

Re-Organizing for Public Value and Reclaiming Post-Capitalist Possibilities

Abstract

This editorial introduces the Special Issue on public value, urging scholars to ask fundamental questions about what public value organizing entails. It proposes key conceptual dimensions to foster public value thinking, highlighting the contested nature of the concept and the subjective understanding of public value among different publics. Themes emerging from the contributions to the Special Issue include re-imagining the State's role in post-capitalistic regimes, re-designing approaches to economic planning, and re-experiencing public value through transforming relationships between planners and the planned, practicing active citizenship endeavours, and integrating environmental concerns into processes and systems of valuation. Problematizing the neoliberal misrecognition of the State as a legitimate institution for wealth creation, this special issue showcases its key role in fostering post-capitalist possibilities. The articles offer evidence and inspiration regarding innovating the ways we plan, design, produce and account for public value by leveraging what we conceptualize as new collaborative governance possibilities. Overall, we call for establishing stronger connections between existing studies on alternative economic, political, and democratic organizing with scholarship on public policy, strategic public management, transformative social innovation and social movements. Four areas for future research on post-capitalist governance are also proposed: State-businesses relationships beyond capitalism; changing conceptions of value including the value of care; municipal approaches towards community wealth building; re-imagining new public institutions for more participatory democracy.

Keywords: State, public value, public policy, social innovation, social movements; strategic public management; collaborative governance

This Special Issue is dedicated to reflecting on the role of the State and on how to re-organize for public value for promoting post-capitalist forms of organizing (e.g., Zandoni, 2020). The aim is to fill a gap given that, even if committed to post-capitalistic forms of organizing, critical organization studies has not much relied on the role of the State and on notions of public value. The focus has predominantly been on alternative forms of organizing within civil society, such as cooperatives and commons (e.g., Colombo et al., 2023; Pansera and Rizzi, 2020). While these alternative forms are significant, academic and policy discussions have tended to view them merely as grassroots initiatives or "manufactured" solutions to State failures (e.g., Brandsen et al., 2017). This perspective neglects the potential of these forms to serve as sites for new strategic governance arrangements that include the State and its policy tools for scaling initiatives both up and out (e.g., Bianchi, 2024; Sancino et al., 2024), thus reducing their capacity to generate transformative post-capitalist possibilities.

The neoliberal principles of the minimal State have dominated our societies in ever deepening ways since the 1970s. Critical organization studies has not completely escaped this, as its origins in the 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin wall, did not make of the State the location to envision alternatives. At best, analyses of privatization, austerity and calls for legislation to contain the market and firms have been produced (e.g. Orr and Bennett, 2023). This oversight implicitly falls into the neo-liberal ideological trap of not recognizing the State as a legitimate institution for wealth creation, something was clearly challenged when this Special Issue call was published in February 2021 amid the global destruction wreaked by the Covid-19 pandemic. At that moment in the history public services provided and/or funded by the State were (re)discovered as essential to save human lives and a dialectical twist was beginning to materialise: the provocation from many grassroots organizers and activists to radically re-imagine the basic contours of how our planet is organized.

Even as people lost jobs, livelihoods, and loved ones, and even within a period where policy decisions were further centralized into the hands of few public leaders (e.g., Rapelli and Saikkonen, 2020; Rullo, 2021), millions of people also took to the streets and social media to demand racial equality, workers' rights, public safety, healthcare, and a host of other rights (Della Porta, 2021; Rohlinger and Meyer, 2022). It can be hard now, looking back at that time, to remember many of those emergent ideas and experiences, and it may be easy to write off the radical thinking of 2020-2021 as idealistic indulgence.

The pandemic crisis interrogated the taken for grantedness of the market/private value as the cornerstone for organizing not only the economy, but also the State and society as a whole. The pandemic highlighted existing systemic inequities, which still persist. For one, wealth inequality increased significantly during the pandemic. As Forbes' Chief Content Officer observed: "The very, very rich got very, very richer" (Dang, 2021, p. XXX). Economic inequalities intersect with racism, health inequalities, and social and political exclusions to create what Sparke and Williams (2023) call a "neoliberal disease". They argue that "most striking among these neoliberal variants are new forms of reactionary and illiberal neoliberalism linked to the rise of authoritarian anti-globalists" (Sparke and Williams, 2023, p. XXX). Although many people want to forget the pandemic and return to "normal", it is important to remember that this normalcy perpetuates a series of crises which are forgotten and neglected by a capitalism only concerned with financial profit and capital accumulation. It is thus essential that we rethink public value considering the significant changes (and

continuities) created or exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and all the other crises the world is facing.

When envisioning 'value', the usual orientation is indeed towards the profit-making of corporations. Within our dominant political economic paradigm, the metrics of success revolve around monetary gain, relegating notions of public value, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability to, at best, a secondary status. This myopic fixation on financial profit not only distorts our perceptions of what is to be valued, but also often fosters exploitation and erodes the social fabric. The primacy of financial profit has become not only a guiding principle but inhabits the very essence of our valuation systems and has often resulted in a profound neglect of the intricate web of human relationships and the collective well-being of societies (Segal, 2023).

With this Special Issue we wanted to help shift the collective imagination concerning what value can be, prioritizing public value over private value and profit, recognizing that notions of value form the foundation of how we perceive and interpret our lives (Pitts, 2020). Asking fundamental questions of what public value organizing could be and become (Moore, 1995), and interrogating what we hold as value and valuable in life (Liu, 2021) is more significant now than ever, particularly in the current socio-economic-political landscapes. Here, the concept of public value can serve as a challenge to neoliberalism and its New Public Management, which in many ways marginalizes the role of the State as unproductive (Bozeman, 2007). We believe there is much to be gained by critical organization studies playing a part in pushing the boundaries of who and what come to be defined as valuable as well as who and what are excluded from such categorisations — something the authors whose articles appear in this Special Issue have done by embracing the publicness perspective on value (Bozeman, 2007).

This editorial proceeds by defining the concept of public value, discussing its origins and its relationships with the State as a political and administrative authority. Then, in the following section we expand the notion of the public beyond the State, providing a more multi-actor view of public value and its publics who might disagree on public value(s) and/or be not emerging because of varying systems of domination. The subsequent section introduces the papers in the Special Issue discussing how radically rethinking public value in theory and practice. In the last section we offer an open research agenda highlighting in particular four main areas for future research on re-organizing for public value.

Public Value

Public value has been conceptualized mainly among public administration scholars (e.g., Bryson et al., 2015; Moore, 1995; Meinhardt, 2019). Drawing from that literature, public value can be understood as the achievement of human progress in public spheres (including the environment) through the pursuit of societal goals as defined in constitutions and democratic institutions of territorial political communities (Benington and Moore, 2010). Meynhardt describes public value as value created for the benefit of society and a contribution to the common good as experienced by society, where value 'is situated in relationships between the individual and "society" (Meynhardt, 2019, p. 212).'

In contrast to 'private value', the term 'public value' indicates a shift towards democratic ideals (Bozeman and Crow, 2021) and demands a collective perspective in comprehending the concept of value (Healey, 2018). As Meynhardt states 'public value breaks with the existing notion of value creation as one that functions purely in financial terms. It includes understanding and harnessing moral, political or aesthetic value' (Meynhardt 2019, p. 11). This distinction is important, because a focus on collective and public value, rather than value at the individual and organizational level, challenges the prevailing system of global capitalism. This system, deeply ingrained in our societal fabric, prioritizes accumulation and individual consumption-based enjoyment, perpetuating a cycle that often contrasts with public priorities, such as collective well-being and social cohesion.

While public value can be interpreted in varied ways across different political communities and remains a contested concept (Benington, 2009), there are some key characteristics that still hold. First, public value is achieved collectively rather than individually, because any resources held in common necessarily imply a collective duty of care (Ostrom, 1990). Second, public value is rooted in a relational ontology of public goods, services, assets and resources, where the relational is constituted by socially generative relationships among people, places and times (Stiegler, 2012; Magatti, 2018). Third, public value encompasses the rights, duties, and aspirations of citizens, thus recalling a key, even if not exclusive, role for the State in public value issues (Bozeman, 2007; Milward et al., 2016). To this regard, according to Collington and Mazzucato in this Special Issue the 'concept of public value, despite its inherent limits and contradictions, remains a relevant concept for analyzing the evolving nature of citizens' demands on the State and the State's ability to meet them (Collington and Mazzucato, 2024, p. XXX).'

The State can be defined as a political and administrative authority of varying forms that organizes the boundaries of a territory, which may nevertheless 'be combined with other forms of political authority and broader patterns of spatial organization, resulting in different kinds of state and polity' (Jessop, 2016, p. 11). We also note the inherently contingent nature of statehood, namely its inseparability and porousness with civil society and private economic interests (Gramsci, 1971; Torfing et al., 2012). Although the State occupies a fundamental role in the economy across nearly all countries, it has largely been an afterthought in critical organization studies, with few exceptions (e.g., Currie et al., 2010; du Gay, 2000; Jagannathan & Rai, 2022; Lopdrup-Hjorth & du Gay, 2019; Saleem et al., 2023). In some ways the oversight is understandable, as the growth of neoliberalism has shifted the focus of critical scholars towards what can be thought of as the main site of power – increasingly stateless corporations. Indeed, it is worth remembering that corporations are enmeshed in the functioning of States, often erroneously presumed to be better equipped to promote public value thanks to their supposed commitments to efficiency, innovation, and cost reductions (Pitts, 2020).

However, for many decades now, even under capitalism, it is important to recognize that the State through its diverse tools of government (Salamon, 2022) has also provided an alternative to capitalistic logics and offered inspiration for how democratic logics may be deployed for organizing (Benz and Frey, 2007). One example is the community wealth-building model of Preston City Council in the UK, which uses the spending power of local institutions to invest in local businesses, with a mission to support co-operatives and enhance sociality and health

(Brown and Jones, 2021). Another example is related to initiatives to make a liveable public for future generations as the Welsh Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. While limited in power and resources, it is possible that others can learn from the experiences of Wales – its successes, limitations and resistances. Other examples deal with public services within health and social care that daily represents for many the only chance to survive; it is worth to remember that those services are only granted by the State either through public money and/or direct delivery. Our Special Issue thus highlights the importance of acknowledging the role of the (democratic) State in economic and political governance as a legitimate vehicle for pursuing collective goals and addressing societal issues. Non-Western models of economic development are clearly leveraging this role, although, unfortunately, often for purposes of domination rather than for pursuing social justice (e.g. Bloom and Sancino, 2019).

Expanding the notion of the public beyond the State

One implication of viewing the State as porous with civil society is to also acknowledge, in Gramscian fashion, that it is an important site of political contestation when it comes to determining which organizations can be considered ‘public’. In our call for papers we were clear that ‘public’ may incorporate the nation-State but in doing so needs to question and resist the normative ways in which the State is conceived. As highlighted powerfully by many feminist, anti-racist and decolonial scholars, notions of statehood tend to be strongly associated with the ‘somatic norm’ (Puwar, 2004) of the white, privileged male and their fantasies of discursive, economic, and militaristic domination. We are also moved, indeed provoked, by Stuart Hall’s (2017) reminder that post-colonial times do not equate to a banishing of the colonial but rather a world living with its potent, lingering, and violent norms. In contemporary societies, the colonial is ‘unravelling – inside the post-colonial, in the wake, in the devastating aftermath...[of] a disaster-littered, protracted, bloody and unfinished terrain’ (Hall, 2017: Loc 501). Elites work hard to maintain their continued social, economic, and political power within the State and to strengthen the institutions and processes that reinforce the structural arrangements that favour them (Rahman Khan, 2012; Táíwò, 2022). This is visible in the continued support for ultra nationalist and reactionary regimes, via discourses that feed from displaced resentment towards the marginalized (Pleyers, 2020).

However, as authoritarian States and formal institutions of democracy often remain closed to vast swathes of the global population, there are emergent energies opening new horizons through social movements and transformative social innovations that may intersect, rejuvenate and/or conflict with the State and/or businesses (Avelino et al., 2019). For example, during the pandemic active civil society organizations sustained communities during the worst of the pandemic and helped many people see that influencing and participating in the ‘public’ need not be far removed from their everyday lives (Aiken, 2020; Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2021; Littman et al., 2022; Moraes et al., 2020; Krlev et al., 2023). Importantly, ‘the public’ is not a social aggregation, but a state of mind that is socially constructed by (non)discourses, organizations and their activities (Meynhardt, 2019). Considering the constructed nature of ‘public’ also reminds us that there will always be disagreement regarding what is meant by it. Public value is often a contested terrain, given that ‘the public’ – as we saw during the pandemic - is constituted through and by multiple groups competing

for power, some with many more resources than others (e.g., Sancino et al., 2021), and some of whom might even be willing to leverage force and violence to achieve their goals.

The literature on public value has overlooked the organizing capacity of bottom-up initiatives, many of which emerge from and in response to the needs of those at the margins of society and operate outside and beyond the reach of the State (Calo et al 2023). Accordingly, expanding notions of who builds 'publics' through an organizational focus, we could learn a lot more about a range of actors and practices currently under-explored, despite being critically important to our present and future. Publics are assemblies (Hardt and Negri, 2017) made up of citizens who come together to reflect upon collective affairs and State actions and their relationships with polities, and to jointly discover and create new governance approaches and possibilities (Fung, 2002). The concept of "publics" is ontologically rooted in the idea of groups of active citizens, akin to Aristotle's notion of *homo politicus* and Hannah Arendt's concept of "active living" (1989). In public value theory, the notion of "publics" is particularly significant as it connects civil society, in all its forms, to democratic States. This connection is especially relevant for participatory forms of governance and democracy (Fung, 2006), while still recognizing the State's role and authority, particularly in situations where citizen assemblies may have destructive intentions. As Benington (2009, p. 246) noted, 'public value is beginning to emerge as an alternative to both rational/public choice theory and theories of public goods, providing a conceptual framework that not only informs and inspires the reform and improvement of public services but also deepens the democratic and deliberative process.'

This idea of discovering the pleasures of being human through being an active citizen part of multiple publics emerging around public value aspirations overcomes 'economic individualism, with its emphasis on individual liberty and each person's role as a producer and consumer' (Bozeman, 2007, p. 3). As noted by Bauman, paraphrasing Tocqueville, 'the individual is the citizen's worst enemy' (translation from Bauman, 2006, p. 28): the former often remains indifferent towards ideas like the common good or social justice, whereas the latter strives for personal well-being by promoting collective well-being. According to Arendt (1989), human beings should be understood as inherently relational. It is through coming together to create a political life that they discover the joys of interconnection. Still, the question of who is considered a citizen of public value necessitates addressing issues of equality and access to the State as fundamental boundary conditions. Unfortunately, these conditions are frequently not respected, particularly in authoritarian States around the globe, whether in the Global North or South. In such regimes, access to State resources and participation in public decision-making are often restricted, leading to significant disparities in who benefits from public value.

Examples of active publics can be found in the inspirational if often opinion-polarising organizing by young people that harnesses mass anxieties about climate change, using direct action in an effort to force responses from State and public (de Moor et al., 2021; Han and Ahn, 2020). Additionally, trade unions are adapting to changing expectations of who has a right to shape 'publics' and we note the rise in many global spaces of trade unionism, particularly amongst workers in sectors previously considered challenging to organize. Workers – in businesses like Amazon and Starbucks, but also in more traditionally unionised

contexts of public services, transport and logistics – have asserted their voices and claims within the public realm.

Radically rethinking public value in theory and practice: Introducing the papers in this Special Issue.

As the articles that follow demonstrate, our Special Issue reckons with contemporary political forms and possibilities in the wake of global crises and change. The potential to re-imagine public value is evident in new scales and strategies of social mobilization (Roglic and Palpacuer, 2024), the more subtle insertions of public value into New Public Management practices (Muñoz and Kimmitt, 2024), and calls to incorporate the environment (Quinn et al., 2024) and the ‘planetary household’ (Nishat-Botero, 2024). Furthermore, the Special Issue shows how democratic practices can promote effective collaborations in ‘smart cities’ (Thabit and Mora, 2024) and State involvement in innovating around the management of public value (Collington and Mazzucato, 2024).

Yousaf Nishat-Botero (in this issue) pushes us to re-envision democratic economic planning by developing the concept of *Oikonomia*, which recognizes the importance of the household, reproductive labour, and the ‘planetary household’ of the natural world, as well as the spheres of production and commodity exchange. To this end, Nishat-Botero develops a critical political ecology of planning that calls for a conscious and collective “organization of social metabolic re/production”. This project requires participatory and collective decision-making, as well as a transformation in the relationship between the planners and “the planned”, and the spheres of production and re-production.

Sara Thabit and Luca Mora expand our theoretical understanding of collaboration in smart cities rooted in assemblage thinking. They argue against the traditional model, in which collaborations are often preconceived arrangements, and instead propose greater flexibility and open-mindedness in how diverse urban actors — within and across sectors — can work together. This project requires valuing the knowledge of local actors, the willingness to form and dissolve partnerships as project needs change, and the construction of participatory models that allow citizens to play a variety of roles given their unique skills, resources, and competencies.

Martin Quinn, Marta Gasparin, Mark Williams, Michael Saren, Simon Lilley, William Green, Steven Brown, and Jan Zalasiewicz expand the concept of public value by examining how nature and the planet can be re-centred through questions about *who* we are doing things for and *what* we are doing. They propose a new concept, *New Public Value in the Anthropocene*, which emphasizes equilibrium between nature and humans, and calls for a global response to environmental crises. This new way of thinking about public value reorients priorities about which actions should be taken, and calls for more inclusive decision-making and mutualistic practices.

The article by Marija Roglic and Florence Palpacuer examines how local actors preserve public value in the face of harmful re-scaling projects. They focus on a case study of the Croatian peninsula of Pelješac and show how Local Action Groups resisted regulations by the European

Union by gathering knowledge across scales, crafting a new narrative, and reshaping the dominant organizational logic by deploying this alternative narrative. Ultimately, they show that these “dynamics of rescaling” enable local communities to protect and expand public value even in the face of multi-scalar challenges.

Pablo Muñoz and Jonathan Kimmitt examine the conditions under which policy makers and public managers shift from a New Public Management (NPM) framework, which leverages market resources to provide public services, towards Public Value Management, which values collaboration between service providers and the benefit of services to consumers. By analyzing the case of Social Impact Bonds (SIB), Muñoz and Kimmitt find that public value is incorporated into New Public Management through three practices: (1) Revaluing social interventions by incorporating collective objectives into the long-term goals of SIBs; (2) Refocusing relationships between people and data; and (3) Shifting accountability mechanisms through data storytelling. In these ways, key actors were able to negotiate and resist the dominant paradigm of NPM while inserting core principles of public value into their practices.

Rosie Collington and Mariana Mazzucato contend that as the goals of public value creation change, we must also innovate the forms of public value creation. They employ the learning and capabilities literature in evolutionary and institutional economics as a suitable theoretical lens for reappreciating the role of the State in public value production. By outsourcing the delivery of public goods to the market, they argue that public managers become limited in their ability to learn from and innovate the processes of service delivery. They advocate for the State to be re-embedded in the production of public value to ensure that the important lessons learned in identifying, creating and delivering goods and services are incorporated into new organizational practices and innovative forms of producing public value.

An open research agenda

As the contributions jointly show, reimagining and re-organizing democratic, economic, and political lives around public value necessitates grappling with various complex issues. This process entails fundamentally reshaping the foundations upon which societies operate, involving considerations such as wealth distribution, the allocation of agency, and overarching societal objectives. It also means fostering organizational conditions that prioritize civic wealth creation (Lumpkin and Bacq, 2019) and societal benefits from a collective, socially generative, and relational standpoint (Magatti, 2018), rather than seeking the accumulation of capital. It entails maintaining critical vigilance with regards to unequal power relations and uneven geographical development, with a view to contributing in some way to the dismantling of interlocking structures of domination. In times when billionaires multiply their share of global financial wealth and the private sector wields an ever-greater influence over governments, international governmental institutions and public discourses (Piketty, 2014), scholars of public value and social movements must explore when and how corporate value usurps and silences conversations about human and planetary value.

Overall, we believe that the articles in our Special Issue provide an important contribution for better understanding and promoting re-organizing for public value. Focusing on public value involves reviving the concept of the State as a legitimate institution, a notion that has been

overshadowed by neoliberal ideologies since the 1970s. This revival acknowledges that the State's legitimacy is conditional, depending on its democratic nature and the active participation of diverse publics. Moreover, the idea of public value, as shown by Roglic and Papalucier in this Special Issue, problematizes the notion of conflict inherent in the process of re-organizing for public value. Such efforts may be circumvented and obscured through rescaling and/or other practices. However, conflict must be nurtured within processes of public value generation if it is to be impactful as a means of challenging injustice and unequal relations of power.

Re-organizing for public value may extend beyond the State, encompassing a broader array of actors. As demonstrated by Thabit and Mora (2024), it is possible to create public value even within regimes that may seem opposed to certain public values. Creating value within resistant regimes necessitates a more innovative, entrepreneurial, and open approach, even under competitive norms that embrace a New Public Management paradigm (e.g., Muñoz and Kimmitt, 2024; Teasdale and Dey, 2019), as well as a more granular understanding of the role that entrepreneurial logics may play within cross-sectoral collaborations.

In this respect, post-capitalist approaches to governance centred on public value promise to be more radically inclusive by incorporating the efforts of local communities, non-governmental organizations, and other non-state actors. This brings us to the notion of *possibilities*. The articles written by Nishat-Botero, Quinn et al., and Collington and Mazzucato share the idea of innovating the ways we plan, design, produce and account for public value by proposing new collaborative governance possibilities, where - as Thabit and Mora highlight - assemblage thinking and relational and fluid approaches appear more suitable for understanding and discovering how post-capitalist endeavors may emerge and be sustained. By collaborative governance possibilities we mean the practices of re-imagining new public institutions and multi-actor and multi-sector configurations aimed at addressing social problems, empowering publics, regenerating social relations, and reassessing what is collectively valuable, from the perspective of humanity as well as the environment (Sancino, 2022).

By centring our political-economic system on notions of public value — emphasizing social welfare, environmental stewardship, and an equitable distribution of resources — we can realign our priorities. In this respect, envisioning possibilities for post-capitalist governance involves recognizing the power disturbances inherent in such transformative projects, as highlighted by Zanoni (2020). Capitalism, with its emphasis on accumulative growth and individualism has compressed civic behaviours that are crucial for a vibrant, democratic society. According to Adler (2019), capitalism is fundamentally incompatible with true democracy because it prioritizes market values of productivity over democratic principles. Providing a meaningful alternative to capitalist logics of value thus requires a shift in everyday practices towards a differently embodied governmentality, enacted through micro-practices that promote cooperation, sustainability, and collective well-being. Both the State and local communities can serve as crucial sites for this transformation, fostering environments where post-capitalist principles can flourish. By theorizing everyday civics both within and beyond the state, we can develop a richer understanding of how ordinary actions contribute to creating a more equitable and democratic society (Ansell and Torfing, 2021). This approach, also defined by some scholars as “new municipalism” (Bianchi, 2024), underscores the

importance of grassroots initiatives and local governance as incubators for innovative governance models that challenge the dominant capitalist paradigm.

As a final note, we offer four promising future research areas for re-organizing for public value, reflections that have been stimulated by the process of engaging with the articles that comprise this Special Issue.

The first involves redefining the role of the State and democratic authority in relation to business to challenge profit-driven and extractive economic growth paradigms. Harvey (2019) highlights how conventional spatial logics of statehood, often favouring corporate interests, may also harbour alternative conceptions of value conflicting with capital's relentless pursuit of expansion. Understanding the State's potential in post-capitalism is crucial, as shown by some papers in the Special Issue. As Mazzucato (2021) argued, the State is the only institution with the power to shape markets and direct economic activity in socially desirable directions – via 'missions' – to achieve publicly accepted outcomes. Similarly, the kind of democratic planning envisaged by Nishat-Botero might potentially be implemented by any public organization around collective goals and regulations, and authority can legitimately be pursued by the State to devise new governance practices centred on the idea of New Public Value in the Anthropocene, as proposed by Quinn et al. (2024). While States under more authoritarian regimes may face greater barriers to progressive change, we cannot dismiss the role of the State when talking about social justice, grand challenges and sustainable development goals, a role which is usually dismissed by traditional management scholarship (George et al., 2016). The role of the State in post-capitalism demands deeper scrutiny because it has the resources and capabilities to serve as a potent force for exploring alternatives to capitalism.

A second promising area deals with changing conceptions of what value might include. We are particularly interested in the emancipatory possibilities of care for transforming public value. Care, or the lack of it, should certainly be a key concern of re-organizing value in societies, with care potentially approached as something that drives micro practices and macro policies – from care for the disabled and elderly through to care for nature on a global scale (The Care Collective, 2020; Segal, 2023). Notions of care and its value for a vibrant public realm that enhances freedoms bring us to questions of value that fly under the radar of mainstream public discourse – particularly the care that (re)produces human beings as empathetic, skilled, healthy and productive community members (Stiegler, 2012). Social reproduction theory, much overlooked in organization studies, with some notable exceptions (e.g. Daskalaki et al., 2021; Zanoni, 2019), offers one important way to understand how the vital work of feeding, cleaning and nourishing a population is marginalized, even discarded from considerations of value that are deeply gendered, racialised and classed (Bhattacharya, 2017). Yet looking for value in currently marginalized social positions allows for a potentially transformative reframing of what is valuable work in societies – and indeed encourages us to look beyond salaried workplaces for value. What social reproduction theory helps us achieve (other conceptual approaches will also be relevant, of course) is a decentring of the kind of agency most taken for granted as providing value – in public, but also in private, in homes and communities, as well as at work. Such approaches should help us see the networks of interdependencies that enable or hinder certain forms of value from emerging. They also imply an ontological change of perspective which favours a shift from individualization to

individuation in relation to the environment and with other human beings, given that – to generate public value – people must be in a position to take care of their communities and the natural world (Healy, 2018).

A third area of research involves developing a municipal, communitarian, and spatial approach to organizational theorizing, focusing on collaborative governance possibilities in democratic jurisdictions. This approach aims to understand civic wealth creation (Lumpkin and Bacq, 2019) beyond narrow organizational conceptions, especially in our era of increasingly digital civilization characterized by large planetary space of financialized flows. Undoubtedly the forces of capital shape our spaces in profound ways, influencing what we come to value in our urban, rural and semi-rural spaces. The contours of our geography and how we come to experience value in our communities is haunted by the ghosts of economic relations past – shuttered shops, rusting industrial structures and communities gutted of secure jobs. Meanwhile, the economic relations of the present operate in very proximate ways, uprooting and pushing low-paid, often immigrant workers further into the peripheries of cities (Collins, 2016), waves of gentrification and the privatisation of space closing out possibilities for generating value through collectively owned and sustained infrastructures (Bautista-Hernández, 2020).

A fourth area refers to the pivotal role that scholars might play in highlighting and helping to overcome people's disconnection from public institutions. We empathise with such feelings of distance and/or distrust. This is a world where political choice is often reduced to deciding between bigoted nationalisms or more of the same neoliberal fare, and when State machinery is still too often geared towards exclusion, punitive measures and violence. Scholars of public value may yet, however, be advocates of a different kind of public institution. Our focus can be upon what have traditionally been held as public bodies, civil society or on making businesses more accountable to public values. We are still confounded by the reluctance of the business world to mention the words 'public value', let alone embrace a more ambitious discourse on public values such as sustainability, equity, diversity and inclusion, and/or social and environmental impact. Between the role of scientists and activists, there is also a role for academics as designers and facilitators of new institutions, where different publics may emerge spontaneously, be connected and empowered for public value generation.

We hope that this Special Issue connects with existing studies on alternative economic, political, and democratic organizing (e.g., Zaroni et al., 2017). We call for establishing stronger connections with these studies and with scholarship on public policy (e.g. Howlett, 2019; Salamon, 2002), strategic public management (e.g. Bryson et al., 2021; Greve and Ysa, 2023), transformative social innovation (e.g. Avelino et al., 2019), and social movements (e.g. Della Porta, 2020), among others. Additionally, we aim to extend these perspectives towards those that show promise for changing systems in a radical rather than reformist way. For doing so, we argue that organization studies, and especially critical approaches, should not neglect the role of public policy, the State and how social movements may enter and/or influence multi-scalar policy and political processes. Finally, we hope that this Special Issue can nurture future scholarship and activism, prioritizing value for all – public value – as a commitment to social and environmental justice, a fidelity that demands sustained and relational care for all life on this planet.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all the contributors to the Special Issue including authors and reviewers, as well as the Editors Raza Mir and Patrizia Zanoni for their comments to this manuscript and support throughout all the Special Issue project.

References

- Aiken, M. (2020). Civic and community action in times of crisis. Institute for Voluntary Action Research. <https://www.ivar.org.uk/civic-and-communityaction-in-times-of-crisis/>. Accessed on July 13, 2020.
- Adler, P. S. (2019). *The 99 percent economy: How democratic socialism can overcome the crises of capitalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Ansell, C., & Torfing, J. (2021). *Public governance as co-creation: A strategy for revitalizing the public sector and rejuvenating democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Arendt H., (1998), *Vita activa. La condizione umana*, Bompiani, Milano.
- Avelino, F., Wittmayer, J. M., Pel, B., Weaver, P., Dumitru, A., Haxeltine, A., ... & O'Riordan, T. (2019). Transformative social innovation and (dis) empowerment. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 145, 195-206.
- Bauman Z., (2009), *Capitalismo parassitario*, Editori Laterza, Bari.
- Bautista-Hernández, D. A. (2020). Commuting inequality, role of urban structure, and identification of disadvantaged groups in the Mexico City metropolitan area. *Journal of Transport and Land Use*, 13(1), 159–183.
- Benington (2009) Creating the Public In Order To Create Public Value?, *Intl Journal of Public Administration*, 32:3-4, 232-249
- Benington, J., & Moore, M. H. (Eds.). (2010). *Public value: Theory and practice*. Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Benz, M., & Frey, B. S. (2007). Corporate governance: What can we learn from public governance?. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(1), 92-104.
- Bhattacharya, T. (2017). *Social reproduction theory: Remapping class, recentering oppression*. Pluto.
- Bianchi, I. (2024). The democratising capacity of new municipalism: beyond direct democracy in public–common partnerships. *Policy & Politics*, 1, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1332/03055736Y2024D000000033>
- Bloom, P., & Sancino, A. (2019). *Disruptive Democracy: The Clash between Techno-Populism and Techno-Democracy*. SAGE Publications Limited.
- Bozeman, B. (2007). *Public values and public interest: Counterbalancing economic individualism*. Georgetown University Press.
- Bozeman, B., & Crow, M. M. (2021). *Public values leadership: Striving to achieve democratic ideals*. JHU Press.
- Brandsen, T., Trommel, W., & Verschuere, B. (2017). The state and the reconstruction of civil society. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 83(4), 676-693.
- Bryson, J. M., Crosby, B. C., & Bloomberg, L. (Eds.). (2015). *Public value and public administration*. Georgetown University Press.
- Bryson, J. M., Barberg, B., Crosby, B. C., & Patton, M. Q. (2021). Leading social transformations: Creating public value and advancing the common good. *Journal of Change Management*, 21(2), 180-202.
- Calo, F., Sancino, A., & Scognamiglio, F. (2024). Social enterprise and social entrepreneurship in the Public Administration (PA) scholar field: a bibliometric analysis and some conceptual considerations. *Public Management Review*, 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2024.2311181>
- The Care Collective. (2020). *The care manifesto: The politics of interdependence*. Verso.
- Collington, R., & Mazzucato, M. (2024), *Beyond Outsourcing: Re-embedding the State in Public Value Production*, *Organization*,

- Collins, F. L. (2016). Migration, the Urban Periphery, and the Politics of Migrant Lives. *Antipode*, 48(5), 1167–1186. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12255>
- Currie, G., Ford, J., Harding, N., & Learmonth, M. (Eds.). (2010). *Making public services management critical*. Routledge.
- Dahl, A., & Soss, J. (2014). Neoliberalism for the common good? Public value governance and the downsizing of democracy. *Public Administration Review*, 74(4), 496-504.
- Dang, S. (2021, April 6). Bezos, Musk top Forbes' record-setting billionaire list. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/bezos-musk-top-forbes-record-setting-billionaire-list-2021-04-06/>
- Daskalaki, M., Fotaki, M., & Simosi, M. (2021). The gendered impact of the financial crisis: Struggles over social reproduction in Greece. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 53(4), 741-762.
- de Moor, J., De Vydt, M., Uba, K., & Wahlström, M. (2021). New kids on the block: Taking stock of the recent cycle of climate activism. *Social Movement Studies*, 20(5), 619–625. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2020.1836617>
- Della Porta, D. (2020). *How social movements can save democracy: Democratic innovations from below*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Della Porta, D. (2021). Progressive Social Movements, Democracy and the Pandemic. In G. Delanty (Ed.), *Pandemics, Politics, and Society: Critical Perspectives on the Covid-19 Crisis* (pp. 210–225). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
- Du Gay, P. (2000). In praise of bureaucracy: Weber-organization-ethics. In *Praise of Bureaucracy*. London: SAGE.
- Fernandes-Jesus, M., Mao, G., Ntontis, E., Cocking, C., McTague, M., Schwarz, A., Semlyen, J., & Drury, J. (2021). More Than a COVID-19 Response: Sustaining Mutual Aid Groups During and Beyond the Pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.716202>
- Fung, A. (2002). Creating deliberative publics: Governance after devolution and democratic centralism. *The Good Society*, 11(1), 66–71.
- Fung, A. (2006). Varieties of participation in complex governance. *Public Administration Review*, 66(s1), 66-75.
- George, G., Howard-Grenville, J., Joshi, A., & Tihanyi, L. (2016). Understanding and tackling societal grand challenges through management research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(6), 1880-1895.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). Selections from the prison notebooks (p. 276). London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Greve, C., & Ysa, T. (Eds.). (2023). *Handbook on strategic public management*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Han, H., & Ahn, S. W. (2020). Youth Mobilization to Stop Global Climate Change: Narratives and Impact. *Sustainability*, 12(10), Article 10. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12104127>
- Hall, S. (2017). *Familial stranger: A life between two islands*. Penguin.
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2017). *Assembly*. Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2019). *Spaces of global capitalism: A theory of uneven geographical development*. London: Verso.
- Healey, P. (2018). Creating public value through caring for place. *Policy & Politics*, 46(1), 65-79.
- Jagannathan, S., & Rai, R. (2022). The necropolitics of neoliberal state response to the Covid-19 pandemic in India. *Organization*, 29(3), 426-448.
- Howlett, M. (2019). *Designing public policies: Principles and instruments*. Routledge.

- Jessop, B. (2016). Territory, politics, governance and multispatial metagovernance. *Territory, politics, governance*, 4(1), 8-32.
- Krlev, G., Wruk, D., Pasi, G., & Bernhard, M. (Eds.). (2023). *Social economy science: transforming the economy and making society more resilient*. Oxford University Press.
- Liu, H. (2021). *Redeeming leadership: An anti-racist feminist intervention*. Bristol University Press.
- Lopdrup-Hjorth, T., & du Gay, P. (2020). Speaking truth to power? Anti-bureaucratic romanticism from critical organizational theorizing to the White House. *Organization*, 27(3), 441-453.
- Magatti, M. (2018) (ed.), *Social Generativity – A Relational Paradigm for Social Change*. Routledge: London/New York.
- Mazzucato, M. (2015). *The entrepreneurial state: Debunking public vs. private sector myths*. Anthem Press.
- Mazzucato, M. (2021). *Mission economy: A moonshot guide to changing capitalism*. Penguin: Allen Lane-Penguin.
- Meynhardt, T. (2019). Public value: Value creation in the eyes of society. In *Public value* (pp. 5-22). Routledge.
- Milward, B., Jensen, L., Roberts, A., Dussauge-Laguna, M. I., Junjan, V., Torenvlied, R., ... & Durant, R. (2016). Is public management neglecting the state?. *Governance*, 29(3), 311-334.
- Moore, M. H. (1997). *Creating public value: Strategic management in government*. Harvard university press.
- Muñoz, P., Kimmitt, J. (2024), Outcomes-based Contracts and the Hidden Turn to Public Value Management, *Organization*
- Littman, D. M., Boyett, M., Bender, K., Dunbar, A. Z., Santarella, M., Becker-Hafnor, T., Saavedra, K., & Milligan, T. (2022). Values and Beliefs Underlying Mutual Aid: An Exploration of Collective Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*, 13(1), 89–115.
- Lumpkin, G. T., & Bacq, S. (2019). Civic wealth creation: A new view of stakeholder engagement and societal impact. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 33(4), 383-404.
- Moraes, C., Santos, J., & Assis, M. P. (2020). “We Are in Quarantine but Caring Does Not Stop”: Mutual Aid as Radical Care in Brazil. *Feminist Studies*, 46(3), 639–652. <https://doi.org/10.1353/fem.2020.0048>
- Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the political*. Routledge.
- Nishat-Botero, Y. (2024), Planning’s Ecologies: Democratic Planning in The Age of Planetary Crises, *Organization –*
- Orr, K., & Bennett, M. (2023). Imagine there’s no heaven: Imaginaries of local government austerity. *Organization*, 30(5), 892-910.
- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge university press.
- Pansera, M., & Rizzi, F. (2020). Furbish or perish: Italian social cooperatives at a crossroads. *Organization*, 27(1), 17-35.
- Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press.
- Pitts, F. H. (2020). *Value*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Pleyers, G. (2020). The Pandemic is a battlefield. Social movements in the COVID-19 lockdown. *Journal of Civil Society*, 16(4), 295–312. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2020.1794398>
- Puwar, N. (2004). *Space invaders: Race, gender and bodies out of place*. Berg.

Rahman Khan, S. (2012). The Sociology of Elites. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 38(1), 361–377. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145542>

Quinn, M., Gasparin, M., Williams, M., Saren, M., Lilley, S., Green, W., Brown, S., Zalasiewicz, J. (2024), Re-Organizing for Public Value in the Anthropocene, *Organization*

Rapeli, L., & Saikkonen, I. (2020). How will the COVID-19 pandemic affect democracy?. *Democratic Theory*, 7(2), 25-32.

Roglic, M., Palpacuer, F. (2024), Playing the Scales: A Strategy Adopted by Resistance Coalitions for Public Value Creation, *Organization*,

Rohlinger, D. A., & Meyer, D. S. (2022). Protest During a Pandemic: How Covid-19 Affected Social Movements in the United States. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 00027642221132179. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642221132179>

Rullo, L. (2021). The COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the personalization of the government in Italy. *International Journal of Public Leadership*, 17(2), 196-207.

Saleem, A., Khan, F. R., & Martin De Holan, P. (2023). “The watchdog is siding with the thieves”: Failing neoliberal policies and successful derisking in the Global South. *Organization* <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505084231207698>

Salamon, L. (2002). *The tools of government: A guide to the new governance*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sancino, A., Garavaglia, C., Sicilia, M., & Braga, A. (2021). New development: Covid-19 and its publics—implications for strategic management and democracy. *Public Money & Management*, 41(5), 404-407.

Sancino, A. (2022). *Public value co-creation: A multi-actor & multi-sector perspective*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Sancino, A., Scognamiglio, F., Corvo, L., Imperiale, F., & Pasi, G. (2024). Institutionalizing experimental places for inclusive social innovation: From utopias to heterotopias. *Voluntas: international journal of voluntary and nonprofit organizations*, 35(2), 240-252.

Segal, L. (2023). *Lean on me: A politics of radical care*. London: Verso.

Sparke, M., & Williams, O. D. (2023). Pandemic Co-pathogenesis: From the Vectors to the Variants of Neoliberal Disease. In A. W. Cafruny & L. Simona Talani (Eds.), *The Political Economy of Global Responses to COVID-19* (pp. 293–318). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-23914-4_13

Stiegler B. (2012), *Reincantare il mondo: il valore spirito contro il populismo industriale*, Orthotes Editrice, Napoli.

Táiwò, O. O. (2022). *Elite Capture: How the Powerful Took Over Identity Politics*. Haymarket Books.

Teasdale, S., & Dey, P. (2019). Neoliberal governing through social enterprise: Exploring the neglected roles of deviance and ignorance in public value creation. *Public Administration*, 97(2), 325-338.

Thabit, S., & Mora, L. (2023). The collaboration dilemma in smart city projects: Time to ask the right questions. *Organization*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505084231183949>

Torring, J., Peters, B.G., Pierre, J., Sørensen, E. (2012). *Interactive governance: Advancing the paradigm*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Wilson, S. (2020). Pandemic leadership: Lessons from New Zealand’s approach to COVID-19. *Leadership*, 16(3), pp. 279-293.

Zanoni, P. (2019). Labor market inclusion through predatory capitalism? The “sharing economy,” diversity, and the crisis of social reproduction in the Belgian coordinated market economy. In *Work and Labor in the Digital Age*, 33:145-164).

Zanoni, P. (2020). Prefiguring alternatives through the articulation of post-and anti-capitalistic politics: An introduction to three additional papers and a reflection. *Organization*, 27(1), 3-16.

Zanoni, P., Contu, A., Healy, S., & Mir, R. (2017). Post-capitalistic politics in the making: The imaginary and praxis of alternative economies. *Organization*, 24(5): 575-588.



Citation on deposit: Sancino, A., Fahlberg, A., Liu, H., & Smolović Jones, O. (2024). Re-organizing for public value and reclaiming post-capitalist possibilities. *Organization*, 31(7), 1021-1034. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505084241269759>

For final citation and metadata, visit Durham

Research Online URL: <https://durham-repository.worktribe.com/output/2971314>

Copyright statement: This accepted manuscript is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>