

Reconstructing the field of studies on Public Policies evaluation at Spanish public universities

Reconstruyendo el campo de los estudios en evaluación de Políticas Públicas en las universidades públicas españolas

Francisco Javier Alarcón-González

Universidad de Granada, Spain

fjalarcon@ugr.es

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7900-5626>

Juan José Flores-Candorcio

Universidad de Granada, Spain

juanjose240499@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3550-9688>

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Abstract

In January 2023, the Law for the Institutionalisation of Public Policy Evaluation in the General State Administration came into force in Spain. This law takes an important step by establishing the evaluation of public policies (EPP) as an instrument to improve the effective and efficient use of public resources and to make the decision-making process more transparent. This requires trained personnel to carry out evaluations. The aim of this article is to present how university education in EPP is structured in the public universities of Spain and how the various university degrees linked mainly to Political Science incorporate courses on public policy analysis and evaluation. Based on the observation and analysis of the presence of these courses in universities, this study shows in the development of political science studies, EPP is at an incipient stage, this being a relatively young approach in Spain within the realm of Political Science and partially limited to a few universities. The proportion of academic credits in public policy analysis and evaluation out of the overall volume of courses is marginal. This implies that in terms of the skillset attained at the end of university education and its transfer to the workplace, it vastly depends on certain universities and the completion of their coursework.

Keywords

Evaluation, policy, publics, professionalization, institutionalization, university, studies, Spain.

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Resumen

En enero de 2023 entró en vigor en España la Ley de Institucionalización de la Evaluación de Políticas Públicas en la Administración General del Estado. Esta ley da un paso importante al establecer la evaluación de políticas públicas (EPP) como elemento para mejorar el uso eficaz y eficiente de los recursos públicos y dotar de una mayor transparencia al proceso de toma de decisiones. Para ello es necesario contar con personal capacitado para realizar las evaluaciones. El objetivo de este artículo es presentar cómo se estructura la formación universitaria dentro de las universidades públicas españolas en EPP y cómo los diferentes grados universitarios vinculados mayoritariamente a la Ciencia Política introducen la formación en análisis y evaluación de políticas públicas. A partir de la observación y análisis de la presencia de estas formaciones en las universidades, este estudio muestra cómo la EPP se encuentra en una fase bastante incipiente en el desarrollo dentro de los estudios de ciencia política, siendo un enfoque relativamente joven en España dentro de la Ciencia Política y parcialmente limitado a unas cuantas universidades. El volumen de créditos formativos en análisis y evaluación de políticas públicas sobre el total de la formación es marginal. Esto significa que, en términos de competencias alcanzadas al final de la formación universitaria y de la transferencia de esos aprendizajes al puesto de trabajo, depende de la realización de la formación universitaria en determinadas universidades.

Palabras clave

Evaluación, políticas, públicas, profesionalización, institucionalización, universidad, grados, España.

Introduction

Public policies have a direct impact on society beyond the effects on the beneficiary population. The levels of well-being of our society are modulated by the effectiveness of the public policies developed (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007). The analysis and evaluation of the different public policies is a central issue that influences the quality of life to the extent that it can help us to know if these social policies (or any other public policy) respond to the needs that shaped their origin (Bustelo, 2020; Casado and Del Pino, 2021). And, ultimately, public policy evaluation (PPE) is a symptom of a healthy democratic system (Blázquez & Alarcón, 2018).

At present, there is an academic and professional consensus on improving the actions of the public administration by incorporating evaluation tools in

the action of government and management of policies and public administrations (Subirats, 2005). This consensus has materialized in the approval at the end of 2022 of the Law on Institutionalization of the Evaluation of Public Policies in the General Administration of the State.¹ The project entered the Cabinet in May 2022 and was sent to the Congress of Deputies for urgent processing. The regulation is part of one of the commitments made under the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan, and aims to shape and boost PPE in a framework of modernization of the Spanish public administration.²

The regulation establishes a framework for action and reestablishes the State Agency for Public³ Policy Evaluation in charge of supervising the EPP at the state level, coordinating the evaluation structures present in each ministry. It will also identify which policies will be evaluated and which will be included in biennial evaluation plans. It provides that the evaluation will be external, in general, although it allows the creation of joint evaluation teams. As for the training of evaluators, Article 16 states that the aforementioned agency, in collaboration with the National Institute of Public Administration (INAP) and, where appropriate, with the Institute of Fiscal Studies, will identify the necessary competencies for the performance of the EPP and design specific training plans for public service personnel.⁴

Regardless of the origin of the evaluation team (external or mixed) and the identification of the necessary competencies for PPE, there is the need for trained and specialized personnel in PPE who are able to carry out the entire evaluation process successfully (Martínez, 2023). There are different approaches in the process, and many types and designs that require specialized knowledge that endows the PPE rigorously and impartially. PPE training is required from two angles. A first, which should focus on the training of the evaluator or the staff performing the evaluative assignment, both require training or expertise in PPE, and in the second angle, on the importance of

1 Law 27/2022 of December 20, on the institutionalization of the evaluation of public policies in the General Administration of the State, published in Official State Gazette number 305 of Wednesday, December 21, 2022.

2 For a retrospective of the evaluation process in the context of Spanish public policies see Arriazu (2015) and Casado and del Pino (2021).

3 Previously we were, still when writing this manuscript, with the Institute for the Evaluation of Public Policies (IEPP) that was heir to the State Agency for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Quality of Services (AEVAL). The AEVAL was created in 2006 and disappeared in 2017 in favor of the IEPP.

4 The National Institute of Public Administration includes in its Statute, approved by Royal Decree 464/2011, of April 1, the training of public employees.

evaluation and evaluations performed for the formulation and design of public policies (Varela, 2023).

For the first of them, the one related to training, there is the training that would be taught, in the Spanish case at the level of General Administration of the State by the INAP and the regulated training taught by university centers. As for the first one, it would be advisable and necessary to promote mixed evaluation and to train public employees of the body in charge of performing external PPE. In terms of training within university studies, it means training future professionals in a fairly extensive field of work and where each evaluation process involves a new, unique and particular exercise. The initial training in PPE is necessary to carry it out and this training requires diverse knowledge of subjects specific to the social sciences (research methodology, experimentation, statistics, etc.) (Picciotto, 2011). This article is framed in this context of the need for professionals who know how to perform PPE.

The institutionalization process of a discipline involves the transition from an informal practice to a more structured and formalized discipline (Harguindéguy and Echavarren, 2016; Barberá *et al.*, 2020). The professional consolidation of the discipline appears with the development of academic programs of higher education, by the existence of specialized publications and journals, by the existence of professional associations and a labor market for these professionals (Berndtson, 1991; Bustelo, 2006). The components of the evaluation process can be located at three levels: institutions, actors and ideas. At the institution level, it should be observed whether there are faculties, professional associations, specialized institutes and programs (Harguindéguy and Echavarren, 2016). In the case that concerns this paper, the institutionalization of the EPP could be observed at the level of faculties or centers of university education in the analysis of the degree subjects dedicated to the analysis and evaluation of public policies.⁵ In other words, what space does public policy evaluation have in the university degree? This knowledge about the training received by higher education centers in the field of PPE has not been addressed by the scientific literature that has indeed provided more interest to the institutionalization process of public policy analy-

5 Other topics (or indicators) that could be further studied are: (i) whether postgraduate courses specializing in public policy evaluation are offered; and (ii) whether training courses in public policy analysis and evaluation are available for staff in different public administrations. Information on the first section can be found in this text.

sis (Harguindéguy and Echavarren, 2016; Harguindéguy and Ruiloba, 2023), even leading some papers to ask about the content of the educational guides on public policies (Valmorisco and Vicente, 2023).

This article aims to fill this gap by analyzing the presence of training at university level in Public Policies in general and in Public Policy Evaluation in particular, from the curricula of the degrees in Social Sciences in the Spanish Public Universities, in order to prepare a diagnosis that can be applied at different times and periodically, to identify the level of adjustment between the academic training taught at the university and the demand for PPE professionals required in the socio-labor field. This work, therefore, focuses on the analysis of university training and the offer of evaluators specialized in different disciplines of social sciences.

To do this, this article is divided into the following sections. A first, following this introduction, it establishes the evolution of PPE teaching in the Spanish university context. The second part condenses the methodology designed to respond to the objective of this research that has been previously defined. The third part deals with the analysis of the presence and characterization of the subjects of analysis and evaluation of public policy in the Spanish public university context. After this, the text develops a proposal for conclusions on the discussion of the main findings and the need to establish a greater presence of training in public policy evaluation to respond to the demands of the professional-private market and in public administration.

The teaching of public policy evaluation in Spain

The studies on PPE are within the Area of knowledge of Political Science and Administration, which was constituted academically with the Law of University Reform.⁶ This rule meant the creation of Knowledge Areas oriented to the constitution of university departments and their staff. This rule initiated a process of reform within the universities that would affect curricula (reform and creation) and the development of new universities in the hands of the Autonomous Communities. The first political scientists were graduates of the Complutense University of Madrid, with the only Faculty of Political

6 Organic Law 11/1983, of August 25, on University Reform. Official State Gazette of 1 September 1983. The separation of Political Science from Political Law or Constitutional Law took place from its entry into force.

Science and Sociology. Subsequently, there was the proposal of the Autonomous University of Barcelona to create a second-cycle degree. After this, the degree was added at the National University of Distance Education and the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology at the University of Granada (Jerez and Luque, 2015). The Area of Political Science is established in Spain in accordance with the standards established by the international scientific community, excepting International Relations that are linked to International Law.⁷

Currently (academic year 2022-2023) the situation is presented in Table 1. There are six Departments of Political Science and Administration, without including as such the Department of Social Sciences of Universidad Carlos III de Madrid despite having a large number of political scientists to include, in its composition, the lines of Sociology and Economic History. Likewise, it shows the names of the 24 universities with an area of Political Science, which is normally included in a department with specialties on the field of Law. The formula usually takes the name of Public Law to a greater extent; also, Constitutional Law or in some cases, the department takes the names of the areas that compose it. It should be noted that, in very few cases, the area of Political Science is linked to Sociology.

Table 1
Political Science - Areas and Departments

No Area or Department Political Science Department	Area of Political Science	Department of Political Science
Cantabria	A Coruña	Autonomous Region of Madrid
Cordoba	Alcalá	Complutense of Madrid
Extremadura	Alicante	Grenada
Huelva	Almeria	Basque Country
Balearic Islands	Autonomous Community of Barcelona	Pompeu Fabra
Jaume I of Castellón	Barcelona	UNED
La Rioja	Burgos	

⁷ It should be noted that the Department at the Autonomous University of Madrid takes the name of Political Science and International Relations. Teaching contents such as “Theory of International Relations” or “Formation of the International Society”.

No Area or Department Political Science Department	Area of Political Science	Department of Political Science
Las Palmas de Gran Canaria	Cadiz	
Lion	Charles III of Madrid	
Lleida	Castilla La Mancha	
Oviedo	Girona	
Polytechnic of Cartagena	Jaén	
Polytechnic of Catalonia	La Laguna	
Polytechnic of Madrid	Malaga	
Polytechnic of Valencia	Miguel Hernández de Elche	
Seville	Murcia	
Valladolid	Pablo de Olavide	
	Public of Navarre	
	King Juan Carlos	
	Rovira i Virgili	
	Salamanca	
	Santiago de Compostela	
	Valencia	
	Vigo	
	Zaragoza	

The curricula that give shape to the studies of bachelor's in political science, and later the Degree with the implementation of the Higher Education Space involve defining the contents and organization of the studies of political scientists. Most of them respond to a combination of theoretical and instrumental subjects and more practical knowledge structured in core subjects, compulsory, optional and free configuration. Currently, the curriculum includes basic, compulsory, optional subjects (in which business practices are included or not) and the Final Degree Project.⁸

⁸ The Bachelor's Degree in Political and Management Sciences is composed of 240 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Each ECTS is equivalent to 10 face-to-face hours in the classroom at the university degree level. At the University of Granada are distributed in 60 ECTS of basic training,

The composition of studies in Political Science incorporates the study of political systems, comparative politics, political behavior, electoral processes, political parties, the European Union, the history of political ideas, political theory and knowledge that enhance the professional presence and the incorporation of political scientists, beyond the methods and techniques of social research, such as studies linked to public administration and the field of public policies, such as the analysis and evaluation of public policies.

At present, the evaluation is consubstantial to the analysis of public policies, as pointed out by Ruiz Martínez (2012), being intrinsic to the analysis of public policies and part of its doctrinal corpus. Much of the development of public policy studies came first with the development of studies at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (from 1986), at the National University of Distance Education (UNED) (from 1987), at the University of Granada (in 1988), the University of the Basque Country (1989), the University of Santiago de Compostela (1991), the Autonomous University of Madrid (1993) and the University of Barcelona (1994) (Jerez and Luque 2015, p.183; Harguindéguy Iloba 2023, p. 6). Secondly, the development is due to the implementation in 1999 of the Degree in “Management and Public Administration” and later of studies at the postgraduate level focused on public policies (see Harguindéguy and Ruiloba, 2023). Jerez and Luque (2015) say it has developed with a clear professional orientation since the 1990s.

Focusing on public policy (Gil, 2015), this may be partly due to the fact that, among the group of professors and university professors assigned to the area of Political Science and Administration between 1985 and 1992, there is only a monograph published on public policies in the 1980s out of a total of 95, seven in the 1990s out of almost a hundred, another seven in the first ten years of the millennium out of more than 80 published, and three out of 62, from 2010 until the publication of the text (Jerez, 2017). This points out that the field has not been very attractive to Spanish political scientists, unlike the theory or political process that gathers the greatest number of investigations. Table 2 shows the different universities offering undergraduate studies in Political Science and in Management and Public Administration.

114 ECTS of compulsory subjects, 60 ECTS of electives, and the remaining 6 ECTS of the Final Degree Work. At the Autonomous University of Madrid the degree consists of 60 ECTS in basic training, 120 ECTS in compulsory training, 51 ECTS in electives and 9 in the Final Degree Work.

Table 2
University and university degree name

University	Degree in...
Alicante	Management and Public Administration
Almeria	Management and Public Administration
Autonomous Community of Barcelona	Political Science and Public Management
Autonomous Region of Madrid	Political Science and Public Administration
Barcelona	Management and Public Administration
Barcelona	Political and Administration Sciences
Burgos	Political Science and Public Management
Charles III of Madrid	Political Science
Complutense of Madrid	Political Science
Grenada	Political and Administration Sciences
Girona	Political and Administration Sciences
Jaén	Management and Public Administration
Malaga	Management and Public Administration
Murcia	Political Science, Government and Public Administration
Oviedo	Management and Public Administration
Salamanca	Political and Administration Sciences
Santiago de Compostela	Political Science and Administration
Vigo	Management and Public Management
Zaragoza	Management and Public Administration
Basque Country	Political Science and Public Management
Miguel Hernández de Elche	Political Science and Public Management
UNED	Political Science and Administration
Pablo de Olavide	Political and Administration Sciences
Polytechnic of Valencia	Management and Public Administration
Pompeu Fabra	Political and Administration Sciences
King Juan Carlos	Political Science and Public Management
Valencia	Political Science and Public Administration

Note. Double degrees or those degrees where the areas and departments of Political Science can have assigned teaching are not included.

At present, beyond the degree studies that include training in analysis and evaluation of public policies, there is another type of training: (i) at the postgraduate level, in master's degree (official) or master's degree of its own, and (ii) at the doctoral level. In this case in Political Science, Public Policy or Public Management.⁹ Although, as will be seen in this work, there is also training in Public Policy in other university degrees (for example, in Criminology, Sociology and Social Work). In the area of training in PPE at the postgraduate level, two university degrees stand out: the Master in Evaluation of Programs and Public Policies, led by Professor María Bustelo at the Complutense University of Madrid, and the Master in Evaluation of Public Policies at the University of Seville led by José Luis Osuna.

The implementation of the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process) imposed a paradigm shift in the way of understanding the teaching-learning process. The university focused its practice on the development of skills that allow its graduates to enter society or the labor market. The process involves identifying the professional competencies established according to the curriculum in basic, general, specific and transversal and materialize in a series of learning outcomes.

We assume that there is an adjustment between the training received by university students and the professional occupation of the graduate in the development of public policy analysis and evaluations. Hence, we understand that there is a correspondence between the different competencies established for the subjects of analysis and evaluation of public policies in the curriculum of Political Science and Administration (and its derivatives as Management and Public Administration) and the competency demand of the profession.

The training of professionals, both in initial stages at the degree level and through continuous training, presents as one of the strategies with the greatest impact in the face of the new challenges that arise. On the one hand, as indicated in the first paragraphs of this work, to give legitimacy to the democratic system and, on the other hand, public higher education must be able to respond to social challenges with specialized graduates and trained in activities oriented to labor insertion with high levels of employability.

9 The work of Harguindéguy and Ruibola (2023, p. 8) quantifies the presence of 26 master's degrees (six in Political Science, 12 in Public Policy and eight in Public Management) and 12 official doctoral programs.

Materials and method

To give a coherent and structured response to the purpose of this research, which aims to establish a map of undergraduate education in PPE, the following fieldwork was carried out. First, the group of Spanish universities that offer studies in Law and Political Science was identified, corresponding to a total of 66 according to the information provided by the Spanish Association of Political Science and Administration (AECPA). Secondly, two criteria were established to be considered as units of analysis: (i) the character of a public university, and (ii) that provides training at the university degree level. The selection does not include private universities (for example, the Loyola Andalusia University or the Pontifical University of Comillas, among others) nor those that only operate in postgraduate or continuing training (for example, the International University of Andalusia or the Menéndez Pelayo International University). The application of these two criteria left us the figure of 48 universities that constitute as our units of analysis.

From the list of selected universities, a database was designed with information related to university degrees where the subject of Public Policy Evaluation is taught after the review of the curriculum of the degrees in Social, Economic and Legal Sciences in those 48 universities. In relation to the degrees in Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, it should be noted that the curricula of the degrees in Political Science, Public Management, Sociology, Economics, International Relations, Criminology, Business Administration, and Law were reviewed. Information was collected on the university degree, the department responsible for teaching, the subject (number of credits, course, semester, and character of the subject: basic training, mandatory, optional, business practices and the final degree work). This review of the different curricula was carried out between February and April 2023 on the curricula in force in the 2022-2023 academic year. This means that curricula that are in the process of extinction are not taken into account.

It should be noted that, although this work was started with the idea of detecting only the subjects of Public Policy Evaluation *per se*, due to its low frequency, it was opted to introduce also any subject that had a content in evaluation. The database contains information on the subjects of: Public Policy, Public Policy Analysis, Public Policy Analysis and Evaluation, and Public Policy Evaluation. Another category was collected under “another denomination” for those subjects that had another denomination and that correspond to

contents of Public Policies, such as “Government and Public Policies” taught at the Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) of Barcelona.

It is necessary to indicate that the subjects of public policy have not been considered as observation units. Subjects such as, for example, “Public Policies in Spain” taught at the Rey Juan Carlos University or “Public Administrative Policies” of the University of Castilla la Mancha, although it seems that they would adapt to the previous category of “Public Policies” respond to a sectoral vision and were not included. Many of these public policies have been developed within the framework of the Welfare State, focusing on the provision of social policies either labor, social, socio-criminal, or have a profile of International Relations, such as the subject of “Foreign Policy of Spain”, or arise within the framework of the European Union (as would be the case of “Policies of the European Union”) focused on the structure or process rather than on the result in terms of public policies (Vallès and Martí, 2005).

These contents have been developed by the specialization of some of the members of that Department or University Area, or by the inclusion of these contents in some university degree of Social Sciences such as, for example, “Socio-labor Policies” in the Degree in Labor Relations and Human Resources (University of Granada), or “Social Policy” in the Degree in Social Work (University of Jaén), “European Public Policy” (University of Alcalá). During the research, also, more specific subjects of evaluation of regional policies, labor, socio-criminal, etc. were found, which were not included since it was estimated that they were not relevant for this work due to their object, which is the evaluation of public policies in their holistic view.

Therefore, four categories of inclusion of the subjects have been established: “Public Policies”, “Analysis of Public Policies”, “Analysis and Evaluation of Public Policies”, and “Evaluation of Public Policies”. In most cases the name of the subject corresponds to one of the first four denominations. In some university degrees, several subjects have been found with content of Public Policy or PPE with different denominations that are not covered by the rest of the variables chosen for the subjects. In these situations where an alternative degree is presented, the teacher’s guide for each was reviewed to see if it adapts or closely resembles one of the four main coding categories.

Likewise, for its codification and for a better representation of the data, the university degrees have been grouped as follows: for the degrees in Political Science, those whose denomination was “Political and Administration Sciences”, “Political Sciences”, “Political Sciences and Public Administra-

tion”, etc., have been grouped all under the denomination of “Political Sciences”; for Criminology, both “Criminology” and “Criminology and Security”, have been grouped under “Criminology”; for International Relations, both “International Relations” and “International Studies” have been grouped under “International Relations” and the same has been done for the double degrees.

Once the database is completed based on a detailed review of the websites of the 48 public universities, the next step would be their processing by the statistical software “SPSS”. The analysis is presented in two stages. First, a univariate analysis of descriptive character has been carried out mainly with the objective of seeing the distribution of the contents of Public Policies in general and of Public Policy Evaluation in particular. Secondly, a multivariate analysis is carried out in search of more explanation of the collected data.

The main limitation of this work and the perspective adopted lies in the fact that the analysis presented does not fall within the evaluation approach adopted by the Area or Department in the formulation of the teaching guide and the teacher’s margin in the teaching of the subject derived from the autonomy of teaching (Harguindéguy and Ruiloba, 2023). As Meller and Stockmann (2013) claim, there are as many approaches as there are evaluators. Despite this, the programs of the subjects refer to the main manuals on public policy evaluation published in Spanish (Briones, 1991; Ballart, 1992; Vedung, 1997; Osuna and Márquez, 2000; Alvira, 2002; Bañon, 2003; Pérez, 2005; Morra and Rist, 2009; García Pérez, 2014; Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 1987, 2007) and in English (Weiss, 1972; Fisher 1995) as well as the various methodological guides published by the main centers dedicated to the evaluation of public policies in Spain (AEVAL, IVÀLUA, etc.) or by international organizations such as the European Union, the World Bank, the United Nations or the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Results

A total of 100 university degrees have been identified, which include subjects of analysis and evaluation of public policies according to the criteria established in the methodology section. Within the universities studied, there are some where no subjects have been found, which are listed below: Alcalá, Cantabria, Córdoba, Extremadura, Huelva, Jaime I de Castellón, La Laguna, La Rioja, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, León, Lleida, Polytechnic of Catalonia, Polytechnic of Madrid, and Seville.

Table 3 indicates whether the subjects (Public Policy, Public Policy Analysis, Public Policy Analysis and Evaluation, and Public Policy Evaluation) are in the curriculum of a degree in Political Science—or not. Of the total of 100 degrees, 57 belong to Political Science (either as a single degree or in a double degree, including the degree of Management and Public Administration since it has been considered in many cases as a diploma of the disappeared Bachelor in Politics and Sociology —specialty Politics— or the Bachelor in Political and Administration Sciences), and 43 to other disciplines of the Social Sciences, such as Criminology, International Relations, Social Work or Sociology.

Table 3
Universities and undergraduate degrees

	Bachelor's Degrees in Other Social Sciences	Bachelor's Degree in Political Science	Total Degrees
Autonomous Community of Barcelona	5	3	8
Autonomous Region of Madrid	1	2	3
Charles III of Madrid	7	4	11
Complutense of Madrid	2	2	4
A Coruña	2	0	2
Alicante	1	1	2
Almeria	0	2	2
Barcelona	4	4	8
Burgos	0	2	2
Cadiz	1	0	1
Castilla La Mancha	2	0	2
Grenada	1	4	5
Girona	3	2	5
Jaén	1	1	2

	Bachelor's Degrees in Other Social Sciences	Bachelor's Degree in Political Science	Total Degrees
Malaga	1	1	2
Murcia	1	1	2
Oviedo	1	1	2
Salamanca	1	3	4
Santiago de Compostela	0	1	1
Valladolid	1	0	1
Vigo	2	1	3
Zaragoza	0	1	1
Basque Country	0	2	2
Miguel Hernández de Elche	0	1	1
UNED	1	2	3
Pablo de Olavide	0	4	4
Polytechnic of Cartagena	1	0	1
Polytechnic of Valencia	0	1	1
Pompeu Fabra	1	2	3
Public of Navarre	1	0	1
King Juan Carlos	0	6	6
Rovira i Virgili	1	0	1
Balearic Islands	1	0	1
Valencia	0	3	3
Total	43	57	100

If we focus on universities, there is a higher proportion of degrees with Public Policy content in the following universities, from highest to lowest: Carlos III of Madrid (11 degrees), Autonomous University of Barcelona

and University of Barcelona (eight degrees) and King Juan Carlos (six degrees). It is noted that while there are several universities with significant representation, most of them usually have one or two degrees. Among the universities with the highest proportion, there is a high number of degrees not belonging to the field of Political Science, such as Carlos III University of Madrid, which out of the 11 degrees, seven are from other disciplines and only four from Political Science. The seven degrees in other disciplines are: in International Studies (single and double degrees, in a total of four), and the degrees in Sociology, Economics and the joint degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics. This situation contrasts with the case of the King Juan Carlos University, which out of the six degrees analyzed, all are of Political Science.

Generally, the trend seems to indicate a greater presence in degrees of Political Science, although there is also a close number of disciplines in the field of Social Sciences (43 versus 57) that also offer subjects with the aforementioned content. Within the degrees of Political Science, about 31.6% of the 57 found correspond to the degree of Political Science, which rises to 48.5% if we include the degrees of Management and Public Administration; the rest would belong to the numerous double degrees that are articulated with that of Political Science, being in this case the most common double degree in Political Science and Law, which equates to 24.7% of the total. Therefore, it seems that the composition of the 57 degrees of Political Science is represented mostly in the simple degrees of Political Science and Public Management and the double degree of Political Science and Law, both reaching 73.2%, the rest being other double degrees of Political Science with Economy, Sociology, Journalism or International Relations.

At this point, it should be noted as Miller and Rodríguez (2023, p. 58) that the training in PPE differs in what is understood and what is taught if it is carried out from the area of Political Science and Administration or from an area of Economics. From Political Science, the analysis and evaluation of public policies adopts a comprehensive perspective with a broader vision focusing on the stages, and everything related to public policy. The analysis of the different stages (diagnosis, formulation, implementation and evaluation) seeks to clarify the dynamics and processes under the use of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. In contrast, the study of PPE from the Economics perspective focuses on experimentation to determine the effectiveness of the theory of change under a causal approach (Abadie and Cattaneo,

2018) and/or learning different methods to carry out economic evaluations (Durrance, 2020). The main methods are cost-effectiveness analysis, cost-consequences analysis, cost-minimization analysis, cost-utility analysis and cost-benefit analysis (Parera, 2009; De La Fuente *et al.*, 2021). All of them seek to identify, measure and compare results and costs of different policies. The difference between them is established in the way of measuring the results and, therefore, also in the type of evaluation question they can answer. The presence of various types of assessment was already accepted in the first PPE guidelines (Newman *et al.*, 1995).

As for the nature of the degrees analyzed, in table 4, out of the total of 100 analyzed, it is observed that 63 of them are simple degrees, and 37 are configured as double degrees. If we delve this time into the 43 degrees that are not of Political Science, only 36 are simple and seven are double; this supposes that the studied subjects are not so present in the double degrees, optimizing in this case the teaching of other subjects (of basic training and mandatory) in detriment of other knowledge as the analysis and the evaluation of public policies.

Table 4
Degree in Political Science and Grade Structure

Political Science	Simple Grade	Double Grade	Total
No	36	7	43
Yes	27	30	57
Total	63	37	100

As seen in table 4, the opposite occurs in the case of degrees in Political Science: the presence of the subjects is very similar in both single (27) and double (30) degrees. In this case, the competences acquired during the learning process of the double degrees are part of the training curriculum and do not overlap with other similar subjects that may include the other disciplines that make up the double degree. This implies originality and a certain exclusivity.

Table 5

Discipline Added to Political Science in Double Degrees

Degrees	Frequency	%
Right	14	37.8
International Relations	3	8.1
Sociology	8	21.6
Philosophy	2	5.4
Journalism	2	5.4
Economics	1	2.7
Double degrees apart from Political Science	7	18.9
Total	37	100

Among the disciplines added to Political Science in the double degrees, the most common is Law (with 14%), followed by Sociology (8%). The seven double degrees in which public subjects appear are in the double degrees in Law and International Relations, Business Administration and International Relations, and Law and Criminology.

The number of subjects taught varies between schools; in most cases there is only one subject, 72%. At the opposite extreme, there is the degree in Political and Administration Sciences of the Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona), which has five subjects: two compulsory of six ECTS each, and three optional of four ECTS (12 compulsory credits and 12 optional credits respectively). In addition, the analysis indicates that it is more common to find the subjects in those degrees in universities that have a department of Political Science and Administration. The average in this case is 1.5 subjects (standard deviation of 0.723), compared to 1.35 subjects on average (standard deviation of 0.644), in the areas of Political Science and Administration.

Table 6
Denomination of the subjects of the degree

Subjects	Frequency	%
Public Policy	19	19
Public Policy Analysis	29	29
Analysis and Evaluation of Public Policies	30	30
Evaluation of Public Policies	22	22
Total	100	100

As for the incorporation of the subjects studied into the curriculum, in Table 6 it can be observed PPE subjects belong to at least one quarter (22%) of the total, while 30% combine analysis and evaluation subjects. The remaining half of the universities bet on the Analysis of Public Policies, which usually have a small section dedicated to the EPP within it (usually a topic, which is usually the last one within the teaching guide), while others bet on a general subject of Public Policies that encompasses both disciplines where they are taught more generally. The data show that, if considering the results in APPE and EPP, 52% of the degrees have training in Public Policy Evaluation.

In order to know the relevance given to the subjects, we observe the load of credits in the degrees in which they are. Considering that an ECTS credit equals 25 hours of work (ten in the classroom and 15 at home), if the load is greater, the student will have more hours of work and the subject can be taught more deeply.

Table 7
Total ECTS in grades

ECTS	Frequency	%
3	3	3
4	3	3
4.5	5	5
6	61	61
9	3	3

ECTS	Frequency	%
12	16	16
13.5	1	1
15	2	2
16	1	1
18	4	4
24	1	1
Total	100	100

The results of table 7 seem to indicate that 61% of the degrees found only offer six ECTS of training in Public Policy, Analysis of Public Policies, Analysis and Evaluation of Public Policies and/or Evaluation of Public Policies, being the load of credits of 12 ECTS the second most frequent with 16%; in some cases there is an overrepresentation, as is once again the aforementioned case of the degree in Political Sciences and Administration of the UPF, with 24 credits. Out of the total ECTS taught, 554.5 would be mandatory and 229.5 optional. There is a higher average with respect to the mandatory ones than the optional ones, being the average of the first 5.54 credits (standard deviation 3.591) and that of the second 2.29 (standard deviation 3.883).

Since the aim of this paper is to analyze the presence of PPE in university degrees, as for the 52 degrees of the set of 100 that offer training in APPE and in PPE, 200 compulsory credits are taught in total and 157.5 optional credits. The number of compulsory and optional ECTS taught in these grades is much more equal than those seen from the common total. However, it should be noted that most of the optional ECTS of the general sum (229.5) would belong to subjects of APPE and EPP (157.5), so it seems that subjects of PP and APP usually have greater exposure to students as compulsory subjects or basic training, while subjects of APPE and EPP are seen more optionally, although they continue to have a remarkable presence among the mandatory.

Regarding the course in which the subjects are taught, most of these concentrate in the 3rd and 4th years of the university curriculum. From here, it can be assumed that the subjects analyzed are usually taught at a time when students have reached a certain maturity with respect to their training, being 3rd and 4th the last years of a common university degree, and the twilight of a double degree. In the case of double degrees, these subjects can be studied

in 5th grade, the last year of career, this being one of the last subjects students would be taught before graduating. The cases found in which the subjects are placed in the “1st semester” only amount to 5%. This means that the subjects analyzed are not usually considered for teaching in the first year of the degree, so there is a general tendency to offer this type of training to students more advanced in the degree, facilitating its acquisition to be applied in the labor market. In addition, as indicated above, the practice of PPE requires knowledge of research methodology, statistics or econometrics, sociology, etc., making its inclusion in the first years of university training unfeasible.

As observed, the training in analysis and evaluation of public policies is mostly linked to the training in Political Science being part of the curricular training of students. Despite this predominance, the presence of analysis and public policy content in other studies is observed, pointing to the confluence of different knowledge around the same problem. There are 43 degrees of related areas of knowledge that include knowledge in public policy analysis and evaluation. Specifically, following the proposed categorization, there are 11 degrees with training in Public Policies, ten in Public Policy Analysis, one in Analysis and Evaluation of Public Policies and a total of 21 in Evaluation of Public Policies. The latter linked to academic degrees in Criminology, Economics and Social Work. It is important to note that the presence in these degrees is insignificant in the general computation since there are only PPE subjects in four degrees in Social Work, while the degree is offered in a total of 37 public universities. The same goes for the degree in Economics, which is taught at most public universities.

Conclusions and discussion

As a result of this study, it can be determined that within the universities that offer subjects with content of Public Policy Evaluation, these are given a diverse and unequal relevance. The credit load that universities invest in different curricula ranges from the slightest to an extraordinary emphasis on evaluation training, so it would be no surprising that some universities end up producing more evaluators than others. However, by virtue of the data analyzed it can be determined that the demand for the evaluation causes it to be studied in one way or another, either as a mandatory subject or as an optional subject. Universities end up having different strategies, those that in-

vest more in evaluation do this, for example, a mandatory general subject of Public Policies with some subject of evaluation, followed by another optional subject within the same program of studies that focuses more on the Evaluation of Public Policies as such. Others opt for two compulsory subjects, or a wide repertoire, while most offer a single subject, giving it less importance.

The study of the EPP would then be in a diffuse situation, giving itself either as a central subject with respect to the others or as an academic niche that could interest some students who want to pursue it and perhaps train more deeply in it in a *postgraduate course, instead of dedicating a deeper subject to their curriculum*. One of the possible reasons for the diversity of the EPP study may be the late use of evaluation as an academic practice in Spain, this being initially implemented in the 1990s (Viñas, 2009; Arriazu, 2015), four years after the integration of Spain into the European Union, which determines evaluation as a mandatory practice. As pointed out by Jacob *et al.* (2015) who indicate that Spain is one of the countries, with Finland and Japan, where the culture of evaluation has improved the most in the first decade of the millennium.

It also emphasizes that the subjects have been integrated into both the simple degree of Political Science and its double degrees, appearing especially on several occasions the double degree in Political Science and Law. While perhaps this may be due to the historical relationship between both disciplines, having traditionally taken the study of Political Science in the field of Political Law before its eventual separation relatively recently, in 1984, with the Law of University Reform (Jerez and Luque, 2016); the greater presence of the double degree in Political Science and Law would be, then, a glimpse of the apparent relationship of the Evaluation expansion of Public Policies with the very institutionalization of the degree in Political Science.

With the recent Law 27/2022 and the Covid-19 crisis that seems to have stoked the demand for evaluation and despite the adjustment made with the Bologna process in the current context, the university training environment and the work environment walk at different speeds. The introduction of possible changes to the curricula requires a lengthy process. The lengthy steps that can be taken over time can lead to a gap between the supply and demand of professionals in the evaluation of public programs and policies. It should be borne in mind that evaluation techniques conform to the advances and methodological developments of the social sciences (Miller and Rodríguez, 2023) that go at a higher speed than that which reviews, redesigns and executes curricula.

In line with the objective of our research, regarding the presence of training in analysis and evaluation of public policies, we have limited the different university degrees of public universities in Spain. In this sense, the research has led us to discover that only 48 public universities in Spain consist of subjects of Public Policy, Analysis of Public Policies, Analysis and Evaluation of Public Policies and Evaluation of Public Policies. Hence, it can be concluded that although the Public Policy Evaluation is integrated and enjoys its instruction in several public universities in the country, its institutionalization is not fully seen and its delivery is usually given inconsistently and with an uneven emphasis on some aspects, such as the evaluation criteria. The aim of the new law is to create a common integration framework to boost public evaluation policy, the disparity in education could hinder the future integration into the labor market of these new assessment professionals who will eventually have to use the same basic tools.

Referring to Law 27/2022, of December 20, on the institutionalization of the evaluation of public policies in the General Administration of the State, in its preamble, it is argued as one of the motivators of its elaboration: the lack of uniformity of the practice of evaluation, with more than a hundred units with evaluative competence that present differences of criteria when defining the evaluation of public policies. This need for uniformity is understood as an increase in the demand for technicians from a Political Science training who specialize in evaluation. With the elaboration of the aforementioned law and with the awareness generated by the coronavirus crisis, it seems that the evaluation is beginning to take a different approach with the objective of achieving greater effectiveness in public policies, determining a more efficient contribution of public resources, and the learning and feedback of public bodies, although, as mentioned above, it seems that the academic field has not yet reached the point necessary to reach the world of work and its demands with respect to evaluation.

Finally, and as indicated in the methodology section, the main limitation of this research is not to focus on the approach adopted by the teacher in the teaching-learning process. This limitation can be considered a future line of work that addresses from the review of the program contents of the subjects of analysis and evaluation of public policies, different issues that concern the training of professionals. First, the PPE approach(s) envisaged. Secondly, the content itself, i.e., whether the subject is based on knowledge of a theoretical and/or practical nature (whether the subjects have theoretical

and/or the empirical component). Thirdly, the weights assigned to the different components (theory, practices, exams, etc.) necessary to pass the subject. Furthermore, such research should also consider issues related to how they are articulated: (i) the content of instruments and techniques (quantitative versus qualitative), (ii) the different training materials, whether they focus on national cases or consider foreign cases, (iii) the origin of bibliographic references, whether they focus on a “national” view or develop local or contextual approaches in PPE.

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