



Public Administration Education in the CEE Countries: How has it Developed during the Recent Decades?

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Abstract

This paper presents findings on the developments of PA education in 11 CEE countries and discusses various patterns based on the data on the historical background of PA education, forming thus the initial outcome of a more complex research carried out within the PAQUALITY project. The analysis is based around two main contextual factors: the role of imprinting (path-dependence) of the PA education in the framework of history and evolved PA ideologies, and the development of PA as discipline; and the role of institutional and HE legal factors on the current existence and status of PA education in the selected cluster of countries. The research question relates to the potential observation of differences in the development and current status of PA education in 11 CEE countries today. For this purpose, we utilize a co-variational international comparative case-study methodological approach, since this is a variable-centered approach, as it is acknowledged that a full-fledged theory might be absent in the framework of this specific investigation. The results indicate that we can argue in favor of the role of path-dependence in shaping PA education in CEE countries, where different starting points affected the outcomes in the content of current PA education. However, path-dependence is not to be taken as a sole factor corresponding to the development of the PA discipline in specific countries, as also more context-based factors and legal provisions do play the role. The outcome is that there is a lack of uniformity of PA education across CEE countries, where the country-specific context is the major factor in shaping the structure and content of programs, in some instances even creating new “sciences”. Although it would be expected to have some convergence in PA programs after almost three decades after the political and economic transformations started, we can even ar-

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gue that PA education is more diverse now. This would give a specific role to the internalization and/or international accreditation in re-shaping and reversing the divergence processes in the future, but the anticipation for program consolidation might also be the factor that could have converging effects.

Keywords:

public administration education, public administration programs, CEE countries, transition

1. Introduction

Public administration (PA) programs and PA education in general have been analyzed, and various approaches can be found in the available literature. The available studies (see, e.g., Staroňová and Gajdushek 2016) indicate that PA programs and education have been researched especially in the context of developed countries, and less attention has been given to the Central and Eastern European (CEE) context and specifics of approaches in the individual countries. Specifically, the research on PA programs in the CEE countries is also rather recent and has concentrated on individual CEE countries (e.g. Gellén 2013; Hajnal 2016; Hajnal et al. 2018), or presented a comparative analysis of the situation in selected CEE countries (e.g. Marčetić et al. 2013), or focused on a specific CEE sub-regions (e.g. Koprić 2013 concentrates on countries in South Eastern Europe), or compared the situation in the CEE programs with those based on U.S. university programs (Staroňová and Gajdushek 2016), or focused on a larger group of programs consisting of public-administration, public-policy and public-management programs (e.g. Staroňová and Gajdushek 2016; Verheijen and Nemeč 2000), or public management programs (e.g. Nemeč et al. 2012).

The existing research focusing on the PA education in the CEE countries is usually based on content analysis of existing study programs; the basic unit of the analysis is the individual program offered (Staroňová and Gajdushek 2016). This can be partially explained by taking into account the historical legacy in the CEE countries. As Kudrycka (2003) stressed, the most important challenge of quality governance in the CEE countries has been linked to capacity building through people. Public servants' education and training was perceived as a key mechanism to help former communist bloc countries become market-oriented democracies. The aim was to create civil servants with three capacities according to Balducci (1995). The first was the capacity to work effectively during the transition period. The second was a grasp of management techniques in more advanced organizations. This included psychological-leadership techniques and management-control techniques. The third was an understanding of techniques of organizational development, project management and policy analysis to activate and manage the change process.

However, although the research might consider institutional structure (how many programs are delivered or accredited, what is the institutional profile of an institution offering the program), it does not consider in more detail the development of PA education in individual countries, although it was already clearly recognized that communist regimes in individual countries were quite different, and diversity among these countries increased greatly after 1990 (Meyer-Sahling 2009). Similarly, Hajnal (2015) also emphasized the historically rooted national distinctiveness of PA education.

In this context, this paper presents findings on the developments of PA education in 11 CEE countries and discusses various patterns of development, based on the data and on the historical background of PA education. The sample consists of the following countries (ordered alphabetically): Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. This means that we focus our analysis holistically on the entire group of countries from the CEE region that are now members of the EU. It discusses various contextual factors more than was done in the literature that focused on PA programs in the CEE region. As such it complements existing approaches and their findings on the institutional structure and content of existing PA programs, but it also discusses national contexts in a comparative manner.

The two main research focuses relate to the investigation of the role of the initial status on the current PA education and on the investigation of contextual factors that influenced the development of PA education and its current status in the observed countries. The paper is structured as follows. First, a summary of the available literature is presented in the next section. This is followed by an outline of data and methodology that was used in our research. In the part after that we present and discuss our findings. This is followed by conclusions that also contain topics for future research.

2. Research on the PA education – a literature review

As already indicated, the existing research on PA education is mainly program-based. Based on the analysis of literature, we may identify the following research directions in the literature on PA programs:

- Literature may define a PA program and deal with the question about what it is and what it is not. Usually this is the case of literature published by those involved in various international accreditation mechanisms like NASPAA or EAPAA. Approaches are based on discussions about shaping PA as a field of research/a separate discipline (i.e. separate from law, public management, public policy) and the main argument that the scholarly meaning of PA is not self-evident (e.g. Fenwick and McMillan 2014). This literature may also discuss shifts in

literature that are followed by shifts in understanding of PA in PA programs (e.g. Fenwick and McMillan 2014).

- Literature may concentrate on the content of PA programs and compare and discuss similarities and differences (within and between countries) as well as key themes (e.g. Fenwick 2018). Sometimes a longer time period is covered, and shifts in content are outlined. Also, a narrower approach can be found – surveying if a course (e.g. comparative PA – Manoharan et al. 2018) or a bunch of courses (relevant for public management – e.g. Nemeč et al. 2012) is/are available in existing courses and examining to what extent such course(s) are diffused in existing PA programs.
- Literature may also concentrate on general and program-specific competencies for PA. It tries to answer questions raised by Denhard (2001): Do we seek to educate our students with respect to theory or to practice? Do we prepare students for their first jobs or for those to which they might aspire later? What are the appropriate delivery mechanisms for MPA courses and curricula? What personal commitments do we make as public-administration educators?
- Sometimes comparisons across countries also exist, based on data on learning outcomes of the programs or competencies defined within programs. Another strand of this literature deals with gaps – compares perceptions of PA practitioners (managers, for instance) with what is defined between learning outcomes/competences of PA programs and discusses the existence of competency-based curricula for PA (e.g. Haupt et al. 2017). A specific strand can be represented by measuring the practice of engagement in PA – to what extent practitioners are involved in PA education – how widely they are employed or how their use differs across faculty cohorts and institutional settings (Neely et al. 2018).
- Some approaches may focus on mimicking between undergraduate and graduate programs. Mimicking occurs when the curricular elements of an undergraduate degree overlap those of a graduate degree (Miller 2018, see below).
- Issues related to quality assurance and accreditation are also presented and discussed (Rosenbaum, 2015).

Moreover, the geographical dimension of the research seems to be of relevance. PA programs and education have been researched especially in the context of developed countries. There is a relative abundance of literature on university programs in public administration (PA), public policy and/or public management, but most of the studies concentrate on the Anglo-American context. Some studies concentrate on differences between PA Education in Europe and the United States (e.g. Hajnal 2003; Hajnal 2015; Matei and Matei 2013), and/or deal with programs across Europe – e.g. Reichard (2017), or Reichard and Schröter (2018) (Reichard 2017 focuses especially on executive academic programs for professionals).

To elaborate on the framework and the context, the experience from the United States shows us that the focus on graduate-level studies in the field of PA is largely due to the timing of the field's development and the state of American higher education after World War II (Dougherty 2011). In addition, according to Farah (2014) public policy had been one of the core subjects of the public-administration discipline in the U.S since 1970. The evolution of public administration had led to the establishment of various autonomous public-policy schools (interestingly, the Brazilian experience was very similar in the time mentioned due to the international influence of the U.S. universities). Since the time mentioned the public-policy programs have been offered all over the country in the U.S.

On the other hand, Randma-Liiv and Connaughton (2005) decided to contribute to discourse focused on developments of education in the PA field in CEE. They stressed that the different state traditions within Europe led to various identities and different approaches to the disciplinary, multi-disciplinary or interdisciplinary character of study of PA. As they pointed out in their article, it has not been possible to design any universal "European" model for public-administration education. Last but not least, there are clear difficulties in teaching some concepts due to various political, cultural or economic reasons, e.g. bureaucracy in the American context (Miller et al. 2010), governance in post-socialist environments (Klimovský 2010). It creates challenges not only in the field of research but also (and especially) in education. This is also the starting point for the investigation on the PA education patterns.

3. Data and methodology

The findings presented in this paper are based on the initial phase of a more complex research carried out within the PAQUALITY project (NISPAcee 2018). The data that were used for this paper are based on country reports on 11 countries prepared within the project between October 2018 and May 2019. The sample consists of the following countries (ordered alphabetically): Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Authors of the country reports were required to use a uniform template. This template required them to summarize findings on the national educational system and PA education and training, on program evaluation and accreditation systems, and on presenting the overview of the existing PA study programs. Thus, this paper is based on findings related to the national educational system and existing PA programs and input obtained from individual country teams and experts dealing with the following questions:

- Is PA education in your country specific for some reason? If yes, why?
- Is PA a well-established own (inter-) discipline in your country?

- How many relevant PA study programs can be identified, and what is their structure?

When identifying existing PA study programs authors were required to use the eligibility criteria of EAPAA as a guiding tool for the inclusion of relevant PA programs (EAPAA 2013). Because the definition is rather broad, authors were advised to include only “straight” or “true” PA programs (not for instance, programs like security management or social work or marketing and PR or even health-care management). Related data collection started mainly in October 2018. Authors were required to provide their expert opinion and, if possible, work with the available literature focusing on their countries.

Based on the country reports the authors of the paper tried to identify common patterns as well as differences in the development of PA education in the countries. The research question relates to the potential observation of differences in the development and current status of PA education in 11 CEE countries today. For this purpose, we utilize a co-variational international comparative case-study methodological approach (Yin 2009), since the analysis of cases is based on comparable inputs, i.e. structured country reports. A co-variational comparative case-study approach is a variable-centered approach, since we recognize that full-fledged theory might be absent in the framework of this specific investigation. The assumption made here is that we seek for the distinctiveness of the PA education development after World War II in those 11 countries, where the specific national context is taken into account. Given the context of the post-socialist environment, we omit the analysis of the PA education existence prior to 1945.

The analysis is based around two contextual factors: the role of the so-called path-dependence or imprinting on the PA education (i.e. the existence of PA education prior to the period of transformation in the framework of history and evolved PA ideologies, and the development of PA as discipline); and the role of institutional and HE legal factors on the current existence and status of PA education in the selected cluster of countries. For the first factor, an assumption is taken from the organizational theory, which captures how initial environmental conditions leave a persistent mark (or imprint) on the organizations and thus shape the outcomes in the long run, even as external environmental conditions change. This imprinting is closely related to the concept of path-dependence, thus noting that history is of importance (see, e.g., Marquis and Tilcsik 2013).

Thus, the analysis is based on the X-centered deduction, whether the initial status and the development of PA education prior to the transformation of the 1990s across the cluster of 11 CEE countries in any manner shapes the current status of PA education in those countries. This focus enables context-sensitive exploration (Blatter and Haverland 2012), since we are operating with a relatively small sample of 11 units under observation. Nonetheless, our investigation is partially also combined, given the initial stage of project activities, to add also the Y-centered

case-study approach of causal process tracing (Blatter and Blume 2008), where we assume the ontology of diverse factors shaping the current outcome, which is assumed under the observed variations in the status and shape of PA education across 11 CEE countries.

In this context, the two main research focuses relate to the investigation of the role of the initial status on the current PA education and on the investigation of contextual factors that influenced the development of PA education and its current status in the observed countries. The value added of this study is that it embraces the entire sample of 11 CEE countries that were affected by political and economic transformations of the 1990s, the so-called post-socialist cluster of CEE countries. Nonetheless, it needs to be stressed that it represents only the early-stage results of the project research, since the project is still undergoing.

4. Findings and discussion

As indicated, our cross-national analysis is based on the sample of 11 CEE countries. Although these countries have some commonalities, as all of them went through all-encompassing economic, political, and social transformations that started in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the communist politico-economic order started to collapse and the transition to capitalism and democratization started. However, the commonality of the transition and transformation does not mean that the starting point was identical for all those countries, as we should understand the different contexts that those countries experienced and that still affect the PA education in those countries. Namely, three of those countries were part of the former Soviet Union, and for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania transformation was also the direct consequence of regained state independence. Six of the countries in the sample were independent, but part of the so-called Warsaw pact, which meant that they also practiced Soviet-style communism with extensive central planning. Thus, although those countries were politically and economically influenced by the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech and Slovak Republics (at that time still Czechoslovakia) were at least formally independent, which meant that they had some ability to tailor social, political and economic development on their own.

Nonetheless, the CEE group of countries also includes Slovenia and Croatia. Those two countries were part of former (second) Yugoslavia, which was officially a socialist country, but not part of the Warsaw pact nor under the patronage of the Soviet Union, as it was officially part of the group of the so-called non-aligned nations. Besides, the socialism in former Yugoslavia was also specific, since it was not a Soviet-style communism applied, but the country was, particularly after the early 1970s, heavily politically and economically decentralized, where economics was practiced through the participatory self-management system, and each of the

6 federal units (i.e. socialist republics, two of which were Slovenia and Croatia) had extensive opportunities to plan their own political, economic, and social developmental. Unlike in the case of the Baltic states, which gained independence in a not particularly hostile way, for Slovenia and Croatia the dissolution of former Yugoslavia and the transition period was also accompanied with military conflicts, which was especially intense for Croatia.

Although PA education in CEE countries gained ground in the 1990s, this does not preclude the same level of development of PA education in those countries. Namely, it seems possible that three different contextual features correspond firmly to the initial existence of PA education in particular clusters of countries if we limit the period of scrutinization to the period after World War II: path-dependence of PA education, development of PA as a discipline and of institutional and HE legal factors. It needs to be stressed that PA education was inexistent in the three Baltic states prior to the 1990s (Lauri 2019; Reinholde 2019; Gudelis 2019). However, in some countries of the former Warsaw pact (e.g. Poland and Hungary), PA education was being developed in particular after the post-Stalinist liberalizations in the late 1950s, although the programs or parts of the programs tended to be incorporated into the law faculties, thus instituting strong connections among legal and public administration studies (Mikulowski and Sakowicz 2019) or understanding public administration studies on the Weberian-based logic of administrative law (Kovacs and Hajnal 2019).

However, in Slovenia and Croatia PA education became institutionalized as its own discipline already in the 1950s, and separate faculties were created with a specific focus on delivering PA programs, the so-called high or higher schools of public administration that started to develop their educational efforts mainly in order to address practical needs of PA and also taking into account experiences of similar institutions that already existed in some Western countries (Pevcin and Kovač 2019). Interestingly, if in the case of Slovenia this tradition is still reflected in today's FPA as a full member of the University of Ljubljana since 1975, in Croatia this high school was merged with the Faculty of Law in 1983 but delivered separate PA programs till 1998 within the university and until 2011 within a special polytechnic (Koprić and Musa 2019).

Thus, it is evident that the historical background of PA education differs among CEE countries, reflecting also the different political and economic contexts of those countries prior to the 1990s. This would serve as a starting point for the scrutinization of the development of PA education after the transformation processes of the 1990s.

To address the first contextual factor – the path-dependence or imprinting of the PA education prior to and after the period of transformation and the development of PA as a discipline, we can elaborate from the cross-country comparisons that the historical context has an important effect on shaping the development of

PA education during the last thirty years. Thus, we can argue on the existence of path-dependence. Namely, the existence of PA education before the 1990s is an important factor in shaping the current content of PA education, as can be observed from the group of countries that have such a tradition. In those countries PA education has been largely affiliated to (administrative) law, and due to the existence of the teaching staff, this has often resulted in supply-based curricula development, ever after transformation, as in the case of Czechia. (Špaček and Nemeč 2019). This has also been the case in Poland (Mikulowski and Sakowicz 2019), Croatia (Koprić and Musa 2019), Hungary (Kovacs and Hajnal 2019), and to some extent also in Slovenia (Pevcin and Kovač 2019).

In contrast, the evidence suggests that in the countries where there was no specific PA education prior to the 1990s, this leads to much more pluralistic shaping of PA education during the last three decades. For instance, in Slovakia the shaping of PA education has been largely shaped by (public) economics discipline (Vitališova et al. 2019), in Estonia by business studies (Lauri 2019), in Latvia by political science (Reinholde 2019), whereas in Romania, Bulgaria and Lithuania this education has been predominantly shaped by the delivering HEI's main fields of orientation (either law, management, political science etc.) (Moldovan and Moldovan 2019; Parashkevova et al. 2019; Gudelis 2019). This indicates that the existence of PA education before the 1990s acts as a catalyst to the development of PA education, where the countries with no prior education exhibit much more freedom in shaping the main focus of education in this field.

However, the question on the development of PA as a discipline is not so clear cut, so we cannot argue that there is path dependence, as in some countries with a longer tradition of PA education this is not yet an established discipline (Poland) or at least not a well-established one (Czechia). We can elaborate that PA as a discipline is well established in Slovenia, Croatia (but with strong attachment to law due to the recent annexation of education within this field), and Bulgaria (Pevcin and Kovač 2019; Koprić and Musa 2019; Parashkevova et al. 2019). PA as a discipline is also well established in Estonia, but a discipline shift induced by the government occurred, which necessitates a positioning of PA either under technology, management, public policy or democracy studies (Lauri 2019).

Yet, PA is not a well-established discipline in Czechia, Slovakia, Romania and Lithuania (Špaček and Nemeč 2019; Vitališova et al. 2019; Moldovan and Moldovan 2019, Gudelis 2019), whereas in Poland and Latvia PA does not even exist as a separate discipline (Mikulowski and Sakowicz 2019; Reinholde 2019). Interestingly, as reported by Kovacs and Hajnal (2019) on the redefining issues what PA education should be, in Hungary we are even experiencing recently a sort of “socio-political engineering” on what PA discipline is, and a new term has been coined, “state sciences”, where PA is merged with policy and defense studies. In this context we can observe that PA development as a discipline does not directly correspond to the

tradition of education, but rather on specific countries' classification of scientific fields, thus institutional and legal factors also matter.

In this context, the influence of the evolved PA ideologies should not be neglected, since PA education has changed dramatically in recent decades, as reported. Although path-dependence was significant, the programs have also changed due to the influences of the ideologies of New Public Management, New Public Governance etc. Still, variations exist regarding how much influence these evolving ideologies had. To sum up, these practices were much more easily incorporated in countries where there was no pre-existing PA education, although some contextual factors were also important, among others also the positioning of PA programs within scientific fields that clearly demanded differentiation in the form of increased multi-disciplinarity and a clear deviation from previous fields that embraced PA (Pevcin and Kovač 2019).

The second contextual factor under analysis – the roles of institutional and HE legal settings – relates to the role of institutional and HE legal factors on the current existence and status of PA education in the selected cluster of CEE countries. In this context, it is of interest also to analyze the number of PA education programs and their structure among countries. Although one determinant might be the specific size of the countries, this does not directly correspond to the number of programs in different countries, as the openness of HE markets and related government policies on inducing competition seem to be the more important determinants. The number of existing PA programs at HEI's across countries (as of 2019) varies from 3 in Estonia, 6 in Hungary, 8 in Latvia, 10 in Slovenia, 20 in Croatia, 29 in Romania, 31 in Lithuania, 42 in Slovakia, 60 in Czechia, 100 in Bulgaria, to 159 in Poland; and this does not correspond directly to the variations in the size of the countries. This reflects that in some countries PA educational markets are much more fragmented (e.g. in Czechia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Lithuania), than in others (e.g. Hungary and Estonia). In the latter two cases, the program consolidations have already occurred, either voluntarily (Estonia) or induced by governmental policy making (Hungary), whereas some countries currently anticipate such processes (e.g. Romania).

Besides, the structure of existing PA programs differs across countries. Countries like Poland and Lithuania, which have a very fragmented program structure on one side, do not have specific PhD programs in PA on the other side, partially explaining why PA is not taken as an established discipline there. Moreover, a clear lack of executive study programs in PA exists across the CEE countries, except for Croatia and Slovakia, although in the latter case they are technically delivered outside classical universities. The potential explanation for this phenomenon might also lie in the legal provisions, either on HEI's or civil servants' remuneration, where executive study programs do not bring additional benefits to wage increases or advancement possibilities of PA employees, thus limiting the demand incentives for

running such programs, as in the case of Slovenia, where such programs were effectively abandoned during the last decade (Pevcin and Kovač 2019).

To summarize, we can argue in favor of path-dependence in PA education in CEE countries, where different starting points affected the outcomes in the content of current PA education. Thus, the existence of such education prior to the 1990s caused for this education to remain more attached to (administrative) law, whereas the non-existence of such education enabled more inter- and multi-disciplinary coverage of this field due to the larger ability and flexibility to adopt contemporary theory and practice-based developments. Nonetheless, this path-dependence does not correspond to the development of PA discipline in specific cases, where more context-based factors and legal provisions played a role.

The consequence is that there is a lack of uniformity of PA education across CEE countries, where the country-specific context is the major factor in shaping the structure and content of programs, in some instances even creating new “sciences”. Thus, although it would be expected that there be some convergence in PA programs after almost three decades after the transformation started, we can even argue that those programs are more diverse now. This would give a specific role on the internalization and/or international accreditation in re-shaping and reversing the divergence processes in the future. Another challenge relates to the perceived consolidations of PA programs in those countries due to the various factors (e.g. sub-optimal fragmentation, demographics, decreased popularity and demand etc.), which would affect the number and structure of the programs in the future. This would help the convergence efforts, but would, in contrast, affect the perceived market influence of the programs in a negative way.

5. Conclusion

This paper represents the first outcome of the PAQUALITY project, whose aim was also to provide an outline of existing PA programs in the cluster of 11 CEE countries. The paper clearly indicates that the situation in PA programs is rather heterogeneous in the countries and that various factors determine this.

The historical background of PA education clearly differs in the countries. Although the role of imprinting (path-dependence) in PA education can be seen in the majority of countries in the sample, there are also other influences – e.g. existing ideologies, or legislation – that can have strong effects on PA education. The comparison of PA education in Slovenia and Croatia can serve as one interesting example. Both countries have shared very similar or mutually interconnected historical events, and both were part of the former Yugoslavian federation. However, while diverse approaches to education in the PA field have been applied in Slovenia, a strictly legalistic approach in this education can be found in Croatia.

The heterogeneity of PA education that was partly indicated in our research may even lead to a conclusion that their diversity is now even higher than before. Our research indicates that in some countries, where there was no specific PA education prior to 1990, a much more pluralistic shaping of PA education can be seen after 1990. This may be a challenge for international exchange student programs and also for practitioners who would like to pick something from higher-education sectors of foreign countries. Obviously, such a diversity can also be linked to expectations and requirements linked to the PA education from all relevant stakeholders' points of view. It is interesting to remember the findings of Nemeč et al. (2017) at this point. According to them, the PA education without any strict national educational standards can be effectively provided in the countries with high demand, functional labor markers and well-developed professional standards, but they stress at the same time that a lack of national educational standards can lead to a chaotic and non-effective state in less-developed countries, where the production of supply-based curricula in the field of PA education is a reality.

And it seems to be a crucial point because, as has been shown in the discussion part, the PA itself is not a well-established discipline across the whole region. In some countries PA education has been more open for experimenting and the implementation of new concepts, while in some others a clear resistance has played an important role. One can find several CEE countries where PA is understood as a highly interdisciplinary discipline and it is offered by different faculties or schools at universities. At the same time, it is possible to find a much more restricted approach, and PA is offered for instance only by law faculties or schools there. Regarding this matter it is important to highlight the conclusion of Rosenbaum (2018), who stressed that scholarship in the field of PA had ignored many of the recent political, cultural, and economic challenges. Moreover, various experiences with PA education in the past, the present complexity of the PA systems and different efforts leading to the implementation of various concepts (NPM, good governance, etc.) in the CEE region, especially since the 1990s, have necessarily supported the mentioned diversity.

Heterogeneity in the development and PA programs highlights the necessity to use a context-based approach in researching PA education. Taking into account the abovementioned findings, future research may focus, for instance, more on the role of organizational factors (the role of program management, the level of changes in the content of PA programs etc.), cultural factors, and the impact of Europeanization. Also, the role of accreditation mechanisms should be checked more because changes in the accreditation frameworks have recently become a part of the agenda of reforms in higher education in some CEE countries, and, for instance, in Czechia it is expected that the number of PA programs will decrease due to this (Špaček and Nemeč 2019).

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