The Internal Perceptions Gap in European Public Administration: Understanding Academic Views of the Discipline

Dion Curry, Department of Politics, Philosophy and International Relations
Swansea University, d.s.d.curry@swansea.ac.uk (corresponding author)

Louis Bromfield, Department of Politics, Philosophy and International Relations, Swansea University

Jack Tudor, Department of Politics, Philosophy and International Relations
Swansea University

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Abstract: *We assess the validity of perceived cleavages within Public Administration by examining the tensions between the focus of research and how the discipline is perceived by European academics, drawing on a survey of PA academics in 28 countries and a bibliometric analysis of over 18,500 pieces of academic literature from European sources. We identify tensions in academic expectations about the breadth and depth of research and what is actually being written, along with tensions underlying theoretical versus applied approaches to research. However, healthy debate about methodological approaches to research and general agreement on the outward-looking nature of the discipline show areas of agreement in the discipline. These findings are significant in identifying the state of the PA discipline and can help shape how research is produced and utilised practically and academically, and how the discipline connects beyond the field.*

Key Words: Perceptions gaps; public administration; bibliometrics; methods; practice

Increasingly, pressures of league tables, universities and funding bodies exert control

over not necessarily what is *substantive* research, but what *types* of research academics are

expected to do. There is a danger that the expectations of universities and other research and higher education organisations may not align with traditional academic expectations for what constitutes useful research and 'deep' academic analysis (Boswell & Smith, 2017 in Cairney & Oliver, 2020, p. 230). This may also extend beyond academia where research may be valued to some extent in policy-making but for different reasons than in the academic sphere (see, for example, Newman, Cherney & Head, 2015; Rose et al., 2020). The potential for tensions between what academics want and value in research compared to what they may be required or expected to produce in terms of outputs is likely even more pronounced in a discipline often rooted in practical application like public administration (PA).

In this paper, we explore two facets of this tension. First, we examine past academic perceptions *of the discipline* and the value of research with regard to theoretical insight and practical application, as well as research that looks inward towards the discipline, or research that looks outwards to other disciplines and contexts. Second, we explore how this is translated into *research outputs* over the past 10+ years, examining the breadth and depth of research that is published and the methodological differences within the discipline. In doing so, we do not intend to create false debates or dichotomies about the nature of the discipline and its research. Instead, we explore whether academics' views on their discipline correspond with the type of research that they produce. We do not delve into the rationale for decisions made by academics or systemic factors (e.g. status and funding requirements), and the paper focusses clearly on academic perceptions of their own methodological and epistemological approaches to research and how they respond to these, rather than practitioner viewpoints or how (or whether) the research is applied.

This research addresses three main research questions. First, what are European academics' research expectations of public administration as a discipline? Second, how is this reflected in the focus of research in public administration journals? Third, what are the

implications of any differences between expectations and outputs for research in the discipline? The research draws on both academic perceptions and research outputs to determine whether and how academics feel the discipline is healthy, which allows for deeper introspection on what research can do moving forward. It is important to consider this question in order to ensure that academic research remains relevant for its end users (academics or practitioners) and matches needs of those groups.

To achieve this, it compares perceptions of public administration as an academic discipline with the nature of the academic research produced within the discipline. The paper uses an expert survey to examine how academics perceive trends within public administration research, then deploys quantitative and bibliometric analyses to establish whether academic perceptions of trends in public administration align with the disciplinary reality. We first draw upon the theoretical literature surrounding expectations to explore whether academic perceptions of research are in line with scholarly research actually being produced. We focus solely on the research element of application, rather than other forms of impact such as teaching (Carson & Given, 2021; Mercer et al., 2021). Methodologically, we draw on two main sources: 1) a survey of 299 European public administration academics from 23 countries that examines contemporary and future-looking perceptions of the nature and state of the discipline to explore how academics view PA; and 2) a bibliometric analysis of all 18,545 pieces of academic research published in public administration in Europe to examine the actual output of research in the field. These sources allow us to identify key trends in academic expectations and research outputs. By combining the two, we gain insight into answering our third question on whether represent tensions or healthy debate within the discipline.

This research contributes to our understanding of the perceptions of public administration academic research in several ways. The study provides insight into the nature

of public administration as a discipline in and of itself, and whether academics have a clear perception of both what they aim to do and how that is translated into research. The research is original in its combination of academics' views of disciplinary trends and how this plays out in the literature. As academics are (presumably) key voices in determining the importance and value of research, the findings of this paper are significant in understanding the alignment between expectations and reality in developing public administration as a key academic discipline in its own rights. Also, literature on expectations in politics and public administration often focuses on the gap between the public sector as a service provider and citizens as consumers (e.g., James, 2009; Flinders and Kelso, 2011), whereas expectations within academic research are relatively unexplored. While literature on evidence-based policy-making (e.g. Nutley, Walter & Davies, 2009; Oliver & Cairney, 2020) examines the role of academic research in practice, this tends to focus more on the use of evidence in policy rather than expectations of what role research plays. Second, by combining surveys of academic perceptions with extensive bibliometric analysis of trends in the discipline, the data in this study provides both large-scale and fine-grained perspectives on the nature of academic research and where it should fit in the broader agenda of public administration, which builds on earlier focuses on specific parts of the discipline (e.g. Boselie, Van Harten & Veld, 2021). Finally, this research also provides insight not only into how academics currently perceive research on public administration, but also the actual state of the discipline and where research may be heading in the future. This research is highly relevant given the significant push for academic research with practical application, and the effects this may have on both academic perceptions of research and the type of research that is being conducted.

The paper first briefly explores the theory underpinning expectations and perceptions and how this can be used to explore the inter-relation and potential disconnect between

research expectations and academic outputs. It then addresses how this disconnect is manifested through four major *perceived* differences within public administration, building on existing theory on the state of the discipline. The paper then moves to empirically validate the presence of these differences and whether (and how) they may reflect a perceived tension in the discipline between expectations and outputs. The paper concludes by reflecting on the implications of the disconnections that may exist between perception of the discipline and research outputs and whether they are indicative of actual tensions or simple debate within the discipline, using data on research trends to highlight ways in which any tensions can be addressed.

Expectations and Public Administration

There is a growing body of literature looking at expectations and public service delivery (for example, see: Lyons, Lowery & DeHoog, 1992; Van Ryzin, 2004 and 2006; James, 2009; Flinders and Dommett, 2013; Denters, 2017), but this satisfaction-based approach has been applied less extensively to expectations regarding research itself and its place both in academia and wider society. Gap analysis allows for the understanding of expectations held by both sides of a service relationship (Brown & Swartz, 1989), but it can also be used internally within organisations. In the case of this paper, it shines a light on the goals of academics with their discipline and how (or whether) it aligns with their research. If there is a mismatch between academic research goals and the research being produced, tension(s) can be seen to exist.

At the heart of what has been deemed the 'relevance gap' in public administration literature (Orr & Bennett, 2012) is the idea that research has to have perceived practical applications (see, for example, Farmer, 2003) and the 'uneasy' relationship between the pull

of 'academic' theory and applied research (Edwards, 2005).[1] This connection to practice has been explored in great depth (Catlaw, 2008) and has created debate around the 'two communities' divide in PA between theoretical and applied approaches (Caplan, 1979; Pollitt, 2014) with PA 'lying, at times uncomfortably, between the world of academe and the world of practice' (Peters & Pierre, 2017, p. 11).[1]

Some authors claim that 'the academic field of public administration exists to provide knowledge and professional training to practicing public administrators; to provide, that is, practical knowledge' (Catlaw, 2008, p. 524), whereas others see practitioners as the 'imaginary ideal' for PA research, steering the discipline away from this focus (Nisar, 2020, p. 44). Meanwhile, Reed asserts that the problem is that academics engage with 'imaginary' practitioners and instead need to engage more with real ones (Reed, 2020, p. 1). This results in 'a mismatch between the focus of research and the focus of knowledge that is needed, the timeliness of the research, and the need to advance scholarly knowledge' (Orr & Bennett, 2012, p. 490) and a divide between theoretical and applied research (Parkinson, 2001 in Edwards, 2005). The cleavages within the discipline are such that some claim PA is suffering an 'identity crisis' (Sarker et al., 2018, p. 353).

This divide can be illustrated quantitatively. Walker et al. undertook a topic modelling of the academic/practitioner gap in public administration research and found that academics possessed greater interest in 'more abstract theoretical concepts', while practitioners were

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[1] This is not to discount other potential tensions in PA research, such as between academic and geographic centres (e.g., American versus European public administration; Western versus non-Western Nations (Welch and Wong, 1998)) or more general issues of diversity in the discipline, such as race, gender, age, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, and others (Sabharwal, Levine and D'Agostino, 2018, p. 261).

[1] The terms 'practical', 'applied', 'instrumental', 'pragmatic' and others have been used, sometimes interchangeably, to denote a broad range of literature that attempts to reach beyond the academic discipline and engage with practice. While no term is perfect, this paper settles on the term 'applied' research as opposed to theoretical, as it encompasses a focus on practice, which was captured in the surveys used. However, the authors would also like to note that much good research combines both theoretical and practical elements, even if 'being practical seems to carry with it an implicit opposition to theory' in the minds of some academics (Catlaw, 2008, p 519). As the focus is on normative ideas of what direction the discipline should head, this binary is seen as acceptable.

more concerned with specific issues and practical solutions. This limits the perceived usefulness of academic writing for practitioners (Walker et al., 2018, p. 934). While some practitioners make significant use of academic research, others view it very negatively and admit to neither valuing it highly nor using its findings when advising policy-making processes. (Newman, Cherney & Head, 2015).

These studies have proven valuable in exploring key concepts (Walker et al., 2018), concepts within the discipline (Sabharwal et al., 2018) and relations to other disciplines (Sarker et al., 2018), and this study aims to build on that research by exploring the nature of the discipline in a holistic manner and tying it to perceptions by academics of what the discipline *should* be. This work then aims to reflect on a) those tensions between what academics expect and what they produce; and b) how that is manifested in differing approaches to academic research. When the paper talks about 'tensions', it does not aim to imply that there is no way to bridge the gap between methodological approaches and application, focus or scope of research. Instead, it is exploring these differing views to ascertain whether there is tension between perceptions and outputs.

Theoretical Frame

Overall, it is clear that there is a potential disconnect between how academics view the purpose and application of their research, or as Bolton and Stolcis put it, between the *science* and *practice* of public administration (Bolton and Stolcis, 2003, p. 629). This gap has also resulted in a literature exploring this gap, examining the historical traditions of PA (see, for example, Kettl, 1993 and 2000 and Evans, 2007) with debates largely centred on the role of theory and practice in the discipline (e.g. Lawler, 1985; Franklin & Ebdon, 2005; Cameron, 2023). From an American perspective, questions of what PA means stretch back to its inception, with Kettl taking stock of the state of the discipline both in the 1990s (1993) and at the turn of the century (2000). He identifies the tension between theory and practice

and notes the fragmentation that occurs from drawing on related disciplines without a clear direction (Kettl, 1993, p. 408), as well as tensions between different schools of thought in the discipline (Kettl, 1993, p. 415). Follow-up work largely found that these gaps still existed at the new millennium, and would continue to do so (Kettl, 2000, p. 8-9), with 'cross-pressures' between theory and practice creating tension (Kettl, 2000, p. 14).

There is some disagreement over whether these can or should be labelled as tensions, or merely different approaches to study in the discipline. In a British context, Evans notes the 'symbiotic relationship between knowledge and action, theory and practice' within PA scholarship (Evans, 2007, p. 129), while also discussing the normative and prescriptive reach of PA research. This includes consideration of the need for a critical approach to public administration, consideration of the relationship between academic study and practical action and the need for rigorous theoretical and empirical research to ground the discipline (Evans, 2007, p. 139-140). Raadschelders (2008) looked at these divides in terms of four 'intellectual traditions' of public administration research, aiming to develop *practical wisdom*, *practical experience*, *scientific knowledge* or *relativist perspectives*. This was then further refined based on the tensions within the academic literature. These tensions potentially include ones between 1) theory and practice; 2) logical versus data-driven research; 3) scientific method versus case studies; 4) academic or practitioner-orientated journals; and 5) academic outputs versus impact (Buckley, 1998; adapted to PA by Bolton and Stolcis, 2003).

Largely, these debates around PA look at either the nature of the discipline, or the nature of the research conducted. On the nature of the discipline, discussion then breaks down into 1) a creation of theoretical knowledge or a development of practical application (for instance, see Franklin and Ebdon, 2005) or 2) whether the discipline should look inwards to other PA academics or outwards to practitioners or other disciplines or countries (see, for example, Bolton and Stolcis, 2003). In terms of the nature of the research conducted, this can

be delineated based on 1) methodological approach and epistemology (as in Raadschelders, 2008) or 2) thematic specialisation vs. generalist approaches (again see Bolton and Stolcis, 2003; or Buckley, 1998 on the scientific method).

These different traditions are delineated and summarised in Table 1. While previous research on the state and tensions in the discipline has provided a useful starting point for exploring expectations of PA research, no work has been done to empirically assess their validity, or to establish their implications for academic research. This work aims to both update existing 'state of the discipline' work on PA drawing on expert opinions, as well as close the gap by empirically testing the actual research being produced. The findings generated by this process allow us to comment on their implications for the discipline moving forward.

Data and Methods

To validate any differences in expectations identified in Table 1, we focus on both past academic perceptions of the discipline of public administration, as well as the nature of research produced within the discipline. Through their comparison, we can establish whether a tension exists between how academics perceive the discipline and its outputs. To facilitate this, our analysis draws on two main sources of data: a 2014 survey of the current and future perceptions of 299 European public administration academics from 23 countries and a bibliometric analysis of 18,545 pieces of European public administration literature over a 10+ year period (2014-2024).

To establish academic perceptions of the discipline, survey questions were drafted by a core team of public administration researchers from around Europe with a wide range of academic experience, building on both their expertise and expectations of potential gaps in the literature. Ethics processes from Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands) were

followed in collecting this data, and informed consent as obtained from all survey participants when completing the survey online. These questions build on similar questions asked of public sector executives in an earlier survey (Hammerschmid, 2015) and also draw on survey methods and questions used by McLean et al. (2009) in a survey of American, Canadian, and British political scientists. It was sent out to the entire population of public administration scholars in Europe, based on scholars' attendance at key conferences.[1] Europe was defined as the (then) 28 EU member states, plus Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, and EU candidate countries. This same country list was used to delimit the sampled countries from the Web of Science literature scrape, harmonising the survey results with our large-N bibliometric analysis. After removing bounced emails, those with no contact information, duplicate addresses and ineligible participants (i.e., practitioners, administrative staff, PhD students and other non-academic respondents), there was a total population of 804, with 299 responses (37% response rate). The decision to focus on European academics was a pragmatic attempt to keep the results focused and allow for a deeper understanding of geographic differences in that area. While it is acknowledged that results cannot necessarily be generalised to the broader PA community, this approach gives insight into granular perceptions of a (relatively) homogeneous view of the discipline, whereas a broader geographic focus could serve to obscure some of these details and cause difficulties in methods and focussing analyses (van Helden et al., 2008, p. 643).

Across its 27 questions, the survey probed the manner in which academics perceived the discipline of public administration, its key trends, and its future trajectory. Open-ended questions asked what key trends and themes in the discipline were declining and increasing in importance, allowing respondents to develop their own. Responses to the open-text questions

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[1] These conferences were based on conference attendance from 2011-2013 at the European Group for Public Administration, the International Political Science Association's Structure and Organisation of Government group, the International Research Society for Public Management, the Public Management Research Association and the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe.

were analysed descriptively by standardising entries and reporting the frequency with which identical responses appeared as a percentage of the total responses. In order to present the distribution of respondents' own wording as transparently as possible and to mirror the exploratory nature of the analysis in the rest of the survey and the bibliometrics, we did not impose a predefined coding scheme or aggregate responses into broader thematic categories. Questions were also asked about the state of the discipline, focussing on both how the discipline *is* and how it *should be*.

Survey responses were measured on Likert-type scales. Academics were asked to score the importance of discipline-shaping issues (e.g., sources of funding, the importance of external disciplines) on seven-point scales from least important (1) to most important (7). Additionally, they were asked to score the present and normative trajectories of trends within the discipline on eleven-point scales. These scores ranged from is/should be becoming less prominent (0) to is/should be becoming more prominent (10). Our survey therefore provides multiple, categorical responses per item. Given that the survey responses use Likert scales, we summarise them using descriptive statistics, treating the data as intervals which allows the use of means and, where n > 1 per country, standard deviations) to measure the actual and variation in respondent sentiment (Norman, 2010).To determine the actual state of research in the discipline, we draw on a bibliometric analysis of key trends in European public administration research from 2014-2024.[1] The time frame was picked to reflect both the five-year time period in which survey respondents were asked to identify trends in the discipline and the evolution of the discipline to now. By covering the period after the survey, we are able to ascertain both what academics *thought* the discipline would become and what has actually happened. Bibliometrics has a useful history in public administration research to analyse trends in both discourse and the discipline, tracing key concepts (Curry and Van de

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[1] The period covered was 01-01.2014 to 22-08-2024.

Walle, 2018), journals (Kumar, Pandey and Haldar, 2020) and articles (Chandra and Walker, 2019) as they diffuse through the literature. This also makes the approach suitable for a broader analysis of the literature in the discipline as a whole. To that end, we collected all 18,545 articles written by European academics[1] in journals in the Topic and Web of Science categories of 'Public Administration' through Web of Science (WoS) using the Core Collection Database. Results were analysed over the entire 10+ year period, as well as the five-year period covered by the survey (2014-2019) and in year-by-year increments to determine trends.

To assess the inward- or outward-facing nature of our collected literature, we measure the extent of literature production, collaboration and journal sources, as well as co-citation between and within countries. We represent this using a global network map produced using the *R* package Bibliometrix (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017). The shading of countries on the map represents their production of public administration literature over the period 2014-2024. Those countries producing a large volume of public administration literature are represented with a darker shading, with lighter shades representing decreased research output. The connections between countries represent international research collaboration with European academics. For a connection to exist, at least twenty pieces of co-authored work must exist between countries. We found that this number provided the optimal trade-off between map legibility and the provision of substantive connections. Despite limiting our sample to the aforementioned European countries, the global network map displays a large quantity of collaborations of European countries with those outside of our sample, such as the United States. Our analysis prioritises intra-European relationships, but touches on the outsized role of the United States in this literature base when appropriate.

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[1] Defined based on institutional affiliation and using the same countries outlined above.

Given the large size of our sampled literature from Web of Science (n = 18,545), we utilise Bibliometrix's co-occurrence network functionality to depict the most common groupings and themes. This allowed for themes to be identified based on the data, rather than through potentially subjective coding, by using word co-occurrence to identify what terms are discussed in relation to others. This not only provides a structure to an otherwise unstructured dataset, but it also provides a visually parsable means of making empirically robust assertions as to the frequency of core themes within the PA literature, as well as displaying where various sub-themes overlap (or do not). To establish the role of these themes within the discipline, we use strategic diagrams to measure their centrality and density (Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2011). Centrality concerns the degree of interaction that a theme has with others in the literature. Central themes are more closely connected to others than their more marginal counterparts. Density concerns the strength of the connections within a theme. Themes with greater density possess stronger internal ties and are therefore more developed and cohesive than less dense themes. In combination, centrality and density determine the characteristics of the themes in our corpus (see: Table 2). Results from the survey and the bibliometrics were used both deductively and inductively – the former to assess the validity of assumptions and theories made about PA as a discipline, and the latter to identify any nascent themes or trends that could not be identified from the existing literature.

The Nature of Public Administration as a Discipline

Public Administration as a Theory- or Practice-driven Discipline

We first use our outlined methods to explore expectations and perceptions as they relate to public administration as a discipline, beginning with the difference or potential tension between focus on theory or practice.[1] Within our survey responses, there was agreement on the general focus on theory in the discipline, with academics from most

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[1] The response scores on which our comments are based are provided in Appendix A.

countries likely to feel that the discipline was becoming more theoretically focused, and that this should be the case. While a minority were likely to feel that the discipline was not becoming more theoretically focused, academics from the majority of countries – twenty in total – were most likely to feel that the discipline should be theoretically focused. This was one of the more strongly felt opinions of our surveyed academics.

Somewhat paradoxically, there is also a strong tendency for academics to feel that the discipline is becoming more focused on applied and practical research (see Appendix Table A1) (M = 6.05, SD = 1.96) and less supportive of the discipline becoming more theory-driven (M = 5.70, SD = 2.07), a statistically significant difference $(p < .05)$, despite a fall in practitioner authors in at least some journals (Raadschelders & Lee, 2011). However, in terms of whether the discipline *should* be focused on applied research, the responses given to our survey were considerably more divided. Overall, academics were more supportive of the discipline becoming more theory-driven (M = 7.11, SD = 1.98) than applied (M = 6.50, SD = 2.32), a statistically significant difference ($p < .001$), a sentiment consistently held across all the academics' countries apart from Poland (Discipline is Becoming Theory-Driven: M = 7.20, SD = 2.49; Discipline Should Be Theory-Driven: M = 4.60, SD = 2.61). Regarding the discipline being more applied, enthusiasm for the notion that PA *should* be more focussed on applied research came strongest from Poland (M = 8.40, SD = 1.14), which makes sense given the lesser support for the discipline being more theory-driven mentioned earlier, as well as Romania (see Appendix Table A2) (M = 8.18, SD = 1.66) and Turkey (M = 8.20, SD = 1.79).

The focus on more applied research is not necessarily reflected in the importance of funding (see Appendix Table A3). Academic sources of funding were seen as most important, with national research council grants seen as most important (M=5.36), followed by university own funding (5.08), government institutions (M=4.94) and European grants

(M=4.52). More practically-orientated sources of funding, such as consultancy (M=3.71), not-for-profit (M=3.62) and executive training (M=3.42) scoring considerably lower in terms of importance. Overall, this points to a divide in the discipline around the role of applied research. While academics from some countries do recognise the need for an increased focus on practice, there is also a strong normative push to further embrace a theory-driven focus in the literature, and funding for research still tends to rely on academic sources. This illustrates a tension between academic perceptions and reality, both in terms of where the discipline presently stands, as well as where its focus normatively ought to be.

Public Administration as an Inward- or Outward-Looking Discipline

Authorship of articles was diverse in origin, but consistent in terms of the ranking of publications by country. From 2014-2024, the United Kingdom was the most significant European producer of research (3509 articles), followed by Spain (2250 articles). Germany (1761), the Netherlands (1618) and Italy (1612) round out the top five countries in terms of article production. Several Nordic nations like Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, along with Belgium and France, occupy the rest of the top 10 and have stayed there consistently over the last ten years. PA also demonstrated considerable cross-national collaboration over the period 2014-2024, with significant reach beyond European bounds. Figure 1 shows both significant international collaborations and globally distributed literature production. Over the period, international collaborations showed a modest but marked increase, with 25.8% of articles internationally co-authored in 2014, increasing to 36.6% of articles in 2024.

In terms of where we find the most frequent collaborative relationships within the European public administration literature, the UK again shows the largest degree of collaboration, unsurprising given the number of articles produced. The Netherlands has high degree of collaboration with countries like Belgium (n = 207), Germany (n = 205) and Denmark (n = 102). Spain is a frequent collaborator with countries such as Italy (n = 122),

the Netherlands (n = 73), and Portugal (n = 63). Scandinavian collaboration is also prominent, with international pairings like Sweden-Norway (n = 113), Denmark-Norway (n = 69) and Sweden-Denmark (n = 59). Despite the European limit on our WoS sample, however, we find the US maintains an outsized role in fostering the public administration literature, with it appearing in 4 of the 10 most collaboration partnerships, such as with the Netherlands (n = 275).

Respondents to our survey felt that the discipline was becoming more internationally competitive (*M* = 6.82, *SD* = 1.86), which agrees with our findings from the literature. Earlier analyses also showed an increase in comparatively-minded articles, which supports this push for a more international focus in public administration (Raadschelders & Lee, 2011). Academics also expressed strong normative agreement that it ought to be trending in this direction. Overall, respondents gave 'international competitiveness' the highest score for what the discipline ought to be (*M* = 7.94, *SD* = 1.84). This support was at its highest in countries like Estonia (M = 8.75, SD = 1.26), Germany (M = 8.45, SD = 1.44) and Hungary (M = 9.00, SD = 0.89).

Public administration was also seen as extremely cross-disciplinary (see Appendix Table A4). Perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents rated politics/political science as the most important related discipline *(M = 5.70, SD = 1.39)*. This, on a scale of 1-7, with a higher score meaning greater importance, is ahead of Sociology (*M* = 4.88, *SD* = 1.37), Business/Management (*M* = 4.87, *SD* = 1.72), Economics (*M* = 4.04, *SD = 1.66*), and Law *(M = 3.99, SD = 1.82)*. These perceptions contrastalign with the broad view of public administration as being predominantly management driven (over policy/governance). Conversely, respondents rated law as the least important.

The cross-disciplinarity identified by these ratings is largely supported by the literature and academic views of the discipline at large. The diversity of sources (different

journals, publications, etc.) was trending upwards until 2021, however dipping again after that period. Survey respondents were most likely to feel that public administration is becoming highly interdisciplinary ($M = 6.75$, $SD = 2.21$) and ought to be so ($M = 7.74$, $SD = 2.06$), with only being 'internationally competitive' drawing out a stronger sentiment from respondents $(M = 7.94$, $SD = 1.84)$. Normative responses pointed towards an increasing desire for greater interdisciplinarity, a focus that can be seen in emerging sub-disciplines such as behavioural public administration (Jilke, Tummers, and Kelman, 2017; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2017; Kasdan, 2020).

Despite broad unity, there were some significant between-country differences in views on interdisciplinarity. The respondents from France ($M = 5.25$, SD $= 3.22$) and Germany ($M = 5.91$, $SD = 1.72$) had the lowest agreement as to whether the discipline was becoming more interdisciplinary. The French, interestingly, had the second highest support for the discipline becoming more so ($M = 9.50$, $SD = 0.83$), a support mirrored by respondents from Estonia ($M = 9.50$, $SD = 1.00$), Hungary ($M = 9.00$, $SD = 0.89$), Romania ($M = 9.09$, $SD = 1.45$) and Slovenia ($M = 9.67$, $SD = 0.58$). Overall, there was cohesion within the survey responses that public administration should become more interdisciplinary and international.

The Nature of Public Administration Research

Methodological Research Focus

There was considerably more debate regarding the methodological focus of public administration research, with respondents expressing a wide range of views regarding both how methodologically driven research *is* and how methodologically driven it *should be*. A slight tendency to feel that public administration is becoming more methodologically focused

was evident, but considerable difference of opinions existed regarding the direction in which the discipline should be moving.

The discipline was also seen as becoming more quantitative (M = 6.54, SD = 2.11) and less qualitative (M = 5.35, SD = 2.08), a difference that was statistically significant to 99.9% ($p < .001$) , although academics were generally most likely to feel that it should become more qualitatively focused (M = 6.74, SD = 1.97) than quantitative (M = 5.76, SD = 2.33), another statistically significant disparity (p < . 001). Support for a more qualitative-oriented discipline was highest in respondents from Croatia (M = 8.00, SD = 1.41), Estonia (M = 8.00, SD = 1.41) and Romania (M = 8.27, SD = 0.90). Academics were more polarised on whether the discipline was too quantitatively focused. Earlier analyses showed that the discipline was becoming increasingly focussed on quantitative methods (Raadschelders & Lee, 2011). The discipline was seen to be becoming slightly more quantitative than qualitative, but countries were split on whether it ought to be following this trajectory. High support for a more quantitative discipline came from Portugal (M = 8.00, SD = 2.45) and Slovenia (M = 9.00, SD = 1.00) while weaker support came from countries like France (M = 4.25, SD = 2.22) and Sweden (M = 5.11, SD = 2.20).

Rather than a disconnect or tension in how research should be conducted in public administration, this seems to indicate a (not necessarily unhealthy) split in the discipline along qualitative and quantitative lines. This methodological pluralism is perhaps a positive and healthy approach to the discipline and regardless is likely inevitable given the nature of academia (Zhu, Witko & Meier, 2019). On the other hand, too much focus on methodological splits has the danger of detracting from establishing robust theoretical underpinnings in the discipline (Ashworth, McDemott and Gurrie, 2018). Ultimately, despite the difference in precise methods used, the tendency to see the discipline as becoming more methodologically focussed may point to the importance of methodological *rigour* moving forward (Nesbit et

al., 2011) and a need to critically reflect on what methods prove most useful (Raadschelders & Lee, 2011, p. 26), despite what epistemological approach is used (Nowell and Albrecht, 2018). This is supported by scholars in the field who also emphasise the need for a bespoke public administration approach to methodology (Gill & Meier, 2000). Indeed, the different views on both methodological approach and application, combined with the general agreement to rigour, point out that the discipline may be more methodologically self-reflexive than some authors note (Zhu, Witko & Meier, 2019, p. 297). Still, more work can be done in terms of reflecting on the benefits of *both* quantitative and qualitative approaches to understanding the field.

Breadth Versus Depth of Research Focus

An interesting dynamic occurs when academics were asked about whether the discipline is and ought to be theoretically specialised. For the former, it was the third most supported statement (M = 6.71, SD = 1.90) behind the discipline being interdisciplinary (M = 6.25, SD = 2.21) and internationally competitive (M = 6.82, SD = 1.86). When asked what the discipline *ought* to be, being thematically specialised was the lowest supported statement of the bunch (M = 5.44, SD = 2.13), with interdisciplinarity and internationally competitive again ranking second and first respectively. The countries with the lowest levels of increased thematic specialisation in the future were Estonia (M = 4.00, SD = 2.45), Portugal (M = 2.00, SD = 0.00), and Slovenia (M = 4.33, SD = 3.21). This illustrates a clear tension and disagreement within the discipline over the role and specialisation of theory in the discipline. There was a great deal of heterogeneity in the themes seen in the expert survey to be gaining prominence, with the most frequent theme being governance with 7.4% of respondents identifying it, alongside accountability, ethics, and regulation (all 4%). Those seen to be losing prominence included (bizarrely) governance (4.0%), performance management (3.3%), bureaucracy, performance measurement and privatisation (all 2.7%). However, the most

significant finding was the role of New Public Management in the discipline, which was was identified as a theme losing prominence by over 1 in 5 respondents (21.4%). In addition to the bifurcation of respondents viewing governance as both gaining and losing prominence as a theme within public administration are various themes also frequently identified as going in both directions, such as accountability (4.0% see it as gaining prominence vs 1.7% who see it as losing); ethics (4.0% gaining vs 1.0% losing) and networks (3.7% gaining vs 2.0% losing). This again speaks to the possibility of differences and tensions in disciplinary perceptions within the discipline.

To establish whether our respondents' perceptions of the discipline align with reality, we conducted an analysis of the centrality and density of themes present within our corpus of WoS literature (see Figure 2). From the diagram, it is immediately clear that PA literature largely breaks into two distinct sub-fields, with one centred on performance and management and another centred on policy, the state and governance. Both are key 'motor' themes that act as the driving force of the discipline. When broken down year-by-year, there were some shifts, with 'performance' moving from being part of a 'motor' theme linked with management to a 'basic' theme, indicating a move away from a theme with breadth and depth throughout the literature to one that is still central and broadly used but less clearly and deeply connected with specific aspects of the discipline. In other words, it indicates a theme that is written about but not necessarily engaged with significantly in the literature (Curry and Van de Walle, 2018).

Work on governance and policy increased as a motor theme, especially in the five years following the survey, and then vacillated between being a motor or basic theme, indicating some sort of embedding of the theme in the literature. In some periods, the governance focus aligned with the wider literature on public management (2016, 2018-20 and 2024), but more fine-grained analysis would be necessary to assess the linkage between the

wider 'public management' and 'governance and public policy' focuses of the discipline. There was also a slight consolidation of the discipline, with the number of distinct co-occurrence networks decreasing slightly when examined on a year-by-year basis, with the literature coalescing around core concepts like management and governance. This presents an interesting insight into the trajectory of the public administration literature when contrasted against the growing size and scale of the literature base, as shown in Figure 3.

Our respondents correctly identified both public management reform/performance and governance as key themes in the literature, and these two were in fact the most central to the discipline. Overall, the lack of movement of key themes in the 10~ year period indicates a largely stable disciplinary focus.

Expectations Within Academic Discourse

This research shows both tensions and agreement within the discipline of public administration. The most notable difference in perceptions within academic discourse was between whether academics do, or should, focus on theoretical or applied research, and whether the discipline should become more thematically-specialised or broadly focussed. There was the strongest positive sentiment that the discipline should be (and is) outwardly focussed both internationally and interdisciplinarily. Finally, there was healthy debate on how qualitatively and quantitatively methodological the discipline should aim to be. These areas of agreement and contention are manifested in terms of the normative expectations of our surveyed academics and the actual outcomes in research evidenced through our bibliometric analysis. The existence of some tensions mirrors the idea of perceptions gaps (Flinders and Kelso, 2011; Brown and Swartz, 1989), except one that is far more introspective and insular. Instead of differing perceptions between actors (providers and recipients), this is a tension that exists within provider (academic) perceptions alone. In other words, an interesting tension is the one between academics themselves. This could be termed an internal tension

between what academics *actually* do and what they *feel* should be done. Similar tensions in perceptions of roles have been found in the role of local government councillors (Tan, Morris and Grant, 2016). This also has an effect on the implications of expectations in public administration research by bolstering the evidence that these may, in fact, be based more on *perceptions* than *expectations*.

Discussion and Conclusions: Implications for Academics

Our analysis reveals that there is significant nuance in the existence of tensions between academic perceptions of public administration and the actual state of the discipline (see: Table 3). On the plus side, the differences shown in what academics feel the discipline should be and what it presently is point to a (usually) healthy debate and internal reckoning on the normative direction of the discipline. Still, broadly speaking, the findings illustrate the existence of two main internal tensions within academia: 1) *disciplinary tensions* between what the discipline is and what it should be and 2) *research tensions* in terms of what academics see as key topics and what is actually written about. More specifically, tensions exist in reconciling the roles of theoretical and applied research and developing/supporting thematic specialisation/trends in the discipline. On the other hand, there was generally congruence on PA being an outward-looking discipline. Finally, the research also reveals the potential for healthy debate in an area without producing disciplinary schisms, which is evident in the discourse around the contributions of both qualitative and quantitative research.

Overall, this paints a picture of a discipline with areas of agreement, healthy debate and certain issues – namely thematic focus and the role of applied research – that still need to be reconciled. This is perhaps unsurprising for a discipline such as public administration and one still finding ways to distinguish it from related disciplines such as political science. In those areas where there are tensions between expectations and the actual state of the discipline, there are ways to potentially address these. While academic perceptions of public

administration as a discipline are driven more by academic concerns than applied ones, this does not preclude at least some focus on applied research. First, it is important not to stress a false dichotomy between theoretical and applied applications, and indeed there are trends for the literature to reconcile both (Peters & Pierre, 2017). There is a general view from academics that research can be both more focused on theory-building *and* applied research. While this could indicate a split in views on what the discipline should be, it also allows for the potential of the discipline to explore practical applications and theory building, both at the micro-level decisions and in relation to the bigger questions facing public administration (Zhu, Witko and Meier, 2019).

International and interdisciplinary collaboration was shown to be key in academic debates and change in the discipline, and this also fed a push for more generalisability in academic research, an approach that bolsters *both* theoretical and applied research. This largely lines up with earlier studies that show that academics often meet some – but far from all – of the requirements for applied research (Streib, Slotking & Rivera, 2001). Further development of international comparative research would improve sharing of information and best practices with different approaches to reform, and many researchers already see the benefit in doing so (Geva-May, 2002; Hou et al., 2011; Welch & Wong, 1998). Interdisciplinarity likewise provides alternative viewpoints to understanding public administration puzzles. Widening the discipline in terms of its international and interdisciplinary connections can also help to broaden the views *within* the discipline, potentially helping to close the gap between perceptions of thematic specialisation and key trends in the discipline by introducing new perspective on public administration puzzles (van Helden, Johnsen & Vakkuri, 2008; Pollitt, 2010). The healthy debate on methodological focus and rigour may point the way to creating constructive discourses about research themes as the discipline grows and becomes both broader and deeper.

Finally, this research points to the usefulness of a certain amount of navel-gazing within a discipline to identify 1) areas of congruence, where the discipline is healthy and developing some homogeneity; 2) areas of debate, where the discipline is healthy in more heterogeneous ways; and 3) areas of tension, where academic perceptions of the discipline may not accurately reflect reality. However, these disciplinary and research tensions can also point to areas where more focus needs to be placed. The differences expressed regarding thematic specialisation and the role of theory in the discipline point to aspects that could receive more research focus to increase clarity in PA. Indeed, disagreement in these areas may indicate a discipline that is aiming to become more established by developing its own theoretical and thematic approaches rather than drawing on related disciplines (Sarker et al., 2018), even if there is debate about whether it has got there yet.

There are some limitations to note in this study. Given the long period the study covers and the nature of the methods used, there were some methodological issues in comparing themes across the survey and bibliometric analysis. This was mitigated by adopting the same keyword frequency approach to identifying themes, rather than developing subjective coding parameters. Secondly, while this research does examine academic perceptions of the practicality of their research, it does not include the practitioner voice in this analysis. This is beyond the scope of the paper but would provide an avenue for interesting future research. Finally, a qualitative assessment of the literature would provide more fine-grained analysis of thematic trends in the discipline. These all provide areas for future research on the discipline.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1: Potential Research Tensions Within Public Administration

Potential Perceptual Tension	Differing Expectations	Measure
Public Administration as a Discipline		
Theoretical vs. Applied Research	• Theory versus 'usefulness' • Academic versus practical relevance	• Survey questions on importance of theory vs. practice • Source of Funding • Orientation to practitioners

	▪ Improvements in practice versus improvements in knowledge	or theory building
Inward- vs. Outward-looking Research	▪ Emphasis on interdisciplinary research ▪ Emphasis on international research	▪ Interdisciplinarity in journals and disciplinary connections to public administration research ▪ International collaborations
Public Administration as Research		
Methodological Approaches	▪ Methodological vs. case-driven ▪ Qualitative vs. quantitative methods	▪ Academic methods and perceptions of methodological trends
Breadth vs. Depth of Focus	▪ Generalisability versus case-specific application ▪ Thematic specialisation	▪ Thematic specialisation ▪ Bibliometric analysis

Adapted from Bolton and Stolcis, 2003 and Buckley, 1998.

Table 2: The Characteristics of Themes Based on their Density and Centrality.

	Low Centrality	*High Centrality*
High Density	Niche Themes ▪ Strong internal cohesion, but limited ties to other themes. ▪ Of marginal importance and often highly specialised.	Motor Themes ▪ Strong internal cohesion and established external ties. ▪ Rising, 'motor' themes that act as the driving force of the discipline.
Low Density	Emerging or Declining Themes	Basic Themes

▪ Weak internal cohesion and limited external ties. ▪ Indicates the emergence of new themes or the decline of established ones.		▪ Strong ties to external themes, but low internal cohesion. ▪ 'Transversal' themes that intersect many others. Important for disciplinary research.	

Table 3: The Nature of Research Tensions Within Public Administration

Potential Tension	Existence of Tension?	State of Academic Normative Perceptions	Manifestation/State of the Discipline
Public Administration as a Discipline			
Theoretical vs. Applied Research	Tension	Need for an increased focus on theory	Disagreement over role of theory in research Disagreement over role/funding of applied research
Inward- vs. Outward-looking Research	Congruence	Need for increased interdisciplinary and international focus	Significant international collaboration and cross-disciplinary makeup of PA

Public Administration as Research			
Methodological Approaches	Debate	Wide variety of views on the qualitative and quantitative focuses of the discipline	Proliferation of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches
Breadth vs. Depth of Focus	Tension	Increasing thematic specialisation and disparate trends in the literature	Lack of alignment between perceptions of trends and research outputs

Figure 1: Map of International Literature Production and Collaboration (2014 – 2024)*

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es

Figure 2: Strategic Diagram of the Centrality and Density of Themes Present Within the

WoS Public Administration Literature (2014-2024)
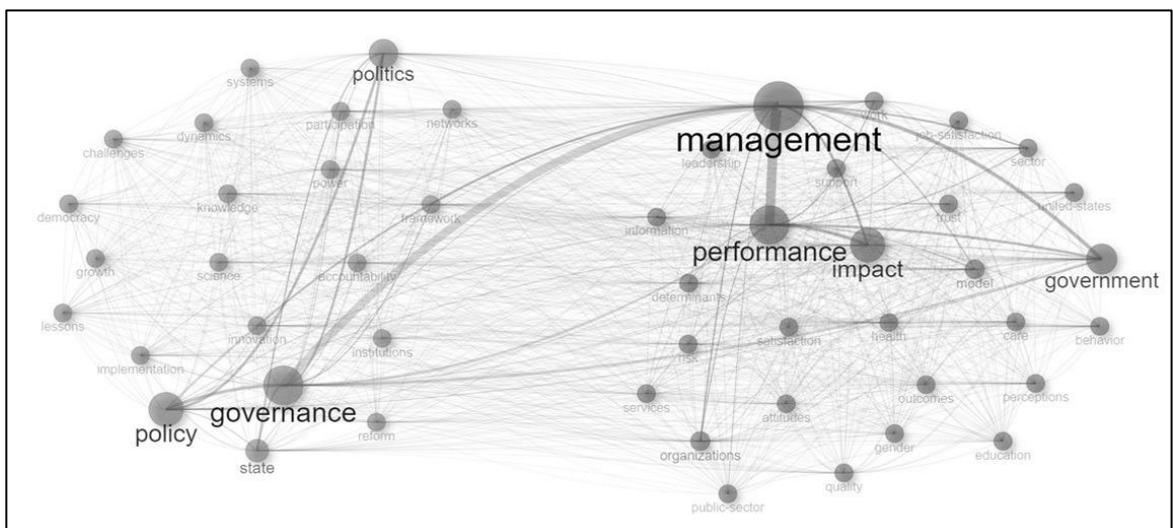
Figure 3: Yearly publication count and rolling average (2014-2024)
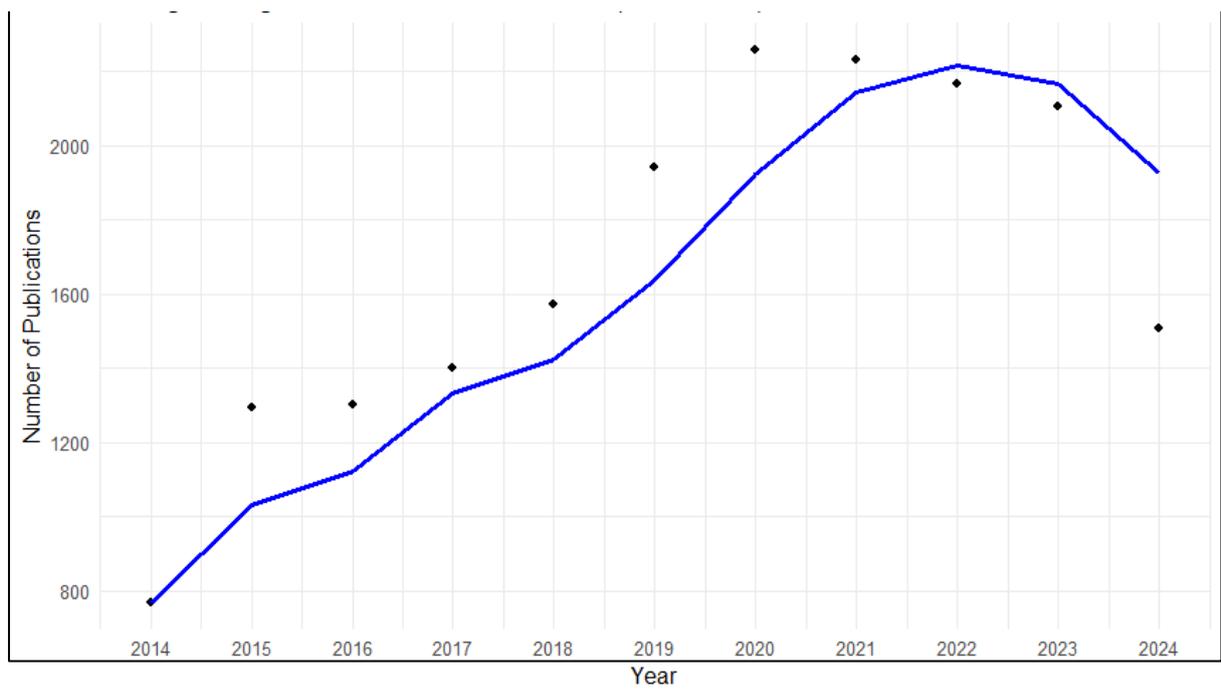
Appendix A:

This appendix contains the averages (means) and standard deviations of the scores given by academics from our surveyed countries across each of our survey questions. All statements are positively coded, such that a higher score reflects a greater enthusiasm/agreement with the given statement. Cases where the standard deviation is reported as NA is due to only there being only one respondent per country.

Table A1: The discipline is becoming: (0 = less, 10 = more)

Country	Interdisciplinary	Practitioner-Focused	Theory-Focused	Applied	Methods-Focused	Quantitative-Focused	Qualitative-Focused	Thematically Specialised	Internationally Competitive
Belgium (n = 11)	6.27 (2.37)	5.73 (2.28)	5.55 (2.30)	6.55 (1.21)	5.82 (2.36)	7.00 (1.95)	5.45 (1.97)	7.27 (2.00)	6.73 (2.00)
Croatia (n = 2)	8.00 (1.41)	9.50 (0.71)	6.00 (2.83)	6.50 (2.12)	7.50 (0.71)	8.00 (1.41)	7.50 (0.71)	7.00 (2.83)	7.00 (1.41)

Czech Republic (n = 1)	8.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)
Denmark (n = 21)	6.52 (1.40)	5.62 (2.27)	6.00 (1.92)	5.48 (1.69)	7.29 (1.38)	7.57 (1.40)	4.71 (1.93)	5.67 (1.74)	7.14 (1.56)
Estonia (n =4)	6.50 (3.70)	4.25 (2.22)	4.00 (1.41)	7.25 (2.22)	6.00 (1.83)	7.00 (1.63)	4.00 (1.63)	6.00 (2.94)	5.75 (2.75)
Finland (n = 7)	6.86 (1.68)	6.14 (1.57)	4.57 (1.27)	6.57 (1.40)	4.43 (1.13)	4.43 (1.13)	6.14 (0.90)	6.71 (1.25)	6.14 (1.86)
France (n = 12)	5.25 (3.22)	7.33 (1.97)	5.83 (2.98)	7.00 (2.09)	5.75 (2.05)	6.17 (2.17)	5.08 (2.27)	7.50 (1.31)	7.00 (1.65)
Germany (n = 22)	5.91 (1.72)	4.82 (1.94)	5.14 (1.78)	5.82 (2.06)	6.05 (1.89)	6.59 (1.76)	4.95 (1.70)	6.73 (1.28)	6.41 (1.87)
Greece (n = 1)	8.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	5.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	5.00 (NA)	9.00 (NA)
Hungary (n = 6)	8.33 (1.21)	6.17 (0.75)	5.33 (1.86)	7.33 (1.21)	6.67 (2.07)	5.50 (2.07)	7.33 (1.03)	7.83 (1.72)	7.83 (0.98)
Italy (n = 25)	7.24 (1.96)	5.16 (2.54)	6.48 (2.00)	6.08 (2.08)	6.76 (2.01)	6.68 (2.14)	5.96 (2.39)	7.28 (1.57)	6.60 (2.27)
Lithuania (n = 3)	8.33 (1.53)	6.00 (2.00)	7.67 (0.58)	7.33 (2.08)	7.00 (1.00)	6.33 (1.15)	6.33 (2.31)	7.00 (2.00)	7.67 (1.15)
Netherlands (n = 54)	6.31 (2.29)	4.98 (2.51)	5.17 (2.22)	5.11 (2.29)	6.44 (2.10)	6.50 (2.25)	5.04 (2.14)	6.91 (1.96)	6.65 (1.78)
Norway (n = 19)	5.47 (2.27)	5.79 (1.96)	5.21 (1.96)	5.68 (1.67)	4.89 (1.37)	6.11 (1.88)	4.84 (1.50)	6.47 (1.95)	6.26 (2.02)
Poland (n = 5)	7.60 (3.21)	6.40 (2.41)	7.20 (2.49)	6.20 (1.64)	5.00 (2.74)	5.20 (1.30)	6.60 (2.30)	5.60 (2.70)	8.40 (1.14)
Portugal (n = 2)	8.50 (0.71)	8.00 (1.41)	6.00 (1.41)	8.00 (1.41)	6.50 (0.71)	5.50 (6.36)	8.00 (1.41)	6.50 (2.12)	7.50 (3.54)
Romania (n = 11)	7.64 (2.06)	6.27 (3.07)	6.45 (1.69)	6.09 (2.34)	6.73 (1.90)	6.27 (2.28)	6.55 (2.50)	6.18 (2.52)	7.45 (2.07)
Slovakia (n = 1)	7.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	9.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)
Slovenia (n = 3)	8.00 (1.73)	4.33 (3.21)	7.00 (1.00)	7.33 (1.15)	6.67 (1.15)	8.00 (1.73)	6.00 (1.73)	7.67 (1.53)	6.67 (2.08)
Spain (n = 12)	8.33 (1.67)	5.50 (2.02)	6.50 (2.32)	6.58 (1.78)	6.33 (2.31)	6.83 (2.79)	7.83 (2.08)	7.00 (1.60)	7.08 (1.68)
Sweden (n = 9)	7.44 (2.07)	5.89 (1.90)	6.33 (1.41)	5.89 (1.54)	6.00 (1.80)	5.78 (2.05)	5.11 (1.83)	5.89 (1.45)	6.89 (1.54)
Switzerland (n = 12)	6.00 (1.95)	5.67 (2.15)	4.58 (2.07)	6.33 (1.50)	5.75 (2.30)	7.00 (1.48)	4.50 (2.35)	6.83 (2.04)	6.83 (1.53)
Turkey (n = 5)	6.80 (2.77)	7.20 (1.48)	6.40 (2.07)	6.40 (2.30)	5.20 (1.92)	5.40 (2.19)	5.00 (1.87)	6.60 (2.41)	6.40 (2.61)

United Kingdom (n = 32)	7.50 (1.95)	5.81 (2.21)	5.91 (1.87)	6.47 (1.68)	6.41 (2.20)	6.72 (2.43)	5.19 (2.22)	6.47 (2.26)	7.00 (2.02)
Overall (n = 280)	**6.75 (2.21)**	**5.63 (2.29)**	**5.70 (2.07)**	**6.05 (1.96)**	**6.23 (2.01)**	**6.54 (2.11)**	**5.35 (2.08)**	**6.71 (1.90)**	**6.82 (1.86)**

Table A2: The discipline should be: (0 = less, 10 = more)

Country	Interdisciplinary	Practitioner-Focused	Theory-Focused	Applied	Methods-Focused	Quantitative-Focused	Qualitative-Focused	Thematically Specialised	Internationally Competitive IS	Internationally Competitive SHOULD BE
Belgium (n = 11)	7.27 (2.00)	6.09 (2.63)	6.36 (2.29)	6.91 (2.12)	7.73 (1.42)	6.27 (2.24)	6.18 (2.60)	5.09 (1.64)	6.73 (2.00)	7.64 (1.75)
Croatia (n = 2)	7.00 (0.00)	5.50 (0.71)	8.00 (1.41)	6.00 (1.41)	8.00 (1.41)	6.00 (1.41)	8.00 (1.41)	6.50 (2.12)	7.00 (1.41)	8.00 (0.00)
Czech Republic (n = 1)	7.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)
Denmark (n = 21)	7.67 (1.85)	5.62 (2.18)	7.52 (1.60)	4.95 (2.13)	6.14 (2.63)	5.24 (1.92)	6.76 (1.37)	5.05 (1.63)	7.14 (1.56)	7.67 (2.18)
Estonia (n =4)	9.50 (1.00)	7.25 (2.63)	6.00 (1.41)	6.25 (2.50)	6.50 (1.91)	5.50 (1.29)	8.00 (1.41)	4.00 (2.45)	5.75 (2.75)	8.75 (1.26)
Finland (n = 7)	8.00 (1.41)	6.29 (2.36)	7.71 (1.38)	7.14 (1.35)	7.29 (1.50)	6.57 (1.72)	6.14 (1.21)	5.86 (2.19)	6.14 (1.86)	7.57 (1.62)
France (n = 12)	9.17 (0.83)	5.67 (3.06)	6.00 (2.17)	6.25 (2.90)	6.00 (1.76)	4.25 (2.22)	7.08 (1.24)	4.50 (2.54)	7.00 (1.65)	7.08 (2.07)
Germany (n = 22)	7.05 (2.50)	5.05 (2.82)	7.64 (1.62)	5.50 (2.87)	6.55 (2.72)	5.27 (2.51)	5.77 (1.97)	4.86 (1.83)	6.41 (1.87)	8.45 (1.44)
Greece (n = 1)	9.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	9.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	9.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	9.00 (NA)	9.00 (NA)
Hungary (n = 6)	9.00 (0.89)	4.67 (1.97)	8.33 (1.03)	6.50 (2.26)	5.83 (2.64)	6.67 (2.73)	7.50 (1.87)	5.17 (1.17)	7.83 (0.98)	9.00 (0.89)
Italy (n = 25)	8.40 (1.87)	7.76 (1.88)	7.16 (2.10)	7.52 (2.10)	7.04 (2.32)	5.80 (2.87)	7.72 (1.95)	7.16 (1.65)	6.60 (2.27)	8.36 (1.82)
Lithuania (n = 3)	8.33 (1.53)	7.67 (2.31)	8.00 (1.00)	7.67 (2.31)	6.67 (0.58)	6.67 (0.58)	7.67 (2.31)	6.67 (0.58)	7.67 (1.15)	8.33 (0.58)
Netherlands (n = 54)	7.06 (2.25)	6.20 (2.12)	6.69 (2.10)	6.17 (2.23)	6.56 (2.20)	5.85 (2.24)	6.43 (2.06)	5.30 (2.20)	6.65 (1.78)	6.98 (2.11)
Norway (n = 19)	7.26 (1.97)	5.58 (2.39)	8.32 (2.19)	6.32 (2.58)	7.11 (2.16)	6.11 (2.18)	6.84 (1.46)	5.16 (1.64)	6.26 (2.02)	8.37 (1.77)
Poland (n = 5)	8.20 (2.17)	7.60 (1.82)	4.60 (2.61)	8.40 (1.14)	7.60 (1.82)	7.00 (2.45)	7.60 (2.19)	6.40 (1.34)	8.40 (1.14)	7.60 (2.19)
Portugal (n = 2)	7.50 (3.54)	6.00 (4.24)	7.00 (1.41)	8.00 (2.83)	8.50 (0.71)	8.00 (1.41)	5.50 (4.95)	2.00 (0.00)	7.50 (3.54)	9.50 (0.71)
Romania (n = 11)	9.09 (1.45)	8.45 (1.04)	7.64 (0.81)	8.18 (1.66)	7.18 (1.83)	7.73 (1.62)	8.27 (0.90)	7.82 (1.47)	7.45 (2.07)	8.82 (1.60)
Slovakia (n = 1)	9.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	10.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	9.00 (NA)	9.00 (NA)	10.00 (NA)	8.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	10.00 (NA)
Slovenia (n = 3)	9.67 (0.58)	6.00 (3.00)	9.00 (1.00)	7.67 (2.52)	8.00 (2.65)	9.00 (1.00)	6.33 (4.62)	4.33 (3.21)	6.67 (2.08)	9.33 (0.58)

Spain (n = 12)	8.42 (1.98)	7.75 (1.60)	7.00 (2.26)	8.08 (1.62)	6.25 (1.48)	5.83 (1.90)	6.67 (2.19)	5.75 (2.83)	7.08 (1.68)	8.50 (1.31)
Sweden (n = 9)	7.67 (2.12)	6.11 (2.57)	7.67 (1.80)	6.11 (2.85)	6.44 (2.13)	5.11 (2.20)	7.00 (2.24)	4.78 (2.39)	6.89 (1.54)	8.56 (1.67)
Switzerla nd (n = 12)	7.67 (2.35)	6.33 (1.92)	6.58 (1.98)	6.17 (1.64)	6.33 (2.81)	5.67 (3.03)	7.00 (2.09)	4.83 (1.40)	6.83 (1.53)	7.92 (1.16)
Turkey (n = 5)	8.80 (1.64)	8.40 (1.67)	7.60 (2.61)	8.20 (1.79)	7.00 (1.87)	7.00 (1.73)	7.00 (1.87)	7.80 (1.30)	6.40 (2.61)	8.20 (1.30)
United Kingdom (n = 32)	7.75 (1.81)	6.25 (2.16)	7.28 (1.94)	6.62 (1.79)	6.09 (2.54)	5.34 (2.06)	6.56 (1.68)	5.28 (1.94)	7.00 (2.02)	8.00 (1.80)
Overall (n = 280)	**7.74 (2.06)**	**6.30 (2.38)**	**7.11 (1.98)**	**6.50 (2.32)**	**6.59 (2.23)**	**5.76 (2.33)**	**6.74 (1.97)**	**5.44 (2.13)**	**6.82 (1.86)**	**7.94 (1.84)**

Table A3: How important are the following sources of funding to your research?

(1 = Not at all important, 7 = Extremely important)

Country	Exec Training	NFP	Consultancy	European Grants	Government Institutions	Your University	Research Council Grants
Belgium (n = 11)	2.91 (1.45)	2.91 (1.58)	3.36 (1.63)	4.27 (1.90)	5.91 (1.22)	5.73 (1.10)	5.27 (1.95)
Croatia (n = 2)	4.00 (NA)	5.00 (0.00)	6.00 (0.00)	6.00 (0.00)	5.50 (0.71)	7.00 (0.00)	6.00 (0.00)
Czech Republic (n = 1)	6.00 (NA)	3.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	5.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)
Denmark (n = 21)	2.48 (2.11)	4.33 (2.33)	1.95 (1.47)	3.10 (1.97)	4.40 (1.79)	5.81 (1.03)	5.62 (1.72)
Estonia (n =4)	1.25 (0.50)	2.00 (1.41)	2.25 (1.50)	5.75 (1.26)	4.75 (2.63)	3.50 (2.08)	6.00 (0.82)
Finland (n = 7)	2.80 (2.17)	3.80 (1.48)	3.60 (1.95)	4.40 (1.14)	4.80 (1.10)	5.80 (0.84)	6.00 (0.71)
France (n = 12)	2.90 (2.23)	2.75 (1.98)	2.44 (2.13)	4.22 (1.56)	5.10 (1.85)	5.43 (1.27)	5.44 (1.81)
Germany (n = 22)	3.62 (1.94)	3.40 (1.79)	3.52 (1.86)	4.81 (1.78)	5.47 (1.12)	4.33 (1.74)	5.57 (1.72)
Greece (n = 1)	1.00 (NA)	1.00 (NA)	5.00 (NA)	3.00 (NA)	5.00 (NA)	4.00 (NA)	3.00 NA)
Hungary (n = 6)	3.20 (1.64)	4.83 (1.94)	3.50 (1.22)	5.60 (0.55)	3.80 (1.79)	5.20 (1.92)	5.50 (1.38)
Italy (n = 25)	4.60 (2.18)	4.00 (1.85)	5.26 (1.63)	4.71 (1.94)	5.72 (1.21)	4.64 (1.85)	4.60 (1.73)
Lithuania (n = 3)	5.33 (1.15)	3.00 (1.00)	6.00 (0.00)	5.33 (0.58)	5.33 (1.53)	6.00 (1.00)	5.67 (0.58)
Netherlands (n = 54)	3.96 (1.78)	3.49 (1.89)	4.08 (1.71)	4.32 (1.95)	4.83 (1.52)	5.23 (1.70)	4.78 (1.93)
Norway (n = 19)	1.88 (1.11)	2.82 (1.81)	1.76 (0.66)	4.22 (2.41)	3.94 (1.70)	6.05 (0.78)	6.21 (0.79)
Poland (n = 5)	3.40 (1.95)	3.25 (2.87)	4.80 (1.92)	5.60 (0.55)	4.80 (1.48)	6.00 (1.73)	6.20 (0.45)

Portugal (n = 2)	1.50 (0.71)	1.50 (0.71)	1.00 (0.00)	6.00 (1.41)	1.50 (0.71)	2.50 (2.12)	7.00 (0.00)
Romania (n = 11)	5.20 (1.81)	4.70 (1.49)	5.20 (1.75)	6.00 (0.94)	5.10 (1.73)	5.00 (1.41)	5.70 (1.49)
Slovakia (n = 1)	6.00 (NA)	5.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	5.00 (NA)	4.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)
Slovenia (n = 3)	4.00 (2.00)	3.67 (1.15)	4.67 (0.58)	5.00 (2.65)	5.00 (1.00)	5.00 (2.00)	5.33 (1.15)
Spain (n = 12)	2.73 (1.62)	3.36 (1.63)	4.45 (1.86)	5.33 (1.72)	5.09 (1.70)	4.08 (1.78)	5.50 (1.62)
Sweden (n = 9)	2.22 (1.48)	3.22 (2.39)	2.44 (1.59)	3.44 (2.40)	4.78 (2.05)	4.00 (1.94)	5.89 (1.90)
Switzerland (n = 12)	4.08 (2.23)	3.75 (1.91)	4.83 (2.17)	4.00 (1.65)	5.55 (1.21)	5.08 (1.68)	5.75 (0.97)
Turkey (n = 5)	4.40 (2.41)	3.80 (2.39)	4.20 (2.59)	3.75 (1.89)	5.20 (2.39)	6.80 (0.45)	3.80 (2.77)
United Kingdom (n = 32)	3.09 (1.99)	4.06 (1.85)	3.50 (1.80)	4.75 (1.76)	4.81 (1.54)	4.69 (1.82)	5.34 (1.64)
Overall (n = 280)	**3.42 (2.03)**	**3.62 (1.91)**	**3.71 (1.98)**	**4.52 (1.91)**	**4.94 (1.60)**	**5.08 (1.68)**	**5.36 (1.68)**

Table A4:   How important are the following disciplines to your research? (1 =

Not at all important, 7 = Extremely important)

Country	Law	Economics	Business/Management	Sociology	Politics
Belgium (n = 11)	4.55 (1.44)	4.09 (1.14)	4.36 (1.63)	4.55 (1.29)	5.55 (1.29)
Croatia (n = 2)	6.00 (0.00)	4.00 (0.00)	5.00 (0.00)	5.00 (0.00)	6.00 (0.00)
Czech Republic (n = 1)	7.00 (NA)	3.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	5.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)
Denmark (n = 21)	2.67 (1.59)	3.81 (1.44)	4.43 (1.86)	5.10 (1.55)	6.19 (0.93)
Estonia (n =4)	3.25 (1.26)	4.25 (1.71)	5.25 (0.50)	5.00 (0.00)	5.50 (0.58)
Finland (n = 7)	4.00 (1.58)	4.00 (1.58)	4.60 (1.67)	5.20 (0.84)	6.40 (0.55)

France (n = 12)	4.11 (1.69)	3.89 (1.83)	3.78 (2.28)	6.10 (1.10)	5.90 (1.37)
Germany (n = 22)	4.33 (1.80)	4.00 (1.48)	4.71 (1.23)	4.76 (1.45)	6.30 (1.03)
Greece (n = 1)	4.00 (NA)	5.00 (NA)	6.00 (NA)	2.00 (NA)	5.00 (NA)
Hungary (n = 6)	4.00 (2.00)	3.40 (2.41)	4.17 (2.32)	5.00 (0.71)	5.67 (1.97)
Italy (n = 25)	4.12 (1.60)	4.52 (1.69)	6.20 (1.15)	4.48 (1.53)	4.96 (1.72)
Lithuania (n = 3)	2.00 (1.00)	4.67 (1.15)	5.67 (1.15)	4.33 (1.15)	4.33 (1.53)
Netherlands (n = 54)	4.09 (1.89)	3.63 (1.66)	4.33 (1.80)	4.94 (1.27)	5.07 (1.58)
Norway (n = 19)	3.42 (1.46)	3.42 (1.77)	4.00 (1.53)	4.58 (1.35)	6.74 (0.45)
Poland (n = 5)	5.80 (1.64)	4.60 (1.52)	5.00 (1.41)	5.60 (1.14)	6.00 (1.41)
Portugal (n = 2)	5.50 (0.71)	5.50 (0.71)	5.50 (0.71)	2.50 (0.71)	5.00 (2.83)
Romania (n = 11)	5.00 (1.33)	5.38 (1.51)	4.90 (1.85)	4.70 (1.64)	5.50 (1.18)
Slovakia (n = 1)	1.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	7.00 (NA)	2.00 (NA)	2.00 (NA)
Slovenia (n = 3)	4.33 (3.06)	5.33 (1.15)	6.00 (1.00)	4.67 (1.53)	5.67 (0.58)
Spain (n = 12)	4.55 (1.92)	5.00 (1.26)	5.50 (1.57)	4.75 (1.60)	5.67 (0.98)
Sweden (n = 9)	3.22 (1.30)	3.78 (1.72)	4.89 (1.76)	5.00 (1.12)	6.22 (1.30)
Switzerland (n = 12)	4.25 (2.05)	3.75 (1.66)	5.50 (1.38)	5.36 (0.92)	5.75 (1.22)
Turkey (n = 5)	5.80 (1.64)	4.20 (2.59)	4.40 (2.70)	5.00 (1.58)	5.20 (1.64)
United Kingdom (n = 32)	3.50 (1.85)	4.03 (1.83)	5.42 (1.52)	5.00 (1.39)	6.16 (1.08)
Overall (n = 280)	**3.99 (1.82)**	**4.04 (1.66)**	**4.87 (1.72)**	**4.88 (1.37)**	**5.70 (1.39)**