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Social Change and the Education of Urban Sciences*

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Abstract

The field of urban science, as the newest sub branches in the field of Social Sciences, is also one of the most dynamic fields in its category. Especially the relationship between social change and urbanization has updated the urban sciences literature in an increasing rate. The most important indication of this process is seen in the variance and uniqueness of local services and projects such as urban transformation, restoration and renovation and has had a tangible and practical effect on the daily lives of city-dwellers. On the other hand it can be said that local politics as a means of participating in politics have become preferred over central politics when considering the global urban networks especially as the power of metropolitan cities increase. The principal argument of this study is that most post-secondary education faculties in Turkey, which are expanded all throughout, can be in closer communication and contact with local administration, and such a circumstance gives credence and applicability to the field of urban sciences as a means of practical and effective social change. The increasingly urban world dynamics have distances the administrative systems from centralization; and favors smaller local governance that is closer to citizens at large. This in turn causes “Public Administration” field to gravitate towards “local” elements with respect to its “Public” side and to become defined as such. Increases in the quality, diversity and efficiency of public offerings also serve to improve the technologies and models that come about from this field, feeding back and strengthening this relationship. The theoretical foundations of this study is made by literature scanning, and the aim is to demonstrate that there is a clear increase both in quantitative aspects, like attendance, number of students and related courses, as well as in quality with respect to the diversification of topics and the increase in available literature.

Key Words: Urban Sciences, Social Change, Inter-disciplinary, Information Technologies.

Introduction

Cultural products creates its sources from the customs, moral values and practical life of the society.

Social education is the element of culture, brings up children within social manners and education and gets a social responsibility and the best manners of society. From this point of view social education gets a sense with in the conscience of human.

As Bookchin’s noted, “education, is the top priority for a radicalization of our time.” (1986: 41) Because “education took many forms in the past and proved itself able to adjust to changing circumstances... but the present change is not like past changes... We have never been in such a situation before. The art of living in a world oversaturated with information has still to be learned. And so has the yet more mind-bogglingly difficult art of grooming human beings for such a life.” (Bauman, 2010: 100-130) For example “education has certainly not reduced the phenomenon civil war; it may indeed have enhanced it; it may even be its principal source of nourishment.” (Wallerstein, 2003: 128)

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Besides “we once shaped our personalities by thinking about the social roles we assumed, or about the way others saw the individuals playing their social roles. We could do so because all roles related to common forms of authority, norms and values... I use the term ‘desocialization’ to describe the disappearance of the social roles, norms and values that were once used to construct the life-world. Desocialization is a direct result of the de-institutionalization of the economy, politics and religion. Whereas a system of production was of necessity seen as a system of social relations of production, a market economy governed by international competitiveness, the proliferation of new technologies and the speculative movement of capital has become increasingly divorced from the social relations of production. Similarly education can no longer transmit the behavioral norms (discipline, work, deferred gratification) imposed by a mode of production.” (Touraine, 2000: 39)

The tight relationship that exist between economic development, educational levels, and democracy is illustrated quite clearly in all over the world. (Huntington, 1993: 65; Fukuyama, 2006: 110-111) According to Fukuyama: “Middle-class societies arise as a result of universal education. The link between education and liberal democracy has been frequently noted, and would seem to be an all-important one... Inequality creeps into the system as a result of unequal Access to education; lack of education is the surest condemnation to second-class citizenship. The effect of education on political attitudes is complicated, but there are reasons for thinking it at least creates the conditions for democratic society.” (2006: 116)

Importance of University Education

Serious organizational transformations have been observed at the high education system of most countries recently. For example contemporary educational authorities reached a consensus on the importance of the approach to interdisciplinary education and its necessity. All in all, it can be concluded that in the period from the past until today, ‘interdisciplinarity’ in light of its development is gaining importance and its place in today’s generation’s understanding of knowledge.

On the other hand the searches for new alternatives have gained momentum especially after the urban and environmental problems, it has recently been applied to the real life. Especially environmental education has play a dominant role of social responsibilities. Because this type of criticism perspective improves the students’ ability to order information, to realize the difference between fact and opinion and to find the relevant data among irrelevant data and to comprehend and appreciate the past and next generations and to comprehend change and continuity.

Environmental education is a process that allows individuals to explore and deeper understanding of environmental and urban management issues, engage in problem solving, responsible decisions and take action to improve the environment. As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and. “The central aims of green democratic theory include community environmental education, democratization and integrated policy-making. As Bookchin suggests, “citizenship within the context of collective ecological management becomes a way of transforming urban dwellers into ‘ecological stewards’, giving those who may have no direct experience of nature some responsibility for, and democratic input into, managing the metabolism between society and the environment. Hence the vital importance of environmental education to foster this responsibility.” (Barry, 1999: 259)

Consequently, universities, that a great responsibility falls upon them, must add new responsibilities and objectives to their three traditional functions of undertaking research activities, offering vocational training and providing public services. Especially in the concept of environmental perspective, technology development centers, university-industry joint research centers and state universities on account of public research undertaken in and their role in the mentioned centers seem to be key elements in regional innovation systems.



While the most significant duties of the universities to educate students are the teaching-education and research, it is to produce knowledge for the existing sources of the governmental institutes. By linking the knowledge of the the universities and these institutes especially local management authorities, while increasing the quality of education the demanded and qualified man power are reached for the necessities of the country. Also university-local administrations cooperation is very important in order to provide efficiency and use local sources effectively.

On the other hand global competition forms an important element of oppression on the universities to become competitive with other universities not only at national level but also at the international level. The universities that aim to increase their competitiveness power in this market hasten their quality work.

Local Administration and Urban Sciences in the Current University Model*

The first consideration of urban science in our country has been in the form of courses in “city planning”, taking place in the curriculum’s in faculties of architecture. Afterwards, under the school of “Public Administration” it has branched out and has seen an appreciable increase in scope and detail.

In his work “The Education of Urban Sciences in Turkey” (1987), Prof. Dr. Ruşen Keleş, by compiling and analyzing the works of academicians in the field of urban sciences on the issue of their perceptions and experiences in schools, have presented an important contribution to the field.

30 years after Keleş’s study, urban sciences have grown beyond the bounds of city planning and architecture and has become a stronger and more well-defined field on it’s own right in the form of “Public Administration”, going so far as to become a separate faculty especially in higher education. As a result of this, there has been an increase in the number of students attending or taking courses on this field. In addition, “Public Administration, Urbanization and Environment” has become a category on it’s own for an Associate Professor degree. The number of students across the country in the “Public Administration and Political Sciences” field has surpassed well over 20,000 when considering other related fields like forest sciences, environmental engineering and similar.

When considering this from a quality perspective rather than quantity, it can be said that the urbanization literature stemming from the “establishment of cities” back until the ancient age, and that the “History of Civilizations” and “History of Political Thought” courses can be started with the concept and attributes of the “city”. The overlap between Urbanization and Public Administration courses have resulted in the “Urban Politics” courses and have transformed into courses that borrow from the foundation of sociology such as “Political Science” and “Sociology of the City”. Considering that nowadays the most current, modern and innovative service and production models are realized by arms of public administration, there is an inescapable gravitation towards “Modern Approaches to Administration”. The fundamental concepts of the field of “Administrative Sciences” such as administration, participation in public administration, privatization, efficiency and performance, have all been codified in local laws. In short it is easily claimed that the literature of urbanization and local administration have grown its share of the “Public Administration” field.

With the increased numbers of courses and faculties, along with the expansion of the field itself, local administrations, as the implementers of such programs have continued to strengthen, which came out of the need to fill the void after the narrowing of scope and focus of units within the central administrations. This education

* Daha geniş açıklama için bkz. Tunçer, A.S. (2015). Kamu yönetimi öğretimindeki kavramsal değişim sürecinde yerel yönetim ve kentbilim unsurlarının rolü. 13. *KAYFOR (Kamu Yönetiminde Değişimin Yönü ve Etikeleri)*, Selçuk Üniversitesi, Konya, 1982-1991.



which has spread all across the network of universities in the country provides students with general conceptions of the fundamentals while at the same time observing these effects in their own local cities. As urbanization increases all throughout the world, it is clear that the models and differences along with unique facets of the fields come about naturally as a result.

For example Keleş, in the study mentioned above, thinks that “the education of urban sciences, whether it be university or higher-level education, benefits immensely from being studied within the country as opposed to abroad” and ties this with the unique socio-cultural circumstances. He continues: “because leaving aside the fundamental academic topics, the social, economical, political and administrative structure of the country is best handled by, and closest to urban sciences.” (1987: 227)

This statement is even more applicable to metropolitan establishments that have long surpassed the scale of cities. On one hand the growing scale of cities, complimented by advancements in technology and increase in quality of life, service offerings have grown and diversified. Understanding all this authentic frame of reference increasingly requires understanding the unique circumstances in lower local units to analyze effectively.

Conclusions

Nowadays urbanization - public administration - environment field have both become fundamental issues to be considered in unison, as well as containing countless sub-branches that have grown wider and deeper in their respective fields. Quality of the urbanization and environmental problems lessons is as important as education techniques, facilities and physical opportunities. So there is no doubt that the urban education programs and credits affect the quality of education positively. The adequacy of that education is relative.

In summary, this rich literature has found its practical applications in the implementation of local administrations with cooperation with universities and their partnerships. Despite being a controversial issue, “at least one university per city” can be considered the intersection of local administrations and the education of this field, which can be considered an interesting opportunity.

More modern administrative techniques and varied models of public service through liberal local policies can bring this relationship to more synergistic results.

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