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Teaching Public Policy in East Asia: Comparing Aspirations, Potentials and Challenges

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ABSTRACT *Public policy courses have increasingly become an indispensable part of professional training programs in public affairs in East Asia in response to rapid changes in the political, social, and economic environment in the region. This paper examines the current trends in public policy education in East Asia through the lens of syllabi of public policy courses offered in graduate programs in leading universities in mainland China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. The comparative analysis points to three main challenges in teaching public policy in East Asia: insufficient attention to policy knowledge rooted in the local context, inadequate teaching capacity, and under-representation of policy analysis.*

Introduction

Although public policy as a field of study was introduced to East Asia as early as the 1960s (Kim and Kang 1992; Jan 2003), the mainstreaming of public policy training in the development of educational programs and professional practices in public affairs has been a recent phenomenon, stimulated by rapid changes in the political, social, and economic environment in many East Asian countries as well as the proliferation of professional training programs, such as Master in Public Administration (MPA), in the region. In Korea and Taiwan, the transition towards democratic systems has broadened the scope of participation in the policy process and thus boosted demand for policy specialists and analysts with professional training in public policy (Lee 2007; Mok 2007). In mainland China, where there were only a handful of universities

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offering courses on public policy in the mid-1990s, under the guidelines stipulated by the National MPA Steering Committee, public policy analysis has become one of the nine compulsory courses for MPA programs, which are now offered in more than 100 universities across the country (Wu and He 2009). In addition, public policy has been included as a key subject in civil service entrance exams in a number of countries (Jan 2003; Park 2009; Watanabe 2009).

The increased emphasis on public policy training should provide not only tremendous impetus to the development of the field of public policy in East Asia, but also unprecedented opportunities to strengthen policy capacity among government agencies, NGOs, and civil society. While East Asian countries made great strides towards economic and social development in the last century, each of them has been confronted with a set of daunting challenges, such as global warming, terrorism, and an aging population. Policy capacity in dealing with these challenges in these countries may be the decisive factor in determining their success in the twenty-first century, and public policy training can be the catalyst.

On the other hand, however, the rapidly growing demand for public policy training in East Asia may present serious challenges. Due to the limited number of graduate programs in public policy in East Asia, very few scholars have been trained in the field of public policy. In mainland China, for example, the public policy analysis courses required for MPA programs are often taught by faculty members with neither training nor professional experience in the field of public policy (Ren 2002; Qian 2007). In Taiwan, Korea, and Japan, though, generations of scholars have pursued their studies in Western countries where there is a longer history in public policy education.

More important, the development of learning materials may not keep pace with the fast-growing demand for public policy training. Although the origin of the field of public policy can be traced to the emergence of policy science in Western countries, particularly the US, the study of public policy is deeply rooted in political systems, cultural norms, and historical contexts that differ considerably from one country to another, and therefore it is critical to assess the applicability of theories and practices developed in other contexts. However, the fast-growing demand for public policy training may leave little time for the development of learning materials based on local contexts, forcing instructors/scholars to rely on learning materials from Western countries.

This paper focuses on various tensions in the development of public policy training in East Asia and their potential impacts on the development of the field in the long run. In particular, we examine teaching capacity, coverage, and learning materials for public policy training in East Asia through the analysis of 62 syllabi used in graduate programs in top universities in mainland China, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. Our analysis allows us to uncover some salient features in the development of public policy training in East Asia and to gain insight into potentials and challenges in such development.

Research Methodology

Course syllabi have been used to analyze trends in the development of public policy training (Romero 2001; Rethemeyer and Helbig 2005). Straussman (2008) has concluded that reviewing syllabi in public affairs programs is an important means for exploring the level of agreement in the profession about what comprises core content in professional training curricula. However, course syllabi have rarely been used to

study curriculum development in East Asia, due perhaps to the fact that the use of syllabi was not a standard practice in many universities in the region until recently.

The main data sources for our analysis are syllabi used in public policy courses in graduate programs from 2008 to 2011 in top universities in mainland China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan.¹ For countries where there are few universities offering public policy courses, efforts were made to collect syllabi from all of them. Most course syllabi were collected through the internet, but e-mail communications and telephone requests were also used extensively when syllabi were not available through the public domain. However, while it is infeasible to check all courses offered in the sampled departments (or programs), we have made efforts to examine the titles of core courses to rule out the possibility of other similar courses on the subject of public policy or policy analysis. Therefore we are confident that the courses included are the only core courses in public policy/policy analysis in their respective programs.

To avoid oversampling of a particular university or program, we selected one syllabus from each university targeted. For consistency, we excluded four types of courses from our sample: courses offered as electives, courses only focusing on policy research, courses devoted to a specific step in the policy process, such as evaluation, formulation, and decision-making, and courses focusing on specific sectoral policy such as education policy and technology policy.

Although efforts were made to ensure the comparability of syllabi across programs and countries, there are two limitations of our study. First, syllabi may not accurately delineate what the instructors would be teaching as some instructors may prefer to use extremely concise syllabi while others may have more detailed syllabi. Second, the omission of certain topics from syllabi might be due to the design of the curriculum in having them offered in other courses included in the curriculum.

Our final sample consists of 62 syllabi in total, 23 from mainland China, 15 from Taiwan, 14 from Korea, and 10 from Japan, as presented in Table 1. The small number of courses for Japan is due to the fact that only a limited number of Japanese universities currently offer courses in public policy. In Japan, the number of public policy schools remains small, with only eight schools as of January 2012 (Watanabe 2009). However, there are about 30-plus universities offering courses in public policy or policy analysis, mainly conducted in the graduate schools of public administration and policy science (Ministry of Education 2012). In our analysis, we have included the majority of first-batch universities accredited by Japan's Ministry of Education that conducted programs in public policy.

Based on Romero's (2001) synthesized model for public policy courses, we coded the contents of course syllabi by four categories according to four main pedagogical foci typically expected in public policy courses. These are: fundamentals of public policy; policy process; policy context; and policy analysis, and each category is represented by several key topics. The details on the rationale of such categorization as well as the selection of topics for each category will be explained in detail in the next section.

While building on earlier studies based on the analysis of course syllabi, two innovations were introduced in our research. First, due to the tremendous growth in the demand for training in public policy, efforts were made to collect the profiles of course instructors so that analysis could be conducted on the teaching capacity for public policy training in East Asia. Through internet searches and direct inquiries, we were able to construct the profiles of instructors, which include information on their highest educational credentials, fields of study, and places (countries and

Table 1. List of courses included in the sample ($n = 62$)

Country	University	Course title
China (23)	Wuhan Institute of Technology	Public Policy Analysis
	Tianjin University of Science & Technology	Public Policy Analysis
	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	Public Policy Analysis
	Renmin University of China	Public Policy Analysis
	China Central Radio and TV University	Public Policy
	Huazhong University of Science and Technology	Public Policy Analysis
	Jilin University	Public Policy Analysis
	Shandong University	Public Policy
	Sichuan University	Public Policy Analysis
	Guangxi University	Public Policy
	Hunan University	Public Policy Studies
	Xi'an Jiaotong University	Public Policy Analysis
	Nanjing university	Public Policy Analysis
	Xiamen University	Policy Science
	Fudan University	Public Policy Analysis
	Southwest Jiaotong University	Public Policy Analysis
	Beijing Normal University	Public Policy Analysis
	Tong Ji University	Public Policy
	Peking University	Public Policy Analysis
	Tsinghua University	Public Policy Analysis
	Sun Yat-sen University	Public Policy Analysis
	Nankai University	Public Policy Analysis
	Zhejiang University	Public Policy Analysis
Taiwan (15)	National Chengchi University	Public Policy Analysis
	National Taipei University	Public Policy Studies
	National Sun Yat-Sen University	Public Policy Analysis
	Shih Hsin University	Public Policy
	National Taiwan University	Seminar on Public Policy
	National Chung Hsin University	Public Policy
	National Chung Cheng University	Policy Science
	Kainan University	Policy Analysis
	National University of Tainan	Public Policy Analysis
	I-Shou University	Public Policy Analysis
	National Hsin Chu University of Education	Public Policy
	National Open University	Policy Analysis
	National University of Kaohsiung	Public Policy
	Soochow University	Public Policy
	Tung Hai University	Public Policy
Korea (14)	Seoul National University	Theories of Public Policy
	Korea University	Public Policy Analysis
	Yonsei University	Introduction to Policy Studies
	Inha University	Introduction to Policy Sciences
	Sejong University	Public Policy

(continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Country	University	Course title
Japan (10)	Ehwa Womans University	Policy Making and Implementation
	Chungnam National University	Introduction to Policy Science
	Pusan National University	Policy Analysis
	Kyungpook National University	Policy Analysis and Evaluation
	Kongju National University	Policy Analysis
	Pukyung National University	Policy Making and Implementation
	Yeungnam University	Policy Science
	KDI School	Analysis of Policy Process
	Dong-A University	Policy-Making Theory
	University of Tokyo	Policy Analysis
	Meiji University	Public Policy
	Ritsumei University	Policy Science
	Hokkaido University	Public Policy
	International Christian University	Public Policy
	Keio University	Public Policy
Osaka University	Public Policy	
Chuo University	Frontier of Public Policy	
Kyoto University	Public Policy	
Hitotsubashi University	Public Policy	

educational institutions) where they obtained their highest educational credentials. Second, based on information obtained from syllabi in our sample, we identified and collected the most frequently used public policy textbooks that were written by local scholars. Lists of references in these textbooks were coded and analyzed to gauge the extent to which learning materials reflect theories and practices generated in local contexts, a critical aspect for training in public policy.

Findings and Discussion

Profile of Course Instructors

Table 2 presents the profiles of course instructors in terms of their training background. While the majority of instructors (82.3 per cent) are doctorate degree holders, there are sizable differences across East Asia, ranging from less than two-thirds in mainland China to 100 per cent in Korea. It is striking that in mainland China more than one-fifth of instructors for graduate courses on public policy only possess bachelor's degrees themselves, an indication of daunting challenges for many Chinese universities to cope with the fast-growing demand for public policy courses. Aside from Japan, where scholars trained in economics and law seem to play a significant role in public policy training, the majority of instructors (about three-quarters) received training in the field of public administration/public policy for their highest educational credentials.

Table 2. Profiles of course instructors ($n = 62$)

Content	China (23)	Taiwan (15)	Japan (10)	Korea (14)	Total
Course instructor background					
PhD	16 (69.6%)	14 (93.3%)	7 (70%)	14 (100%)	51 (82.3%)
Master	2 (8.7%)	1 (6.7%)	1 (10%)	0	4 (6.5%)
Undergraduate	5 (21.7%)	0	2 (20%)	0	7 (11.3%)
Highest degrees from (local universities: 64.3%, overseas universities: 35.7%)					
China	21 (91.3%)	0	0	0	
US	1 (4.3%)	9 (60%)	1 (10%)	7 (50%)	18 (29.0%)
Taiwan	0	5 (33.3%)	0	0	
Japan	0	0	9 (90%)	0	
Korea	0	0	0	5 (35.7%)	
UK	1 (4.3%)	1 (6.7%)	0	0	
Others	0	0	0	2 (14.3%)	
Field of study of the course instructor					
Public admin/policy/analysis	15 (65.2%)	13 (86.7%)	4 (40%)	12 (85.7%)	44 (71.0%)
Economics	1 (4.3%)	0	2 (20%)	1 (7.1%)	4 (6.5%)
Political science	2 (8.7%)	1 (6.7%)	0	1 (7.1%)	4 (6.5%)
Law	1 (4.3%)	1 (6.7%)	3 (30%)	0	5 (8.1%)
Others	5 (21.7%)	0	2 (20%)	0	7 (11.3%)

Although the majority of course instructors obtained their highest academic credentials from universities in their own countries, there are considerable disparities across East Asia, ranging from 91.3 per cent in China to only about a third in Taiwan, where roughly two-thirds pursued their graduate studies in the US. The United States is the top destination for scholars to pursue their studies outside their own countries, as around 30 per cent of course instructors in our sample are graduates of various degree programs from educational institutions in the US.

It would be wrong to assume that the Western influence on public policy training in China would be less extensive because 91.3 per cent of course instructors obtained their highest educational credentials in China. Universities across China have made tremendous efforts in recent years to strengthen capacity building and many faculty members have been sent to Western countries for short training programs or joint research projects, and as a result it is rare that a scholar from a top university in China has no experience abroad. More important, sustained efforts have been made to translate books written by Western scholars so that language barriers have had less impact. Table 3 shows the selected list of public policy books that have been translated into Chinese, and the list has been expanding quickly.

Pedagogical Focus 1: Fundamentals of Public Policy

Although there is no consensus on what are the fundamentals in the field of public policy, we include the following topics in this category: concepts of public policy; evolution of policy sciences; and approaches to public policy, based on the list of topics typically appearing in leading public policy textbooks, such as Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl (2009) and Lester and Stewart (2000). The coverage of these topics in our sampled courses is reported in Table 4. There seems to be a strong tendency

Table 3. List of public policy textbooks translated into Chinese (selected)

Title	Author(s)	Year of publication
<i>New Science of Management Decision Systems Analysis and Policy Science</i>	Simon, Herbert A.	1982
<i>The Policy-Making Process</i>	Klawn, R.M.	1987
<i>Public Policy-Making</i>	Lindblom, Charles E.	1988
<i>Making Public Policy</i>	Anderson, James E.	1990
<i>Encyclopedia of Policy Studies</i>	Kelman, Steven	1990
<i>The Public Policy Dictionary</i>	Nagel, Sturt S.	1994
<i>Policy Making in the Crisis</i>	Kruschke, Earl R	1992
<i>Theoretical Foundations of Public Policy</i>	Dror, Yehezkel	1996
<i>Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning (2nd Edition)</i>	Bromley, Dannel	1996
<i>Public Policy Making: Process and Principles</i>	Patton, C & Sawicki, D.	2001
<i>Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice (2nd Edition)</i>	Gerston, Larry N.	2001
<i>Public Policy Analysis (2nd edition)</i>	Weimer, D. & Vining, A.	2002
<i>Understanding Public Policy</i>	Dunn, William	2002
<i>Top-Down Policymaking</i>	Dye, Thomoas R.	2002
<i>Evaluation of Public Policy</i>	Dye, Thomoas R.	2002
<i>Post-modern Public Policy</i>	Fischer, Frank	2003
<i>Agenda, Alternative and Public Policies</i>	Cobb, John B.	2003
<i>New Public Policy: Public Policy for Democracy</i>	Kingdon, John W.	2004
<i>Policy Paradox</i>	Ingram & Schneider	2005
<i>Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycle and Policy Subsystem</i>	Stone, Deborah	2006
<i>Theories of the Policy Process</i>	Howlett, Michael et al	2006
<i>Public Policy Instruments: Evaluating the Tools of Public Administration</i>	Sabatier, Paul A.	2006
	Peters, Guy B.	2007

among course instructors in East Asia to include topics categorized as “fundamentals of public policy”. Given the introductory nature of many of the courses selected, the emphasis on these topics is well placed.

One finding that may not be obvious from the coverage statistics in Table 4 is the dominant influence of Western literature. A glimpse through leading public policy textbooks used in courses in mainland China, Taiwan, and Korea would quickly yield the revelation that definitions of public policy in the classics of public policy written by Western scholars such as Dye (2002), Dror (1971), and Jenkins (1978), the history and evolution of policy science in the US, and various approaches such as public choice, positivism, and institutionalism are often upheld as the fundamentals of public policy by East Asian scholars.

Pedagogical Focus 2: Policy Process

Although the prominence of the stage model as a policy science theory has gradually declined among public policy scholars, the use of various stages in the policy process in

Table 4. Coverage based on course contents ($n = 62$)

Content	China (23)	Taiwan (15)	Japan (10)	Korea (14)	Total
Fundamentals of public policy					
Concepts of public policy	23 (100%)	14(93.3%)	7 (70%)	9 (64.3%)	53 (85.5%)
Evolution of policy science	19 (82.7%)	10 (66.7%)	6 (60%)	10 (71.4%)	45 (72.6%)
Approaches to public policy	14 (60.9%)	10 (66.7%)	6 (60%)	9 (64.3%)	39 (62.9%)
Policy process					
Agenda setting	18 (78.3%)	8 (53.3%)	5 (50%)	7 (50%)	38 (61.3%)
Policy formulation	15 (65.2%)	11 (73.3%)	9 (90%)	5 (35.7%)	40 (64.5%)
Decision-making	16 (61.9%)	12 (80%)	6 (60%)	7 (50%)	41 (66.1%)
Policy legitimization	15 (65.2%)	4 (26.7%)	1 (10%)	4 (28.6%)	24 (38.7%)
Policy implementation	18 (78.3%)	13 (86.7%)	3 (30%)	6 (42.9%)	40 (64.5%)
Policy evaluation	20 (87.0%)	14 (93.3%)	5 (50%)	6 (42.9%)	45 (72.6%)
Policy termination	12 (52.2%)	7 (46.7%)	2 (20%)	5 (35.7%)	26 (41.9%)
Policy context					
Policy actors	17 (73.9%)	11(73.3%)	9 (90%)	8 (57.1%)	45 (72.6%)
Political systems	9 (39.1%)	8 (53.3%)	7 (70%)	6 (42.9%)	30 (48.4%)
Society structures	4 (17.4%)	4 (26.7%)	7 (70%)	7 (50%)	22 (35.5%)
Policy network	4 (17.4%)	6 (40%)	2 (20%)	5 (35.7%)	17 (27.4%)
Public opinion	4 (17.4%)	9 (60%)	5 (50%)	7 (50%)	25 (40.3%)
Policy discourse	0(0)	8 (53.3%)	0	6 (42.9%)	14 (22.6%)
Policy instrument	12 (52.2%)	9 (60%)	3 (30%)	4 (28.6%)	28 (45.2%)
Policy marketing	2 (8.7%)	4 (26.7%)	0	1 (7.1%)	7 (11.3%)
Policy analysis					
Constructing policy problems	21 (91.3%)	12 (80%)	2 (20%)	8 (57.1%)	43 (69.4%)
Determination of policy objectives and criteria	16 (69.6%)	3 (20%)	1 (10%)	7 (50%)	27 (43.5%)
Formulating policy options	12 (52.2%)	6 (40%)	1 (10%)	5 (35.7%)	24 (38.7%)
Forecasting policy outcome	15 (65.2%)	6 (40%)	0	5 (35.7%)	24 (38.7%)
Average number of topics covered in each syllabus	12.4	12.6	6.8	9.7	

sequencing and organizing content in public policy courses seems to continue to hold its appeal. In our analysis, we used the five steps outlined in Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl (2009) – agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation – as the basis, and added two more steps featured in other classics of public policy (Jones 1984; Sabatier 1999; Lester and Stewart 2000) – policy legitimization and policy termination – into the category of policy process.

Table 4 shows that the policy process receives a high level of coverage among public policy courses in East Asia, especially in mainland China and Taiwan. A close examination of textbooks used in courses in mainland China and Taiwan reveals that both the policy process and individual stages are covered extensively in these textbooks.

The under-representation of some topics, such as policy legitimization in Japan and Korea and policy formulation in Korea, can be explained by differences in definition or merely translation of terminologies – for instance, policy formulation and legitimization may be considered as a part of decision-making in some countries. However, there are still considerable disparities both across countries and across topics. For example, topics related to the policy process were covered much less extensively in courses in Japan and Korea than in those in mainland China and Taiwan, and in Japan, policy implementation was only covered by three out of ten courses examined.

Pedagogical Focus 3: Policy Context

In the “policy context” category, we included topics concerning policy actors, policy environment, the interaction between policy actors and policy environment, and the interaction among policy actors.

In particular, we included two types of topics in this category to gauge the coverage of policy context. The first type of topics focuses on policy actors and the environment for policy development, including policy actors, political systems, and societal structures. The second type of topics deals with how policy actors interact with each other, including policy network, public opinion, policy discourse, and policy marketing. Due to differences in political systems and societal relationship, policy context can be expected to differ considerably from one country to another.

While the majority of courses (72.6 per cent) covered “policy actors”, the rest of the topics in this category received less attention than those in “fundamentals of public policy” and “policy process”, and substantial variations were found both across topics and across countries. For example, two-thirds of courses in mainland China did not include “political systems”, and “societal structures” is not covered in six out of every seven courses. In comparison, instructors from Taiwan and Korea have paid much greater attention to topics related to policy context, such as policy network, public opinion, and policy discourse.

One plausible explanation for the more extensive coverage of these topics in Taiwan and Korea might be the change in political systems. For example, the transition towards democracy has increased the scope of public participation in public affairs, and thus topics such as public opinion and policy discourse might be gaining more prominence in public policy education. Another interpretation is that, because in both Taiwan and Korea a significant number of course instructors were trained in the US, they might be more receptive to the influence of new trends in policy research in Western countries, such as the emergence of post-positivism approaches to public policy.

Pedagogical Orientation 4: Policy Analysis

Defined specifically, policy analysis is “determining which of various alternative policies will most achieve a given set of goals in light of the relations between the policies and the goals” (Nagel 1990, page xi). Policy analysis differs from other pedagogical foci in that it emphasizes more prescriptive as opposed to analytical and descriptive aspects of public policy, and thus has a strong practical orientation.

The topics we chose to assess the coverage of policy analysis include key steps in conducting policy analysis (Bardach 1999; MacRae and Whittington 2000) – identifying policy problems, determination of decision criteria, alternative formulation, and forecasting policy outcome.

While each of these steps is indispensable in conducting policy analysis, their coverage in public policy courses differs considerably from one step to the other. For example, in general, “constructing policy problems” received much more attention than “formulating policy options” and “forecasting policy outcomes”. Such imbalance in coverage may undermine the potential of public policy training to improve the quality of policy-making through better policy analysis. One explanation is that technical aspects of some steps in policy analysis, such as “forecasting policy outcomes” present significant challenges for many instructors who were trained in disciplines in which technical analysis is not emphasized.

Given the practical orientation in the study of public policy, the development of skills and craft in conducting policy analysis is an essential component of public policy education. However, limited attention has been directed to this aspect. The fact that policy analysis received greater attention among courses in mainland China does not mean that sufficient attention is paid to the development of necessary skills and craft. Close examination of course syllabi and leading textbooks used in these courses reveals that the subject of policy analysis is only covered in one chapter in textbooks, and instructors rarely spend more than one session on the whole subject. In addition, based on course requirements stated in syllabi, it is rare (two of 23 courses in mainland China) that students are required to conduct policy analysis for a real policy issue. While it is true that policy analysis is often a part of master’s theses or capstone projects in graduate programs in public administration and policy, our analysis suggests that the students are often asked to conduct policy analysis before they receive any formal training on the subject in their coursework.

The challenges in better integrating policy analysis in public policy courses may also reflect the institutional realities in many East Asian countries. For example, policy analysis is not required and routinely practiced in most government agencies in these countries, and the development of the profession of policy analysts is still in its early stages. On the other hand, however, the weakness of policy analysis in public policy training may undermine the future progress towards more extensive use of policy analysis in government agencies.

Learning Materials: Textbooks

Learning materials from Western countries have been used extensively in public policy courses in East Asia as nearly half of courses required at least one book authored by foreign scholars to be included among the textbooks for the courses (Table 5). While it might be reasonable to assume that instructors with overseas training and experience might have a bias towards textbooks authored by foreign scholars, there is no evidence to support this based on our analysis. For example, although the majority of Chinese instructors for courses in our sample (91.3 per cent) obtained their highest academic credentials from domestic universities, two-thirds of them required textbooks written by foreign scholars; in contrast, although most

Table 5. Coverage based on course content ($n = 62$)

	China	Taiwan	Japan	Korea	Total
Required textbook					
Foreign only	1 (4.3%)	6 (40%)	2 (20%)	1 (7.1%)	10 (16.1%)
Local only	8 (34.8%)	4 (26.7%)	5 (50%)	12 (85.8%)	29 (46.8%)
Both foreign and local	12 (52.2%)	5 (33.3%)	1 (10%)	1 (7.1%)	19 (30.6%)
Unknown	2 (8.7%)	0	2 (20%)	0	4 (6.5%)

Korean instructors (about two-thirds) were trained abroad, the vast majority of them (85 per cent) only assigned textbooks written by Korean scholars.

While course instructors may typically assign a range of reading materials, such as journal articles, government reports, and unpublished manuscripts, to supplement the textbooks, the uses of such materials were not systematically documented in the majority of the syllabi in our sample, thus our comparison is based on the textbooks specified in the syllabi. As in other fields in social sciences at the graduate level, textbooks should not only cover the classic readings in the discipline, but also introduce new theories and practices.

It is also a mistaken belief, however, that textbooks written by East Asian scholars would necessarily differ substantially from those by their Western counterparts in their emphasis on theories and practices generated in the context of their own countries. In order to gauge the extent of such focus, we conducted an in-depth analysis on the references reported in nine leading textbooks written by local scholars, three from Taiwan (Chiu 2008; Wu 2008; Chang 2009), three from mainland China (Chen 2009; Xie 2009; Yan 2009), and three from Korea (Rho 2006; Gil 2010; Kang 2000).

It is clear that books, especially books by foreign scholars, are heavily weighted in comparison to journal articles, which are often considered the main sources for cutting-edge research and new practices. There are also considerable differences across textbooks in the number of books referenced as the percentage of total number of references, ranging from 44 per cent in Gil (2010) to 99 per cent in Chen (2009). In addition, the majority of journal articles referenced were written by foreign scholars and published in journals abroad, and articles published in local journals only accounted for a very small share of the references. As a result, many textbooks by East Asian scholars can be seen as variants of textbooks from Western countries.

The neglect of local scholarship in references reported in textbooks may in part reflect the status of public policy research in East Asia. While greater efforts have been made to introduce public policy theories and practices from the Western countries, insufficient attention has been paid to generating policy knowledge rooted in individual country contexts. In the long run, an over-reliance on learning materials imported from abroad may inadvertently undermine the appeal of the study of public policy in providing practical solutions to major policy challenges in East Asia.

Concluding Remarks

The demand for public policy education has increased dramatically. In China, courses on public policy analysis have been offered in over 100 universities across the country as a result of fast-growing professional training programs in public administration. In

Table 6. Analysis of local textbooks in public policy

Textbook title	Taiwan				China				Korea			
	Public Policy	Public Policy Analysis	Public Policy Analysis	Introduction to Public Policy	Public Policy Science	Public Policy Analysis	Public Policy Analysis	Theories of Policy Sciences	Public Policy Analysis	Public Policy Analysis	Public Policy Analysis	Public Policy Analysis
Author (year)	Chiu (2008)	Wu (2008)	Chang et al. (2004)	Xie (2009)	Yan (2008)	Chen (2009)	Rho (2006)	Gil (2010)	Kang (2000)			
Highest degree	PhD in public policy	PhD in public policy	PhD in public affairs	Master	Undergraduate	PhD in public policy	PhD in public policy	PhD in public policy	PhD in public policy			
Reference (total)	309	77	131	38	139	261	412	513	155			
In the form of books												
Total	241 (78%)	59 (77%)	100 (76%)	35 (92%)	114 (82%)	259 (99%)	297 (72%)	223 (43.5%)	113 (73%)			
	Average: 77%											
Foreign books	228	46	75	25	87	184	251	190	71			
Local books	13	13	25	10	27	75	46	33	42			
Local textbooks	8 (2.6%)	6 (7.8%)	17 (13%)	8 (21%)	13 (9.3%)	11 (4.2%)	29 (7.9%)	19 (3.7%)	28 (18%)			
	Average: 7.8%											
In the form of Journal articles												
Total	68 (22%)	18 (23%)	31 (24%)	3 (8%)	25 (18%)	2 (1%)	115 (28%)	290 (56.5%)	42 (27%)			
	Average: 23%											
Foreign articles	57	10	25	2	15	2	91	223	19			
Local articles	11 (3.5%)	8 (10.3%)	6 (4.5%)	1 (2.6%)	10 (7.1%)	0	24 (6.5%)	67 (13%)	23 (15%)			
	Average: 6.1%											
	Average: 3.2%											
	Average: 11.5%											

Korea, there are about 20 universities that offer Master's degrees in public policy. Similar developments are also observed in other East Asian countries. There is shared optimism that the greater emphasis on public policy education can contribute to the quality of policy-making and governance in East Asia.

This paper examines the current trends in public policy training in East Asia through the lens of syllabi of public policy courses offered in graduate programs in leading universities in mainland China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. The analysis reveals several salient features. First of all, public policy education in East Asia has been heavily influenced by theories, practices, and learning materials from Western countries. Textbooks written by Western scholars are often assigned as required textbooks in public policy courses, and the textbooks written by local scholars are also largely dominated by theories and practices from Western countries. Although local cases are indeed included in the textbooks, our in-depth analysis of such cases included in selected textbooks suggests that they are often used to vindicate theories or approaches generated by Western scholars. The under-representation of work by local scholars in leading textbooks demonstrates that public policy research in East Asia has not kept pace with the demand for public policy education. We believe that the scholars/educators in East Asia can do more to generate policy knowledge. That is, to conceptualize and theorize based on individual country contexts, instead of merely introducing and verifying policy knowledge generated in the Western countries.

Second, the fast-growing demand for public policy education has posed significant challenges in the area of teaching capacity. While the scholars trained in various disciplines may bring fresh perspectives into public policy teaching and research, there is a danger of undermining core values and approaches of the field.

Third, there is an imbalance of attention paid to descriptive, analytical, and prescriptive aspects in the study of public policy, as seen from the under-representation of policy analysis in public policy courses. Insufficient attention has been paid to the development of skills and craft in conducting policy analysis. The lack of emphasis on policy analysis may undermine the potential of public policy education to improve the quality of policy-making through better policy analysis.

While one might rightly argue that the above problems might be temporary or transitional in nature, the trends embedded in these problems may have detrimental and potentially irreversible impacts on the development of the field in the long run. For example, uncritically upholding theories and practices generated in Western countries as general truths may divert scholarship attention away from essential questions with regard to their applicability in specific contexts. More important, the failure of public policy education in response to key policy challenges may gradually vanquish the tremendous enthusiasm and optimism placed on it and resources allocated to public policy education may be diverted elsewhere. It is our hope that the analysis in this paper can help to raise awareness of these possibilities and that individual and collective efforts can be made to elevate public policy education in East Asia to the next level.

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Note

1. While there is a long history of public policy training in Hong Kong and Macau, there are in general too few programs in Hong Kong and Macau that offer graduate courses in public administration or public policy to generate statistical results for the purpose of comparison. Therefore, public policy courses taught in programs in Hong Kong and Macau are not included in the sample of our analysis.

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