one in French, the remaining eight were in Turkish, as shown in Figure 1 below. The theory–practice ratios were on average 50–50. Selected results from the content analysis of public policy courses are listed in Table 4.

Both the content analysis of the syllabi and the interview results showed that the basic public policy literature was covered during the first few weeks of each course. Most of these courses were taught by presenting the public policy cycle idea\(^8\) (the process dimension) as the basic framework. The actors dimension seemed to be emphasized less\(^9\) by the instructors, perhaps due to thinking that actors and their interplay may be too detailed and complicated for undergraduate students to grasp. Similarly, in many syllabi, the details of theory were not explained in detail at the undergraduate level\(^{10}\) in order to present a basic understanding of the discipline to the students, who may have difficulties with complex theories. The list of subjects that were covered in course syllabi is presented in Table 4 and Figure 2.

**Figure 1.**
Language of the Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 4.
**Selected Results of the Content Analysis of Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Core or Elective Course</th>
<th>Language and Resources</th>
<th>Similar Course in the Undergraduate Program</th>
<th>Similar Course in the Graduate Program</th>
<th>Percentage of Books to Articles</th>
<th>Latest Resource</th>
<th>Theory–Practice Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akdeniz U.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>50–50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balikesir U.-1</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>90–10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balikesir U.-2</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>30–70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bolu U.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>40–60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galatasaray U.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>60–40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hacettepe U.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>50–50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mersin U.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>50–50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East Technical U.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>50–50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sakarya U.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>90–10</td>
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<td>Süleyman Demirel U.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamukkale U.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*a C: Core; E: Elective

b*: Not clear
The findings from the interviews provided some insight regarding the problems experienced both by teachers and students of these public policy courses. A major problem was the inadequacy of Turkish language literature on public policy theory and practice. Content analysis of course syllabi as well as interview findings showed that, while many faculty members used English language resources in presenting theory due to lack of academically satisfactory Turkish material, most case studies used in these courses were chosen from Turkey so that the students could grasp the theoretical material better with the help of real-life examples.
Since most of the courses are instructed in Turkish, the theoretical part of the courses required a considerable amount of translation by the instructors.

As explained earlier, the overall findings suggested that case studies are essential parts of public policy teaching in Turkey. Cases in public administration and policy are crucial because they develop skills needed by managers. Students should be able to describe, apply, and analyze public policy theories (Foster et al., 2010, pp. 522–524). Interview findings suggest that while it was the faculty member’s responsibility to present the theory of public policy, the students were asked to analyze cases, mostly from Turkey, by using the theoretical frameworks presented by their teachers. These analyses, if properly executed and archived, may create a pool of case studies to the benefit of public policy researchers.

Interview findings show that some instructors used movies or movie clips for teaching public policy issues. One of the movies used for instruction was the Fog of War, which is a semi-documentary featuring a long interview with the former U.S. Secretary of State, Robert McNamara. This movie presents information on decision making, agenda formation, policy analysis, and implementation, together with policy actors, via detailed analyses of historical cases such as the bombing of Japan during World War II, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Vietnam War. Another movie that was used as a tool of instruction was Thirteen Days, which presents a detailed analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis case from the viewpoint of collective decision-making issues within the framework of the factors that shape national defense policies. Television series that reflect the policy analysis and implementation processes, such as Yes Minister and Yes Prime Minister, were also preferred tools of instruction. In addition to movies and television series, some instructors emphasized that they benefited from the use of short animated movies, such as Story of Stuff and Meatrix, which are freely available on the Internet.

**Discussion**

Public policy as a field of research and teaching has become increasingly popular in the last decade. One important reason for this popularity is the nature of the public policy field as an area of research that combines the disciplines of political science and public administration. In other words, public policy connects these two disciplines in the eyes of the academics, students, and practitioners of public administration in a very practical, easy-to-understand fashion through theory and practice. The overall objective of this study is to critically analyze the increasing global recognition of public policy and its exportation to new countries. By the help of the Turkish example that was examined in detail earlier, the main question to answer is whether the study and teaching of public policy study is just “widening” (increasing in number), or if it is also “deepening” in terms of analytical contributions to the field. To this end, this section aims to provide some insights via the example of the historical development and current status of undergraduate public policy education in Turkey.
The overall findings in the Turkish example suggest that while public policy studies are diffuse at a global level, this field is not deepening. Akdooğan (2011, p. 94) argues that public policy analysis methods and techniques could not take root in the Turkish public administration system, despite the opening of several windows of opportunity. Similarly, this study suggests that undergraduate-level teaching of public policy in Turkey in the last two decades has accomplished little more than teaching the translations of the English-language books and articles. A few original additions to the Turkish-language public policy literature are promising (e.g., Çelik, 2008; Çorbacıoğlu, 2008); however, these new publications are mostly critical appraisals of the English-language books and articles, instead of being original contributions that are meaningful for a global audience of public policy researchers and practitioners. Robins (2009, p. 289) emphasized the same point from an academic output perspective when he wrote, “There is no systematic, book-length study of public policy making in Turkey, whether in English, Turkish or any European language. Indeed, there are surprisingly few publications to be found at all.”

There are several explanations for this lack of deepening of public policy in Turkey: First of all, public policy study is a relatively new phenomenon in Turkey; the main wave of academic diffusion took place only recently, during the 2000s. The interview findings suggest that first, there is limited demand for rigorous analysis of policy problems. Akbulut (2002) blames this on the Turkish culture, which is not consistent with the idea of planning and decision making by the help of systematic, quantitative evaluations. Neither the public nor the policy actors see such analysis as absolutely necessary for legitimizing their analysis and decision-making processes. However, there are some exceptions to this rule when international organizations such as the World Bank and supranational bodies such as the European Union are important policy actors in a given policy area. For example, the “Transformation of Health” project, which was initiated in 2010, was based heavily on firsthand data collection by extensive fieldwork and rigorous policy analysis results, conducted with the help of World Bank funding.

A second reason that limited the development of public policy studies and analyses in Turkey is the lack of current and complete data sets to base the analyses upon. Third, the teaching of public policy has not yet created a critical mass of policy analysts who are well versed in the theory and equipped with the whole toolbox of policy analysis methods. Fourth, similar to the previous point, the teaching of public policy has not yet created a critical mass of policy analysts, who would be employed in government agencies that are responsible for policy analyses. An increase in the number of policy analysts in government may help the creation of a lobbying group for the production of more and better analyses.

Public policy teaching in Turkey seems to have become an amalgam of the U.S. and European approaches, which were explained in detail earlier. The Turkish approach, in its orientation toward predominantly quantitative research and practice, is similar to the U.S. style; yet there is neither a movement toward
government coordination of public policy teaching, as in the European Union, nor the creation of an associational track for accreditation, such as NASPAA in the United States. In Turkey, both government agencies and privately funded think tanks produce research, but strong connections with the levels of government as in the United States and a comparative orientation as in the European Union seem to be lacking at this point.

Several trends can be indicated, and some suggestions can be made to increase the analytical depth of policy analyses and deepening of public policy teaching in Turkey: An overview of the literature and interview findings suggest that there is a high level of interest in public policy research and teaching in Turkey. Organization of annual public policy workshops for the last 3 years, the opening of a public policy research center in Sabanci University (Istanbul Policy Center), and the establishment of numerous think tanks indicates an upward trend. Therefore, it can be assumed that there will be a growing interest in public policy in Turkey in the coming years. An increase in academic exchange programs with the European and American universities may facilitate this trend. In addition, a Turkish academic journal similar to JPAM (Journal of Policy Analysis and Management) and an association such as APPAM, which deals with the organization of the emerging Turkish public policy community, will be useful.

Legal mandates to conduct policy analyses before making certain types of government decisions can help deepening public policy studies in Turkey. In 2003, the passage of Law Number 5018, the Public Financial Management and Control Law, mandated the techniques of strategic planning and performance-based budgeting whenever money is being spent from the public purse. Another such legal mandate is of conducting environmental impact analysis before making any considerable public investment.

Efforts are under way to open public policy specialties in some public administration departments. This high level of interest may cause vertical and horizontal diffusion in public policy teaching. At the horizontal level, there may be a tendency to break the undergraduate public policy course into two—one course based on theory and one on practice. At the vertical level, the trend to offer new courses of public policy at graduate level is already evident.

The high degree of interest in public policy courses creates a parallel high demand for more Turkish-language research and publications on public policy. Predominantly English-language sources cause problems of instruction for the instructor and problems of perception for the students due to the differences in political and administrative systems as well as differing philosophies of government. It seems evident that either a reader or a textbook on public policy in Turkish, combining the theory and practice of the field in its entirety, is urgently needed. Such a book will inevitably involve a certain amount of translation from the predominantly English-language sources and will require the addition of original contributions from Turkey as well.
A related problem is the lack of empirical analyses of Turkish public policy problems that include numerical/statistical or detailed analysis based on current data sets. That current and accurate data cannot be found for analysis was a common complaint in the interviews as well as the Turkish-language public policy literature (Göksu, 2003, pp. 337, 346, 349; Tatar, 2003, p. 260). This lack of detailed analyses may partly be solved by the accumulation of case-study assignments, which were prepared by the students through original data collection and analysis or by secondary data analysis from existing databases. Another way to overcome the problem of limited analytical studies is to organize guest lectures by experienced bureaucrats and politicians, so that they can orally transfer their accumulated wisdom to the students during class time.

This article examined the historical development, current status, and future prospects of public policy teaching in the public administration departments of Turkish universities. Future researchers on this topic may examine more specific aspects of public policy teaching in Turkey, such as the use of case studies, scenario analysis, or simulations. Teaching of public policy in Turkey at the graduate level is another promising topic for future research.

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Footnotes

1 During the revision process of this article in March 2011, our web searches uncovered three additional public administration departments offering public policy courses, in addition to the original 17. These departments at Sakarya, Istanbul, and Kocaeli universities, however, do not provide syllabi on their websites. The course at Sakarya, entitled “Public Policy and Analysis,” is listed as a required course; the other two, “Public Policy” and “Public Policymaking Process in Turkey,” are electives. These elective courses are new additions to the department curriculum as a result of the EU integration and standardization process (known as the Bologna Process) as a part of the Erasmus European Academic and Student Exchange Program. Out of these three courses, the syllabus of the course in Sakarya was obtained and added to the content analysis. Syllabi for the other two courses are not available, since they have not been taught yet.

2 The remaining 10 departments neither placed their syllabi online nor answered our e-mail and telephone follow-ups regarding our request to obtain a copy of their syllabus, if they had one.

3 These 11 syllabi were taken from 10 departments, since Professor Gökhan Orhan from Balikesir University teaches two undergraduate-level public policy courses.

4 Göktuğ Morçöl, PhD, taught the course in two semesters under the titles of “Public Policy Analysis I: Teaching Public Policy to Undergraduate Students”
Analysis of Policy” and “Public Policy Analysis II: Analysis for Policies.”

5 Turgay Ergun, PhD, taught the course under the title of “Analysis of Public Policies.”

6 The first meeting of the Public Policy Workshop, where the academic followers and enthusiasts of this new discipline officially gathered for the first time, was held in Mersin in 2009. A second workshop was successfully organized in 2010 in Ankara. Academics and students alike showed great interest in the first two meetings. A call for papers has been distributed for a third workshop in Balikesir in 2011.

7 Erasmus is an academic exchange program among the European Union countries. As a candidate country to the EU membership, Turkey is also included in the Erasmus program for the exchange of students and faculty between Turkish and European universities.

8 Half of the syllabi do not include the “policy cycle” topic, per se, as a specific topic to be discussed. However, when the contents of the syllabi are taken into consideration, the topics covered in these courses are directly related to the policy cycle process, although they are not named as such.

9 The “actors” topic is briefly mentioned in the syllabi as “public policy making, processes, actors, their roles, . . . etc.” However, the identity and functions of these actors are not explained in detail with the help of some explanatory frameworks such as, “networks” or “intergovernmental management.” In other words, defining and linking policy actors to each other seems to be absent in the syllabi.

10 The instructors emphasized that they reflect the full complexity of the public policy literature in their graduate course syllabi.

References


Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM). (2010). Website: www.appam.org/conferences/fall/index.asp


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Teaching Public Policy to Undergraduate Students

Appendix

A. Interview Questions

Used in the interviews with the faculty members who teach undergraduate-level public policy courses at Turkish universities.

1. Since when was this course offered by your department? Are you the person who taught it for the first time? Have you ever taken any course in public policy during your master’s or doctoral studies?

2. How was the decision made to add this course into the undergraduate curriculum? Did you have any effect on this decision?

3. Is the public policy course offered as a mandatory or elective course in your department? What is the interest level of the students, and is there any change in interest over the years?

4. Is the course predominantly theory or practice-oriented?

5. What are the main topics included in the course?

6. What kind of resources do you use? Are the readings in Turkish, or do you prefer it to be in English? Which language do you prefer, if you chose any foreign language?

7. What are your and your students’ responsibilities in the course? (e.g., attendance, exams, presentations, homeworks, case-studies…)

8. How can this course be improved, and what can be done to increase the students’ level of interest for this course?

9. What can be said about the future of this course, in particular, and public policy studies, in general, in Turkey?
B. CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORIES

Used for the content analysis of undergraduate-level public policy courses

1. Are the resources in Turkish? If so, how many of them are in Turkish?
2. Are the resources books? If so, how many of them are books?
3. Are the articles dominant in resources? If so, how many of them are articles?
4. Are the resources directly related to public policy? If so, how many of them?
5. Are the resources up to date? (What is the most recent resource?)
6. Is there a main course book?
7. Is this book in Turkish? If not, what language is it written in?
8. Theory and practice balance of the course (how many weeks for each?)
9. Is the course student oriented?
10. Is the theory taught by lecturer?
11. Are there any case studies?
12. Do the students have any homework obligation?
13. Is the homework task a case study? (How?)
14. Is there any course quota? If so, how many?
15. Are there any specific areas in the reading list?
16. If there is any specific area in the reading list, are they the specialty area of the lecturer? (If yes, what are they?)
17. Are the following basic topics included in the syllabus?
   a. Public policy cycle
   b. Basic concept
   c. Actors
   d. Agenda setting
   e. Definition
   f. Models
   g. Decision making
   h. Bureaucracy-politics relationship
   i. Legal dimension
   j. Evaluation
   k. Policy networks
   l. Case studies
18. Are the case studies from Turkey?
19. Are the case studies up to date?
20. Do the students have any presentation obligation?
21. Are there any similar courses at the master or doctoral level?
22. Are there any other public policy courses at the undergraduate level?