

Sadam Abu Azam¹, Ziyad M. Rabei²

Citizens' Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform: Key Trends, Influential Studies, and Future Research Directions

ABSTRACT: *This study offers a thorough analysis of academic literature exploring the significance of citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform. It employs a combined approach, utilizing both bibliometric and systematic literature review methods. The study examines 377 journal articles published between 1994 and 2024. This timeframe captures emerging trends and advancements within the field. The analysis identifies influential articles, journals, authors, and countries contributing to this area of research. In addition, it highlights key thematic clusters that have emerged from the research, including popular protests, elite coordination, bureaucratic capacity, democratic legitimacy, and citizen engagement in transitional democracies. The study then discusses insights from noteworthy contributions within each cluster, along with potential areas for future research and opportunities for further studies. This work represents the first attempt to integrate bibliometric and systematic literature review methods, offering a holistic perspective on the scholarly discourse surrounding the relevance of citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform.*

KEYWORDS: Constitutional Reform, Citizens' Attitudes, Democratic Legitimacy, Political Engagement, Bibliometrics

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INTRODUCTION

Social, political, and legal frameworks are only a few of the many factors contributing to attitudinal changes in favor of constitutional reform on the part of citizens (Schimmelfennig & Scholtz, 2008). The multiple dimensions of constitutional reforms have been analyzed by scholars, who have contributed a very comprehensive analysis of benefits coupled with certain challenges that arise from these reforms (Casper & Tyson, 2014). Public opinion, especially with regard to perception linked to constitutional amendments by different groups within society, has been a very vital arena of scrutiny upon which researchers have focused (Pace, 2013). These attitudes are important to understand for policymakers since they suggest a way in which to frame reforms commensurate with priorities and values of society. Thus, according to Albertazzi and McDonnell (2005), the outcome of constitutional reform goes well beyond changes in the legal framework, impacting on governance, citizen participation, and social justice. Other researchers have focused on how constitutional amendments can promote political stability, increase transparency, and make democratic institutions more resilient. Most of the studies have researched what shapes attitudes toward reform, including, among others, media influence, civic education, and political participation. The relationship between public opinion and the trust in the political class in the implementation of a certain reform has also been explored, adding even more value to this complex dynamics, by Mayer & Palmowski (2004). By applying these insights, policy actors will be in a better position to understand how the interplay between citizen attitudes and constitutional reforms can be approached from an informed decision-making perspective. This is in line with Pirro & Stanley (2022).

This paper considers the attitude of citizens toward constitutional reforms by considering some key drivers of public support or opposition to constitutional reform. This will be done through a mixed-method approach combined with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, as shown by Farrell et al. (2020). Such a deeper understanding of the ongoing debates and research gaps

¹ Law Department, Faculty of Law, Jerash University, Jerash, Jordan, Email: sa.aboazam@jpu.edu.jo

² Jerash University, Jordan, Email: dr.ziyad.law@gmail.com

in this realm was facilitated through the use of bibliometric analysis tools in combination with systematic literature review (SLR) principles, as suggested by Brown et al. (2022). Thus, the study follows well-set SLR methodologies: it articulates research questions, selects databases, and rigorously screens articles to find relevant academic papers, among other activities. The final dataset comprises 377 peer-reviewed articles in journals from the years 1994 to 2024. These were retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database (Momani et al., 2023). VOSviewer and Bibliometrix R package shall be used for data analysis. The tools used are capable of carrying out deeper bibliometric analysis. These tools underlined the top authors, articles, journals, and countries contributing to the area of constitutional reform studies. Bibliometrix also allowed the development of scientific maps by means of techniques such as trend topic analysis and phrase co-occurrence analysis, which revealed key research streams and future research paths. The study design revolves around two key research questions: What are the dominant themes within citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform? and What are the emerging directions for future research? In addition, Al Qudah et al. (2024) add that these research questions will be able to capture current scholarship while pointing out the gaps in the literature for future exploration. According to Alrahamneh (2024), this research informs the current debate on constitutional and bibliometric analysis reforms and places itself at the juncture between bibliometric analysis and reform studies.

This paper achieves a critical breakthrough regarding how citizens consider constitutional reforms; it presents wide perspectives on past, present, and future contributions about these subjects (González-Ocantos & Meléndez, 2024). Traditional narrative reviews normally focus their attention on given areas or on limited numbers of articles. Yet, such a limitation is not present in this study; it allows for an overall and unbiased overview of the topic at hand. In this paper, the combination of quantitative and qualitative bibliometric analysis with SLRs will enable us to point out the research gaps without focusing on any given subareas. It also points to some fruitful avenues for future research, such as how media might shape public opinion about constitutional amendments, among other factors. Other studies may want to delve into civic education as a potentially key modifier of citizens' knowledge about reforms, regional and demographic variation in popular support for reform, and the interaction between political trust and constitutional change. These findings thus provide useful guidelines for further studies. The final sections of the paper, therefore, give an account of the methodology adopted in this research, bibliometric analysis, thematic clusters, and conclusions.

In discussing methodological strengths and limitations, this study recognizes inherent strengths of bibliometric and SLR methodologies regarding their ability to comprehensively map existing literature and underline research gaps. It also, however, reflects on likely weaknesses of the study, including publication bias and the challenge of capturing intricate public opinion through quantitative analysis. The additional insights drawn from the Central European studies enable a much more developed analysis and give it a place within the journal's spotlight on Central and Eastern Europe. This places the research into a larger geographic perspective. By framing the conclusion in cohesive paragraphs, the study synthesizes the key findings while emphasizing their relevance to the ongoing constitutional reform debates. The conclusion also aims to make some actionable research proposals that address identified gaps while reinforcing what this study contributes to the material existing in the field. Therefore, such a research question is justified on the basis of its importance it adds to the understanding of public attitudes toward constitutional reform, consequently informing policymakers on how to formulate effective reform strategies.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology that is followed for this research is a hybrid between the bibliometric analysis and SLR, inspired by the work of Qudah et al. (2023). In such a way, seminal works, such as the assessment of how financial technology has influenced Islamic finance, will further offer depth on issues like the attitude of the citizens toward constitutional reform, introducing quantitative and qualitative elements of each methodology. Integration of such methods essentially rules out any possibility of bias and adds to the scientificity and truthfulness of such results.

SLR Process

It all started with an SLR that was informed by a preset and structured protocol. Considering that bibliometric analyses are of such nature, for instance, as proposed by Momani (2023), an approach should allow for a repeatable and transparent research process. The comprehensive research protocol had well-set research questions, specific academic databases, and detailed search criteria that set a well-defined roadmap for the investigation. It was characterized in the initial phase by the following stages:

Defining the area of investigation: The study focused on and channeled its direction into designing research questions (ALShanti 2024). *Database selection and keyword identification:* Certain academic databases were chosen with appropriate keywords that fitted an

efficient literature search (Alqudah 2024). *Refining search results:* In refining the results, conditions concerning subject area, document type, and language of publication were employed to screen literature that directly answered the research questions. The relevance of each paper was first checked against the predefined criteria through a strict screening.

Bibliometric Analysis

Following the preliminary literature search, bibliometric analysis was conducted in an effort to get a more profound insight into the field. This analysis is advantageous in that it manipulates big datasets in a systematic and objective way using descriptive statistics and similarity measures (Aladayleh, 2023). Moreover, unlike what was performed in previous research, which merely listed the relevant literature, the bibliometric analysis allows the identification of influential publications, journals, and authors. Therefore, contributions to a clearer intellectual mapping of the field are realized. On the other side, it allows the development of science maps, which depict graphically how specific fields of research evolve or what their structure is. This enhances the scientific quality and reproducibility of the study. *Quantitative indicators:* Indicators include the number of publications and citation frequencies, which provide a wide quantitative outlook on the domain of research. For example, Alrahamneh (2024) describes two types of indicators. *Core themes and patterns:* In relation to the evaluation of common keywords and their connections, the research brings to light key themes and patterns that take precedence in shaping the field. According to Perez Calderón & Alrahamneh (2024), the emerging research areas and geographic trends help the researcher contextualize the scope and direction of the present study in relation to the development trajectory of the field. As such, the current study is informed by Al Qudah (2024).

Strengths and Limitations of the Methodology

The hybrid approach that uses bibliometric and SLR methods imparts substantial power to the study with respect to objectivity, the possibility of replication, and systematically analyzing large volumes of data. However, there are methodological limitations; the reliance on indexed databases may lead to partial representations, and studies that would match the topic under discussion may not be detected. This is a common problem of bibliometric analysis, whereby qualitative insights may demand more context than SLR can allow by using a detailed screening process. Data remains partial from January to May 2024 and shall be interpreted cautiously, so that misleading trends in results are not inferred.

Relevance to Constitutional Reform Debates

The methodology follows the expansion of the scope of the study and increases its relevance to continuous constitutional reform debates. All these data thematic clusters represent important areas, such as public attitudes, media influence, and regional differences, for understanding dynamic forces affecting the way in which citizens view reform. Focusing on these clusters allows the study to delve deeper into constitutional reform and present a set of recommendations for the benefit of policymakers and researchers.

Phase I: SLR

Following the procedures for conducting an SLR, the first step was to develop specific research questions that provided the focus for our study:

- a) What are the distinctive themes that describe research investigating citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform?
- b) What are the differences between these themes?
- c) How are research trends in the field of citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform unfolding?

The dataset was compiled with great care, in a way to representatively and inclusively select relevant papers from the WoS database. Among other options, WoS is highly recognized for its wide coverage and preferred at the time when in-depth literature reviews were conducted. Such a choice allowed for the possibility of a wider search and had an effect on positive data collection, organization, and analysis. We used an automated search using a Python script based on the WoS library. The query consisted of keywords referring to citizens' attitudes, constitutional reform, and political change (ALShanti, 2024).

The current research is being conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, which increase transparency and reproducibility for this study (Qudah, 2024). Indeed, the PRISMA guidelines have provided a robust framework concerning tracking the flow of information across identification, screening, eligibility, and the

inclusion of studies. The adherence to PRISMA minimizes bias and enhances the reliability of our findings into a comprehensive, objective analysis of academic literature on citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform. This study adheres strictly to PRISMA, as stated by Al Qudah (2024).

Certain filters were imposed during the execution of the search to enhance the relevance and focus of the dataset. Target areas included, among others, "Political Science," "Law," and "Sociology." Specific document type ("article"), publication stage ("final"), source type ("journal"), and language ("English") were also considered in the search conducted herein (Al Karabsheh, 2024). This ordered structure enabled an in-depth literature review with regard to the importance of citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform (Qudah, 2024).

The search eventually yielded 377 journal articles published from 1994 to 2024. This starting year of 1994 will enable an in-depth investigation during a period of crucial political evolution and changes in public sentiments, marking important constitutional discourses. The search recorded partial data from January to May 2024, excluding careful consideration of data that might portray misleading trends, and the data collection was completed in early September 2024. More specifically, the focus has fallen only on the peer-reviewed, English journal articles regarding relevance and recency, as per Momani (2023).

An initial search of 820 articles, therefore, underwent a two-tier screening. Titles and abstracts were reviewed for relevance to study objectives by each author, and full articles, if necessary, were reviewed independently. Any disagreements or doubts were resolved through regular discussions. This elaborate screening excluded out-of-scope articles, book chapters, duplicates, and articles with no abstract. The number reduced to 377 journal articles.

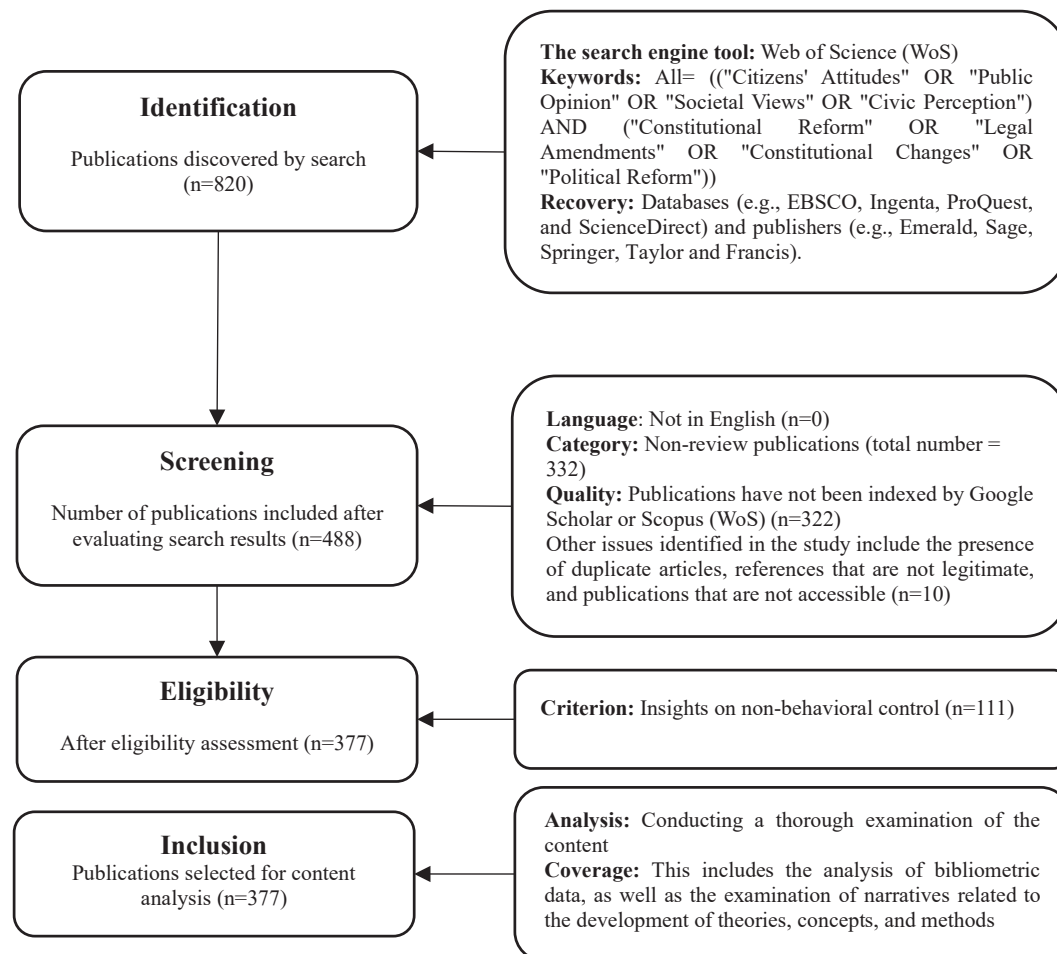
The advantages of this integrated approach of bibliometric analysis and SLR boast of objectivity, reproducibility, and structured treatment of a huge amount of data. However, there are some pitfalls in partial representations based on indexed databases, including those relevant papers missed. In addition, while bibliometric analysis may provide some quantitative insight, it misses context that qualitative interpretations rely on. This incompleteness of insight from the bibliometric analysis is compensated for through the contribution of SLR by providing a complete review process. The data analysis resulted in key thematic clusters identified on public attitudes, media influences, and regional variations. Each cluster has something diverse to contribute to the greater context of constitutional reform, hence providing important perspectives to policymakers and researchers alike. By analyzing these clusters, this study develops an enhanced understanding of debates about constitutional reform and provides a nuanced foundation on which further research and informed policy decisions could be based as shown in figure 1.

Phase II: Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric research is initiated with the crucial introductory step of performance analysis. This crucial step lays the foundation for subsequent analyses, in an attempt to gauge the performance of the research field in terms of major components: authors, countries, and journals. Performance analysis is, therefore, developed based on various measures derived from bibliographic citations, providing full descriptive statistics. The overview given through this study represents the volume of research in the field and its resultant impact. The study of the development of research into citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform, as performed by citation publication yearly CPY, focused on the distribution of articles over time, while assessing their impact through citation analysis. Citation analysis is among the popular bibliometric methods, whereby lists of highly cited papers or authors are compiled as a way of giving insight into research prominence and productivity. This approach is based on citing of the influential and relevant works, and influential journals, authors, and countries were identified through this methodology. In this regard, VOSviewer software that is widely used because of its usefulness in bibliometric analysis was used to visualize the most important publications, authors, journals, research groups, and countries concerning the subject at hand. Bibliometric analysis, the core of this science mapping, used first- and second-generation relational indicators for analyzing the structure of research about citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform. The main techniques used in the analysis are keyword co-occurrence and trend topic analyses.

It is a type of content analysis in which keyword co-occurrence analysis identifies keywords of articles to show the conceptual landscape of a field. It detects significant thematic clusters based on the number of times specific keywords appear together in an article. High co-occurrences mean a closer link, with the likelihood of papers sharing themes being higher. It links thematic papers based on the content and not, as other bibliometric tools do, by showing documents through citations or co-authorships. Topic analysis of trends was done using the R package Bibliometrix, which classified sources, authors, records, and various structures occurring in the field.

Fig. 1: Publications selection PRISMA review methodology flowchart.



Network graphs showing keyword co-occurrence in a visual format were created using clustering algorithms such as “walktrap” and “leading eigenvalues.” The leading eigenvalues algorithm through Bibliometrix software presented the keyword relationships visually to develop a co-occurrence network map for the keyword co-occurrence analysis.

A thesaurus standardized the raw keywords by removing duplicates, standardizing variations, and combining synonyms. Bibliometrix performed assignment of articles to thematic clusters at a given probability level. Therefore, according to Al Qudah (2024), articles with high probabilities (0.8 and above) were classified as highly likely to belong to a certain cluster, while those with moderate probabilities (0.4–0.8) were classified as likely to do so. Articles with lower probabilities required manual screening for correct clustering, as noted by Al Karabsheh (2024).

The current study is pegged on combined strengths of bibliometric and SLR methodologies. The bibliometric approach gave a more objective overview of the academic research pattern by presenting the data, while SLR allowed examining the scholarly content in a structured and transparent way. However, possible limitations can be identified, such as only one database being selected, WoS; therefore, non-English language publications had to be excluded, thus narrowing the scope. In addition, partial data for 2024 covers only January to May; hence, there are limitations. Trends should be interpreted with caution so as not to skew the overall analysis. Each of the identified thematic clusters provides nuanced insight into citizens’ attitudes toward constitutional reform. Deep exploration of these clusters exposed necessary trends in public perception, legal implications, and political dynamics corresponding to debates on reform. The relevance of the thematic cluster to ongoing discussions about reform indicates both societies’ values and challenges, informing policies on how to consider public sentiments.

RESULTS

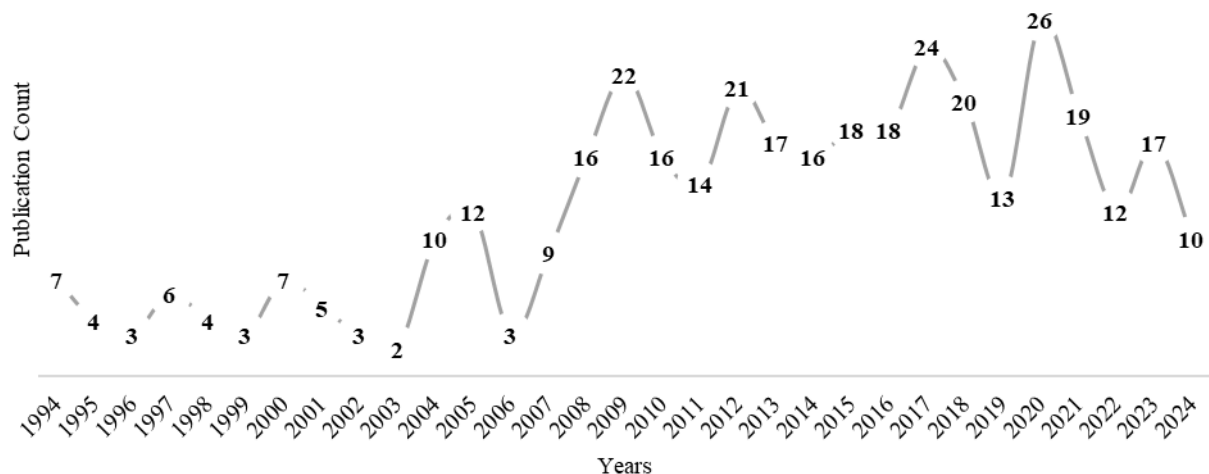
Description

This chapter outlines a method for summarizing and interpreting data that expose patterns and trends and determines meaningful results. This approach, in regard to the citizens' perceptions about constitutional change, has several advantages: it illustrates an increased public awareness of the sphere in question; and through it, one will notice the emergence of crucial themes and significant research works that impact the debate on constitutional change. It basically outlines the works done by different authors and publications, giving a wide point of view of what is actually happening on the scientific landscape. This section does this through the analysis of publication numbers, citation rates, and geographic dissemination of research output.

Articles

Over the years, this landscape has increased in respect of research output about the attitudes of citizens on constitutional reform to 377 documents published between 1994 and 2024 in 210 sources. Such growth provides the building blocks for increased interest by academics in analyzing perceptions that citizens have toward constitutional issues and engagement with them. The annual growth rate stands at 1.2%, showing steady engagement in the field. This number, in the starting years, was modest at seven documents in 1994, coming down to 10 in 2023. Perhaps it is suggestive that during these decades, this level of research output is variable. The leading year in terms of publications was 2004, with 10 publications attracting an average of 48.3 citations per article, which, at the time, was considered considerable scholarly attention. Other interesting aspects of this research relate to collaboration dynamics: the body of work is made up of the contribution of 513 authors, including 250 single-authored documents. The average number of co-authors per document is 1.45, and about 10.08% of the publications are products of international co-authorship. Whereas in the last years a decrease can be observed, the general trend is that research took speed in this area, as could also be seen from the average citations per document at 12.47. The need to understand the attitudes of the citizens in relation to constitutional reform and the resultant policymaking is consequently underlined as shown in figure 4.

Fig. 4: Number of publications.



Within WoS, the most cited article as of September 1, 2024, by far, is an important study on democratic governance. Table 1 lists 'Bureaucratic Capacity, Delegation, and Political Reform' by Huber & McCarty (2004), which has been cited 174 times. It shows that there is a great deal of interest in the role of bureaucratic functions vis-à-vis political reform. More importantly, the current debate

on cryptocurrency regulation is highly divided. What some advocates believe is that stronger regulations are called for, which will minimize dangers such as fraud and manipulation and protect investors' interests, thus leading to a sound market environment in general. Those who believe otherwise—that lighter regulations facilitate innovation and would not hinder this burgeoning industry—oppose stronger regulations. However, most scholars agree that increased regulation is expected to address security issues, protect investors, and enhance stability within the cryptocurrency market in general (Hutson, 2023; Barrera & Böhme, 2022; Gans & Halaburda, 2021; Mavilia & Pisani, 2020; Walton & Johnston, 2018).

Tab. 1: As of September 1, 2024, 10 papers with the most references on WoS.

#	Reference	Article	Total Citation TC
1	Schimmelfennig & Scholtz (2008)	EU democracy promotion in the European neighbourhood: Political conditionality, economic development and transnational exchange	177
2	Huber & McCarty (2004)	Bureaucratic capacity, delegation, and political reform	174
3	Casper et al. (2014)	Popular Protest and Elite Coordination in a Coup d'état	157
4	Moravcsik (2006)	What can we learn from the collapse of the European constitutional project?	124
5	Pace (2013)	Paradoxes and contradictions in EU democracy promotion in the Mediterranean: the limits of EU normative power	109
6	Lynch & Crawford (2013)	Democratization in Africa 1990–2010: an assessment	109
7	Albertazz & McDonnell (2005)	The Lega Nord in the second Berlusconi government: In a league of its own	104
8	Walter (2015)	Why bad governance leads to repeat civil war	104
9	Buchanan (1995)	Federalism and individual sovereignty	95
10	Beissinger et al. (2015)	Explaining divergent revolutionary coalitions: Regime strategies and the structuring of participation in the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions	95

Among the papers discussing democratic governance, one relevant work is “Bureaucratic capacity, delegation, and political reform” by Huber & McCarty (2004), which is the most cited on WoS as of September 1, 2024, having been cited 174 times in total according to Table 2. This just goes to show great interest in the role that bureaucratic functions are to play in political reform. Secondly, discussions on cryptocurrency regulation are highly divided. One camp of supporters for heavier regulations argues that these rules are crucial in trying to temper the risks of fraud and manipulation, which will protect investors and ensure stability in the markets. Those arguing for lighter regulations claim that this will enable, in turn, innovation and not hamper this emergent industry. However, the consensus among researchers seems to be that more regulation is expected; it is suggested that this would come in areas such as security concerns, investor protection, and, finally, market stability, as noted by Hutson (2023), Barrera & Böhme (2022), Gans & Halaburda (2021), Mavilia & Pisani (2020), and Walton & Johnston (2018).

Authors and Journals

Table 3 gives a general view of ranking of the top 10 authors of the area by yearly citation rate. The analysis collected data based on the number of articles published, total citations received, and average citations per year. In this respect, the works of Farrell (2013) and Flinders (2005) were prominent; Farrell had an astonishing number of 89 citations from three works, or 3.083 per year. For Flinders, one can observe a total number of 47 citations from three articles, which accounts for an average citation rate of 1.95 per year. Furthermore, Levy (2010) also contributed immensely, with 22 citations gained from one article, but Matthews (2011) trails closely behind with a total number of 27 citations. Blokker (2017) represents other influential authors who have contributed much, having attained a high citation points record of as many as 59 citations for one work published in the year 2019, thus showing inclusion of impactful contributions across different years. These statistics are summed up in Table 3, which brings out the impact of each researcher in the field concerning the Average Impact Factor per published item.

Tab. 2: As of September 1, 2024, 10 papers having the highest yearly reference count citation yearly (CY).

#	Reference	Article	# TC per year
1	Pirro & Stanley, (2022)	Forging, bending, and breaking: Enacting the “illiberal playbook” in Hungary and Poland	16.67
2	Casper et al. (2014)	Popular Protest and Elite Coordination in a Coup d’état	14.27
3	Biermann et al. (2019)	Political (non-) reform in the euro crisis and the refugee crisis: a liberal intergovernmentalist explanation	11
4	Schimmelfennig & Scholtz (2008)	EU democracy promotion in the European neighbourhood: Political conditionality, economic development and transnational exchange	10.41
5	Walter (2015)	Why bad governance leads to repeat civil war	10.4
6	Blokke (2019)	Populism as a constitutional project	9.83
7	Beissinger et al. (2015)	Explaining divergent revolutionary coalitions: Regime strategies and the structuring of participation in the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions	9.5
8	Lynch & Crawford (2013)	Democratization in Africa 1990–2010: an assessment. In Democratization in Africa: Challenges and Prospects	8.29
9	Pace (2013)	Paradoxes and contradictions in EU democracy promotion in the Mediterranean: the limits of EU normative power	7.79
10	Farrell et al. (2020)	The effects of mixed membership in a deliberative forum: The Irish constitutional convention of 2012–2014	6.81

Tab. 3: Top 10 authors with highest rate.

Element	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	Number of publication NP	PY_start
Farrell Dm	3	3	0.25	89	3	2013
Flinders M	3	3	0.15	47	3	2005
Levy R	3	3	0.2	32	3	2010
Matthews F	3	3	0.214	27	3	2011
Blokke P	2	2	0.25	62	2	2017
Cain Be	2	2	0.1	55	2	2005
Chaney P	2	2	0.095	24	2	2004
Diamond P	2	2	0.2	23	2	2015
Dostal Jm	2	2	0.25	7	2	2017
Dunleavy P	2	2	0.083	11	2	2001

Table 3 shows the top 10 authors in terms of citation rate per year. Further analysis explored the number of articles published with regard to the total citations obtained, as well as the average citation points per author. Surprisingly, among the major contributors in the year 2023 were Pirro and Stanley in the year 2022, each of whom had two articles published. Pirro and Stanley (2022) received two citations; another one, such as Biermann et al. (2019), has an average of 3.5 citations per article. In turn, Walter (2015) submitted only one article in 2015, but with a high number of 20 citations, which showed his outstanding scientific contribution. Finally, Beissinger et al. (2015) have received 13 citations each from different articles, such as Lynch & Crawford (2013) and Pace (2013). Taken together, these statistics show the different contributions and reception averages of individual researchers in the field and the scholarly influence of the researchers. The second will be toward the journal landscape, which is represented in Table 4, showing the top 10 most mentioned journals within this domain. It should be noted from the data that Political Studies tops the list with an h-index of 17, hence reflecting a very strong scholarly impact. This is followed by *Parliamentary Affairs* and *West European Politics*, each with an h-index of 9, highlighting their prominence in political scholarship. Most importantly, Democratization and International Journal of Constitutional Law further establish this pattern and create a scope of articles to be published by them. As

Table 4 shows, these journals remain very important in determining the nature of research on political science. As an example, the total frequency of citations would hint that such journals create an important channel for publications which are very highly cited. Together, author and journal analysis can point not only to the contributions of individual researchers, but also at the academic landscape in which these contributions are made.

Tab. 4: Ten most often mentioned journals.

Element	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start
West European Politics	9	9	0.429	299	9	2004
Democratization	6	7	0.353	283	7	2008
Canadian Journal of Political Science- <i>Revue Canadienne De Science Politique</i>	5	6	0.161	109	6	1994
Icon-International Journal of Constitutional Law	5	7	0.278	127	7	2007
Parliamentary Affairs	5	9	0.2	95	9	2000
British Politics	4	6	0.267	63	6	2010
Political Quarterly	4	7	0.133	72	17	1995
Regional And Federal Studies	4	4	0.25	71	4	2009
Australian Journal of Political Science	3	3	0.103	32	3	1996
British Journal of Politics & International Relations	3	3	0.214	44	3	2011

Countries

As shown in Table 5, researchers in the field of citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform are highly productive in developed countries. The UK leads the scoreboard with 138 articles and an impressive average number of citations equal to 12.30, while the USA comes a close second with 106 articles and 20.60 citations. Others that follow in the list include Australia (42 articles, 6.10 average citations) and Italy with 28 articles with a citation average of 10.40. In contrast, the developing nations, as expected, depict low research output in indicating the various levels of development in democracy and institutional maturity. However, there is an embryo discourse in those parts of the world. For example, Tunisia, with its 16 articles, has highlighted the impact of the FinTech ecosystem on civic engagement in the country, with recent studies pointing to the development of strong regulatory frameworks that ensure active citizen participation in governance.

Tab. 5: Most often mentioned countries of authors.

Region	NP	TC	Average article citations
UK	138	1214	12.30
USA	106	1584	20.60
Australia	42	140	6.10
Italy	28	166	10.40
Ireland	25	166	10.40
Germany	20	279	17.40
Spain	18	164	12.60
Canada	16	121	9.30
China	9	39	4.30
Chile	7	21	7.00

Thirdly, recent scholarship emanating from countries such as Brazil and India testifies to increased interest in constitutional change and its relationship with democratic processes. Thus, researchers in Brazil have begun to explore how economic factors intersect with popular views of constitutional transformation, while their Indian counterparts are exploring the influence of social movements on citizens' understanding of constitutional change. In addition, the work is supported by other institutions, such as the University of California System and University College London, which add to the literature. The University of California System, for example, has published over time and hence managed to accumulate a number of articles that reflect various aspects of constitutional reform. To the same degree, University College London has also taken a valuable contribution in this area, most notably in recent years, in the light of the rising global debate on democratic governance and active citizenship. Overall, such variation in results across both developed and developing countries puts into emphasis the contextual embedment of citizen orientations toward constitutional reforms. This developing trend underlines the need for specific regulatory mechanisms in view of the peculiarities of political and social processes in every state and makes the constitutional discussion more inclusive.

Keyword Co-occurrence Study

Figure 2 shows the keyword co-occurrence network map of the results. Circles represent keywords and connecting lines represent how many times the keywords have appeared together in the researched material. The larger the circle, the greater the importance of that keyword. The thickness of each line denotes the intensity of a relationship between keywords, as described by the frequency of their co-occurrence. Furthermore, the positioning of circles expresses thematic affinity, where closer keywords are more related to one another. Nodes of the same color belong to the same thematic cluster, and their identification underlines, from a visual point of view, the interconnected areas of precious research in the respective field.

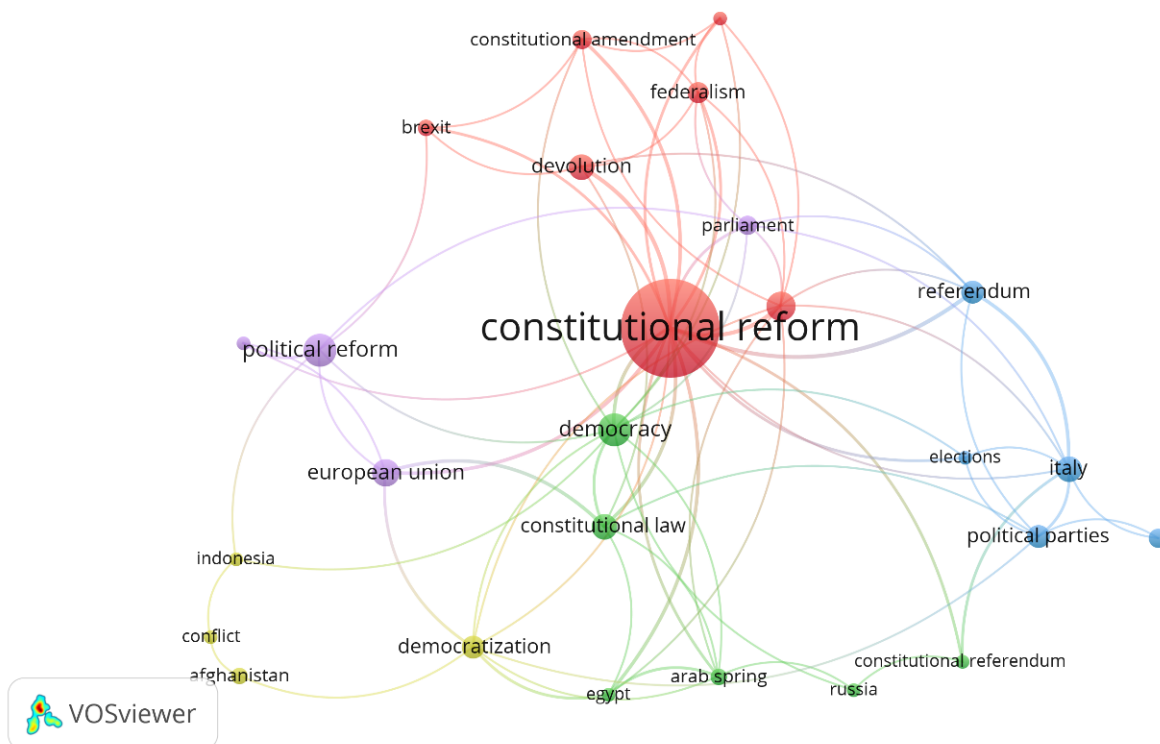


Fig. 2: Map of co-occurrence for keyword study. Extensive bibliographic data is gathered from the WoS collection.

Here, we visualized the relationships of frequently occurring research keywords with a co-occurrence network map. For clarity, we removed isolated nodes, that is, keywords which do not connect to other keywords. Thus, our network map consists of 26 keywords grouped into five clear thematic clusters. Writing a catchy title with keywords is important to give a glimpse into the major ideas and objectives of the research clusters. The heading must also be indicative of the core of the research, its boundaries, and probable impact. For example, the title “Steering Constitutional Reform: Challenges and Opportunities in Democracy and Political Change” is catchy enough in the Red Cluster to actually denote an analysis of big issues at play in constitutional reform. In this direction, the title of the Green Cluster, “Democracy and Constitutional Law: Citizen Perspectives on Reform in the Context of the Arab Spring,” puts into focus the critical issues which the attitudes of the citizens will go through within the context of the most serious political transformations. The approach followed for this method by the clusters is that the Red Cluster is titled as “Navigating Constitutional Reform: Challenges and Opportunities in Democracy and Political Change,” whereas the Green Cluster is titled as “Democracy and Constitutional Law: Citizen Perspectives on Reform in the Context of the Arab Spring.” The Blue Cluster is entitled, “Decentralization and Electoral Dynamics: Shaping Citizens’ Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform.” Yellow contains “Democratization and Conflict: Citizens’ Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform in Diverse Global Contexts,” while the Purple Cluster is “Political Parties and Parliamentary Influence: Understanding Citizens’ Attitudes toward Constitutional Changes in Europe.” All these titles, in clear and concise language reflecting the core of the research, provide a meaningful summary of the main themes and purposes of each cluster.

Trend Topics

Figure 3 shows the current affairs hot topics in Citizens’ Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform. It displays bibliographic information mined from WoS collection, with a focus on trends from 2008 through 2024. The keywords presented herein put into evidence a large number of themes which can be considered as those that attract most academic interest. Each bubble in the scatter plot represents a topic. The size of each bubble shows the frequency of occurrence of a keyword. Larger bubbles indicate the higher degree of prominence of the topics, while the gray bar shows the range of time for which the topic has been studied from the first to the third quartile. There are several key trends apparent in this data. For example, democratization was one of the first foci to emerge, in 2008, and remained relevant until 2013. The keyword “democracy” started an upward trend from 2010 and peaked in 2021, which may mean that it has been an issue of continuous centrality within the political reform debate. Political reform reached a peak between 2012 and 2017, which could testify to a coherent interest by scholars in the topic.

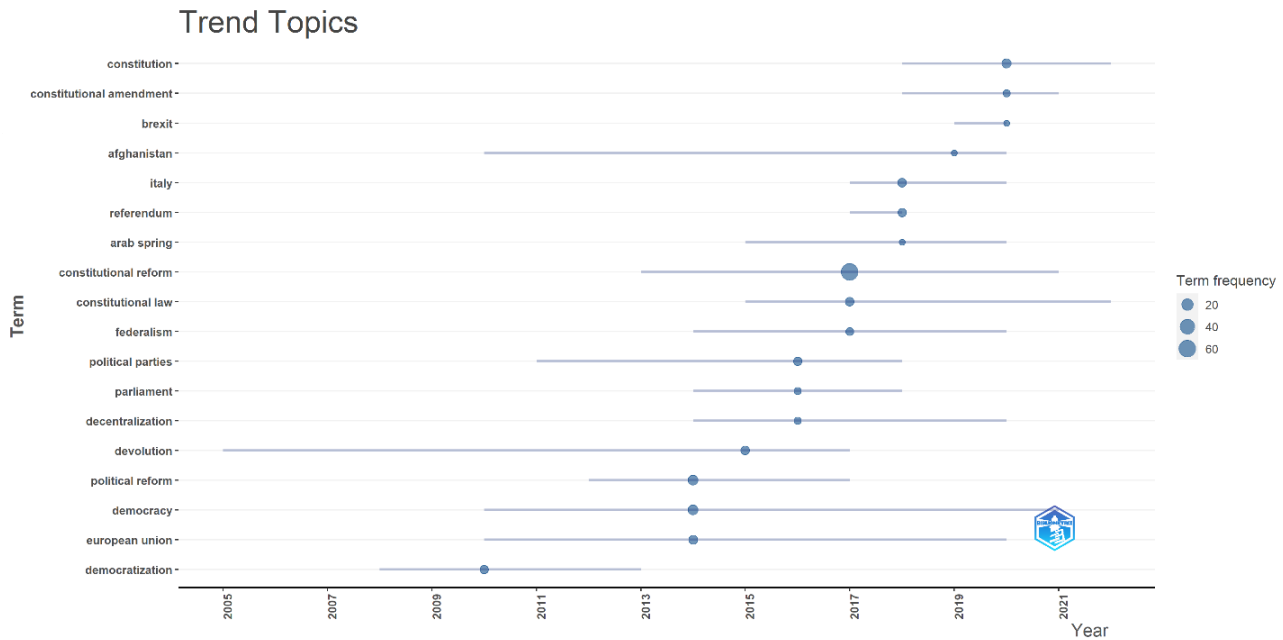
From a regional focus perspective, it would seem that the European Union (EU) is the most prominent region of research interest, with studies conducted between 2010 and 2020. The other significant area of interest is constitutional reform, and the graph shows a similar trend between 2013 and 2021. This represents debates on governance and structural adjustments in many countries. Some of the key themes that have emerged, therefore, are devolution, decentralization, and federalism – all buzzwords in any discussion on changing nature and forms of governance structures. Above all, the keyword that seemed important from 2005 until 2017 was devolution. Considering it from a constitutional point of view, the Italian case was focused between 2017 and 2020, part of wider European trends. Specific events underpin the global reach of research into political changes: the Arab Spring- 2015–2020, Brexit- 2019–2020, and constitutional amendments- 2018–2021. These findings, represented by Figure 3, provide a holistic overview of the development of important topics within the constitutional reform domain. The analysis shows regional and global dimensions of academic inquiry – from more long-standing themes like democracy and reform to more modern ones like Brexit and the Arab Spring.

DISCUSSION AND EMERGING RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The following section details the key insights gained by analyzing the most occurring keywords and trending topics of the relevant articles from each of the thematic clusters that were suggested by the keyword analysis described in Figure 2. These theme clusters were made by relating the more frequent occurring terms to each other. By analyzing the trends of the topic and the content of the highly contributing papers in each cluster, we trace the uprising trends in research and promising directions for future studies. Thus, this approach helps us understand the current landscape in each domain and detect the potential areas in which further research might be conducted.

Table 6 presents a synthesis of the principal keywords, relevant publications, and prospective research questions generated from nascent research trajectories within each cluster.

Fig. 3: Examining current affairs hot subjects- bibliographic information derived from WoS collection.



Tab. 6: Summary of research clusters.

Cluster	Key keywords	Principal articles	Prospective research opportunities and emerging research directions
Red Cluster	Constitutional Reform, Democracy, Political Change	Schimmelfennig & Scholtz (2008), Huber & McCarty (2004), Casper & Tyson (2014), Moravcsik (2006), Pace (2013), Lynch & Crawford (2013), Walter (2015), Albertazzi & McDonnell (2005), Biermann et al. (2019), Beissinger et al. (2015)	Explore the interplay of elite coordination and public participation, examine the influence of governance on reform success, investigate populism's role in constitutional changes, analyze non-reforms during crises
Green Cluster	Democracy, Constitutional Law, Citizen Perspectives	Schimmelfennig & Scholtz (2008), Huber & McCarty (2004), Casper & Tyson (2014), Moravcsik (2006), Pace (2013), Lynch & Crawford (2013), Albertazzi & McDonnell (2005), Walter (2015), Buchanan (1995)	Study the impact of external actors on constitutional reforms, compare regime strategies in Tunisia and Egypt, examine the influence of populism on reforms, explore citizen participation mechanisms
Blue Cluster	Decentralization, Electoral Dynamics, Citizen Engagement	Buchanan (1995), Schimmelfennig & Scholtz (2008), Huber & McCarty (2004), Albertazzi & McDonnell (2005), Casper & Tyson (2014), Walter (2015), Moravcsik (2006), Pace (2013), Lynch & Crawford (2013)	Investigate different types of decentralization and their effects on citizen engagement, study the intersection of decentralization and populism, analyze how electoral dynamics shape citizen attitudes toward reforms
Yellow Cluster	Democratization, Conflict, Citizen Attitudes	Schimmelfennig & Scholtz (2008), Lynch & Crawford (2013), Huber & McCarty (2004), Casper & Tyson (2014), Walter (2015), Beissinger et al. (2015), Pace (2013)	Examine how public dissatisfaction drives preferences for reform, explore the impact of external crises on reform processes, study citizen reactions to deliberative forums and their outcomes
Purple Cluster	Political Parties, Parliamentary Influence, Citizen Attitudes	Schimmelfennig & Scholtz (2008), Huber & McCarty (2004), Casper & Tyson (2014), Moravcsik (2006), Pace (2013), Keefer & Negretto (2024), van Leeuwen (2023)	Investigate the influence of political conditionality on reforms, analyze bureaucratic capacity's role in implementing changes, study the perceptions of EU influences on constitutional reforms, explore elite dynamics within political parties

In our study, we used a co-occurrence network map in Figure 4 to graphically illustrate the links among frequently occurring terms. Motivated by this methodology, our network map disclosed six unique theme groupings. Each cluster signifies a primary area of research emphasis. The clusters are enumerated as follows:

Red Cluster: “Navigating Constitutional Reform: Challenges and Opportunities in Democracy and Political Change”

The leading articles on constitutional reform offer variant insights into the complex and variant chances and difficulties concerned with negotiating such reforms, especially within democratic and politically developing contexts. Scholars assessed such changes behind international pressures, elite coordination, and issues of internal governance.

The “Red Cluster” discusses various articles by the likes of Schimmelfennig and Scholtz (2008) and Pace (2013) talking about democracy promotion by entities like the EU. For example, Schimmelfennig and Scholtz argue that democracy promotion through political conditionality and economic incentives is a local socioeconomic impediment. This refers to the complex dynamics of the reforms driven by external actors in regions characterized by reluctance to external pressures. In this respect, there are also several contradictions inherent in the EU-led reforms within the Mediterranean, something underlined by Pace in 2013, drawing on how local resistance complicates reforms. These themes suggest that without local buying-in and contextual awareness, efforts of international organizations sometimes go amiss.

The ‘Green Cluster’ focuses on elite coordination, bureaucratic capacity, and domestic political factors. Studies by Casper and Tyson (2014) and Huber and McCarty (2004) further claim that elite cooperation and strong institutions are essential factors in the reform implementation process. Casper and Tyson, for example, indicate that elite strategies lie at the core of the successes of reforms in popular protests. The tension between elite control and popular demands is a manifestation of this. On the issue of weak bureaucratic institutions, Huber and McCarty further conceptualize that it limits effective reform, hence the importance of institutional resilience. Although the literature helps to understand how elite strategies and international pressures work, it has a significant gap in explaining how civic involvement is framed within reform processes. Future research may take up frameworks examining the mechanisms of civic participation in such cases, especially post-authoritarian or emerging democracies. To this end, it could explore how digital platforms for engagement and grassroots movements shape constitutional discourses, thereby informing policymakers and advocates of reform about how to effectively bring citizen voices into discussions.

Setting Findings Within the Context of Larger Debates on Constitutional Reform: Elite coordination and governance structures are some of the major challenges in contemporary debates on constitutional reform. In Africa, Lynch and Crawford (2013) observed that democratization processes are usually historically embedded – that is to say, legacies from colonial rule persist to the present times when shaping contemporary structures of governance. This larger background further underlines the need to address historical contexts when undertaking reforms. Similarly, Walter has pointed out that even reforms not underpinned by strong governance will have recurring conflict, hence good governance is a requirement for peace and stability.

The emerging scholarship, such as by Albertazzi and McDonnell (2005), deals with how populist movements will bring about changes in the political regime to consolidate their power, a phenomenon on the rise in Central Europe. Pirro and Stanley (2022) cite the illiberal strategies on the part of the governments of Hungary and Poland to entrench power through constitutional processes, which are an important challenge for democracy in the region. Biermann et al. (2019) look at non-reforms during crises – the Euro and refugee crises are examples – which actually show the difficulty of enacting constitutional changes under pressure. It could also be enlightening for future research to investigate resistance to reforms during socio-political crises and to establish why certain political milieus are resistant to change, even in the presence of extreme challenges.

Recent scholarship has increasingly focused on constitutional changes within Central and Eastern Europe, matching the regional focus of the journal. Research shows that it is both internal disagreements and tensions from historical background grounds that continue to define reform processes today. The implications of elite influence and populist agendas in such regions remain to be looked into, especially in the way these elements shape democratic governance.

While the roles of institutional capacity, elite coordination, and public engagement are, therefore, a fundamental aspiration of these constitutional reforms, scholars like Beissinger et al. (2015) have emphasized the role of public participation and elite alignment to shape reforms, particularly in revolutionary contexts such as Tunisia and Egypt. Future research might thus be well served by elaborating new methodologies with which to capture the impact of civic engagement on reforms. Case studies from Central and Eastern Europe may also provide instructive examples of the balance between elite and popular interests.

Green Cluster: "Democracy and Constitutional Law: Citizens' Perspectives on Reform in the Context of the Arab Spring"

The lead articles in the Green Cluster provide the necessary frameworks for understanding constitutional reform and democratic transition in the Arab Spring contexts that focus on the delicate balance between external influences and internal political dynamics. For example, Schimmelfennig and Scholtz (2008) highlight the role that political conditionality and economic development play in promoting democracy. This becomes particularly relevant when assessing the impact of the EU on the countries of the Arab Spring, given that transnational exchanges affect local processes of reform in a specific way. In this respect, many foreign initiatives for democratization clash with local sociopolitical forces and complicate processes of reform. The authors also reinforce the position of bureaucratic capacity in supporting political reform. In the view of Huber and McCarty, strong bureaucratic structures are necessary for effective and durable constitutional changes. Their work underlines the fact that, without such infrastructure, reform processes risk grinding to a halt, as has happened in a number of Arab Spring states.

Casper and Tyson present a detailed analysis of the mechanisms of elite coordination as well as popular protest, particularly with respect to watershed events such as the Arab Spring. The results make a strong point about how elite behavior can facilitate or hinder constitutional reforms; examples include Tunisia and Egypt. Although this political elite coordination is needed to ensure reform success, it forms a risk the moment the interests of elites differ from public demands. Adding to such evidence with the failure of the European constitutional project is Moravcsik, who showed how either internal fragmentation or discrepancies in public and elite priorities can bring down reforms. These insights, within the Arab Spring context where public sentiment often runs against elite strategies, make uniform constitutional reform goals difficult to achieve.

Lynch and Crawford (2013) present comparative perspectives in democratization from Africa between 1990 and 2010, citing how often colonial legacies and local political dynamics took precedence over driving constitutional reforms. Similar to African experiences, countries of the Arab Spring face challenges related to external pressures versus indigenous political expectations. Pace (2013) develop an almost scathing critique of contradictions within the EU's so-called democracy promotion in Mediterranean countries, which ultimately show limitations of external normative influences to ensure deep-seated reforms. These observations become particularly important when considering recent post-Arab Spring developments, where, quite often, national responses resisted EU encroachment, as well as stability and authenticity of reform.

Albertazzi and McDonnell (2005) explore how populists use constitutional reforms to consolidate their rule, a theme which chimes with the post-Arab Spring states, where populist movements came into power as challenges to political elites. In this line, Walter (2015) warns that bad governance will result in the repetition of civil wars – a highly applicable argument in fragile Arab Spring states attempting to work out reform. Buchanan (1995) has indeed brought into focus the sensitivity of federalism and sovereignty, which may guide the reform process in balancing national authority with that of local governance – a central issue for a number of Arab Spring countries experimenting with decentralization to manage diverse societal needs.

Despite the useful insights gained from current research, there remain significant research gaps in understanding the role of civic participation in reforms undertaken within the Arab Spring. Schimmelfennig and Scholtz (2008) advise in the spirit of future studies on Arab Spring effects in the wake of the Arab Spring to adopt the approach of analyzing how economic and political conditionalities shape the trajectory of reforms. This could be the longitudinal effect of programs by EU and UN targeting local governance structures. However, Beissinger, Jamal, and Mazur (2015) deal with revolutionary coalitions in Tunisia and Egypt, encouraging further study to understand how different reform outcomes are affected by different regime responses. This could be taken a step further, focusing on long-term implications for political stability and reform acceptance in similar sociopolitical contexts.

Examples drawn from Central and Eastern Europe would enrich the analysis. However, Pirro and Stanley (2022) bring up the illiberal turn of Hungary and Poland within the context of how populist regimes use constitutional changes to entrench power – a development eerily reminiscent of dynamics seen in transitions elsewhere, such as those of the Arab Spring. Such an invitation into comparative analysis underlines the way in which populism and authoritarianism go hand in hand through constitutional reform into institutional backsliding. Including deliberative models, such as the Irish constitutional convention studied by Farrell et al. (2020), might give insight into the mechanisms of citizen participation. Such models offer clear practical ways in which citizens might be involved in constitutional dialogs, therefore potentially enhancing the sustainability of reforms in countries after the Arab Spring.

The constitutional reform within the context of the Arab Spring is a complex, multidimensional process influenced by external influences, elite coordination, and governance challenges. In this regard, addressing research gaps involves embedding comparative

analyses with Central and Eastern European cases to add depth to democratic transitions and reform strategies. Further studies would be welcome in designing a framework for analyzing civic engagement in constitutional processes and the role of popular pressure in stabilizing reforms. This thematic synthesis thus sets an agenda to understand and guide constitutional reforms in transitional societies facing similar democratization and governance challenges.

Blue Cluster: “Decentralization and Electoral Dynamics: Shaping Citizens’ Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform”

The Blue Cluster consequently offers important lessons to be learned regarding the effects of political decentralization on the support of the citizenry for constitutional reform, both with respect to democratic structures and avenues of future research. Decentralization, or the shifting of power from central to local governments, influences governance through the promotion of political participation at the local level, which then shapes citizen views on reform (Buchanan, 1995). Appreciating how decentralization affects the behavior of voters and change in institutions requires a qualitative investigation of these reforms within wider debates on constitutional reform, something that has proved critical within the context of contemporary political dynamics.

Scholars in the principal articles support the view that decentralization strengthens democratic legitimacy, an essential component of nascent democracies where constitutional reforms are aimed at consolidation of democratic institutions based on the postulation by Schimmelfennig & Scholtz (2008). For instance, Huber and McCarty (2004) contend that decentralization strengthens bureaucratic capacity, thus strengthening government to be responsive to local demands with greater efficiency. This acquires a specific centrality in Central and Eastern European countries, where regionalist parties exploit decentralization as one of the tools through which they can consolidate their electoral strongholds (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2005). The text of such electoral dynamics brings in comparative insights since regional autonomy and political competition have been among the core issues in post-socialist countries within this region.

Decentralization creates opportunities for local elites to engage in political activities, which can either reinforce stability or challenge the supremacy of the central authority (Casper & Tyson, 2014). Still, the absence of proper governance arrangements, particularly within post-conflict or authoritarian states, could result in the manifestation of instability, which delays reforms of any kind (Walter, 2015). The Green Cluster contributes to the above knowledge in a review of populist demands on constitutional amendment. Research into European reforms by Moravcsik (2006) puts into perspective the fragmented problem facing the developing systems of governance in a decentralized setting. Similar challenges are reported by Pace (2013), in the different countries discussed in this course, covering the Arab and Mediterranean series. Paradoxes in decentralization are pointed out through cross-regional comparisons since decentralization can be used to foster democratic governance as well as jeopardize the political destabilization of such fragile systems.

Future research might explore how various forms of decentralization – administrative, fiscal, and political decentralizations – specifically impact civic participation in constitutional processes. This could involve a comparative study between regions, like Africa and Latin America, to better capture how public satisfaction with decentralized governance influences preferences for constitutional reform. Further studies could delve into the connection between decentralization and populism, addressing the manner in which populist agendas influence constitutional discourses around reform. It could be furthered, with the civic participation frameworks, deliberative forums, or even citizen assemblies, into more inclusive reform strategies. For example, studies in the area of less-centralized reforms in Central Europe – investigating the attitudes of the public toward regional autonomy could provide concrete methodological tools for engagement with citizens regarding governance changes (Osorio-Rauld et al., 2024).

Considering the journal’s focus on Central and Eastern Europe, adding Central European citations will align to assure consistency with current democratic reforms within this region. It is impressively comparative, taking a closer look at Hungary and Poland through their respective decentralization efforts – in particular their populist turns – to show how shifts in constitutional power affect democratic integrity. Case studies from these countries would expand the contextual framework within which one places decentralization impacting constitutional stability and citizen engagement, especially in regions where political norms and democratic frameworks are still in flux. These insights underpin the pathways through which decentralization influences public attitudes toward reform through an in-depth analysis on the blue and green clusters, pointing at actionable directions in exploring civic participation mechanisms. Bringing in cross-regional perspectives and a focus on centralized versus decentralized models in comparative contexts – especially post-socialist and emerging democracies – can offer valuable contributions to the literature on constitutional reform.

Yellow Cluster: “Democratization and Conflict: Citizens’ Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform in Diverse Global Contexts”

It outlines the Yellow Cluster, which represents where public sentiment, governance, and institutional change are significant parts of constitutional reform. For instance, scholars emphasize that constitutional reform is the political will of the people, portraying a democratization process in various regions of the world. The role of external democracy promotion, in particular by the EU, indicates how conditionality and transnational exchange can shape citizens’ orientations to reform, and this has been especially effective when linked to economic development. Examples of democratization efforts across regions—characterized by complex dynamics of citizen engagement and elite political structures—can be found in both Central Europe and Africa. Consider, for instance, the case of African democratization between 1990 and 2010.

Other emerging research opportunities include a focus on how bureaucratic capacity and political delegation influence the perception of citizens regarding reform in settings that are politically volatile. Such work could also base its premises on frames that attempt to understand perceptions of political reforms under conditions of delegitimized governance or when populist leaders challenge constitutional constraints. For example, the Green Cluster emphasizes that coups or popular protests do not usually pop out of the blue, but relate more generally to disgruntlements regarding elite coordination and various government failures. Thus, these contexts offer particularly fertile ground for understanding how citizen attitudes both facilitate and are reshaped through moments of crisis (Casper & Tyson, 2014).

To fill the gaps in the current research, as revealed by the yellow and green clusters, it would be of interest to devise civic participation frameworks relating to mechanisms such as deliberative forums and citizen assemblies. With these, it should perhaps become easier to identify what really heightens citizen input into reform, especially in post-conflict regions where dissatisfaction with governance usually motivates popular preferences for reform (Walter, 2015; Pálsdóttir et al., 2023). Analysis of how citizen-led demands for political transformation during key events, such as the Arab Spring, provide critical lessons on how regime strategies and citizen expectations shape revolutionary coalitions. In the development of a deep understanding of these dynamics, researchers should direct attention to various regional case studies, including Central European contexts in which citizen-driven demands for reform are pitted against governance challenges.

The broader debates on constitutional reforms center on how the reform trajectories are influenced by exogenous factors such as economic crises and regional instability. For example, the crisis in the Eurozone has demonstrated that national sovereignty, combined with tensions at the supranational level of governance, may influence attitudes toward reform in that the democratic process either received inspiration or was hindered by the views of citizens themselves (Biermann et al., 2019). This dynamic is alive in Spain, where regional demands from Catalonia have propelled constitutional changes outside of formal amendment processes, offering lessons on federalism, sovereignty, and regional autonomy that are particular to that experience. Central and Eastern Europe provide a contextually rich setting in which tensions over sovereignty and regionalism, similar to those alive today in the UK, are now pivotal in examining how constitutional reform is pursued in politically diverse regions.

Future research might delve more into citizen support for reform in mixed-membership deliberative bodies, such as the Constitutional Convention in Ireland. This could be very instructive in considering how mixed membership influences perceptions of reform processes with respect to the legitimacy of participatory mechanisms in emerging democracies. Research on post-socialist Central Europe could also consider the ways that populist narratives shape citizen preferences for reform, particularly those related to questions of sovereignty and judicial independence. How citizen preferences interact with institutional constraints in various models of governance provides a number of rich avenues for research. What would be more revealing about the intricacies of constitutional governance and shifting dynamics of public sentiment on a global scale is a more explicit concentration on empirical research that can give substance to regional centrality in Central Europe and to comparative frameworks ranging from democratic to non-democratic contexts.

Purple Cluster: “Political Parties and Parliamentary Influence: Understanding Citizens’ Attitudes Toward Constitutional Changes in Europe”

The Purple Cluster theme has been set within the interplay between political parties, parliamentary influence, and the attitudes of European citizens toward constitutional changes; from this, critical insights into European governance structures and citizen engagement have emerged. Major articles in this area have discussed how the mechanisms negotiating, implementing, and disseminating political reform efforts to the people lay a strong foundation upon which further research directions could be taken. The relevance of this cluster lies in the analysis of the role of the EU in promoting democratic alignment and that of political parties in channeling reform sentiments.

One dominating theme in this cluster is the manner in which political conditionality influences public perception about constitutional reform. Schimmelfennig and Scholtz (2008) show that political and economic incentives by the EU promote democratic reforms in neighboring countries. Future research might consider how this model of conditionality could affect constitutional reform internally within the EU with regard to the level of citizen involvement and party politics. For example, researchers could explore the ways in which political parties use EU conditionality in efforts both to reinforce and resist the political impulse to reform at home, as well as the degree to which such external pressures actually succeed in encouraging or hindering the mobilization of popular support for constitutional change.

Another principal area of ignorance involves bureaucratic capacity to underpin political reform. As Huber and McCarty (2004) emphasize, it is the administrative structures, which, in any case, have to accomplish such reforms. Drawing upon the above point, such institutional strengths and weaknesses play a dual role in the functioning of constitutional amendments within various European states. The research frameworks present the basis of measuring the extent to which various parliamentary initiatives are capable of undertaking reform. This analysis is indeed relevant for Central and Eastern Europe, where reform outcomes have continued to vary in response to historical legacies and administrative capacities. Casper and Tyson add a complementary approach to elite coordination by showing how elite dynamics could shape reform processes. Drawing on this perspective may be suggestive in underlining how elites within political parties coordinate and communicate with parliamentarians to support or oppose constitutional amendments related to European constitutional changes. That is, understanding these elite dynamics is important for a comprehensive assessment of the ways in which political parties seek to influence reform, shaping public perceptions and acceptance of constitutional modifications. Indeed, Chaisty and Whitefield (2017) note this very point.

Perhaps one foundational lesson to be learned regarding the general difficulties in securing popular support for extensive constitutional reforms is through the collapse of the European constitutional project that Moravcsik (2006) studied. Further research might add to this by analyzing why citizens in some European countries would support or oppose constitutional changes, placing particular emphasis on how trust in the political institutions and relevance of the reforms influence public opinion. It will help to understand better why certain reforms are supported and not others and what public attitudes toward constitutional changes are, especially in a contemporary political context. Future studies may, for example, zoom in on the perceptions of supranational influence in citizens through domestic political reforms and investigate the ways in which the policies of EU democracy promotion influence citizen confidence in reform processes. As indicated in the work of Pace (2013), for example, the normative power of the EU can support or even retard democratic development, and related frameworks could position citizen responses to external pressures on constitutional reform.

From this, in terms of practical guidance, there is an open area for articulation in participatory frameworks that can strengthen civic engagement in constitutional reform processes. Research would be able to set ways of ascertaining methodologies to measure public satisfaction with reform efforts, specifically with deliberative assemblies and consultative forums. In addition, these participatory approaches will help lessen opposition from citizens since the reforms will fall within the expectations of the people, which increases democratic legitimacy. For example, Central European frameworks would need to take into consideration a number of historical and cultural variables that shape attitudes toward sovereignty and regional autonomy, particularly in response to the EU directives.

In the empirical analysis of the relationship between bureaucratic capacity and reform outcomes, future research should draw comparisons across regions such as Western and Central Europe. Precise mechanisms of how institutional readiness influences constitutional amendments through parliamentary processes would, no doubt, be quite illuminating. The additional investigation into the effect of supranational influences on citizen attitudes toward reforms will go a long way toward explaining how domestic and supranational dynamics interact in shaping reform trajectories for countries with high political and economic interdependence with the EU.

Furthermore, the paradoxes of EU democracy promotion can be investigated by researching the ways in which external democracy promotion has inspired or hindered democratic development, especially with regards to changes within constitutional frameworks. For instance, public discontent with the political status quo might thus culminate in support for certain types of reform while opposing others. Drawing on the work of Schimmelfennig and Scholtz's (2008), Huber and McCarty (2004), and Casper and Tyson (2014), it is possible to go one step further in discussing how political dynamics, institutional capacity, and elite coordination interact in the course of constitutional reform, while at the same time considering the contribution or hindrance of active citizenship in solidifying or blocking the reform process.

CONCLUSIONS

This work is a milestone study in the field of constitutional reform because of the combination of two strong methods: first, the quantitative approach termed bibliometric analysis, using statistical methods to analyze large datasets of scholarly publications; second, an SLR, a qualitative approach that is a scrupulous review and analysis of relevant literature. Community reviews previously conducted in this area have often adopted traditional narrative approaches or have focused on niche areas within the wider scope of constitutional reform. This paper consequently represents a singular contribution to the literature through the provision of an overarching and objective overview of the totality of knowledge across variant research streams for citizens' attitudes toward constitutional reform. This, therefore, forms a very good foundation for new researchers who may want to bring new ideas and contributions in the field.

Bearing this in mind, the research established a sound research methodology, drawing on best practices in conducting SLRs. A series of bibliometric tools were utilized, including Vosviewer and Bibliometrix software, to conduct such mapping analyses that were instrumental in assessing the performance of the field and its knowledge structure. We complement the bibliometric analysis with a manual content analysis of relevant articles. This provided an opportunity to discuss more deeply key findings for each research cluster and to identify potential gaps in existing knowledge.

This paper reviews the attitudes of citizens toward constitutional reform using 377 journal articles published within the period of the research. The findings indeed show a steep rise in research impact, with the number of articles published increasing from a mere three in 1996 to as high as 26 in 2020. A turn in the trend happened in 2020, reflecting increased public interest in constitutional matters at that particular period. This recent period has also shown an increasingly strong emphasis on the need for citizen involvement within the process of reform. We find that this relevance debate has been dominated by a couple of top journals. Specifically, political science and governance journals make up almost one-third of all citations within this set, presumably due to the works of renowned scholars. In our opinion, the most important contribution of this study is the identification of six major thematic clusters that capture the main knowledge trajectories leading value-relevant research in the domain of citizens' attitudes.

We identified the following clusters by keyword analysis. The Red Cluster is entitled, "Navigating Constitutional Reform: Challenges and Opportunities in Democracy and Political Change." The Green Cluster is entitled, "Democracy and Constitutional Law: Citizen Perspectives on Reform in the Context of the Arab Spring." The Blue Cluster is entitled, "Decentralization and Electoral Dynamics: Shaping Citizens' Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform." The Yellow Cluster discusses "Democratization and Conflict: Citizens' Attitudes toward Constitutional Reform in Various Global Contexts," while the Purple Cluster engages in discussion on "Political Parties and Parliamentary Influence: Understanding Citizens' Attitudes Toward Constitutional Changes in Europe." Although the Red Cluster entitled "Navigating Constitutional Reform: Challenges and Opportunities in Democracy and Political Change" has great research included, a huge gap exists regarding specific or particular challenges that are afforded by citizens' attempts to influence processes of constitutional reform.

Future research could usefully explore the details of public engagement in such processes, including issues of transparency, access, and the development of trust in government institutions. Whereas questions of civic engagement have been salient in the Green Cluster, which addresses the topic "Democracy and Constitutional Law: Citizen Perspectives on Reform in the Context of the Arab Spring," little research has considered holistic approaches to investigating the effectiveness of mechanisms for citizen participation in constitutional reform. One of the major foci of the Blue Cluster, "Decentralization and Electoral Dynamics: Shaping Citizens' Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform," is the transformational potentials of constitutional reforms. However, a gap remains in our understanding of the socioeconomic effects of these changes on poor and vulnerable groups.

Future research might consider new constitutional changes that would protect, serve, or otherwise benefit underrepresented groups and foster social justice. It is in this regard that the Yellow Cluster, “Democratization and Conflict: Citizens’ Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform in Diverse Global Contexts,” has investigated historical contexts, but still lacks understanding of the cultural and behavioral factors influencing public support for constitutional reforms across diverse socioeconomic settings. Although there is a bit of literature concerning popular attitudes toward constitutional change in developing countries of the Purple Cluster, “Political Parties and Parliamentary Influence: Understanding Citizens’ Attitudes Toward Constitutional Changes in Europe,” what is still sorely lacking is the understanding of the socioeconomic consequences of reform interventions on marginalized groups. Further research may look into studying constitutional frameworks on aspects regarding access to political representation and social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

It also outlines practical lessons that may be useful for policymakers and other actors involved in constitutional reform processes. The key thematic clusters and research gaps will be noted by the stakeholders to help prioritize further investigation and policy development where needed. For example, policymakers can refine frameworks relating to citizen engagement and the redressing of socioeconomic inequalities brought forth by changed constitutions. This study can be extended through empirical research to validate these findings and explore some of the challenges in each thematic cluster. It can thus provide a greater potential for interdisciplinary collaboration among academics, practitioners, and policymakers in considering holistic approaches to many multidimensional challenges. From the research gaps analyzed, policymakers should undertake programs which would advance increased public participation, inclusiveness, and equity in constitutional reform. This proactive dialog with the citizens can build the adaptable frameworks that can effectively balance the demand for reform in respect of the rights and needs of all constituents.

In the light of this, improvement of mechanisms for citizen participation in reform processes should become the primary task of lawmakers in the developed countries. The same could be achieved by capacity-building efforts with civic engagement in the developing world. A collaboration between developed and developing countries could foster sharing of knowledge while encouraging inclusive reform processes. It is an inclusive approach to constitutional reform that the full potential of citizen engagement in promoting sustainable democratic development may come to light. New researchers in this evolving field, where complex challenges continue to arise with regard to the attitudes of citizens about constitutional reform, will find interdisciplinary methods and the building of collaborative networks particularly rewarding. By catching the emerging trends and public sentiments, researchers identify unique areas of study to contribute to growth in knowledge within a rapidly changing domain. These will be perfected and enhanced in relevance and impact with partnerships of civic organizations and policymakers to drive positive change in the landscape of constitutional reform.

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