

## Political socialization: A science mapping research

Atif Çiçekli<sup>2</sup>, Önder Eryılmaz<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Amasya City Governorship, Amasya, Türkiye; <sup>3</sup> Amasya University, Department of Turkish Language and Social Sciences Education, Amasya, Türkiye.

### ABSTRACT

Political socialization is a dynamic process in which individuals shape their political identities and attitudes, influenced by various factors such as family, educational institutions, media, and social environments. This study examines the academic literature on political socialization through bibliometric analysis, assessing the development of the field, the most cited works, collaborations among researchers, and trending topics. Analyzing 1,175 articles published between 1976 and 2024 in the Web of Science (WoS) database, this research identifies changes and trends in scientific output over time. The findings indicate a significant increase in studies on political socialization since 2002, with special emphasis on the increasing role of social media and digital platforms in shaping political awareness. While political socialization is essential for fostering democratic participation, it is also vulnerable to populist manipulations. This study explores how political socialization shapes individuals' political engagement, how it intersects with various disciplines, and the global distribution of scientific production in the field, aiming to guide future research. The results highlight the need for further investigation into the influence of social media on young people's political attitudes and how populist narratives shape political socialization.

### KEYWORDS

Political socialization, bibliometrics, science mapping.

## Siyasal sosyalizasyon: Bir bilimsel haritalama çalışması

### ÖZET

Siyasal sosyalleşme, bireylerin siyasi kimlik ve tutumlarını şekillendiren, aile, eğitim kurumları, medya ve sosyal çevre gibi çeşitli aktörler tarafından yönlendirilen dinamik bir süreçtir. Bu çalışma, siyasi sosyalleşme konusundaki akademik literatürü bibliyometrik analiz yöntemiyle inceleyerek, alanın gelişimini, en çok atıf alan çalışmaları, araştırmacılar arasındaki işbirliklerini ve trend konuları değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Web of Science (WoS) veritabanında 1976-2024 yılları arasında yayımlanan 1.175 makalenin analizi, bu alandaki bilimsel üretimin zaman içindeki değişimini ve eğilimlerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular, 2002 yılından itibaren siyasi sosyalleşme üzerine yapılan araştırmalarda dikkate değer bir artış yaşandığını, özellikle sosyal medya ve dijital platformların siyasi bilinç üzerindeki etkisinin giderek daha fazla önem kazandığını göstermektedir. Siyasi sosyalleşmenin demokratik katılımı artıran bir süreç olmasının yanı sıra, popülist manipülasyonlara da açık olduğu belirlenmiştir. Çalışma, siyasi sosyalleşmenin bireylerin siyasi katılımını nasıl şekillendirdiğini, bu sürecin farklı disiplinlerle nasıl kesiştiğini ve bilimsel üretimin küresel dağılımını inceleyerek gelecekteki araştırmalara yol göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Sonuçlar, sosyal medyanın gençlerin siyasi tutumları üzerindeki etkisi ve popülist söylemlerin siyasi sosyalleşmeye yön verdiği konularının daha fazla araştırılması gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

### ANAHTAR KELİMELER

Siyasal sosyalleşme, bibliyometri, bilimsel haritalama.

## Introduction

Political socialization is a dynamic and social process through which individuals acquire knowledge of norms, values, political systems, and ideological structures, thereby shaping their political identities and orientations. Beginning in early childhood, this process is influenced by various agents of socialization such as the family, educational institutions, media—and particularly in today's context—social media, political parties, and leaders. Political socialization shapes not only the nature and extent of an individual's political involvement on multiple levels, but also plays a key role in incorporating the individual into the political system to support the sustainability of democratic governance (Almond & Verba, 1963). The notion of political socialization emerged in political science and sociology literature during the 1950s and gained significant prominence as a fundamental element for the preservation of democratic systems, particularly after Almond and Verba's influential study *The Civic Culture* (1963). Framing their analysis within systems theory, Easton and Dennis (1970) underscored the essential role of political socialization in preserving the political system, as it cultivates citizens' acceptance of, loyalty to, and defense of the system's legitimacy through values internalized from an early age.

Various theoretical frameworks on political socialization provide distinct insights into how individual political identity is shaped and how this process influences society at large. The structural-functionalist perspective conceptualizes political socialization as a means of promoting social cohesion and maintaining stability (Parsons, 1965). In contrast, the behaviorist approach emphasizes how individuals acquire political attitudes and behaviors (Almond & Verba, 1963). Critical theory and Marxist perspectives, however, interpret political socialization as an instrument through which dominant classes sustain political hegemony via the state's ideological apparatuses (Althusser, 1991). Meanwhile, the psychosocial approach seeks to examine the emotional and cognitive dimensions of individuals' relationships with the political system (Easton & Dennis, 1970). Contemporary research increasingly analyzes the role of digital and social media in shaping political identity by employing Foucault's discourse analytical lens, which highlights the ways in which political awareness is formed through dominant knowledge systems and power relations (Foucault, 2019a, 2019b).

The impact of political socialization can be observed not only in the formation of social consciousness but also in individuals' voting tendencies, participation in social movements, and engagement in political activism (Easton & Dennis, 1970). For example, individuals who are exposed to political discussions within their families from an early age often demonstrate greater interest in political processes than those without such early exposure. Similarly, the inclination of young people—who gain political awareness through social media and the internet—toward direct forms of action such as global environmental movements and social protests serves as a valuable example for understanding political socialization in practice (Foucault, 2019a). However, the susceptibility of this process to misinformation, political polarization, and populist manipulation also highlights the necessity of developing critical thinking skills as a prerequisite for healthy and balanced political socialization (Parsons, 1965).

Political socialization plays a key role not only in fostering civic engagement but also in embedding democratic norms and promoting societal harmony. Political parties, labor unions, and local authorities serve as key actors in promoting civic involvement, a cornerstone for sustaining a vibrant democratic culture (Althusser, 1991). In countries like Finland, the education system is structured to encourage empathetic engagement with diverse political perspectives, offering a successful example of how political polarization can be mitigated (Foucault, 2019b). Similarly, some municipalities in Türkiye showcase how political socialization can function in real-life settings through efforts like organizing public assemblies to boost civic involvement. Political socialization ultimately serves not only to integrate individuals into the political sphere but also to equip them with the cognitive and emotional capacity to understand diverse ideological standpoints and engage constructively with political pluralism (Almond & Verba,

1963). It should also be noted that a well-functioning political socialization process equips individuals with the capacity for political adaptability in the face of hegemonic, populist, or manipulative strategies employed by dominant actors through their instruments of power.

In the literature, political socialization has been examined not only for its role in enhancing democratic participation but also for its potential manipulative use in reinforcing populist tendencies. Mudde and Kaltwasser (2019) highlight that populist leaders use political socialization to steer public political thinking toward their own ideological positions. Particularly through the uncontrolled use of social media, individuals have become increasingly susceptible to political polarization, and the manipulation of political awareness by dominant forces has become a widespread phenomenon (Foucault, 2019b).

Analyzing scholarly studies on political socialization plays a vital role in assessing the topic's perceived importance, examining situational risks, and reinforcing its role in equipping individuals to confront significant democratic challenges like populism. This research is considered valuable for providing a general overview to scholars who plan to conduct research on political socialization or who seek to gain insight into the existing literature on the topic. Based on this significance, the main objective of the study is to systematically examine and evaluate the body of literature on political socialization from various perspectives. Based on this research objective, the study aims to explore the following questions:

- How has the volume of research on political socialization evolved over time?
- What are the leading publication sources for research on political socialization?
- Who are the researchers that have published the most studies on political socialization?
- What are the most highly cited works in the field of political socialization?
- In which countries have the majority of studies on political socialization been conducted?
- Which countries have collaborated most frequently in producing studies on political socialization?
- What have been the trending topics related to political socialization in different years?
- Which keywords appear most frequently in the literature on political socialization?

## Method

The science mapping technique was applied in this study to investigate different aspects of research on political socialization. Science mapping is used to visually analyze the development, structure, dynamics, characteristics, or prominent elements of a specific scientific field (Cobo, Lopez-Herrera, Herrera-Viedma & Herrera, 2012; Noyons, Moed & van Raan, 1999; Small, 1999). As this research intends to visually examine and assess political socialization across multiple variables, the science mapping technique was implemented.

## Documents

This study analyzed research on political socialization published in journals listed in the Web of Science (WoS) database. The WoS database was chosen for data collection because it is considered more suitable, consistent, and standardized for conducting scientific mapping studies (Bozkurt, Eryilmaz & Boyraz, 2021; Chen, Yang, Yang, Jiang & Zhou, 2014). Moreover, the Web of Science (WoS) database was selected over alternatives like PubMed because it indexes a wider range of journals in the social sciences (Falagas, Pitsouni, Malietzis & Pappas, 2008).

For the purpose of data collection, an appropriate search query was first formulated. The keyword "political socialization" was entered into the search engine, with the search field set to

"Topic" to ensure comprehensive coverage. The initial search yielded a total of 2,267 records. To refine the dataset, the Web of Science (WoS) database was selected as the source, resulting in 1,293 relevant publications. Subsequently, a filtering process was applied to exclude records from the year 2025, along with document types such as meeting notes, abstracts, editorial materials, summaries, corrections, clinical trials, letters, and retracted articles. Following this refinement, the final dataset comprised 1,175 documents. Detailed information regarding the included publications is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1** Information about documents

Variable	Result
Time-span	1976-2024
Document numbers	1175
Sources	597
Authors	1766
Single-authored studies	600
Multi-authored studies	575
References	45000
Keywords (Keyword Plus)	1286
Author keywords	2208

As presented in Table 1, a total of 1,175 studies published between 1976 and 2024 were analyzed based on the specified criteria. The dataset comprises contributions from 1,766 unique authors, citing approximately 45,000 references. A total of 1,286 keywords and 2,208 author-provided keywords are recorded across the documents. In terms of authorship patterns, 600 publications were written by a single author, while 575 were produced through co-authorship.

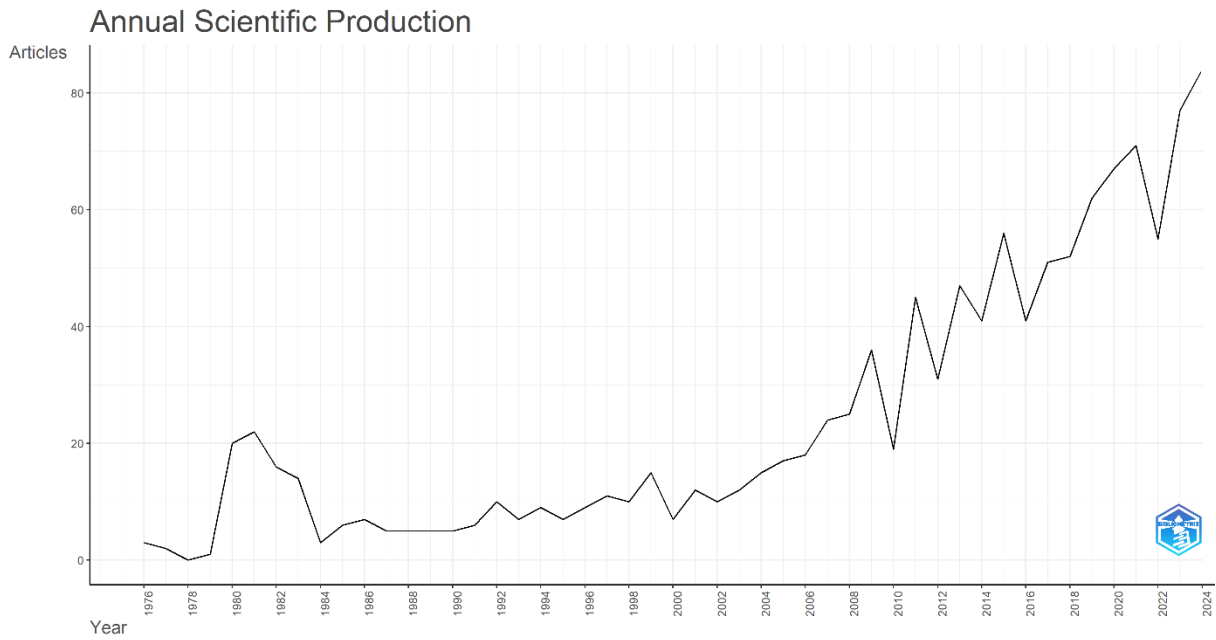
### Data analysis

In this study, data related to 1,175 publications and their corresponding sources were retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database using the "Full Record and Cited References" option. The data were downloaded in two separate plain text files and subsequently merged in a structured format suitable for analysis. The dataset was subjected to bibliometric analysis, a quantitative method widely used to examine scientific output. Bibliometric analysis involves a range of techniques including co-authorship, co-word, citation, co-citation, and bibliometric coupling analyses. These techniques enable the identification of collaboration patterns, thematic structures, intellectual influences, and knowledge networks within a specific field. In this context, the metadata of the retrieved studies were analyzed to explore the structural and dynamic characteristics of the research domain on political socialization (Büyükkıdık, 2022).

The data obtained were analyzed via the Bibliometrix package in the R software. Bibliometrix is fully compatible with Web of Science data formats and supports a wide range of analytical techniques including co-authorship, co-word, citation, co-citation, and bibliographic coupling analyses (Derviş, 2019; Guleria & Kaur, 2021). Due to these capabilities, the Bibliometrix package in R was employed in this study to analyze research on political socialization.

### Findings

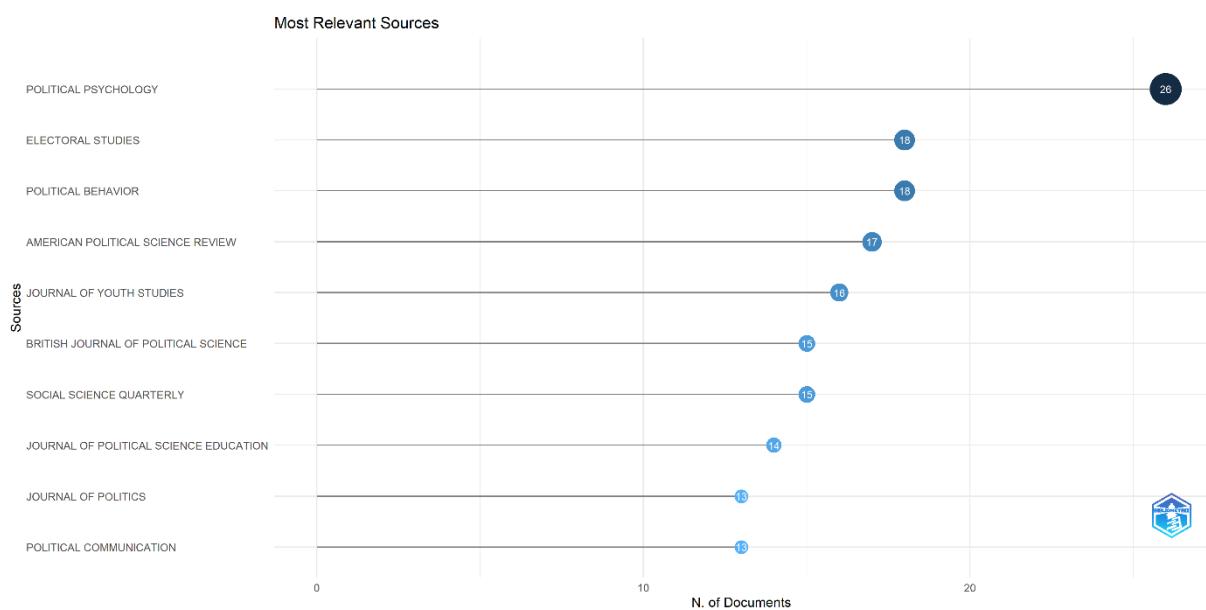
The initial stage of the analysis focused on identifying the temporal distribution of scholarly publications related to political socialization. This provides insight into the historical development and growing academic interest in the field over time. The annual scientific production on political socialization is illustrated in Graph 1, which presents the number of studies published each year within the scope of the dataset.



**Graph 1** Annual scientific production

As illustrated in Graph 1, there has been a quantitative increase in the number of articles on political socialization published in journals indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database. When examining the trend from 1974 to 2024, a general upward trajectory in the average number of publications per year is observed. However, it is also evident that the growth rate has experienced periods of stagnation and occasional decline. In particular, the period between 1984 and 2002 reflects a relatively stagnant phase, during which the number of studies on political socialization showed minimal growth. Following 2002, there was a noticeable and consistent rise in publications. Although there have been intermittent decreases in publication numbers since 2002, by the year 2024, the total number of articles on political socialization had increased more than eightfold compared to 2002.

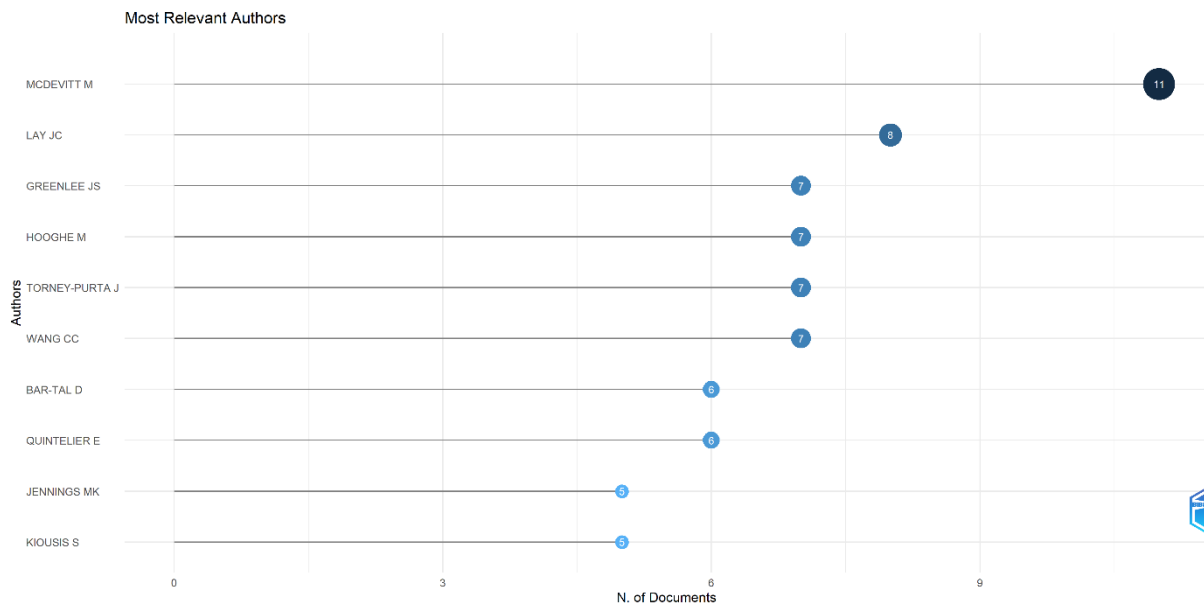
Another key finding of the study relates to the sources that have published the highest number of articles on political socialization. The journals with the most frequent publications on the topic are presented in Graph 2.



**Graph 2** Most relevant sources in the field of political socialization

As shown in Figure 2, Political Psychology has emerged as the leading journal in terms of publication volume on political socialization, publishing 26 relevant articles by the end of 2024. Following *Political Psychology*, the journals with the next highest number of publications on the topic include *Electoral Studies*, *Political Behavior*, *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Youth Studies*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Social Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Political Science Education*, *Journal of Politics*, and *Political Communication*. It is observed that the number of publications on political socialization in these journals is relatively close to one another.

The study also identified findings related to the researchers with the highest number of publications on political socialization. The most prolific authors in this field are presented in Graph 3.



**Graph 3** Researchers who have the most publications on political socialization

As illustrated in Figure 3, Michael McDevitt emerges as the most prolific contributor to the political socialization literature, with a total of 11 publications on the topic. A closer look at Professor Dr. An examination of McDevitt's broader research portfolio reveals that his academic interests extend into adjacent fields such as political communication, political identity, and media sociology. Following McDevitt, other prominent contributors to the literature on political socialization include respectively J. Celeste Lay, Janet S. Greenlee, Marc Hooghe, Judith Torney-Purta, Chia-Chou Wang, Daniel Bar-Tal, Ellen Quintelier, Myron Kent Jennings, and Spiro Kiousis.

Another finding obtained in the study is the most cited articles. Information regarding the most cited articles in the WoS database is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2** Information of the most cited studies on political socialization

Publications	TC	ACy
Mishler, W., & Rose, R. (2001). What are the origins of political trust? Testing institutional and cultural theories in post-communist societies. <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> , 34(1), 30-62. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414001034001002">https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414001034001002</a>	916	36.64
Galston, W. A. (2001). Political knowledge, political engagement, and civic education. <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> , 4, 217-234. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.4.1.217">https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.4.1.217</a>	710	28.40
Jennings, M. K., Stoker, L. & Bowers, J. (2009). Politics across generations: Family transmission reexamined. <i>The Journal of Politics</i> , 71(3), 782-799. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609090719">https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609090719</a> .	561	33,00
Smets, K. & van Ham, C. (2013). The embarrassment of riches? A meta-analysis of individual-level research on voter turnout. <i>Electoral Studies</i> , 32(2), 344-359. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2012.12.006">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2012.12.006</a> .	442	34,00

Weaver, V.M., Lerman, A.E. (2010). Political consequences of the carceral state. <i>American Political Science Review</i> , 104(4),817-833. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055410000456">https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055410000456</a>	334	20,88
McFarland, D. A., & Thomas, R. J. (2006). Bowling young: How youth voluntary associations influence adult political participation. <i>American Sociological Review</i> , 71(3), 401-425. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240607100303">https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240607100303</a>	325	16,25
Xenos, M., Vromen, A., & Loader, B. D. (2014). The great equalizer? Patterns of social media use and youth political engagement in three advanced democracies. <i>Information, Communication &amp; Society</i> , 17(2), 151–167. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.871318">https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.871318</a>	308	25,67
Campbell, D.E. (2008). Voice in the classroom: How an open classroom climate fosters political engagement among adolescents. <i>Political Behaviour</i> 30, 437–454. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-008-9063-z">https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-008-9063-z</a>	290	16,11
Kahne, J. E., & Sporte, S. E. (2008). Developing citizens: The impact of civic learning opportunities on students' commitment to civic participation. <i>American Educational Research Journal</i> , 45(3), 738-766. <a href="https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831208316951">https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831208316951</a>	280	15,56
Jost, J. T., Ledgerwood, A., & Hardin, C. D. (2008). Shared reality, system justification, and the relational basis of ideological beliefs. <i>Social and Personality Psychology Compass</i> , 2(1), 171-186.	266	14,78

TC: Total citations, ACy: Average citations per year

As shown in Table 2, it is observed that the study titled “*What Are the Origins of Political Trust? Testing Institutional and Cultural Theories in Post-Communist Societies*” by William Mishler and Richard Rose, published in 2001 in *Comparative Political Studies*, ranks first in terms of both total citation count and average citations per year. When examining the average citations per year, the studies “*Politics Across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined*” and “*The Embarrassment of Riches? A Meta-Analysis of Individual-Level Research on Voter Turnout*” distinguish themselves by receiving more citations annually than the others. This indicates that these works are expected to gain greater prominence in total citation counts in the near future.

The research also revealed insights into the countries in which the authors of studies on political socialization are primarily located, based on the number of publications and citations. These results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3** Countries with the most active authors on political socialization by number of publications and citations

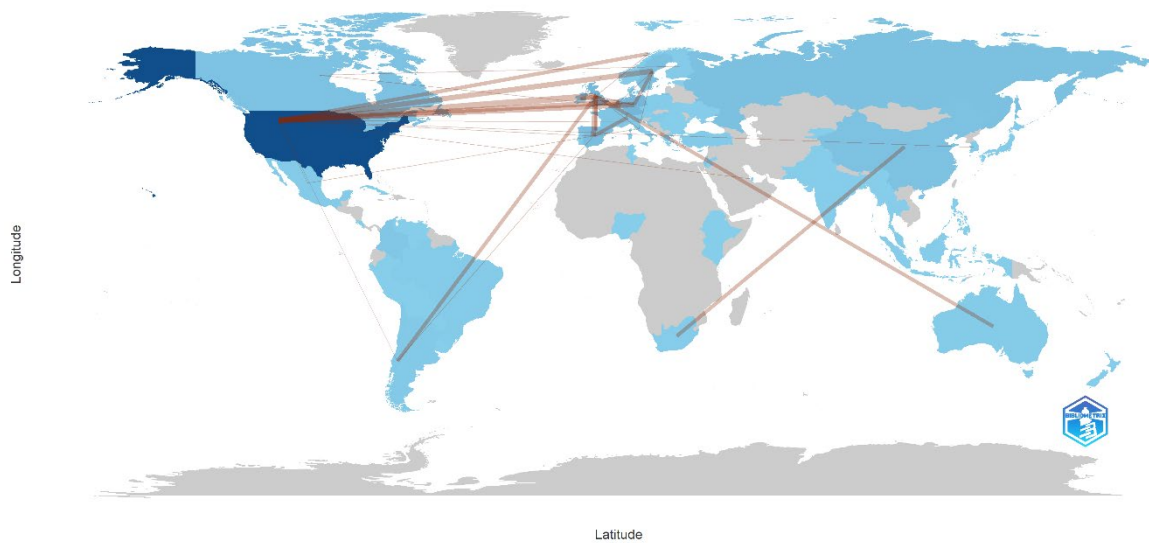
Country	TP	Country	TC	ACy
1. USA	723	1. USA	14295	33,30
2. GERMANY	97	2. UNITED KINGDOM	1333	24,70
3. UNITED KINGDOM	88	3. SWEDEN	846	25,60
4. NETHERLANDS	72	4. BELGIUM	761	28,20
5. SPAIN	67	5. CANADA	665	22,90
6. CHINA	58	6. GERMANY	629	9,50
7. SWEDEN	57	7. ITALY	627	41,80
8. RUSSIA	56	8. ISRAEL	382	14,10
9. CANADA	51	9. NETHERLANDS	381	12,70
10. COLOMBIA	48	10. SPAIN	294	7,20

TP: Total publications, TC: Total number of citations, ACy: Average citations per year

An analysis of Table 3 reveals that the United States ranks first in terms of both total number of publications and average number of citations. In terms of total publications, the United States is followed by Germany and the United Kingdom, respectively. Regarding average citations per year, the United Kingdom and Sweden follow the United States. Additionally, while China, Russia, and Colombia are among the top ten countries in terms of total number of publications, they do not appear in the top ten in terms of total citations. In contrast, Belgium, Italy, and Israel—while not appearing in the top ten by publication volume—rank 4th, 7th, and 8th, respectively, in total citations. Moreover, Italy stands out as the country with the highest average number of citations per year, whereas Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, and Spain show significantly lower average citation rates compared to other countries.

The research also revealed findings on studies carried out through collaboration among researchers from various countries. Cross-country collaborations are depicted in Figure 1.

### Country Collaboration Map



**Figure 1** Country collaboration map

As shown in Figure 1, researchers from different countries most frequently collaborate with scholars based in the United States and the United Kingdom. In addition, there are also collaborative studies involving Chinese and South African researchers, as well as French and German, and Swedish and German scholars. Comprehensive information on the countries with the most frequent collaborations is presented in Table 4.

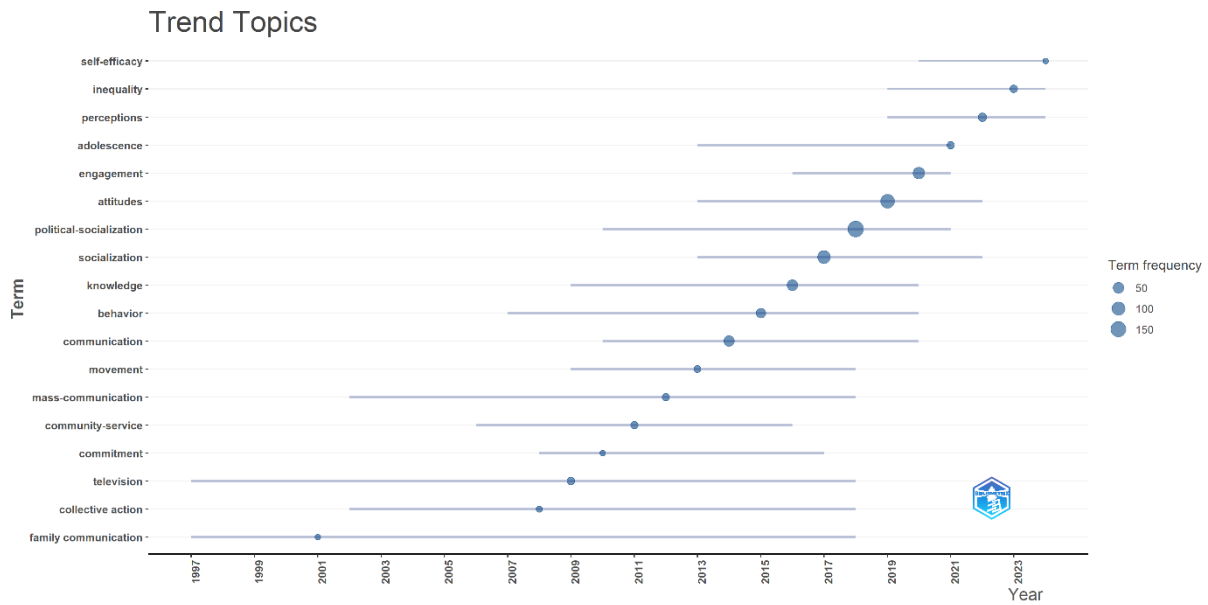
**Table 4** Top collaborating countries

Countries Represented by Collaborating Researchers	TP
NETHERLANDS - BELGIUM	5
USA – UNITED KINGDOM	5
UNITED KINGDOM - SPAIN	4
USA - GERMANY	4
USA – NETHERLANDS	4
USA - SWEDEN	4
CHINA – SOUTH AFRICA	4
GERMANY – SWEDEN	3
SPAIN - SWITZERLAND	3
UNITED KINGDOM - AUSTRALIA	3

TP: Total number of publications

Table 5 shows that the most frequent international research collaborations on political socialization are between scholars from the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as between the United States and the United Kingdom. These collaborations are notably frequent with scholars from English-speaking countries. Additionally, the table indicates that research partnerships are primarily concentrated in Western and Northern Europe.

The study also highlights emerging themes in the field of political socialization. These trends are illustrated in Graphic 4.



Graphic 4 Trend topics

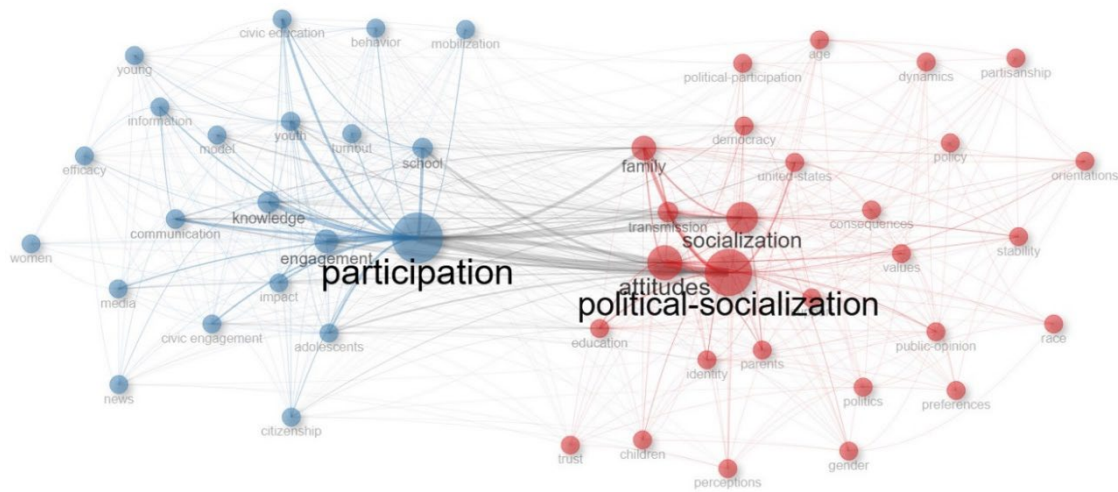
Graphic 4 reveals that, in recent years, key trending topics related to political socialization include “self-efficacy”, “inequality”, “perception”, “adults”, and “interaction”. The term "political socialization" itself also emerged as a trending topic in 2018. As seen in Figure 1, there was a significant increase in publications on political socialization between 2018 and 2020. In addition, topics such as “socialization”, “knowledge”, “behavior”, “communication”, “movement”, and “mass communication” have also appeared as trending subjects related to political socialization across different time periods. A word cloud illustrating these trending topics is presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Word cloud about trend topics

Figure 2 illustrates that trending topics also include broader themes such as family, school, democracy, education, youth, identity, and civic engagement. This study also highlights the co-occurrence relationships among keywords that frequently appear together in the literature on

political socialization. These relationships are visualized in the co-occurrence network shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3** Co-occurrence network

Figure 3 indicates that, in studies on political socialization, the most prominent keywords are “participation”, “socialization”, and “attitude”—these terms appear most frequently and are most strongly associated with other concepts. According to the co-occurrence network, “participation” is commonly linked with keywords such as “interaction”, “knowledge”, “school”, “civic education”, “citizenship”, “behavior”, “media”, “communication”, “youth”, “adults”, and “women”. On the other hand, keywords most frequently associated with “socialization” include “family”, “stability”, and “transmission”. Similarly, the term “attitude” is often linked to “family”, “transmission”, “education”, and “values”. It is also evident that these three central keywords are frequently connected to each other within the same studies.

## Conclusion, discussion and recommendations

This study carried out a bibliometric analysis of academic literature on political socialization, focusing on research trends, influential scholars, most cited works, collaborative efforts, and emerging themes. By employing scientific mapping techniques, the analysis was structured within a systematic framework, allowing for greater visibility of the field’s development, dominant patterns, and interconnections among researchers.

According to the main findings, the number of academic publications on political socialization has shown a noticeable increase since 2002, although there have been periods of stagnation and decline. The graph illustrating annual scientific output reveals that this growth accelerated particularly after 2010 and reached its peak following 2020. This trend may be associated with a growing scholarly interest in new factors such as social media, digital participation, political polarization, and populist politics in political socialization research (Yilmaz, 2013).

According to the study, academic publications on political socialization are distributed across various disciplines. The prominence of the journal “Political Psychology” in terms of publication volume suggests that the psychological effects of political socialization on individuals’ political attitudes and behaviors have been extensively explored. Moreover, studies published in “Electoral Studies and Political Behavior” indicate a strong connection between political socialization and electoral processes, as well as individual political behavior.

These findings collectively affirm the practical relevance of political socialization in real-world democratic contexts. As Almond and Verba (1963) emphasize, an individual’s willingness to participate in elections constitutes a core aspect of political learning, thereby positioning

political socialization as a critical mechanism for sustaining democratic governance. "Moreover, the presence of political socialization research in top-tier journals such as the "American Political Science Review" and the "British Journal of Political Science" reflects the field's conceptual weight. It underscores the assumption that political socialization serves as—and is expected to remain—a foundational lens through which to understand complex causal relationships across individual, societal, institutional, and state levels.

In contrast, the high volume of contributions in the "Journal of Youth Studies" highlights the growing interest in youth-focused political socialization. These studies emphasize that young people are not only central subjects in the construction of political identity, but also influential agents—particularly through their active roles in social media and contemporary activist movements. This finding underscores the central role of youth in political identity formation. The inclusion of journals such as "Political Communication" and the "Journal of Political Science Education" further demonstrates the multidimensional relationship between political socialization and fields such as communication, science, and education (Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014). Moreover, these findings suggest that future research should more deeply explore the causal relationships and interactions between political socialization and media/digital platforms, the political participation tendencies of young voters, and how these are shaped by populist discourses.

As a result of the data analysis, Michael McDevitt has been identified as the most prolific researcher in the field of political socialization. His work not only focuses on political socialization but also extends to topics such as political communication, political identity, and the sociology of media. This emphasizes that political socialization is a multifaceted process that includes individuals' political engagement as well as their relationship with media and the shaping of their political identity. The substantial contributions of other scholars such as J. Celeste Lay, Janet S. Greenlee, and Marc Hooghe further indicate that political socialization is approached from an interdisciplinary perspective (McDevitt, 2006).

Following McDevitt, researchers such as Judith Torney-Purta, Chia-Chou Wang, and Daniel Bar-Tal rank among the most prolific contributors to the field. Their work indicates that political socialization is extensively studied within the contexts of individual psychology, education, and political psychology. Additionally, the research of scholars like Ellen Quintelier, Myron Kent Jennings, and Spiro Kioussis highlights the relationship between political socialization and areas such as media, youth studies, and electoral processes. This analysis demonstrates that studies on political socialization are shaped by diverse theoretical and methodological approaches, and that researchers draw from multiple disciplines, offering an interdisciplinary perspective. "A deeper understanding of political socialization—particularly in the context of youth development—is vital for fostering democratic resilience and countering hegemonic populist narratives imposed by dominant political actors. Adopting a multidisciplinary research agenda in this field enables a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the political socialization process. It is evident that the multidisciplinary approach adopted in academic studies of political socialization makes a significant contribution to recognizing the importance of the topic.

The findings of the study reveal that the most highly cited work in the field of political socialization is the article by Mishler and Rose (2001), titled "What are the origins of political trust?", published in "Comparative Political Studies". This study has had a significant impact by exploring the formation of political trust through institutional and cultural factors, particularly within the context of post-communist societies, thereby underscoring the importance of the topic. Similarly, Galston's (2001) work "Political knowledge, political engagement, and civic education" has made a substantial contribution to the literature by examining the relationship between political socialization and civic education. Furthermore, the study by Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers (2009), "Politics across generations: Family transmission reexamined" revisits the

intergenerational transmission of political values within the family, emphasizing the role of familial influence in shaping political culture and identity across generations.

An evaluation of average annual citations reveals that the meta-analysis by Smets and van Ham (2013), titled *The Embarrassment of Riches?*, has attracted considerable scholarly attention within a relatively short time span. The study stands out as one of the most comprehensive analyses of voter behavior within the context of political socialization. Similarly, the study of Weaver and Lerman (2010), which examines the political consequences of the criminal justice system, highlights the intersection between political socialization and institutional processes. In addition, the study by Xenos, Vromen, and Loader (2014), which explores the impact of social media use on youth political participation, has become a key reference in contemporary research on digital political socialization. Overall, this analysis demonstrates that highly cited studies in the field of political socialization tend to focus on themes such as voter behavior, intergenerational political transmission, social media, and civic education.

An analysis of the country-level distribution of academic publications on political socialization reveals that the United States holds a clear leading position in both total publication (TP) and total citation (TC). In terms of total publications, the U.S. is followed by Germany and the United Kingdom, while in total citations, the United Kingdom and Sweden rank next. This pattern suggests that U.S.-based research exerts a disproportionate influence on the global discourse surrounding political socialization, underlining the prominence of the Anglophone academic tradition in shaping the field's intellectual trajectory. Furthermore, although countries such as China, Russia, and Colombia are among the top ten in terms of total publications, they do not appear in the top ranks based on citation counts. This results show that academic output from these countries receives comparatively lower international visibility and scholarly engagement.

On the other hand, although Belgium, Italy, and Israel do not rank among the top ten countries by total number of publications, they hold prominent positions in terms of total citation count. These findings suggest that research produced in these countries tends to achieve greater scholarly visibility, as reflected in higher citation frequencies within the international academic community. Particularly, Italy stands out as the country with the highest average annual citation (ACy). In contrast, countries such as Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, and Spain show comparatively lower average annual citation rates. This analysis suggests that while academic production in political socialization is predominantly centered in the United States and Europe, certain countries, despite publishing fewer studies, produce highly impactful research. In this context, understanding how the global academic balance in political socialization is shaped highlights the need for increased contributions from diverse geographical regions in future research (Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014).

International academic collaborations in the field of political socialization reveal that the United States and the United Kingdom are the leading countries in terms of joint research efforts. Similarly, the strong collaboration between the Netherlands and Belgium highlights the significance of regional academic networks within Europe. Moreover, the close academic ties between the United States and countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden reflect the robust interdisciplinary and cross-continental interactions characterizing research on political socialization. The tendency toward collaboration among English-speaking countries further suggests that global academic output may be concentrated in specific regions due to language barriers (Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014).

In addition, collaborations between countries such as China and South Africa, Germany and Sweden, as well as the United Kingdom and Spain, are also noteworthy. The high level of academic interaction, particularly among Western and Northern European countries, reflects the influence of regional research hubs. Collaborations between Spain and Switzerland, and between the United Kingdom and Australia, further demonstrate the global reach and distribution of research on political socialization. However, it is unfortunately clear that countries

in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America are underrepresented in academic collaborations. In the future, increased cooperation among researchers from diverse geographical regions could contribute to enhancing global academic diversity in the study of political socialization.

An analysis of trending topics related to political socialization reveals that concepts such as self-efficacy, inequality, perception, adults, and interaction have gained prominence in the field in recent years. Political socialization has garnered increased scholarly attention and has emerged as a rapidly growing area of research since 2018. As shown in Figure 1, this growing attention aligns with the sharp rise in publications on political socialization observed between 2018 and 2020. During this period, the increasing focus on the effects of political socialization on young adults, the perception of political self-efficacy among individuals, and its connection to themes of inequality have played a significant role in driving this upward trend (Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014). Additionally, themes such as socialization, political knowledge, civic behavior, interpersonal and mass communication, and social movements have emerged as recurring topics over time, reflecting the field's thematic breadth and interdisciplinary orientation. The influence of media and communication tools in the political socialization process is increasingly being examined, particularly in terms of how they shape individuals' political attitudes (Jennings & Niemi, 1981).

According to the word cloud analysis, terms related to political socialization span a wide range and are addressed within a multidisciplinary context. Terms such as participation, political socialization, attitudes, education, and communication emerge as the most prominent keywords in the field. These findings affirm that political socialization is a multifaceted phenomenon—one that includes both the mechanisms through which individuals engage in political life and the educational processes by which political norms and values are transmitted. (Jennings & Niemi, 1981). Moreover, the inclusion of concepts such as family, school, democracy, youth, identity, and civic engagement among trending topics indicates that political socialization is not limited to individual learning processes but is also shaped at institutional and societal levels. It is obvious that educational institutions, media, family structures, and social groups play a critical role in the transmission of political values. In this context, the growing number of studies focusing on the factors that influence the political attitudes of young people further demonstrates the direct relationship between political socialization, democratic processes, and civic education and culture (Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014).

As a result of the co-occurrence network analysis, the themes of participation, socialization, and attitudes emerge as the most prominent in the field of political socialization. The concept of participation shows strong associations with keywords such as interaction, knowledge, school, civic education, citizenship, behavior, media, communication, youth, and adults. These associations suggest that political socialization plays a key role in shaping the pathways through which individuals engage with political life and participate in democratic processes (Jennings & Niemi, 1981). Similarly, the term "socialization" frequently co-occurs with family, stability, and transmission, underscoring the importance of early-life influences and intergenerational continuity. The concept of "attitudes", on the other hand, is most commonly linked with family, transmission, education, and values, highlighting how political dispositions are formed and internalized through social and institutional contexts. These findings indicate that political socialization is heavily influenced by early life experiences, with family and education emerging as key determinants in shaping individuals' political attitudes (Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014). Moreover, studies have shown that these three core terms—participation, socialization, and attitudes—are often directly linked to one another. This further reinforces the idea that political socialization not only influences individual political behavior, but also helps explain broader transformations in social values and relational norms.

In addition, from the perspective of elite theory and populism, it is evident that political socialization is not limited to fostering democratic engagement. It is also a critical domain that can be directed by dominant political elites and considered in the production of hegemonic

policies. Populist leaders may utilize political socialization processes to extend their hold on power, suppress potential opposition, disseminate their own narratives, and reshape the political perceptions of the masses (Çiçekli & Çiçekli, 2022).

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the multilayered and interdisciplinary nature of the field of political socialization. Future research should aim to further examine the influence of social media on political socialization, conduct comparative analyses across diverse geopolitical contexts, and investigate in greater depth the emerging forms of political participation among younger generations (Yılmaz, 2014). Moreover, future research should explore how political socialization not only fosters democratic values but may also serve as a conduit for the dissemination and legitimization of populist discourse.

This study aimed to map the academic trajectory of the concept of political socialization over the past two decades. By offering a comprehensive framework of the existing literature, it is intended to guide future scholarly inquiries and inform new research directions. Furthermore, conducting broader studies on how the political socialization process shapes individual differences and which global variables influence this process is crucial for the continued development of the field.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendation may be offered:

- Future research should examine concepts and dimensions that have either been overlooked or only minimally explored within the context of political socialization.
- Increasing the number of comparative studies on political socialization processes across different countries would contribute to a deeper understanding of how cultural and political contexts shape individuals' political identities. Given the current Western-centric orientation of the literature, there is a clear need for more research focusing on regions such as Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa. Increasing academic contributions from these underrepresented regions would significantly enhance the global relevance and inclusivity of the field.
- Moreover, international collaboration among scholars remains limited, which hinders the development of a more integrated and globally representative research landscape. Therefore, it is recommended that international academic collaboration on research focusing on political socialization be strengthened and increasingly pursued.
- To foster a more global perspective in political socialization research, international collaborative projects should be actively promoted. Collaborative studies conducted by scholars based in Europe, the United States, and Asia would contribute to diversifying and enriching the existing literature.
- Utilizing big data analytics, machine learning, and AI-supported content analysis is suggested to enhance the understanding of political socialization processes. In particular, data mining techniques can be employed to examine how political attitudes are shaped on social media platforms.

## **Limitations**

This study is limited to the publications and related data indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database. The primary reason for selecting only the WoS database is its provision of a dataset that is well-suited for bibliometric analysis. Additionally, the WoS is widely recognized as one of the most reputable databases within the international academic community, which further justifies its use in this research.

Moreover, the study includes only research articles retrieved using the search term "political socialization" within the WoS search engine. Despite these limitations, the substantial number

of studies analyzed has provided valuable insights into the international literature on political socialization, offering a meaningful overview of the field.

## References

- Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963). *The civic culture political attitudes and democracy in five nations*. Princeton University Press.
- Althusser, L. (1991). *İdeoloji ve devletin ideolojik aygıtları*. Y. Alp ve M. Özışık (Çev.). İletişim Yayınları.
- Bozkurt, M., Eryılmaz, O., & Boyraz, C. (2021). Science mapping research on citizenship education: A bibliometric review. *International Journal on Social and Education Sciences (IJonSES)*, 3(4), 670-695. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijonSES.148>.
- Büyükkıdık, S. (2022). A Bibliometric Analysis: A tutorial for the bibliometrix package in R using IRT literature. *Journal of Measurement and Evaluation in Education and Psychology*, 13(3), 164-193. <https://doi.org/10.21031/epod.1069307>.
- Chen, H., Yang, Y., Yang, Y., Jiang, W., & Zhou, J. (2014). A bibliometric investigation of life cycle assessment research in the web of science databases. *The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment*, 19, 1674-1685. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11367-014-0777-3>.
- Cobo, M. J., López-Herrera, A. G., Herrera-Viedma, E., & Herrera, F. (2012). SciMAT: A new science mapping analysis software tool. *Journal of the American Society for information Science and Technology*, 63(8), 1609-1630.
- Çarkoğlu, A. & Kalaycıoğlu, E. (2007). *Turkish democracy today: elections, protest and stability in an Islamic society*. IB Tauris.
- Çiçekli, A., & Çiçekli, A. (2022). Demokrasinin güncel tehdidi: Popülizm. *Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*(48), 199-220. <https://doi.org/10.21497/sefad.1218430>
- Derviş, H. (2019). Bibliometric analysis using bibliometrix an R package. *Journal of Scientometric Research*, 8(3), 156-160.
- Easton, D., & Dennis, J. (1970). The child's image of government. E.S. Greenberg (Ed.). *Political socialization içinde* (s. 24-55). Routledge.
- Falagas, M. E., Pitsouni, E. I., Malietzis, G. A., & Pappas, G. (2008). Comparison of PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar: Strengths and weaknesses. *The FASEB Journal*, 22(2), 338-342. <https://doi.org/10.1096/fj.07-9492LSF>
- Foucault, M. (2019a). *Bilginin arkeolojisi*. V. Urhan (Çev.). İmge Ayrıntı Yayınları.
- Foucault, M. (2019b). *Hapishanenin doğuşu*. M. A. Kılıçbay (Çev.). İmge Kitabevi.
- Guleria, D., & Kaur, G. (2021). Bibliometric analysis of ecopreneurship using VOSviewer and RStudio Bibliometrix, 1989-2019. *Library Hi Tech*, 39(4), 1001-1024. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LHT-09-2020-0218>
- Jennings, M. K., & Niemi, R. G. (1981). *Generations and politics: A panel study of young adults and their parents*. Princeton University Press.
- Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser, C. R. (2019). *Popülizm, kısa bir giriş*. S. Erdem Türközü (Çev.). Nika Yayınları.
- Noyons, E. C., Moed, H. F., & Raan, A. F. (1999). Integrating research performance analysis and science mapping. *Scientometrics*, 46(3), 591-604.
- Parsons, T. (1965). *The social system*. The Free Press.
- Small, H. (1999). Visualizing science by citation mapping. *Journal of the American society for Information Science*, 50(9), 799-813.
- Xenos, M., Vromen, A., & Loader, B. D. (2014). The great equalizer? Patterns of social media use and youth political engagement in three advanced democracies. *Information, Communication & Society*, 17(2), 151-167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.871318>
- Yılmaz, N. (2013). Sosyalleşme sürecinin siyasallaşma boyutu. *Uluslararası Yönetim İktisat ve İşletme Dergisi*, 9(19), 319-331. <https://doi.org/10.11122/ijmeh.2013.9.19.372>
- Yılmaz, V. (2014, Mayıs) Türkiye gençler ve siyasi katılım: Sosyo- ekonomik statü fark yaratıyor mu?. *Yeni Zamanlarda Genç Yurttaşların Katılımı Konferansı Bildiriler Kitabı içinde* (s.57-62). İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.