

In the Public Administration, What Is Researched? A Review

Alexander Báez Hernández

Administrative Sciences Department, Universidad Central del Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador

Email: albaez@uce.edu.ec

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Abstract

Determining the researching issue in public administration by bibliometric analysis was the paper objective. The methodology utilized was as follows: Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect and Google Scholar were the sources. In order to do a bibliometric analysis was took the first and second sources. Instead, the third and four sources provide the referential searches. The metadata, generated from search criteria, was imported by VOSviewer program let it to build three bibliometric maps. The evidence was displayed by a bibliometric graphics group. It was the publications growth on the subject, and its concentration in universities from developed countries, headed by the US; the relationship of the Public Administration with other areas in terms of scientific production; the most productive authors and journals with the greatest impact on the subject. The maps, detection of the most recurrent terms and their networks in the titles of research, co-occurrence and networks of keywords, and networks of authors were obtained from Vosviewer program running the seminal articles, 5 originals, 8 revisions and the 10 most cited books were determined. Interesting areas and emerging niches in the Public Administration investigation were visualized.

Keywords

Public Administration, Literature Review, Research Trends Scopus, Web of Science

1. Introduction

Is it possible to formulate a scientific problem without a literature review? In the Knowledge Society, with the explosion of information and publications in an interconnected world, the inability to acquire useful knowledge is more latent. The accumulation of icebergs of information with technical language, but with very

little or no contribution is a fact recognized by information theorists. The “pseudoscientific garbage” invades us with a frenzy to limit the perception of objective reality in visualization a problem. In this context, the bibliographic review takes center stage as a powerful compass that takes us to the port in a sea of information. It is a powerful instrument at the service of knowledge that is expressed in different ways, attending to the specific needs of the researcher and the discipline of knowledge that it is intended to address.

The very fact that the bibliographic review is an instrument at the service of science requires a rigor of evidence. In this sense, it has evolved from the choice, under one criterion, of a group of books, documents, articles or others of an author or subject, to being the product (final result) of a structured, systematic and above all methodological procedure that leads to the selection of a sample of relevant documents, confirmed by the scientific community and useful on a specific topic or subject, interpreted under an investigatory question. On this last idea [Toro \(2002: p. 10\)](#) refers: the nature of the doubt and, therefore, of the question that the user asks himself will condition the result of the review, both in the content of the information and in the type of recovered documents; this idea addresses the concept of bibliographic reference defended by [Vilanova \(2012: p. 109\)](#) as: a systematic compilation of published information related to a topic. Carrying out a bibliographic search is a complex and fundamental process in the context of a research project. If it is assumed that every research project requires the analysis of a research question, then the bibliographic review is mandatory, necessary and inherent to the research process itself.

[Bernardo Peña \(2010: p. 1\)](#) reflects: the review is an obligatory step for any investigation, that is why it is important to know what it consists of, what are the different stages involved in its elaboration and how its results and conclusions are presented. To materialize the previous postulate, the analysis on objectives of the review article and Types of reviews by [Goris & Adolf \(2015: p. 5\)](#) coinciding with [Merino-Trujillo \(2011: p. 36\)](#) was taken. Under these theoretical guidelines, the bibliographic review was classified as evaluative, because it answered the specific question asked.

The theoretical methodological reference was taken from [Gómez-Luna, Fernando-Navas, Guillermo, & Betancourt-Buitrago \(2014: p. 159\)](#) due to its quality referred to by the authors in the following expression: the methodology proposed for the bibliographic review can be applied to any research topic to determine its relevance and importance and ensure the originality of an investigation. In addition, it allows other researchers to consult the bibliographic sources cited, being able to understand and perhaps continue the work carried out. A notable aspect appreciated, in addition, is its simplicity when considering the following stages: definition of the problem, search for information, organization of information, analysis of information. In the case of the second stage, the path suggested by [Merino-Trujillo \(2011: p. 37\)](#) was assessed, which establishes three steps: querying databases and documentary sources, establishing the search strategy and specifying the selection criteria of documents.

In compliance with the first stage, the following question was raised: What is being investigated with prevalence in the Public Administration? (research niches) and is based on the assumption of inference that the focus of research on specific niches is correlational with the publications that address it and the network of citations and authors that is generated in their environment and constitute areas of research interest for the scientific community that represents it and, in turn, visualizes incipient research areas that have not been treated in depth and that constitute a source for the development of new research niches.

Based on the above, the following objectives are established: to carry out a bibliometric analysis¹ of the research published in the field of public administration, to determine the seminal articles and classic books, the collaborative networks and the main areas of research interest. In addition, for the author it means the first phase of the configuration process of the doctoral thesis, bibliographic inquiry prior to the definition of the scientific problem to be dealt with, which must be carried out in every doctoral process. In order to fulfill the previous objectives, the following work methodology was drawn up.

2. Methodology

The session analyzes Scopus, Web of Science, ScinceDirect, and Google Scholar as a source of information and in the case of the first two as instruments for bibliometric analysis. The potential of VOSviewer as specialized software in the construction of bibliometric maps of science is exposed and the session closes with a graphic description of the research process and the format of the article.

Scopus is a multidisciplinary database of abstracts and citations, created in 2004 by the publisher Elsevier. It is currently the largest database in the world and is updated daily. It contains more than 69 million references, mostly post-1969, belonging to 21,950 peer-reviewed journals, including 3600 open access journals. In turn, Scopus includes more than 39 million patents from 5 different agencies, more than 8 million conference proceedings, 562 book series and more than 150,000 books (Lucas-Domínguez, Sixto-Costoya, Castelló Cogollo, González de Dios, & Aleixandre-Benavent, 2018: p. 90). It emerged as a European alternative to the monopoly exercised for more than 40 years by the databases of the former Institute for Scientific Information (ISI - now Thomson Reuters) in the area of citation studies in the international scientific context, and since then it has raised great interest among researchers and academics, both for its documentary coverage and for its friendly interface and its multiple features (Andalía, Labrada, & Castells, 2010: p. 271). The volume of high-quality scientific information, the powerful analysis tool Bibliometric, its friendly interface and the preference of the scientific community place the Scopus academic directory “top” to carry out the bibliographic review.

Following in the footsteps of the large directories, information from Scopus' competitive rival, Web of Science (formerly known as Web of Knowledge); described in the following terms: Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (WoS) is the

world's leading scientific citation search and analytical information platform. It is used as a research tool supporting a wide range of scientific tasks in various domains of knowledge, as well as a data set for large-scale data-intensive studies. WoS has been used in thousands of academic studies published in the last 20 years (Li, Rollins, & Yan, 2018: p. 1). The use of this second directory makes it possible to see the scientific information from another point of view provided by bibliometric tools of different configuration, which allows a certain triangulation in the analyzes.

About ScienceDirect, the Elsevier (owner) website reports: ScienceDirect provides access to more than 16 million articles, 2500 journals, 250 full open access journals, 39,000 books, and 330,000 subject pages to help researchers discover more ideas, make more progress and advance your research (ScientDirect, 2018: p. 1). His choice was due, in addition to the above, to the characteristics of being "open access" and of the same owner as Scopus. The fact of not restricting your entry does not imply full access to all documents; There are those under the "not open access" regime, of which only the metadata is observed.

Google Scholar is an open access web search engine that indexes the full text or metadata of academic literature in a variety of publication formats and disciplines. Released in beta in November 2004. Since its launch (Hoseth, 2011: p. 36) Google Scholar has firmly established itself as a critical resource for those conducting academic research, bolstered by its free access and extensive interdisciplinary coverage. It has been disseminated as a resource on many library websites and is taught to students; is a strong participant in the world of academic research and offers students and researchers an easy-to-use and highly accessible research tool. An assessment of its size from the owner himself from his confession is impossible. Google does not publish the size of the Google Scholar database. A conservative figure for its critical sense refers: The size of Google Scholar could have been underestimated so far by more than 50%. According to our estimate, Google Scholar, with 389 million records, is currently the most comprehensive academic search engine (Gusenbauer, 2019: p. 177).

A contrasting view offered by Joshi (2016: p. 2) dictates: comparative studies of WOS and Scopus conclude: both are in constant refinement, the significant advantage of choosing one of these two sources depends on the area of the particular topic. Some researchers propose doing a subject-specific analysis to find out which database works best for specific fields or time periods. By virtue of this logic, we proceeded with both directories, the one that maximized the desired result in terms of explicitness and visualization was selected for the review.

VOSviewer is a free software tool for building and visualizing bibliometric networks. These networks can include, for example, individual journals, researchers or publications, and can be built on the basis of citations, bibliographic coupling, co-citations or co-authorship relationships. VOSviewer also offers text mining functions that can be used to build and visualize co-occurrence networks of important terms extracted from a body of scientific literature. Jan and Walt-

man in their article visualized, a decade earlier, the capacity of the software: VOSviewer pays special attention to the graphical representation of bibliometric maps. The VOSviewer functionality is especially useful for displaying large bibliometric maps in an easy to interpret way (Jan van Eck & Waltman, 2010: p. 536).

The investigative process started with searches under the phrases: “public administration”, “public Administration” in the title and keywords of the investigations in English and Spanish. Bibliometric studies of the “not open access” databases and the Referential research in search engines. The Scopus database was exported in RIS format to VOSviewer and the bibliometric maps were made. The respective analyzes were carried out and those considered relevant according to the research question were presented. See **Figure 1**.

“Unlike what happens with original articles, there is no established organization for the review. Consequently, each author will have to elaborate their own” (Vera Carrasco, 2009: p. 67). On the previous premise and the study of the formats of the ten most relevant review articles exposed as a result of the work, we opted for a format with some similarity to IMRAD2 under the suggestions of the editorial note of González & Mattar (2010: p. 1) for its clarity and precision, with the peculiarity that the results are presented and valued within the same object of discussion.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Bibliometric Analysis of Public Administration Works

The bibliometric analysis of research in the field of public administration in Scopus presented the following: there are 5021 documents and 227,172 patents registered from 1874 to April 29, 2019. This information was detected using as search criteria: “Public administration” in the title of the contributions. **Figure 2** shows the evolution of scientific productivity on this subject, as a function of time. To generate this graph, contributions from the year 2000 to 2018 were considered a total of 3017 documents. There is a growing trend in the number of investigations that relate to this topic.

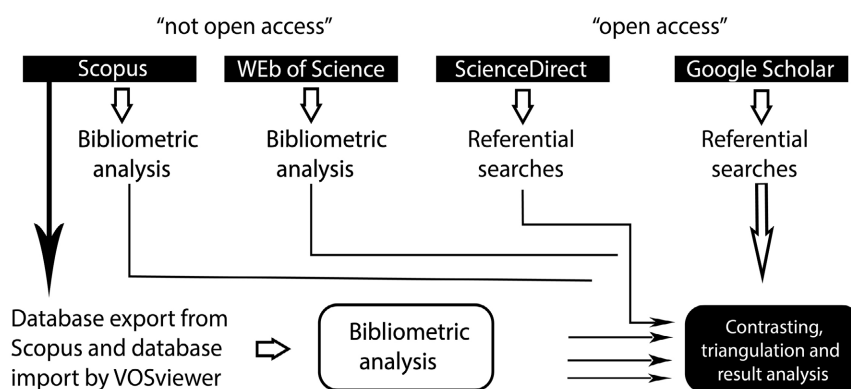


Figure 1. Investigative process.

Documents by year

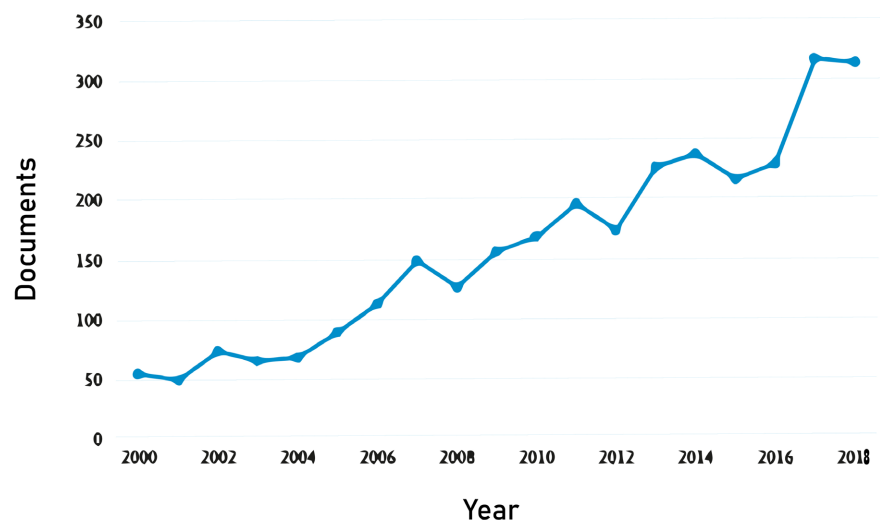


Figure 2. Number of publications per year (Source: Bibliometric analysis tools in Scopus).

The global economic powers see public administration as an effective and efficient tool in the economic and administrative management of their nations. The United States is the leading country in research related to public administration; his contributions represent about 70% more than his closest follower, Italy. See **Figure 3**. This graph was obtained by analyzing the existing information in Scopus, using the criteria and search conditions previously declared.

The academic research institutions that exhibit a higher result in this area of knowledge are highlighted in **Figure 4**, obtained in Scopus under the search conditions previously declared. The Erasmus University of Rotterdam leads the socialization of the investigations in Public Administration. It is interesting that the aforementioned University has seven faculties and is focused on four lines of research: Health, Economy, Government and Culture. Note in emphasis in the investigation on the operation of the government.

The research areas with the greatest connectivity with the Public Administration in scientific production are: social sciences, followed by studies in business and management. And in a third place, studies in computer science. It is valid to highlight that computer science is finding many research niches in the study of public administration due to the use of artificial intelligence tools such as Fuzzy Logic and others, in decision-making. **Figure 5** offers percentage values of the distribution of the contributions detected by lines of research, considering the criteria and search conditions highlighted previously. The multidisciplinary nature of the specialty is observable and the postulate presented in the doctoral classes is validated: “The study of public administration seems to have to cover the executive branch of government, commonly called public, civil or civic service, including all subjects of implication within it, all the matters that impact on him and all the topics on which he impacts”.

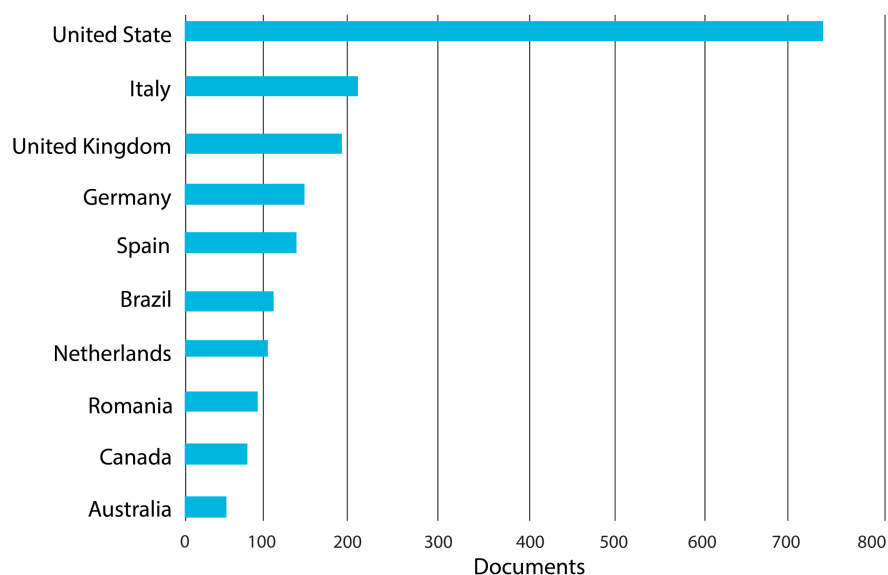


Figure 3. Number of publications by country (Source: Bibliometric analysis tools in Scopus).

Documents by affiliation

Compare the documentcounts for up to 15 affiliation

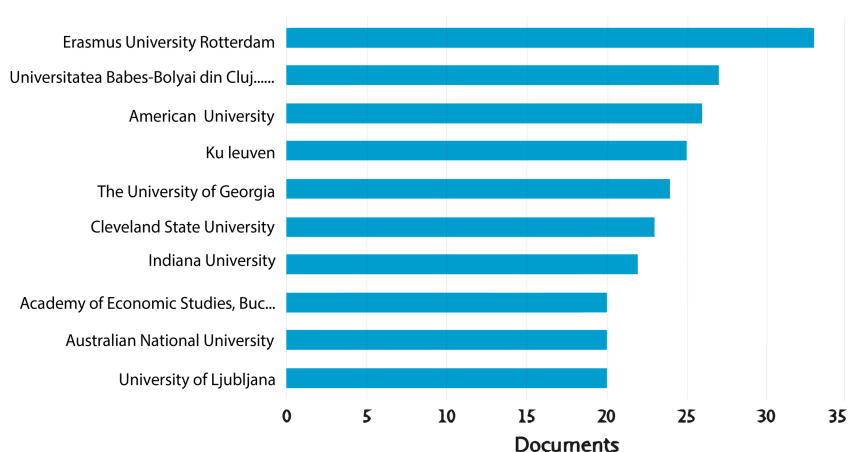


Figure 4. Number of publications generated by academic research institution (Source: Bibliometric analysis tools in Scopus).

The journals registered within the Scopus academic research directory, which most socialize public administration research are:

- 1) Public Administration Review
- 2) International Review of Administrative Sciences
- 3) Administration and Society
- 4) International journal of Public Administration
- 5) Public Administration

These five journals in their order of appearance are the journals that offer the highest representation of public administration research at an international level. **Figure 6** shows the performance of these magazines in the last 18 years. To

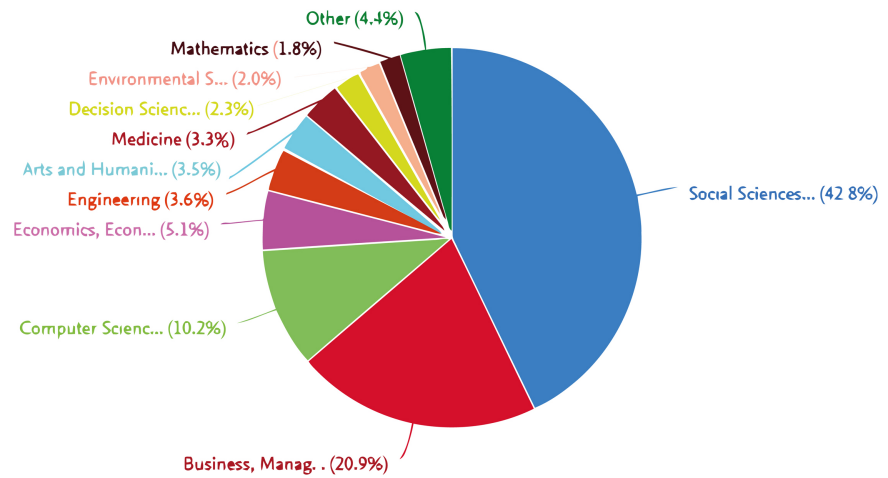


Figure 5. Percentage distribution of total publications by areas of knowledge (Source: Bibliometric analysis tools in Scopus).

Document per year by source

Compare the document counts for up to 10 source. [Compare sources and views CiteScore, SJR, and SNIP data](#)

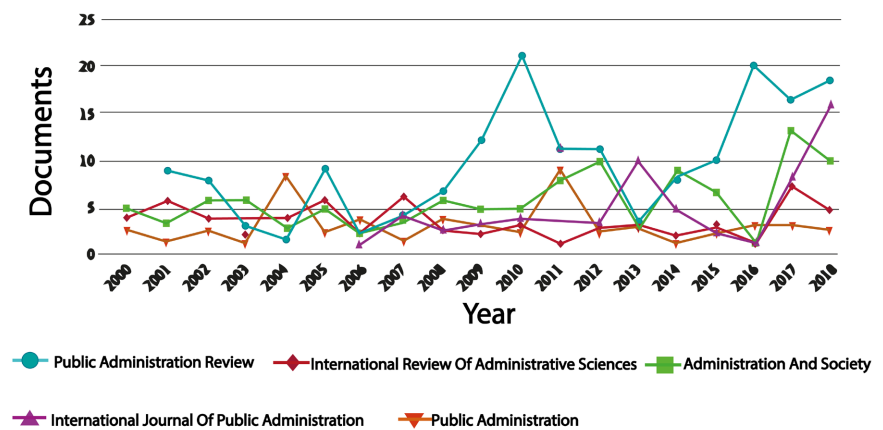


Figure 6. Number of researches published per year, in each of the five most cited reviews (Source: Bibliometric analysis tools in Scopus).

generate this graph, the contributions from 2000 to 2018 were considered. In total 3017 documents.

The most prolific author in terms of research in the area of public administration, in the present century is Ph.D Konstantinos Tarabanis A. From the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, Greece, specifically in the Department of Business Administration. This author has 14 publications of high academic profile in Scopus and more than 1831 citations. **Figure 7** illustrates the number of publications of the most cited authors in this century.

A review of the publication volume on the Web of Science revealed the following: there are 6126 investigations that in their title have the exact phrase: “Public Administration”. The predominant area is “Government Law” with 3362 scientific contributions. When conducting the same review in ScienceDirect under the same sentences, the following was found: 5077 with a predominance of

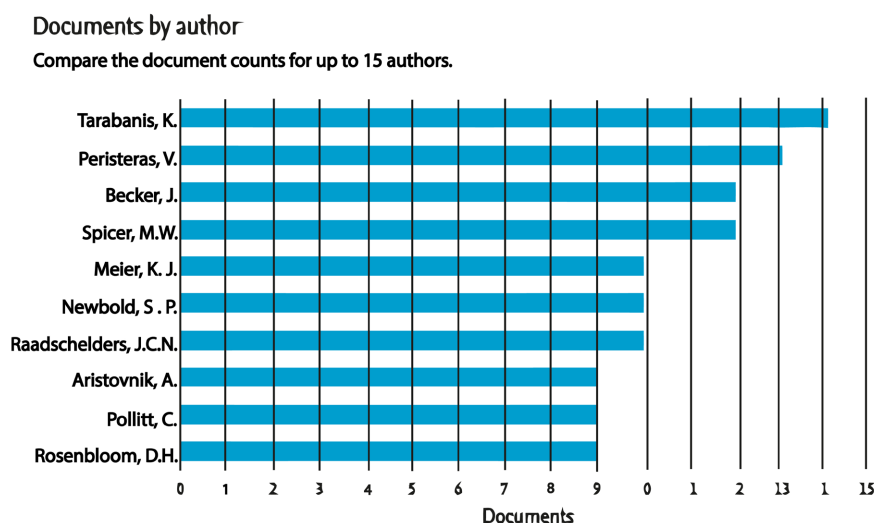


Figure 7. Number of publications by each of the most prolific authors on the subject (Source: Bibliometric analysis tools in Scopus).

the area “Public Environmental Occupational Health” specifically 1879 works among articles, books and published conferences. If ScienceDirect is compared with the previous one, a lower representation and socialization of research on Public Administration is perceived. For its part, Google Scholar displays 420 academic papers under the same search criteria and coincides with ScienceDirect in terms of the area of predominance. The lower presence of publications in Google Scholar vs Web of Science and ScienceDirect is notable, under the same parameters and search criteria previously declared. The results show a concentration of research in Anglo-Saxon journals, the United States being its main exponent. The statement in **Figure 7** is ratified.

3.2. Public Administration, Scientific Evolution Maps

From the use of the science bibliometric analysis tool VOSviewer, and with the data extracted from the Scopus database under the criteria and search conditions highlighted above. Data mining was carried out on the titles of the articles detected, so it was possible to identify the most recurrent terms and their interconnection. See scientometric map in **Figure 8**. As expected, the term “public administration” is the densest and the terms that are linked to it are, among others:

- 1) Management
- 2) Administrative reform
- 3) Human
- 4) Food and drug administration
- 5) Information technology

Figure 9 made with the same techniques of the development of **Figure 8**, but this time using text mining on the indexing keywords of the detected articles. It offers a vision of the terms and their relationship from the perspective of classification of the editors and reviewers of the journals that socialize these investigations.

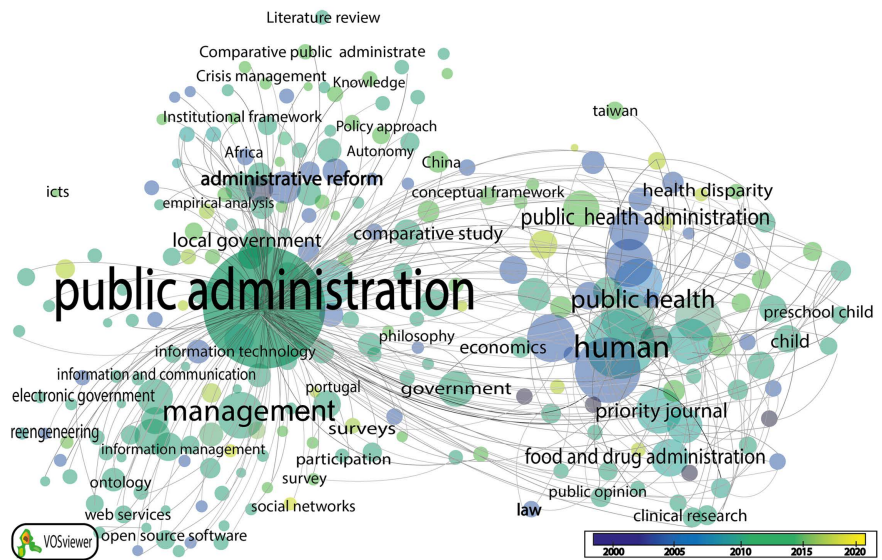


Figure 8. Data mining on research titles, and detection of the most recurrent terms and their networks (Source: Bibliometric Analysis and Data Mining Tool, VOSviewer).

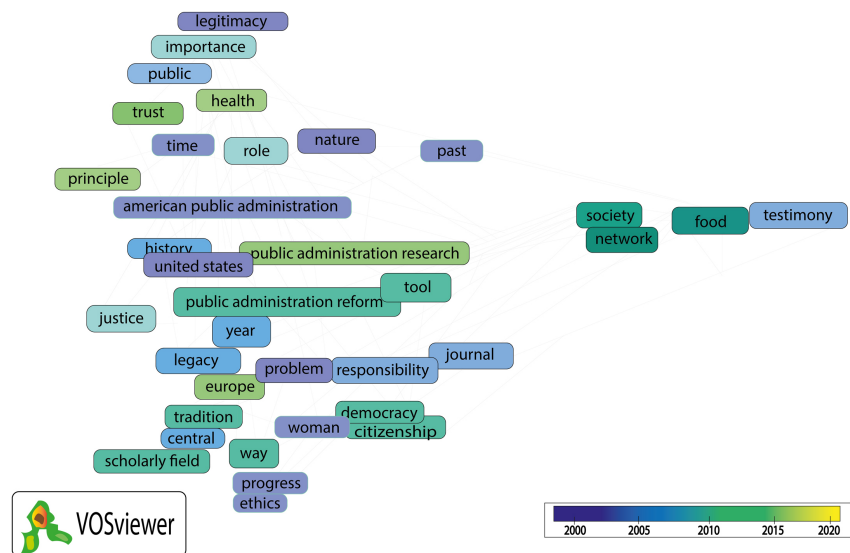


Figure 9. Text mining on keywords, their co-occurrence and networks (Source: Bibliometric Analysis and Data Mining Tool, VOSviewer).

This is because the indexing keywords are established by the editors and/or reviewers of the articles published in the different journals.

The information on the authors, extracted from the aforementioned database, was processed in the VOSviewer software, performing text mining on the aforementioned criterion (author). In this way, **Figure 10** illustrates the relationship of the authors in the density of citations, defined by the size of the spheres. It is prudent to emphasize that the authors illustrated in this figure do not have to coincide with the authors shown in **Figure 6**; since **Figure 6**, as evidenced, establishes the hierarchy by number of articles, while **Figure 9** establishes it by number of citations of the literati.

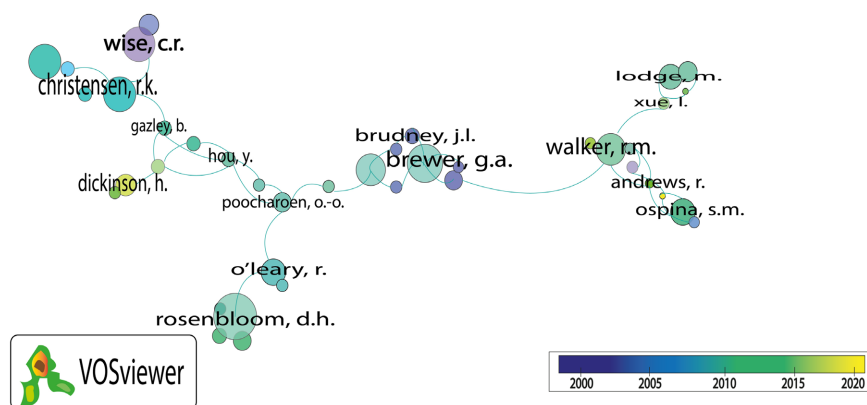


Figure 10. Text mining on author groups (Source: Bibliometric Analysis and Data Mining Tool, VOSviewer).

3.3. Public Administration, Seminal Articles

A seminal article is defined by two necessary and sufficient characteristics: it must have become a reference research within the subject by the number of citations that other researchers have referenced and by maintaining its validity over the years. Next, **Table 1** presents the seminal articles on the subject of research in Public Administration. In other words, these are the articles most recognized by the scientific community that studies Public Administration. They were obtained from Scopus, under the search criteria “public administration” in the title of the contributions, and were ordered from highest to lowest according to the number of citations. The publications provide a clear perception of the diversity and scope that this topic has had in recent years.

Without attempting an exhaustive qualitative analysis, which required specialized software such as “Atlas.ti”, would distort the decisive path of the research question, moving to another type of article and compromising the reasonable extension of the work presented, the essential contributions of the most representative articles. This idea was also maintained for the analysis of review articles and classic books.

The authors O’Toole Jr (1997: p. 45) in their research posed the question: How well equipped are today’s public administrators to face the challenges they face due to the participation of companies, non-profit organizations, other government units and even clients in complex patterns of program operations? Not very good, if judged by the extent to which professionals and academics have incorporated the concept of the network and its implications in their own work. Discussions in the field contain little to help practicing managers cope with network setup. In fact, conventional theory can backfire when inappropriately applied to network contexts. And yet these arrangements are now consistent and increasingly important. Professionals must begin to incorporate the concept of the network into their administrative efforts. The challenge for academics is to conduct research that illuminates this neglected aspect of contemporary management. The author outlines a set of agendas that offer perspectives to help address this need.

Table 1. Seminal articles in public administration.

Title	Authors	Year	No. of citations	Reference
Treating Networks Seriously: Practical and Research-Based Agendas in Public Administration	O'Toole Jr, L. J.	1997	641	(O'Toole Jr, 1997)
From old public administration to new public management	Dunleavy, P. Hood, C.	1994	549	(Dunleavy & Hood, 1994)
The Question of Participation: Toward Authentic Public Participation in Public Administration	King, C. S. Feltey, K. M. Susel, B. O.	1998	389	(King, Feltey, & Susel, 1998)
From responsiveness to collaboration: Governance, citizens, and the next generation of public administration	Vigoda, E.	2002	317	(Vigoda, 2002)
Toward a public administration theory of public service motivation: An institutional approach	Vandenabeele, W.	2007	217	(Vandenabeele, 2007)

The scientific contribution of (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994: p. 9) begins by analyzing the now familiar idea of New Public Management (NPM) in light of previous management reform efforts, arguing that NPM has proven to be a fairly enduring agenda and consistent. Then the main criticisms of the NPM inside and outside the public service are reviewed, demonstrating the tensions and contradictions between the main criticisms. To resist, NPM must be able to accommodate different poles of criticism by modifying its agenda, trying to identify the areas where the shortcomings in NPM methods are most prominent. Finally, some future challenges for NPM are discussed: the perspective of results outside the conventional distinction of traditional and modern public management styles; the risk of inappropriate cloning; and quasi-constitutional questions about the core competencies of public sector agencies.

The publication (King et al., 1998: p. 317) asks: How can public participation processes be improved? This study uses interviews and focus group discussions to find some answers. The results suggest that improving public participation requires changes in the roles and relationships of citizens and administrators and in administrative processes. Specifically, we need to move away from static and reactive processes towards more dynamic and deliberative processes. The article suggests some practical steps to achieve these changes.

The author's work Vigoda (2002: p. 527) states that: The evolution of the New

Public Management movement has increased the pressure on state bureaucracies to be more receptive to citizens as clients. Without a doubt, this is an important advance in contemporary public administration, which is struggling in an ultra-dynamic market. However, along with such a welcome change in theory building and in the practical reconstruction of culture, modern societies still face a growth in citizen passivism; they tend to favor the easy chair of the client over the sweat and agitation of participatory participation. This article has two main objectives: First, to establish a theoretically and empirically grounded critique of the current state of the new managerialism, which obscures the importance of citizen action and participation by overemphasizing the (important) idea of responsiveness. Second, the article proposes some guidelines for the future development of the discipline. This progress is towards better collaboration and partnership between government and public administration agencies, citizens and other social actors such as the media, academia, and the private sectors and third parties. The article concludes that, despite the fact that citizens are formal “owners” of the state, property will continue to be a symbolic banner for the government-public administration-citizen relationship in a representative democracy. The movement’s alternative interplay between responsiveness and collaboration is more realistic for years to come.

The author [Vandenabeele \(2007: p. 545\)](#) in his scientific contribution expresses that: The Motivation of Public Service (MSP) is a prominent concept within the current public Administration, since it refers to the promotion of interested and altruistic public behavior. Although substantial empirical research is available on its nature and impact, little is known about the origins of MSP. Driven by cues provided by previous empirical research, this article seeks to develop a general theory of MSP, encompassing both the causes and consequences of MSP. Based on an interdisciplinary approach, the elements of institutional theory and motivational psychology merge, merging into an operational theory of M As an essential part of the study of research trends, it is necessary to assess the works that precede the present, in consideration it is presented the eight seminal articles on the subject in [Table 2](#).

Under the same declared approach, the first four articles of the aforementioned table were analyzed. The scientific contribution of the authors [Raadschelders and Lee \(2011: p. 19\)](#) questions:

What are the methodological and research trends in the content of public administration review papers during the last decade? From the perspective of the journal’s 70-year history, with the aim of “entangling” the creation of professional and academic knowledge, the thematic coverage since 2000 reflects a surprising continuity, emphasizing many of the “basic” administrative problems, such as planning, human resources, budget and public management. A marked increase in coverage is evident in the application of a more sophisticated quantitative statistical methodology, as well as in the number of female authors, while the number of professional authors decreased dramatically. Throughout the

Table 2. Seminal articles of bibliographic review.

Title	No. of citations	Reference
Trends in the Study of Public Administration: Empirical and Qualitative Observations from Public Administration Review, 2000-2009	61	(Raadschelders & Lee, 2011)
Electronic service delivery in public administration: Some trends and issues	50	(Bekkers & Zouridis, 1999)
Scholarly collaboration and productivity patterns in public administration: Analyzing recent trends	37	(Corley & Sabharwal, 2010)
A New Look at Comparative Public Administration: Trends in Research and an Agenda for the Future	26	(Fitzpatrick et al., 2011)
Reforming local public administration in Romania: Trends and obstacles	17	(Dragoş & Neamţu, 2007)
Trends in the Comparative Study of Public Administration	16	(Riggs, 1962)
Public Administration for Development: Trends and the Way Forward	12	(Puppim de Oliveira, Jing, & Collins, 2015)
Foundations and trends in performance management. A twenty-five years bibliometric analysis in business and public administration domains	11	(Cuccurullo, Aria, & Sarto, 2016)

turbulent first decade of the 21st century, three intellectual themes stood out: evaluations of new public management, connections between professionals and academics, and responsiveness to immediate social, economic, and political challenges. Given the constant demand for usable knowledge, scholars seem to have neglected attention to the historical context and epistemological foundations of the study.

The publication (Bekkers & Zouridis, 1999: p. 183) states that: Contemporary Dutch public administration increasingly uses new information and communication technologies (ICT) to support the provision of its services. As in many other European countries, Dutch municipalities experiment with one-stop shops. The national government has also started new experiments. For example, student loans. Students can use traditional paper forms to communicate with the agency, but they can also use their smart cards or the Internet. This scientific contribution studies the use of ICT for the provision of public services. We also explore the democratic implications of electronic service delivery. While the quality of public services can be improved with ICTs, their use can also lead to a departure from traditional constitutional democratic relations between the state and its citizens. This development may threaten some fundamental legal and

democratic guarantees, which are rarely taken into account by the main political coalitions.

The study (Corley & Sabharwal, 2010: p. 627) sustains that: previous studies have confirmed the interdisciplinary nature of the field of public administration and encouraged the exploration of an important indicator of interdisciplinarity: research collaboration. One way to explore patterns of collaboration is through the study of co-authorship among faculty members (Smart & Bayer 1986; Katz & Martin, 1997). In the field of public administration, studies on academic co-authorship and productivity are scarce. In this article, we use bibliometric data to explore patterns of collaboration in relation to productivity levels and the quality of publications in the field of public administration. Our study finds that the most productive academics, as well as those with the greatest impact, are less likely to collaborate than their colleagues. Our results also indicate that there are gender differences in patterns of collaboration and productivity within the field of public administration.

The article (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011: p. 821) highlights that intensified globalization, especially the need to learn more about how administrative reforms work effectively in different cultural contexts, requires public administration research to adopt perspectives comparative. How well is the field moving in that direction? The authors of this contribution present the results of a content analysis of 151 scientific publications of comparative study of the public administration from 2000 to 2009. The results indicate that the comparative research is based on theory and empirical research, making use of samples intentional and using a mixture of causality, description and exploration. Methodologically the subject varies widely, but most of the research focuses on European, Asian and North American countries. Comparative research is primarily qualitative, making extensive use of existing data. The authors recommend a better application of mixed methods, a greater use of culture as a key concept, and the integration of a wide range of social sciences to encourage more students, professionals, and academics to think and work comparatively. Three senior comparative scholars respond, sparking a fascinating and insightful dialogue on this seminal topic in public administration.

3.4. Public Administration, Relevant Works (Books)

The most referenced literature globally on public administration issues in its environment and practice is shown in **Table 3**.

In the same way as for the seminal articles and under the same criteria, the content of the three most relevant books was analyzed and an extract from them is exposed. The text entitled “Tradition and public administration” by the authors Painter, M. and Peters, BG published in 2012 by the Palgrave Macmillan publishing house, examines the persistence of administrative patterns in the face of pressures for globalization developing a concept of administrative traditions and describing the practices that exist around the world. They assess the impact of traditions on administrative reforms and the capacities of the government to

Table 3. Most consulted books at the international level in public administration.

Title	Authors	Editorial	Year	Reference
Tradition and public administration	Painter, M. P ters, B. G.	Palgrave Macmillan	2010	(Painter & Peters, 2010)
Madison's managers: Public administration and the constitution	Bertelli, A. M. Lynn Jr, L. E.	Johns Hopkins University Press	2006	(Bertelli & Lynn Jr, 2006)
Understanding e-government: Information systems in public administration	Homburg, V.	Routledge Taylor and Francis Group	2008	(Homburg, 2008)
Public Administration: The Interdisciplinary Study of Governmen	Raadschelders, J. C. N.	Oxford University Press	2011	(Raadschelders, 2011)
Governing electronically: E-government and the reconfiguration of public administration, policy and power	Henman, P.	Palgrave Macmillan	2010	(Henman, 2010)
Public administration and public management: The principal-agent perspective	Lane, J. E.	Routledge Taylor & Francis Group	2005	(Lane, 2005)
Reflections on public administration	Gaus, J. M.	University of Alabama Press	2006	(Gaus, 2006)
Policing the Roman Empire: Soldiers, Administration, and Public Order	Fuhrmann, C.	Oxford University Press	2012	(Fuhrmann, 2011)
In Defense of politics in public administration: A value pluralist perspective	Spicer, M. W.	University of Alabama Press	2010	(Spicer, 2010)
A new synthesis of public administration: Serving in the 21st century	Bourgon, J.	McGill-Queen's University Press	2011	(Bourgon, 2011)

change public administration (Painter & Peters, 2010). The text contains 274 pages.

The text of the authors Bertelli, A. M. and Lynn Jr, L. E. entitled "Madison's managers: Public administration and the constitution" published in 2006 by the Johns Hopkins University Press; Combining ideas from traditional thought and practice and contemporary political analysis, Madison managers present a constitutional theory of public administration in the United States. Anthony Michael Bertelli and Laurence E. Lynn Jr. argue that managerial responsibility in the US government depends on official respect for the separation of powers and a commitment to judgment, balance, rationality, and responsibility in manageri-

al practice. The authors argue that public management, the administration by unelected officials of public agencies, and activities based on the authority delegated to them by policymakers, derived from the principles of American constitutionalism, more clearly articulated by James Madison. Public management is, they argue, a constitutional institution necessary for successful governance under the separation of powers. To support their argument, Bertelli and Lynn combine two intellectual traditions that are often seen as antagonistic: modern political economy, which views public administration as controlled through negotiations between separate powers and organized interests, and traditional public administration, which emphasizes responsible implementation of established policies by legislatures and elected executives, respecting procedural and substantive rights imposed by the courts. These publications are mutually reinforcing, the authors argue, because they both present the role of constitutional principles in public management. Madison's *Managers* challenges academics and public management professionals by recognizing that the legitimacy and future of public administration depend on its constitutional foundations and its specific implications for management practice (Bertelli & Lynn Jr, 2006). The book spans 224 pages.

The text conceived by the author Homburg, V., entitled "Understanding e-government: Information systems in public administration" and published by the publisher Routledge Taylor and Francis Group in 2008 is reviewed: governments these days often boast of the efficiency of your electronic systems. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) apparently allow the public service to be cheaper, faster and more democratic. E-government has become another buzzword, the bright future of the public realm. However, critics claim that ICT's potential for democratic renewal is hampered by long-standing assumptions about how governments should function. But which point of view is closer to the truth? In this insightful and original volume, Vincent Homburg demonstrates how the use, form and impact of ICTs are, in fact, intertwined within the sociopolitical, economic and institutional aspects already established by government and Public Administration. Evangelical or fatalistic perspectives are discredited to show the different realities in which ICTs play a role in our daily lives. Using case studies and vignettes from across Europe and the US, the book looks at what these new technologies actually do and how they are analyzed through various levels of bureaucracy and convention. This is a timely addition to our understanding of what is meant by e-government. Understanding electronic government and information systems in Public Administration is put behind the political rhetoric. These aspects are defined as key readings for all students of public administration, political science, organization theory and information systems (Homburg, 2008). The text contains 131 pages.

When evaluating the study carried out, it is established that research in the area of Public Administration currently evolves in many directions with paths (trends) that channel and concentrate the prolific publication by the scientific community on this subject, an approach to what that the author considers the

most relevant are:

- 1) The social projection of the practices of the Public Administration.
- 2) Implementation of contemporary techniques and technologies in the design strategies of the public administration process.
- 3) Improving the effectiveness of public administration.
- 4) The complexity of the processes within the framework of the networks of action and interests.

There are research lines that have recent publications in increasing numbers and that show research potential due to their interest for the scientific community (incipient niches). Three of its exponents are: the relationships between social phenomena rooted in the human being and their effect on public administration, such as fraud explained through current tools, the globalized phenomena of public administration, such as the influence of models from one country to another. And the instability that characterizes current performances from the perspective of generational change and the new society

The research is limited to the English language. This decision is justified by the information represented in **Figure 11**. It is observable that more than 24 thousand scientific contributions in all their formats are in English languages, much higher than the 1258 in Spanish (This last analysis is obtained from the sum together of all sources).

When assessing the limitations of the research, the following is referenced: the documents analyzed, in their entirety, are in English, with the exception of those referring to introductory or methodological aspects, this fact was based on the previous paragraph; the documents are limited to: scientific article and specialized text or book; the databases or academic research catalogs considered are: Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect and Google Scholar, others such as EBSCO (not open Access), REDALYS, Scielo, DOAJ, WorldWideScience and others were not included.

In the form of a conclusive summary, the following is established: the bibliometric analysis in Scopus presented a marked tendency to growth in the number of investigations. The leading country in investigations is the United States

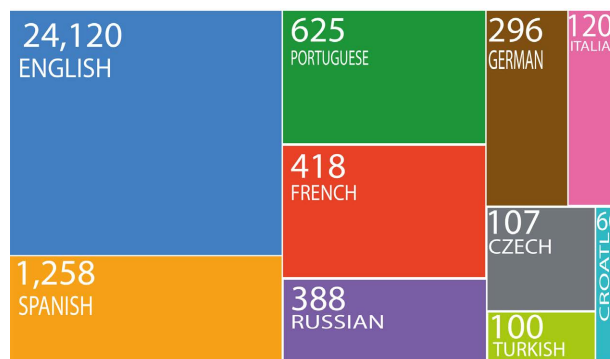


Figure 11. The languages that socialize research in Public Administration (Source: Prepared by the author, using the information from all the aforementioned databases and academic directories).

with a high margin of separation compared to Italy and the United Kingdom. The Erasmus University of Rotterdam leads the socialization of research in Public Administration with a line of research dedicated to the government the research areas with the greatest connectivity in scientific production with the Public Administration are: social sciences, business studies and management, and computer science research. The journals registered within the Scopus academic research directory, that most socialize public administration research are: Public Administration Review, International Review of Administrative Sciences, Administration and Society, International journal of Public Administration, Public Administration.

4. Conclusion

The bibliometric analysis from the VOSviewer contributed the following: in the network of indexing keywords (keyword index), the density of the terms is observed in the publications with a broad predominance of “public administration”, followed by “management”, “human” and “administrative reform” that make up four “clusters” with a high degree of connectivity with “comparative study”, “local government”, “public health administration”, “information technology” and “information management”. The relationship of the specialty with the different branches of knowledge is expressed. The dispersion and volume of the yellow dots is notorious in preprinter publications, which implies relatively recent research niches (summary of the map, **Figure 8**). In current research, the most co-occurring keywords that are used more frequently in the most recent research are “public administration research”, “tool”, “health”, “principle”. It is also observed the thematic evolution in the last 20 years (summary **Figure 9**). In the specialty the most productive author is Rosembloom, there are other classics such as: Cristesen, Brewer, Walker and Lodge. Dickinson’s preprinter volume is remarkable, which makes him a very productive author in it that is also observed the collaborative networks of these authors (summary **Figure 10**).

The detection and subsequent analysis of seminal articles, specialty articles and bibliographic review articles, the most relevant books grouped in descending order by number of citations, and the bibliometric study allowed us to answer the question: What is investigated in Public Administration? Four areas of research interest were visualized: the social projection of Public Administration practices, study and implementation of contemporary techniques and technologies in the strategies of conception of the public administration process, the improvement of the effectiveness of the public administration, the complexity of the processes within the framework of the networks of action and interests.

Emerging niches are the relationships between social phenomena rooted in the human being and their effect on public administration, such as fraud explained through current tools, globalized phenomena of public administration, such as the influence of models from one country to another, and instability. That characterizes current performances from the perspective of generational

change and the new society. As a general rule, these incipient investigative niches penetrate other branches that impact or are related to the Public Administration in both directions.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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