

The creation of public value from the action of hybrid organisations

Paolo Biancone, Federico Chmet, Daniel Iannaci, Michele Oppioli

Dipartimento di Management dell'Università degli Studi di Torino, Corso Unione Sovietica 218 bis, Torino

Corresponding Author: Federico Chmet, e-mail: Federico.chmet@unito.it

ABSTRACT

Increasingly, organisations occupy an intermediate position between public and private ownership; such organisations are called hybrid organisations (Doherty et al., 2014), whose goal is to create innovation and synergy in addressing complex social issues, leading to more sustainable development (Karré, 2020).

In the paper, we investigate how the actions of hybrid organisations produce public value, adopting a conceptual scheme that relates broad strategic objectives of general (and public) interest to the policies that public administrations put in place.

The objective is to plan and report on the sustainability and social impact dimensions of hybrid organisations, information that is central to the public sector entity, whose principal and specific role is to provide quality services to the target community. The hybrid organisation must account for its social performance, report on it and draw up an action plan to improve its performance. Therefore, it is a process through which public administration can better understand the impact of its actions on the community and, consequently, be accountable to its primary stakeholders.

In this paper, we address the research question of how value creation is accounted for in hybrid organisations.

Several approaches for reviewing the scientific stream can be applied in the management sector. For example, bibliometric reviews use a qualitative approach to evaluate and monitor published research, considering statistics on authors, journals and countries (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

According to Massaro et al., (2016), in bibliographic and bibliometric analysis, researchers may be interested in representing a static picture, providing answers about the history of the research field under investigation, and using bibliographic pairing of authors, keywords and citations.

In our analysis, the composition of the research field was set: only products from the subject area 'Business, Management & Accounting'. Following the studies by Mariani & Borghi, (2019), Massaro et al., (2016) and Secinaro et al., (2020), only "articles" written in the "English" language were

considered. Following studies Li et al., 2017; Xu et al., (2018), articles published in journals on the ABS list (2018) with the classification at 1, 2, 3, 4 and 4* were considered. This choice is widely adopted in bibliometric studies, and researchers commonly employ it to identify quality scientific articles. We have also carefully reviewed the selected papers, highlighting those aspects that are useful for research and considering only those papers that have been published in journals in the relevant subject area.

To perform the biometric analysis, we used the Bibliometrix application: a statistical package available on R-Studio (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017); the software allows the representation of bibliometric information, including authors, citations, countries of production and keywords and Structured literature review.

Keywords: hybrid organization, value creation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, organisations occupy an intermediate position between public, third sector and private ownership (Secinaro et al., 2019; Amelio & Orlandini, 2020) ; such organisations are called hybrid organisations (Doherty et al., 2014), whose goal is to create innovation and synergy in addressing complex social issues, leading to more sustainable development of public services and thus creating public value (Karré, 2020). In this regard, the participation of private partners and civil society in the formulation of policies, the design and delivery of public services, as well as the processes of allocating and reporting on the use of public resources, has become so fundamental that scholars now refer to public value cocreation (Bracci et al., 2019; Bryson et al., 2017). Public value cocreation occurs when stakeholders' expertise, information, skills, experiences, and resources are integrated into the public value creation processes (Gebauer et al., 2010; Grönroos, 2011). The creation of value in hybrid organizations is a relevant issue and has an impact on the well-being of the population that requires more in-depth analysis, new orientations and case studies (Esposito et al. 2021).

This issue is particularly pertinent for public sector organisations, which provide critical services to current and future community members and consequently face increased accountability requirements to convey the sustainability of their actions (Greiling et al., 2016; Greiling & Grüb, 2015). Public administrations, in particular, provide public services without direct remuneration for the resources they use, with the goal of creating public value through services, laws, regulation, and other acts (Kelly et al., 2002).

Indeed, public value is linked to public administrations' ability to activate production processes capable of meeting individual and community requirements at the same time (Bozeman, 2007). Recent contingencies must be considered in addition to the physiological characteristics of public sector organisations. Public sector organisations are currently dealing with a situation that includes complicated issues such as climate change, natural disasters, waste generation, natural resource depletion, poverty, and social inclusion.

In the paper, we investigate how the actions of hybrid organisations produce public value, adopting a conceptual scheme that relates broad strategic objectives of general (and public) interest to the policies that public administrations put in place.

The objective is to plan and report on the sustainability and social impact dimensions of hybrid organisations, information that is central to the public sector entity, whose principal and specific role is to provide quality services to the target community. The hybrid organisation must account for its social performance, report on it and draw up an action plan to improve its performance (Brandsen & Karré, 2011). Therefore, it is a process through which public administration can better understand the impact of its actions on the community and, consequently, be accountable to its primary stakeholders.

The hybridity stems from the interaction of several governance regimes and institutional logics as they function at the intersection of the realms of state, market, and society (Koppenjan et al., 2019; Skelcher & Smith, 2015). Many governments have built hybrid organisations during the last two centuries by embracing innovative public management practises (NPM). NPM encourages the marketization of governmental services through contracts, outsourcing, and privatization (Barberis, 1998).

In this paper, we address the research question of how value creation is accounted for in hybrid organisations.

Although the literature on hybrid organisations has reached an important degree of maturity, and despite the importance of the involvement of being for public value creation highlighted in numerous contributions (S. P. Osborne et al., 2016), the two research streams have not met. However, an in-depth examination of their relationship should be encouraged in order to determine whether and how the creation of hybrid organisations facilitates the cocreation of public value. The purpose of this study is to enrich the existing knowledge on hybrid public sector organisations by trying to shed light on a possible link to the cocreation of public value. Several ways have been proposed to take into account the fact that literature reviews can be done for a number of reasons (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008).

The structured literature review (SLR) method was chosen as the best fit for the objective of this article. Indeed, the SLR enables analysing the corpus of academic literature and creating insights, critical thoughts, and future research routes by building on carefully stated research questions and processes of investigation (Massaro et al., 2016).

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: Section 2 describes the SLR methodology, emphasising its suitability for the purpose of this work; Section 3 addresses the results obtained from the bibliometric analysis; Section 4 discusses the findings, depicts the avenue for future research paths on the topic and concludes the paper.

2. METHODOLOGY

Previous studies on hybrid organisations and public value creation have used bibliometric or structured literature review methodology. The present study is innovative because it combines both themes in a SLR to categorise existing knowledge and identify future research avenues to broaden the understanding of the phenomenon (Dumay et al., 2016).

Therefore, the starting point of the analysis is through an extensive search of published research articles on the topic.

The Web of Science database was used to select the articles which were the subject of the analysis.

The choice of the database is dictated by the fact that numerous studies show an overlapping in the discipline of management between the Scopus and Web Of Science databases (Van Eck & Waltman, 2009). Both databases offer valuable and high-impact collections in many disciplines, including management.

The data search phase was conducted in May 2022, and, using the keywords

"hybrid organisation*" (All Fields) or "public valu*" (All Fields), 2,452 research products were identified. "*" were inserted as Boolean operators because we consider that authors may have added a different suffix to the same word root, depending on the context.

By applying search filters, some constraints were imposed to refine the literature review (Mariani & Borghi, 2019).

Following the studies by Mariani & Borghi, (2019), Massaro et al. (2016) and (Secinaro et al., 2020), only "articles" written in "English" were considered, identifying 1,743 articles.

Following studies (Li et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2018), articles published in journals on the ABS list (2018) with the classification at 1, 2, 3, 4 and 4* were considered. Journals that did not systematically publish articles on the analysis topics were excluded. Therefore, all Journals with a publication count of fewer than 5 articles were excluded.

All these survey steps yielded a final dataset of 284 articles.

Such a choice is widely adopted in bibliometric studies, and researchers commonly employ it to identify quality scientific articles.

The Bibliometrix application, a statistical package available on R-Studio (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017), was used to perform the biometric analysis. The software allows the representation of bibliometric information, including authors, citations, affiliations between countries and keywords (Campra et al., 2022).

This article builds its methodological foundation on a Structured Literature Review (SLR) to analyse state of the art, i.e. what it proposes on public value created by hybrid organisations (Massaro et al., 2016; Petticrew & Roberts, 2008; Tranfield et al., 2003).

Cook et al., (1997) state that "systematic literature reviews are scientific investigations in themselves, with pre-planned methods and a set of original studies as subjects". Thus, systematic literature reviews differ from traditional narrative approaches in that they are based on an extensive, reliable and scientific evaluation of the data, limiting the possibility of bias. Among the types of systematic literature reviews, SLR is increasingly being used for reviews in the social sciences, including hybrid organisations and public value creation, as a method of analysing existing research on a topic through precise stages of investigation and research questions, in order to develop critical insights and describe possible future research paths (Guthrie et al., 2012; Hoque, 2014).

This research aims to critically analyse the existing body of knowledge on the public value created by hybrid organisations, and SLR is the best method of investigation.

According to (Massaro et al., (2016), SLR is a systematic, rigorous methodology by which knowledge is produced on research currents and trends, as well as the basis for possible future research; SLR combines systematic analysis with bibliometrics, and the output of the research will, therefore, be a qualitative-quantitative study (Secundo et al., 2020).

The conducted study adopted the scientific workflow mapping method, considering the following five phases (Secinaro et al., 2021; Secundo et al., 2020; Zupic & Čater, 2015):

(i) study design;

(ii) data collection;

(iii) research findings: analysis and insights;

(iv) data visualisation; and

(v) interpretation.

3. RESULTS

This study section analyses the raw bibliometric data extracted from the Web of Science Database and presents the coding analysis performed. Therefore, this section will answer RQ1.

RQ1. What is the public value of the services provided by hybrid enterprises?

3.1 Bibliometric analysis

Table 1 shows the essential information on 252 articles over a time horizon from 1994 (the first year that articles were published in this field) to 2021. The average growth rate of scientific production published is 14.85%. Despite a period of twenty-seven years, the average seniority of the papers in the sample is six years (6.18). The scientific production on the topic is recent. The studies have an average of two authors (2.14). A sharp increase in scientific production has occurred since 2013. In fact, from 2013 until 2022, there was a growth rate of 39.08% in the scientific output produced (Figure 1). The data justify the analysis of the literature, which is rapidly expanding and advancing scientific knowledge over time. The number of Keywords Plus (ID), which are keywords that frequently appear in study titles, is 484. The Author's Keywords (DE) are keywords identified by authors and are almost three times the number of articles (631).

Table 1. Main information

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1994:2021
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	15
Documents	252
Annual Growth Rate %	14.85
Document Average Age	6.18
Average citations per doc	30.74
References	11269
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	

Keywords Plus (ID) 484

Author's Keywords (DE) 631

AUTHORS

Authors 445

Authors of single-authored docs 76

AUTHORS COLLABORATION

Single-authored docs 85

Co-Authors per Doc 2.14

International co-authorships % 23.81

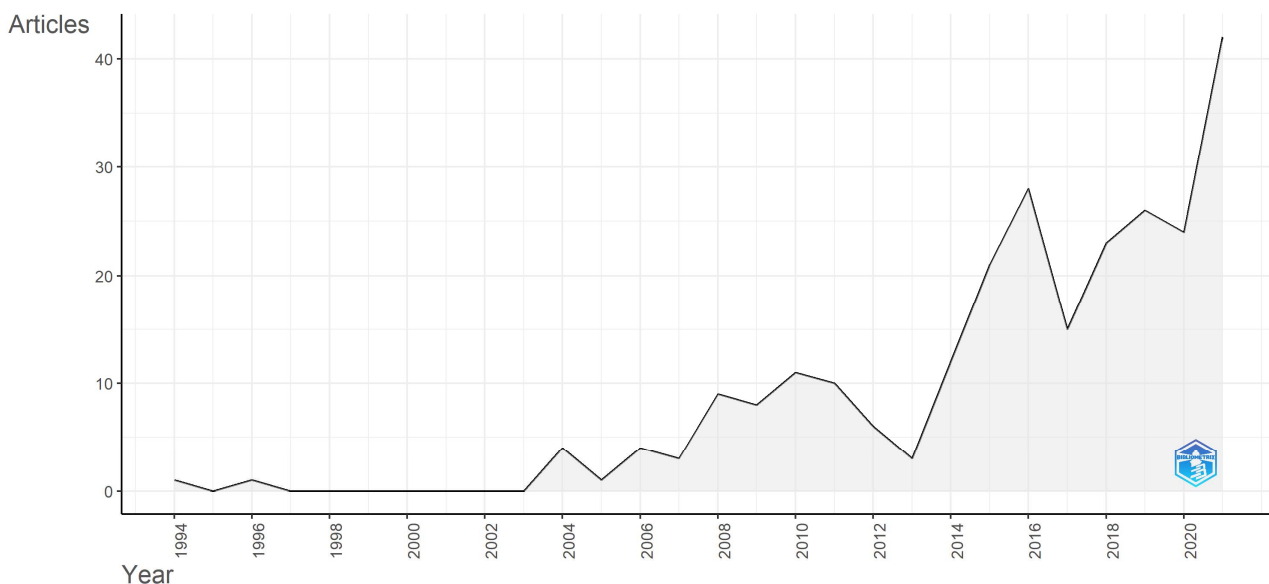
DOCUMENT TYPES

Article 246

Article; proceedings paper 6

Source(s): Authors' elaboration

Figure 1. Annual scientific production



Source(s): Authors' elaboration using the bibliometrix R-package

3.1.1 Sources' analysis

The distribution of studies shows an interesting concentration on the top 5 journals in Table 2. In order by the number of publications, the first five journals comprise 148 studies out of 252 in the entire sample. Out of a total of fifteen, the first five journals comprise 58.73% of the studies in the sample. The journals with the most significant number of published studies related to the topic are Public Management Review, Public Administration Review and International Journal of Public Administration.

Only academic articles were selected, only scientific production inherent to academic journals can be analysed. These last play an essential role in developing knowledge on the topic. Indeed, it is possible

to understand research trends, thematic priorities and the level of knowledge of the scientific community. The Public Management Review is the journal with the highest number of publications (36) and is a journal taken as a reference on these issues. This journal covers the topics of public management, strategic and operational management of public services, and the development of social/public policies. The second journal by the number of publications is Public Administration Review, with 31 papers. Like the previous one, this journal is crucial for those dealing with the following topics. Public Administration Review deals with topics ranging from the theory to the practice of public administration. With 30 publications, the International Journal of Public Administration is listed in Table 2. The journal deals with topics relating to developments in public administration, public policy and management. Journals that have published studies on this topic are considered to be among the top journals (A or A* qualified) according to the Academic Journal Guide 2021 of the association of business schools (ABS) lists. Of the top ten sources by the number of publications, nine are on this list.

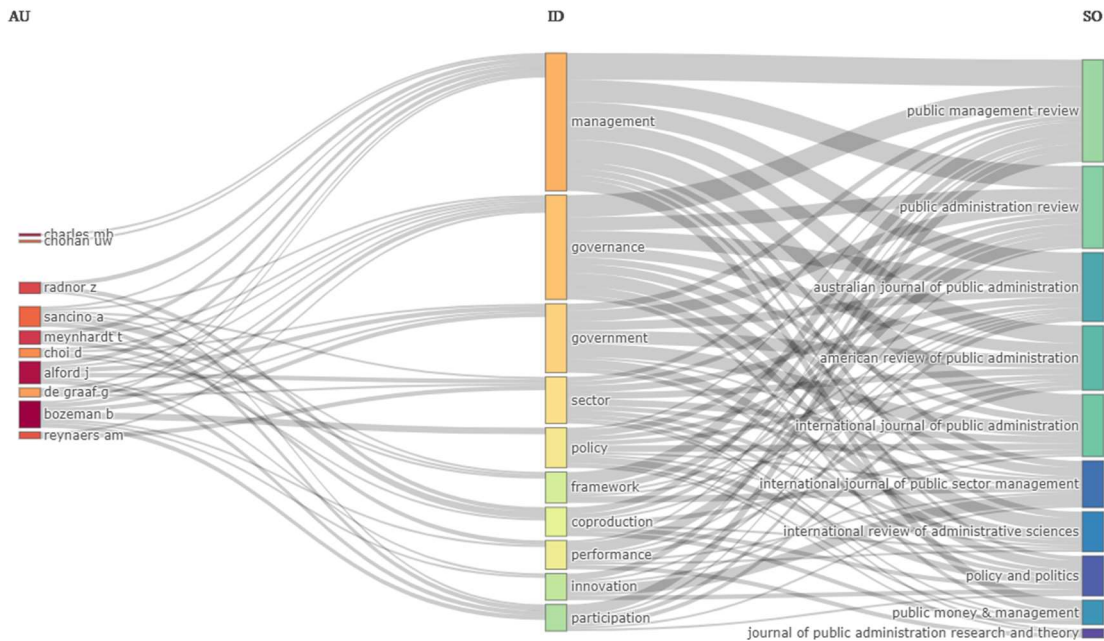
Table 2. Main sources

Top ten sources	Articles
PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REVIEW	36
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REVIEW	31
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	30
AMERICAN REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	26
AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	25
PUBLIC MONEY & MANAGEMENT	24
INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES	19
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT	15
POLICY AND POLITICS	10
JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION RESEARCH AND THEORY	7

Source(s): Authors' elaboration

The themes and research strands most frequently addressed within each study are identified through the three-field plot in Figure 2, highlighting the management of public value created by organisations. In addition, the other themes in Figure 2 concern aspects of public administration, multi-stakeholder co-production, performance and innovation.

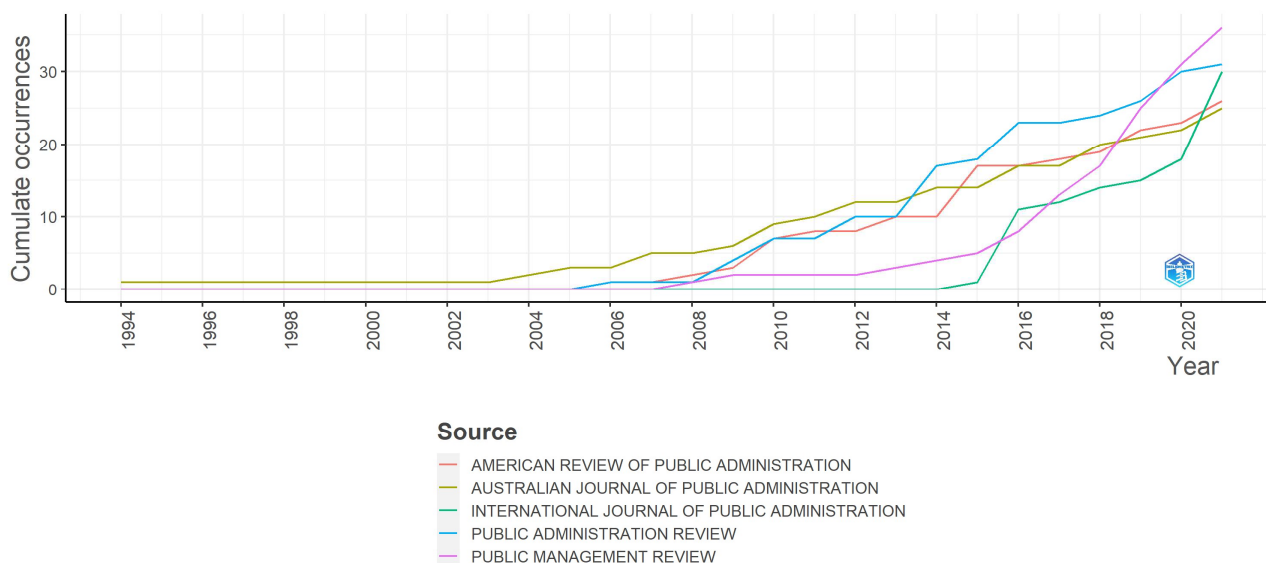
Figure 2. Three-Field Plot



Source(s): Authors' elaboration using the bibliometrix R-package

Figure 3 represents the distribution frequency of publications in the top five journals by the number of publications. Until the early 2000s, being an emerging topic and not as relevant as today, studies were published in journals with lower prestige. The International Journal of Public Administration and the Public Management Review only started publishing numerous studies related to the topic in 2015. The other three journals started publishing studies related to the topic more consistently from 2007-2008. The most interesting increase occurred in Public Management Review, which had only published seven studies between 2008 and 2016. As of 2017, Public Management Review was the journal with the highest number of annual publications, becoming the journal with the most studies published in 2021 (36).

Figure 3. Sources dynamics



Source(s): Authors' elaboration using the bibliometrix R-package

3.1.2 Authors' analysis

This section identifies the authors with the largest number of publications within this sample. Table 3 shows the top ten authors ranked by the number of publications. Barry Bozeman is the author with the highest number of published studies, with six published studies. Bozeman is a professor of Technology Policy and Public Management, and his studies deal with the topics of public management, science and technology policy. With five published studies, John Alford is the second most published author. He is an expert in public value, public budgeting, and co-production. Alford, until 2017 was a Professor of Public Sector Management at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) and the Melbourne Business School (MBS), University of Melbourne. Michael B. Charles has authored five publications related to the topic and is a management and policy expert at Southern Cross University.

Table 3. Most relevant authors

Top ten authors on n° of documents	Articles
BOZEMAN B	6
ALFORD J	5
CHARLES MB	5
MEYNHARDT T	4
RADNOR Z	4
REYNAERS AM	4
SANCINO A	4
CHOHAN UW	3

3.1.3 Keywords' analysis

Table 4 ranks the top ten Keywords identified by the authors within their published studies. With 17 repetitions, the keyword co-production is present, with 16 public management and 12 public administration. The keyword co-production refers to the joint production between several actors that can be: public administrations, private companies, hybrid organisations, and citizens to provide public services and thus create public value (Aschhoff & Vogel, 2018; Williams et al., 2015). The keyword public management is used in contexts where the topic of the public value creation process is addressed (Picazo-Vela et al., 2017). This keyword is often used in connection with the value created through public management (Brown, 2021). Finally, with 12 repetitions is the keyword public administration identified by the authors of these studies. Since the early 2000s, public value has come into solid relation with the concept of public administration (O'Flynn, 2021; Rutgers, 2014). Public Administration must succeed in creating public value by providing services to different stakeholders.

Table 4. Author's keywords

Top ten authors' keywords	
co-production	17
public management	16
public administration	12
new public management	11
public value management	10
co-creation	9
accountability	8
collaboration	7
e-government	6
leadership	6

Source(s): Authors' elaboration

Figure 5 shows the combinations of keywords identified by the authors of the papers. Very often, articles that address the topic of co-production are very much related to aspects of Public Administration and New Public Management. The same is the case for studies such as Picazo-Vela et al., (2017) that deal with Public Management and Public Value Management, as identified above. The keyword co-production is also connected with the keyword co-creation because they are two successive phases in creating public value (Petrescu, 2019).

Figure 5. World TreeMap

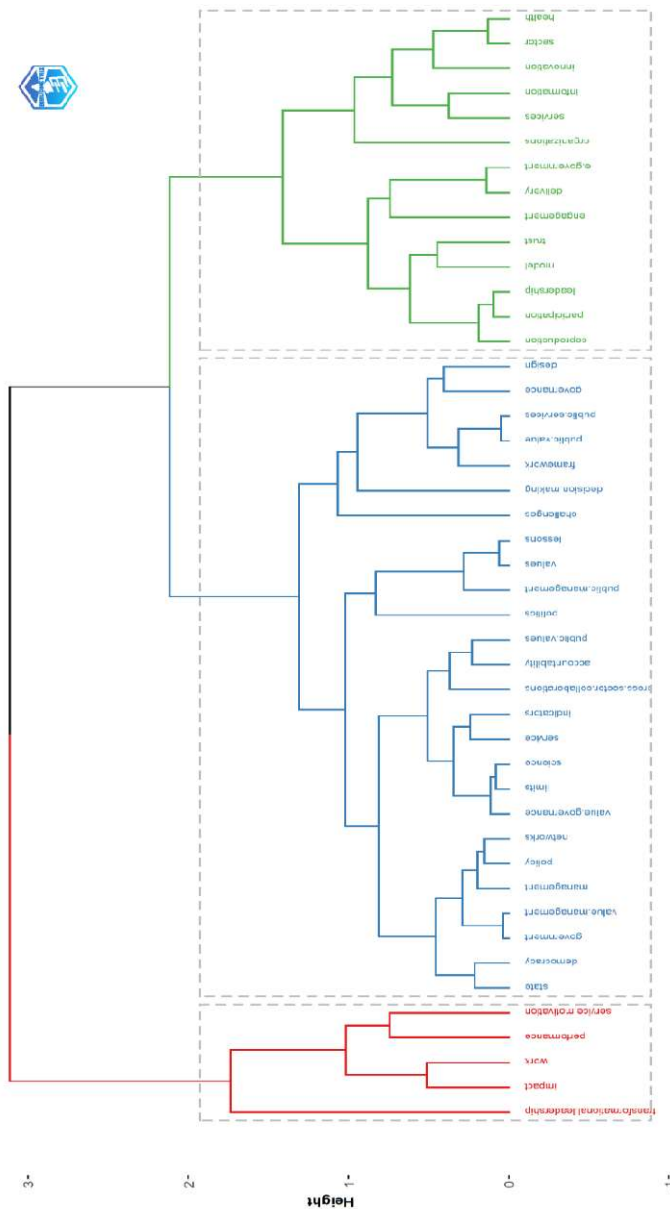


Source(s): Authors' elaboration using the bibliometrix R-package

Figure 6 highlights the topic dendrogram that allows the flow and clusters of searches to be visualised in a single image (Silva et al., 2016). This Topic dendrogram analysis performed with bibliometrix R-package makes it possible to create clusters with the most frequently used keywords. In this way, Figure 6 allows insights into specific topics. Furthermore, again thanks to this type of graphical representation, it is possible to carry out a hierarchical clustering analysis considering the height of the nodes. Based on the height, it will be possible to understand the similarity of the different nodes to each other—the more significant the node height, the greater the difference. From Figure 6, it is

possible to understand how there are three main research strands. The first strand focuses on work, performance, and motivation to achieve clear and precise goals that have been set through transformational leadership. The second strand, represented in Figure 6 with the colour blue, includes aspects of public administration such as value management, public service, and challenges to be overcome through decision making. Finally, the third research strand, which is closely linked to the second, includes aspects concerning collaboration between several stakeholders to create public value. Examples may be co-production, engagement, and organisations.

Figure 6. Topic dendrogram

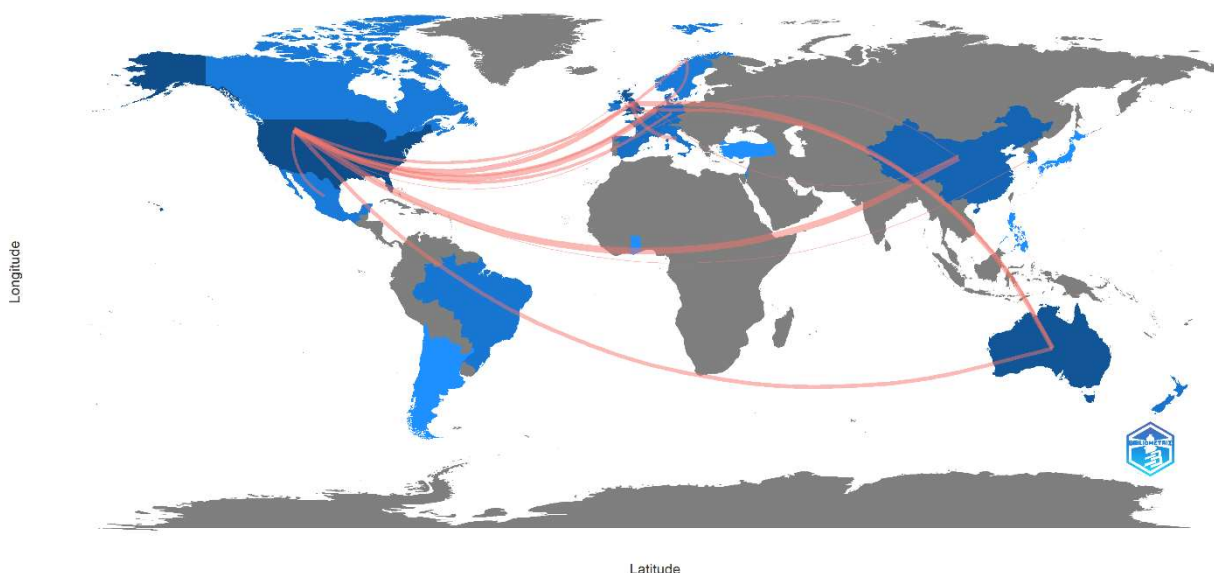


Source(s): Authors' elaboration using the bibliometrix R-package

3.1.4 Authors' collaboration

Figure 7 shows the global collaborations between the authors during the creation of the scientific production on the topic. The world's states represented in blue mean that they have had collaborations. In addition, and pink lines show the degree of collaboration between authors. From Figure 7, it can be seen that the United States is the country that has had the most collaborations. Europe also has several collaborations with Australia and the United States. In particular, the European states with the most collaborations are England and the Netherlands. Whereas China only has strong collaborations with the United States. Some countries, such as Russia and all but one state in Africa, have a total absence of scientific production and collaborations related to the topic.

Figure 7. Country collaboration map



Source(s): Authors' elaboration using the bibliometrix R-package

3.1.5 Citations' analysis

Table 5 highlights the ten papers with the highest number of citations globally. Seven out of ten studies, looking at the year of publication of the articles (Table 5), were published in the early 2000s. In contrast, the remaining three papers were published later, namely one in 2010, one in 2012 and one in 2016. The paper with the most citations is that of (Stoker, 2006), with over 600 citations. The top five papers in terms of the number of citations received globally are all papers from the early 2000s (Agranoff, 2006; Hefetz & Warner, 2004; S. Osborne et al., 2016; Stoker, 2006), except that of S. Osborne et al., (2016) which was published in 2016. Such a high number of citations, particularly for the third study reached in a few years, shows that the studies provide great quality information.

Table 5. Most cited documents

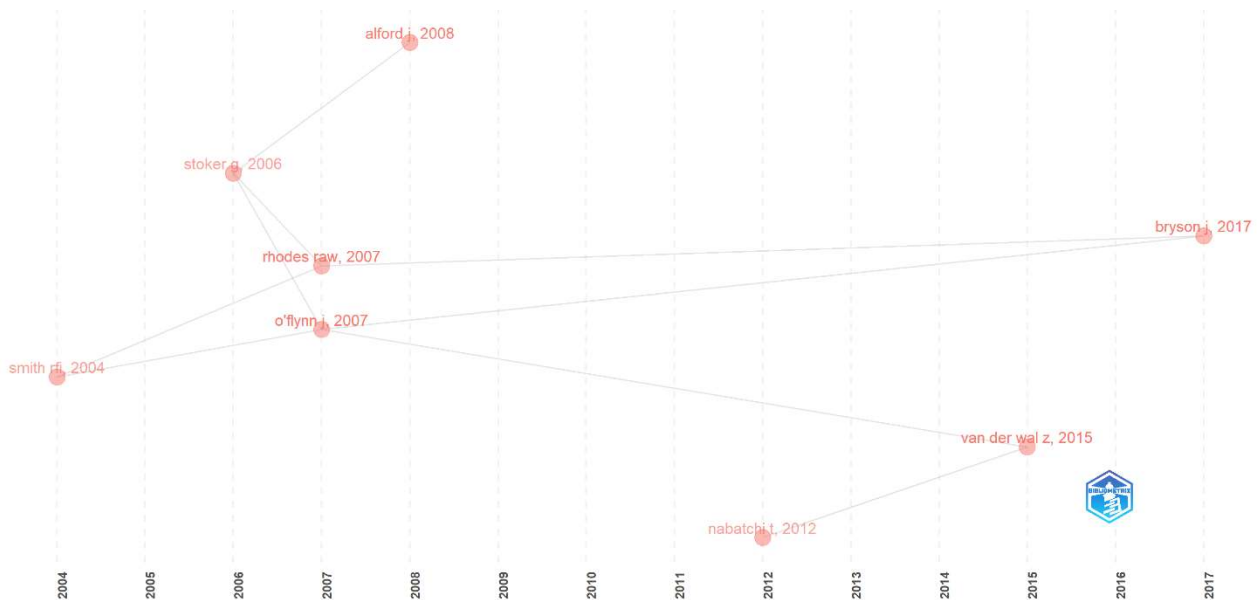
Ranking no	Authors and their sources (Top 10)	Total Citations
1	STOKER G, 2006, PUBLIC VALUE MANAGEMENT - A NEW NARRATIVE FOR NETWORKED	603
2	O'FLYNN J, 2007, FROM NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT TO PUBLIC VALUE: PARADIGMATIC CHANGE AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS	405
3	OSBORNE SP, 2016, CO-PRODUCTION AND THE CO-CREATION OF VALUE IN PUBLIC SERVICES A SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT?	355
4	AGRANOFF R, 2006, INSIDE COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS: TEN LESSONS FOR PUBLIC MANAGERS	330
5	HEFETZ A, 2004, PRIVATIZATION AND ITS REVERSE: EXPLAINING THE DYNAMICS OF THE GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING PROCESS	308
6	BOVAIRD T, 2004, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: FROM CONTESTED CONCEPTS TO PREVALENT PRACTICE	277
7	NABATCHI T, 2012, PUTTING THE "PUBLIC" BACK IN PUBLIC VALUES RESEARCH: DESIGNING PARTICIPATION TO IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO VALUES	185
8	MOORE M, 2008, INNOVATIONS IN GOVERNANCE	171
9	ALFORD J, 2008, PUBLIC VALUE PRAGMATISM AS THE NEXT PHASE OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT	169
10	KIM S, 2010, A STRATEGY FOR BUILDING PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION RESEARCH INTERNATIONALLY	161

Source(s): Authors' elaboration

Figure 8 represents and retraces the studies that have obtained the most citations over time. This illustration makes it possible to reconstruct the main topic trends from 2004 to 2017. The study by Smith, (2004) allows both to identify the notion of public value, highlight the problems in the public sector at that time, and look at future developments creatively. O'Flynn and Rhodes & Wanna (O'Flynn, 2007; Rhodes & Wanna, 2007) are the principal authors that link to these trends identified in 2004. Both studies emphasise the increase in general interest in the topic of public value but also focus on the issues to be addressed (O'Flynn, 2007; Rhodes & Wanna, 2007). For example, the comparison between new public management and the public value paradigm or the role of public managers in the public interest. Both of these studies are related to the papers by Bryson et al., (2016) and Stoker (2006). Stoker (2006) paper focuses on the paradigm between traditional public management and new public management. The strength of public value management is in the engagement of people, networks and partnerships. The research by Bryson et al., (2016) aims to suggest modifications to the public value theory by creating the strategic triangle framework to adapt

this theory to an emerging world in which different stakeholders must work together to create public value. Alford & Hughes, (2008), being connected with (Stoker, 2006), focuses on new public management is now fifteen years old, and the next phase must be public value pragmatism. On the other hand, (Wal et al., 2015) conducted a Cross-Disciplinary Review and Analysis of Public Values Publications From 1969 to 2012 to understand how the boundaries of Public Administration and management boundaries can be crossed and how different scholars from different research fields define them. Finally, linked to the study by (Wal et al., 2015) is the paper by (Nabatchi, 2012), which aims to bring citizen engagement back to public value by theorising the potential of direct citizen participation.

Figure 8. Historical direct citation network



Source(s): Authors' elaboration using the bibliometrix R-package

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In order to the purpose how value creation is accounted for in hybrid organisations, the study explore and presents results from 1994 to 2021 on topic of public value creation of the action of hybrid organizations and shows that the themes that influenced research in the first 20 years were dictated by the grafting of new public management. There has been an increase since 2013 and an even more pronounced increase in 2015. 2015 represents the year of the enactment of the Standard Development Goals (SDGs).

Demonstrating the evolution of these themes, the analysis in this paper presents a deeper understanding of the intellectual structure of the public value creation of hybrid organisations by

interpreting the emerging bibliometric characteristics of the study, aimed at mapping and understanding the current maturity of the fields.

The main result is that evolving public sector studies have focused on value creation through cross-sector collaboration and therefore also in line with the principles of reducing inequality (SDG 10) and making cities and communities sustainable (SDG 11).

The values of co-production, co-creation and collaboration that emerged from the research emphasize the importance of achieving goals in partnership (SDG 17) to enable the organization and all its stakeholders to move forward together toward achieving full accountability.

There is a sense of the multidisciplinary nature of the topic and how the literature has treated it more or less consistently. Since it is an interdisciplinary field, it benefits from a series of growing developments crossed with emerging approaches that also lead to practical feedback.

This has undoubtedly brought about the need to change the traditional ways of organizations, acquiring mixed elements between the for-profit, non-profit and public sectors giving rise to the definition of a hybrid organization.

Not all countries are aligned with this mode from a legal perspective, but in business realities this is the case.

Since it is generally agreed that innovation is the central theme in order to be able to create value because it generates growth, we find this to be particularly evident.

This study is an opportunity to direct future research to fill the gaps in the literature. Since the SDGs are goals to be achieved by 2030 (AGENDA 2030), evidence of these gaps can raise awareness of the scientific production and thus promote the achievement of the goals.

At a time when the economic, health, and geopolitical crisis has created great difficulties for the system, it is very important to understand what the model is for creating value through increasingly hybrid organizations. These, in turn, can create a cycle of ethical investment through a chain reaction that generates activities that can create social impact by helping citizens in need.

These findings form the basis for providing support to the scientific research sector, third-sector agents, investors, and all stakeholders working with social entrepreneurs to better understand the focus on which research and business will need to concentrate to generate value and social impact.

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