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Mapping the Evolution of Monarchy Systems: A Global Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

While monarchical systems represent one of the oldest forms of state governance, scholarly literature remains fragmented across regional and historical subdisciplines. This study presents a comprehensive global bibliometric analysis of monarchy system research using a Scopus-retrieved dataset of 4,083 documents published between 1908 and 2025. Employing Biblioshiny (R package) and VOSviewer, this paper evaluates publication growth trajectories, citation performance, key contributors, intellectual network structures, and thematic evolutions. The findings reveal a steady annual growth rate of 5.10 percent, reaching peak scientific output after 2020. Research output is heavily concentrated in Western institutions and high-income nations, led by the United States and the United Kingdom, with limited international collaboration (5.41 percent). Keyword co-occurrence and reference analysis uncover nine interconnected clusters, transitioning from foundational European historical studies (e.g., Habsburg and Spanish monarchies) toward contemporary discussions on democratic transition, authoritarian resilience, and political legitimacy, notably in Middle Eastern contexts. However, non-European constitutional monarchies, particularly in Asia (e.g., Malaysia), remain significantly underrepresented. We argue that future research must prioritise comparative institutional frameworks, digital governance studies, and cross-regional collaborations. Ultimately, this mapping provides a systematic foundation for future scholarship examining the evolving political, legal, and functional dynamics of modern monarchies.

1. Introduction

The monarchy remains one of humanity's oldest and most resilient institutions of state governance. While the global political landscape underwent sweeping waves of democratisation throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, monarchical systems did not simply fade into historical obsolescence. Instead, they have demonstrated remarkable institutional adaptability. Modern monarchy exists across a diverse spectrum: from ceremonial constitutional frameworks in

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Europe and East Asia that coexist with parliamentary democracies [1-3], to dynastic regime survival, active executive rule, and post-Arab Spring resilience in the Middle East and North Africa [4-6].

Consequently, scholars across political science, constitutional law, international relations, historical political economy, and digital public policy have examined monarchies from varied analytical perspectives. Academic literature on monarchical systems broadly explores themes of democratic legitimacy [2,7], gender representation and legislative influence [8], institutional soft-power projection and media economics [9], rentier state political dynamics [4,10], and comparative executive authority [2,6].

However, despite decades of rich qualitative, historical, and case-study-driven research, the literature remains fragmented across subdisciplines and regional specialisations. Existing reviews of monarchy systems are primarily narrative or domain-specific, focusing narrowly, for instance, on European parliamentary crowns [2] or Gulf absolute monarchies in isolation [4,5,10]. What is missing is an empirical, macro-level synthesis of how scholarship on monarchy systems has grown, structuralised, and interconnected on a global scale over time. Without a quantitative mapping of the literature, it is difficult to identify core knowledge clusters, trace major theoretical shifts, or spot systemic gaps across regional and sub disciplinary boundaries.

To address this gap, this study conducts a comprehensive global bibliometric analysis of scientific scholarship on monarchy systems. By leveraging performance analysis alongside science mapping, this paper provides a quantitative framework to chart the intellectual evolution of monarchy studies. Specifically, this study addresses four central Research Questions:

- RQ1: What are the global publication trends, annual growth trajectories, and citation patterns in monarchy system research over time?
- RQ2: Which authors, primary journals, institutions, and countries exert the greatest influence on monarchy system studies?
- RQ3: What core thematic clusters and intellectual foundations have defined monarchy system research, and what shifts mark their evolution?
- RQ4: Which emerging themes should be prioritised in developing the future research agenda?

By answering these questions, this study offers three primary contributions to political scholarship. First, it establishes the first comprehensive mapping of the global publication dynamics surrounding monarchy research. Second, it identifies the foundational works and thematic clusters that anchor the field's intellectual structure. Finally, it highlights under-researched domains and cross-regional collaboration gaps, offering a clear agenda to guide future empirical research on modern monarchical governance.

2. Methodology

This section outlines the methodological procedures employed in this study. To ensure transparency and reproducibility, the research process is presented in a step-by-step manner, encompassing data collection, article identification and screening using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework by Zakaria *et al.*, and bibliometric analyses performed with Biblioshiny (R package) and VOSviewer.

2.1 Data Extraction Protocol

This study relies exclusively on data extracted from Scopus due to the limited data size found in alternative databases, making the Scopus dataset suitable for this study. Furthermore, Scopus stands as a primary repository widely utilised within the social sciences and features a high concentration of top-quartile publications. The idea of doing bibliometrics for “Monarchy System” because the literature on monarchy systems is fragmented and dispersed across disciplines and in addition, Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy with a unique rotational monarchy system, yet there is limited evidence-based synthesis to inform future research and policy discussions. While this study deliberately restricts its search scope to Scopus, relying on a single indexing platform presents an inherent risk of Western and English-language bias [11,12]. Integrating supplementary or regional repositories such as Web of Science, JSTOR, CNKI, or CiNii could yield broader non-Western scholarship. Nevertheless, Scopus was selected for its extensive multidisciplinary coverage, status as a premier global database, and robust inclusion of social science literature [13-15]. Critically, utilising a single uniform source maintains metadata integrity by mitigating duplicate records, structural inconsistencies, and data corruption during network visualisation [16]. Thus, despite underlying indexing disparities, Scopus offers a methodologically sound foundation for evaluating macro-level research trends without sacrificing data processing quality.

Refer to Figure 1, this database search and extraction of data were conducted in July 2026 using a simple Boolean search in the search section of the Scopus database. The search field for this study includes the title, keywords and abstract from the beginning of publication until 2025 with only select study in the English language. However, publications from the year 2026 were intentionally omitted from this analysis because the incomplete data for that year could distort the final results of the study. The Boolean used in this research is TITLE-ABS-KEY (“monarch* system*”). The symbol “*” at the end of “monarch*” and system has been added in the Boolean to increase the scope of the data. Despite utilising a straightforward Boolean search string, this study successfully retrieved a robust dataset comprising 4,083 documents.

2.2 Bibliometric Analysis Procedure

To execute the analytical framework, this study utilises two primary computational tools: Biblioshiny (R package) and VOSviewer.

2.2.1 Biblioshiny

To conduct the quantitative bibliometric analysis, this study employed Biblioshiny, the web-based interface for the Bibliometrix R-package. This tool enabled the generation of various descriptive and performance metrics, such as baseline dataset characteristics, annual trends in scientific production, annual citation metrics, primary publication sources, prominent authors, and author productivity trajectories over time [17]. Additionally, it was used to identify influential institutions, corresponding author countries, overall country scientific output, highly cited papers, three-field plots, word clouds, thematic evolution, and thematic maps. Together, these analyses offer a comprehensive and structured evaluation of research productivity, publication performance, intellectual foundations, and thematic developments within the domain of monarchy system research.

2.2.2 VOSviewer

Keyword co-occurrence analysis was executed using VOSviewer (version 1.6.2) to map and visualise bibliometric networks. This software facilitated the generation of network diagrams that highlight thematic clusters and map the links between frequently used keywords [18]. By leveraging the VOS clustering algorithm, the tool categorised related keywords into distinct thematic domains, thereby mapping the intellectual landscape and prominent research areas within monarchy system studies. These visual mappings augment the quantitative results from Biblioshiny, providing deeper insights into thematic connections and current research frontiers. However, certain terms were filtered out of the dataset, specifically geographic indicators, methodologies, and keywords directly synonymous with monarchy or monarchical.

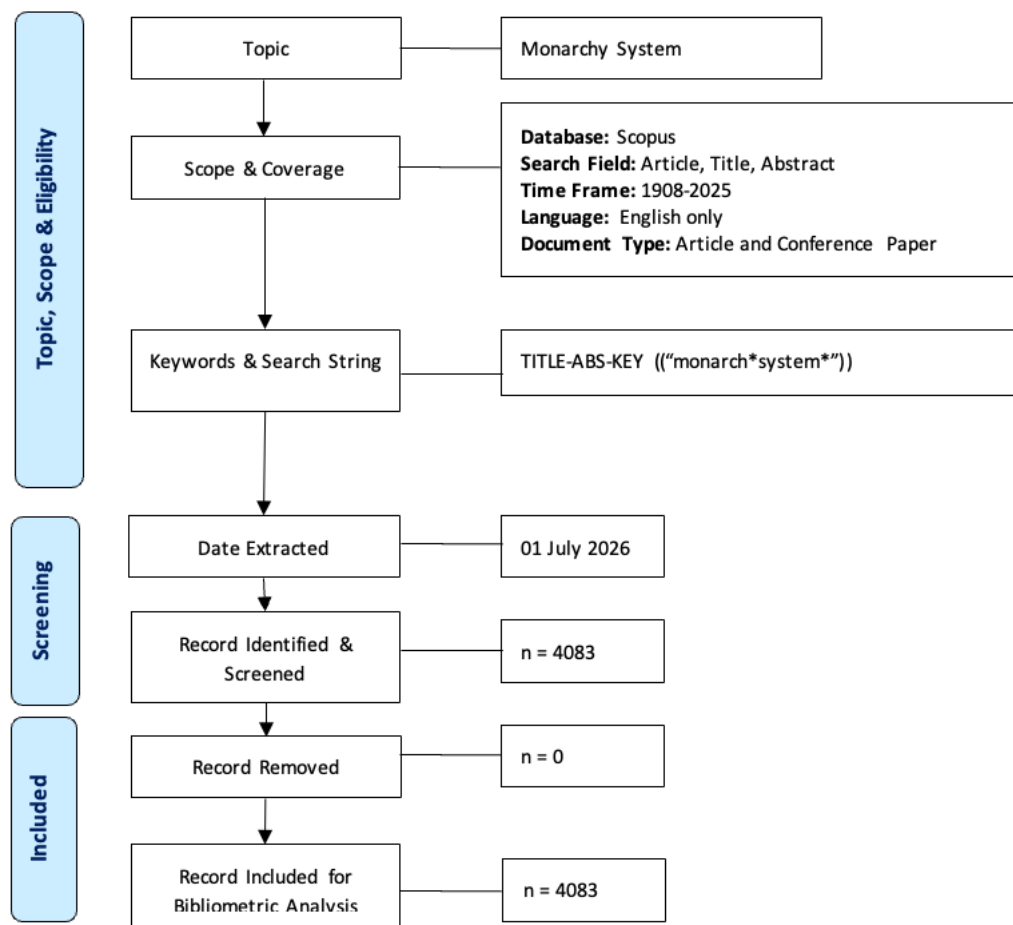


Fig. 1. Flow diagram of the search strategy

Source: Zakaria *et al.*,

3. Results

This section reports the results of the bibliometric analysis of the monarchy system from the years 1908 to 2025 which were obtained from Biblioshiny (R package) and VOSviewer. In order to ensure a logical and comprehensive presentation, the findings are structured according to the four research questions. Section 3.1 outlines the bibliometric dataset. Subsequently, Sections 3.2 to 3.5 present the empirical results corresponding to Research Questions 1 through 4.

3.1 Overview of the Bibliometric Dataset

Table 1

Overview of Scopus data

Description	Result
MAIN INFORMATION	
Time Range	1908:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	1687
Documents	4083
Annual Growth Rate %	5.10
Document Average Age	11.8
Average citations per doc	7.37
References	165,183
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	1509
Author's Keywords (DE)	9584
AUTHORS	
Authors	4523
Authors of single-authored docs	3002
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	3406
Co-Authors per Doc	1.26
International co-authorships %	5.413
DOCUMENT TYPES	
Article	4012
Conference Paper	71

Table 1 presents the descriptive characteristics of the retrieved dataset regarding monarchy system. A total of 4,083 documents were published between 1908 to 2025 which indicates the research has accumulated for more than 117 years of academic growth across 1,687 publication sources indicate that research on the monarchy system is exceptionally multidisciplinary. The literature has experienced steady increment over years (5.10%) signifies sustained scholarly interest in monarchy system research. The retrieved publications received an average of 7.37 citations per document and contained 165,183 cited references, reflecting a mature and well-established research field. Furthermore, the dataset comprised 4,523 contributing authors, although international collaboration remained relatively limited (5.41%), suggesting that monarchy system research continues to be dominated by nationally focused studies.

3.2 Global Publication Trends, Growth Trajectories and Citation Patterns

3.2.1 Evolution of scientific production and citation performance



Fig. 2. Graph of annual production

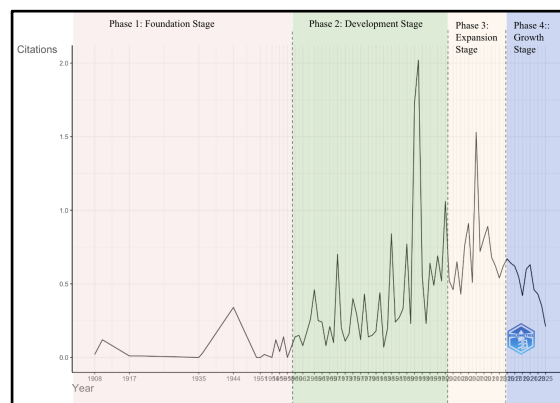


Fig. 3. Graph of annual citation

Figure 2 and Figure 3 depict the annual scientific production and citation trends for monarchy system research from 1908 to 2025, detailing the field's evolution across four distinct phases: Foundation (1908–1959), Development (1960s–1999), Expansion (post-2000), and Growth (current). Phase 1 was marked by minimal, irregular publication output and restricted citation influence. Phase 2 saw a gradual escalation in publication frequency and growing citation momentum as political science, constitutional jurisprudence, and international relations perspectives were integrated. Phase 3 (post-2000) brought a sharp increase in annual publications and stronger citation impacts, driven by expanding international focus on democratisation, contemporary political frameworks, and national identity. The current Growth Stage represents peak productivity, reaching an all-time high of over 330 publications in 2025. Although recent publications show lower average citations due to standard citation lag rather than declining relevance, 2005–2015 works maintain the highest impact as foundational texts, confirming the field's transformation from a niche historical interest into a thriving, multidisciplinary domain.

3.3 Leading Contributors to Monarchy System Research

3.3.1 Leading publication sources

Table 2 identifies the primary outlets driving monarchy system research, focusing on the top 20 journals with a minimum of 20 contributions each. History of European Ideas leads in volume with 64 documents and 220 citations, yielding a g index of 11, followed by Parliaments, Estates and

Representation with 58 documents and 117 citations. However, output volume does not strictly dictate impact. While ranking ninth in total publications with 29 documents, the Historical Journal achieves the dataset's highest h-index and g-index alongside 510 total citations, reflecting exceptional scholarly influence. Similarly, despite ranking third in volume, the Royal Studies Journal exhibits impact metrics comparable to the fifteenth-ranked Journal on European History of Law, demonstrating that higher publication output does not automatically guarantee stronger academic resonance.

Table 2

Leading publication source (more than 20 article)

No	Source Title	Total Publications	H index	G index	Total Citation
1	History of European Ideas	64	9	11	220
2	Parliaments, Estates and Representation	58	6	7	117
3	Royal Studies Journal	38	3	3	30
4	Austrian History Yearbook	36	7	9	129
5	Court Historian	35	4	5	46
6	Religions	34	5	8	93
7	Journal of North African Studies	33	13	19	416
8	French History	31	7	11	159
9	Historical Journal	29	14	22	510
10	History of Political Thought	26	12	18	350
11	European Review of History	25	5	7	76
12	Journal of Medieval History	25	10	16	308
13	European History Quarterly	24	8	12	169
14	History Compass	23	8	12	174
15	Journal on European History of Law	22	3	3	21
16	Seventeenth Century	22	4	7	69

3.3.2 Leading authors and scholarly influence

Table 3

Most relevant authors and citation index (more than 5 documents)

Author's Name	No. of Documents	Total Citation	H-index	g-index	Year
Mccargo D	12	523	7	12	2005
Clancy L	9	85	6	9	2019
Bonney N	8	36	5	5	2010
Faust A	7	103	5	7	2005
Chachavalpongpun P	7	28	3	5	2015
Chambers P	6	109	3	6	2013
Subrahmanyam A	6	22	3	4	2015
Maritan M	6	14	2	3	2021
Dressel B	5	159	5	5	2009
Hewison K	5	187	5	5	2007
Coakley J	5	85	4	5	2009
Demmelhuber T	5	43	4	5	2011
Haberkorn T	5	27	4	5	2017
Richter T	5	104	4	5	2014
Ivašković I	5	7	2	2	2017

Table 3 highlights the primary contributors to monarchy system research, focusing on authors with more than five publications to evaluate scholarly output and influence. McCargo D leads the field with 12 publications, 523 citations, and an h-index of 7, demonstrating unmatched productivity and academic impact. Clancy L follows in second with nine publications. Notably, scholars like Hewison K (187 citations) and Dressel B (159 citations) achieved significant citation resonance despite lower publication volumes, reinforcing that academic influence depends on citation quality alongside output. Additionally, Maritan M, who entered the field in 2021, has accumulated six publications and 14 citations, signalling a rapidly expanding research footprint.

3.3.3 Authors' scientific production over time

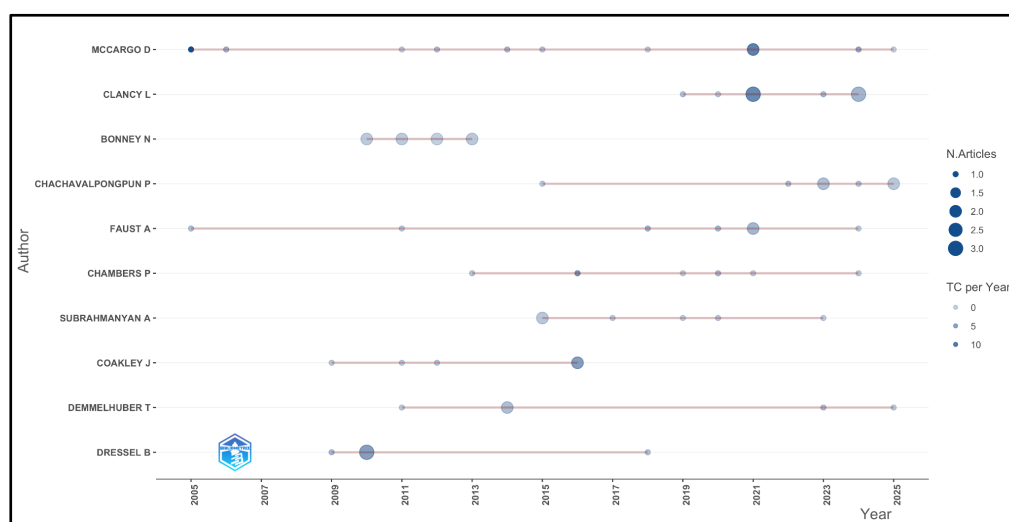


Fig. 4. Authors' production over time

Complementing Table 3, Figure 4 maps key authors' publication trajectories to highlight long-term research consistency and evolving scholarly activity. McCargo D demonstrates the longest active presence from 2005 to 2025, peaking in 2021, while Faust A and Chambers P also exhibit sustained output over extended periods. In contrast, scholars such as Bonney N and Coakley J show highly concentrated activity within shorter timeframes. Meanwhile, recent contributions from Clancy L and Maritan M reflect an expanding cohort of newer researchers, illustrating that the field relies on both foundational continuity and fresh academic voices.

3.3.4 Geographical distribution of scientific contributions

Table 4
Top 20 countries contributed to the publications

Country	Total Publications	Percentage (%)	Total Citation	Percentage(%)
United States	958	28.90	3434	31.42
United Kingdom	574	17.32	2308	21.12
Spain	281	8.48	415	3.80
Australia	152	4.59	491	4.49
Germany	139	4.19	806	7.37
Hungary	115	3.47	159	1.45
France	113	3.41	373	3.41
Italy	111	3.35	212	1.94
Czech Republic	107	3.23	82	0.75
Austria	105	3.17	195	1.78

Table 4 (Continued)

Country	Total Publications	Percentage (%)	Total Citation	Percentage(%)
Canada	88	2.65	250	2.29
Croatia	82	2.47	58	0.53
Poland	74	2.23	66	0.60
Portugal	74	2.23	84	0.77
Romania	63	1.90	32	0.29
Thailand	63	1.90	403	3.69
Netherlands	58	1.75	259	2.37
Israel	54	1.63	256	2.34
Slovenia	54	1.63	127	1.16
Denmark	50	1.51	919	8.41

Table 4 reveals that monarchy system research is heavily concentrated within Western and English-speaking nations, led by the United States and the United Kingdom, which together account for 46.22 percent of total publications and 52.54 percent of citations. The remaining top 20 list features a strong European presence, including Spain, Germany, France, and Italy, alongside major English-speaking contributors like Australia and Canada. This regional dominance reflects deep monarchical histories, rich archival resources, and global academic reach. Consequently, theoretical and empirical advancements remain centred within a few established powerhouses, highlighting a need for greater geographical diversity in future scholarship.

3.3.5 Leading research institutions and global research collaboration

Table 5

Strongest international collaboration pairs

No	Collaboration	Frequency
1	United States - United Kingdom	16
2	United Kingdom – Australia	7
3	United Kingdom – Italy	7
4	United Kingdom – Ireland	6
5	United States – Australia	5
6	United Kingdom – Germany	5
7	Spain – France	4
8	United State – Italy	4
9	United Kingdom – Norway	4
10	Austria – Norway	3

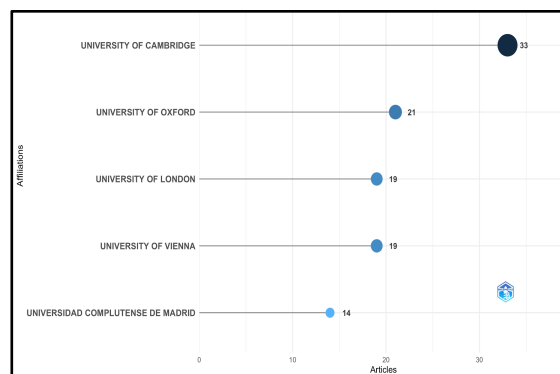


Fig. 5. Most influential institutions

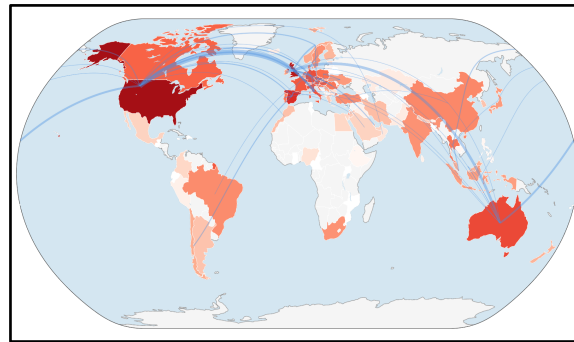


Fig. 6. Global research collaboration

Figures 5 and 6 alongside Table 5 map the institutional landscape and international collaboration networks driving monarchy system research. The University of Cambridge leads institutional output with 33 articles, followed by the University of Oxford with 21, the Universities of London and Vienna with 19 each, and Universidad Complutense De Madrid with 14, highlighting a core concentration within elite European universities. Despite this local anchoring, research is increasingly global. The United States and United Kingdom maintain the strongest partnership with 16 joint publications, while the United Kingdom also collaborates extensively with Australia, Italy, Ireland, Germany, and Norway. Secondary ties, such as partnerships between Spain and France or Austria and Norway, demonstrate that monarchy scholarship relies on historical and regional academic networks aligned around shared political and constitutional histories.

3.3.6 International collaboration based on corresponding authors

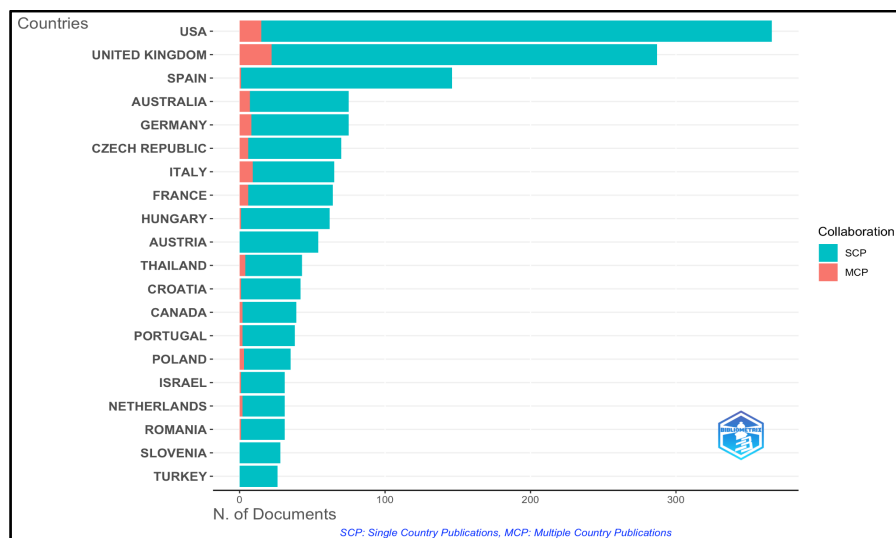


Fig. 7. Geographical distribution and international collaboration in monarchy system research

Figure 7 illustrates the geographical distribution of Single Country Publications (SCP) and Multiple Country Publications (MCP), confirming that monarchy system literature remains anchored by a few dominant nations. The United States leads in total publication volume, followed by the United Kingdom and Spain. However, output from these top contributors consists primarily of SCP, indicating that research is largely localised within domestic institutions. Conversely, nations with lower overall output such as Thailand, Italy, Germany, and Australia show higher MCP ratios, demonstrating stronger engagement in cross-border partnerships. Meanwhile, countries like Spain, Austria, and Hungary rely almost exclusively on internal networks. Overall, monarchy system scholarship remains

driven by nationally focused communities, though rising MCP engagement reflects a growing international framework.

3.4 Intellectual Structure and Thematic Evolution of Monarchy System Research

3.4.1 Relationships among authors, keywords, and publication sources

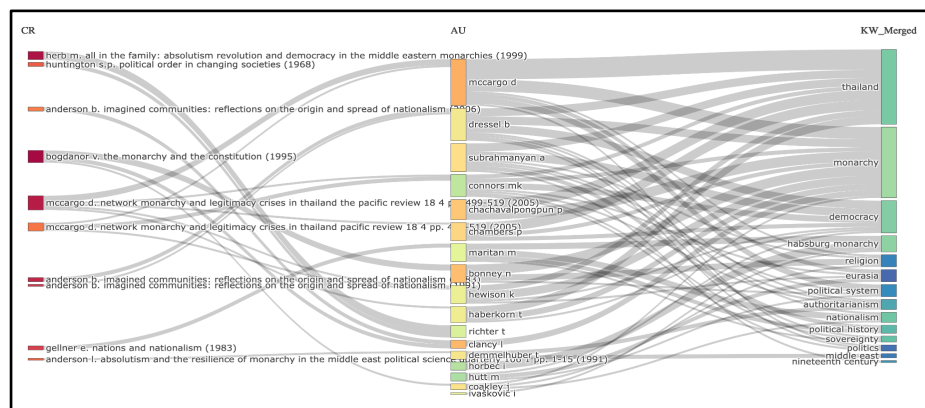


Fig. 8. Three-field bibliometric relationship among cited reference, authors, and author keywords

Figure 8 presents a three-field bibliometric plot mapping the connections between key references, productive authors, and major research themes from 1908 to 2025. McCargo D occupies the central position with strong linkages to influential foundational texts and keywords such as Thailand, monarchy, and democracy, highlighting his significant impact on contemporary Southeast Asian political discourse. Interdisciplinary theoretical works on nationalism, constitutional governance, and state legitimacy, including seminal texts by Anderson, Gellner, Bogdanor, and Herb, serve as common foundations across multiple authors. The dominant keyword clusters centre on Thailand, the Habsburg monarchy, political history, and democratic transitions, demonstrating that the field bridges historical and contemporary governance. Ultimately, this structural mapping reveals an intellectual core anchored in a select group of scholars, emphasising opportunities for expanded comparative research into underrepresented systems like Malaysia.

3.4.2 Relationships among authors, keywords, and publication sources

Table 6

Highly cited articles

No.	Author	Journal	Themes	Title	Year	C	CpY
1	Elliot J.H.	Past and Present	Historical Evolution of European Monarchies	A Europe of Composite Monarchies	1992	715	20.4
2	Bjørnskov C	Public Choice	Political Economy and State Development	Determinants of generalized trust: A cross-country comparison	2007	658	32.9
3	McCargo D	The Pacific Review	Monarchy, Democracy and Political Legitimacy	Network monarchy and legitimacy crises in Thailand	2005	321	14.6
4	Kuru A.T.	World Politics	Religion, State and Constitutional Development	Passive and Assertive Secularism: Historical Conditions, Ideological Struggles, and State Policies toward Religion	2007	255	12.8

No.	Author	Journal	Themes	Title	Year	C	CpY
5	Escribà-Folch A	International Study Quarterly	Authoritarianism, Regime Survival and International Politics	Dealing with Tyranny: International Sanctions and the Survival of Authoritarian Rulers	2010	223	13.1
6	Biggs M	Comparative Studies in Society and History	Historical Evolution of European Monarchies	Putting the State on the Map: Cartography, Territory, and European State Formation	1999	223	8
7	Myerson R.B.	American Political Science Review	Monarchy, Democracy and Political Legitimacy	The Autocrat's Credibility Problem and Foundations of the Constitutional State	2008	196	10.3
8	Yom S.L.	Journal of Democracy	Monarchy, Democracy and Political Legitimacy	Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On	2012	190	12.7
9	Herzog Z	Tel Aviv	Religion, State and Constitutional Development	Redefining the Centre: The Emergence of State in Judah	2004	181	7.9
10	Kailitz S	Democratization	Monarchy, Democracy and Political Legitimacy	Classifying political regimes revisited: legitimation and durability	2013	161	11.5

Note: C= Citations; CpY = Citation per year

Table 6 presents the 10 most highly cited articles establishing the intellectual foundation of monarchy system research. Elliot [19] achieved the highest total citations (715), while Bjørnskov [20] recorded the highest annual average (32.9), reflecting the combined influence of classic historical scholarship and recent political economy studies.

This foundational literature spans three principal intellectual streams. The first stream focuses on historical evolution, where Elliot [19] and Biggs [22] examine composite monarchies, state formation, and imperial governance, establishing European historical institutions as the field's core baseline. The second stream addresses democracy and political legitimacy; McCargo [21], Myerson [24], Yom [25], and Kailitz [23] analyse regime stability and democratic pressures, positioning monarchies as active political institutions rather than mere ceremonial entities. The third stream adopts a broader institutional governance perspective. Studies by Bjørnskov [20], Kuru [3], and Escribà-Folch [26] integrate economics, comparative politics, and international relations to evaluate governance quality, state development, and institutional resilience.

Critically, these citation patterns reveal a geographic concentration on European constitutional development and select Asian contexts. While McCargo [21] highlights Southeast Asian monarchies through Thailand, research on other constitutional monarchies, particularly Malaysia, remains underrepresented. Expanding comparative scholarship to diverse non-European regions is essential to test the global generalizability of current monarchical theories. Ultimately, the field has transitioned from traditional historical narratives toward multidisciplinary analyses of contemporary governance and legitimacy.

Overall, the literature exhibits a well-developed yet uneven intellectual framework. Research remains heavily concentrated on European historical regimes and authoritarian persistence, while Asian constitutional monarchies, such as Malaysia, remain understudied. Furthermore, emerging issues including digital governance, institutional reform, public trust, and modern democratic integration require greater scholarly attention. Bridging these geographical and thematic gaps represents a necessary direction for future research.

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3.5 Emerging Themes and Future Research Directions

3.5.1 Evolution of research themes

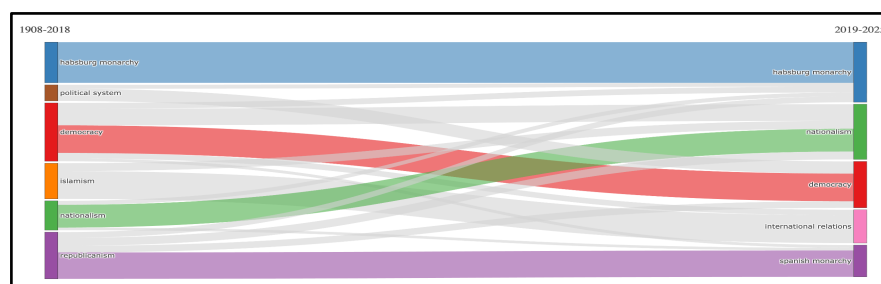


Fig. 11. Evolution of research themes over time

Figure 11 illustrates the evolution of major research themes between 1908-2018 and 2019-2025. The result shows that the Habsburg monarchy remains the most stable research theme that maintains a direct continuation across both periods. This continuity indicates that research into the monarchy system remains intellectually anchored in historical analyses of European dynasties. At the same time, democracy remained a core theme but evolved in tandem with broadening geopolitical contexts. Because of the structural links between democratic setups and international relations, current research regularly examines monarchies via global diplomacy, transnational governance, and international statecraft rather than viewing them solely as isolated internal systems. Furthermore, nationalism experienced significant expansion, establishing itself as a leading modern analytical category after 2019. This shift underscores an increasing scholarly emphasis on the intersections of monarchical rule with modern state formation, civic identity creation, and constitutional legality boundaries.

On the other hand, separate thematic areas such as Islamism, theoretical republicanism, and general political systems gradually consolidated into integrated analytical subfields. For instance, republicanism shifted conceptually toward focused examinations of the Spanish crown, demonstrating a methodological move away from abstract debates and toward historically rooted, institutional studies of specific nations. In conclusion, this pattern of thematic development indicates that academic literature on monarchies has shifted from traditional historiographical mapping to comprehensive, interdisciplinary dialogues that incorporate constitutional design, contemporary nationalism, democratic practices, and international diplomacy.

3.5.2 Identification of emerging and mature research themes

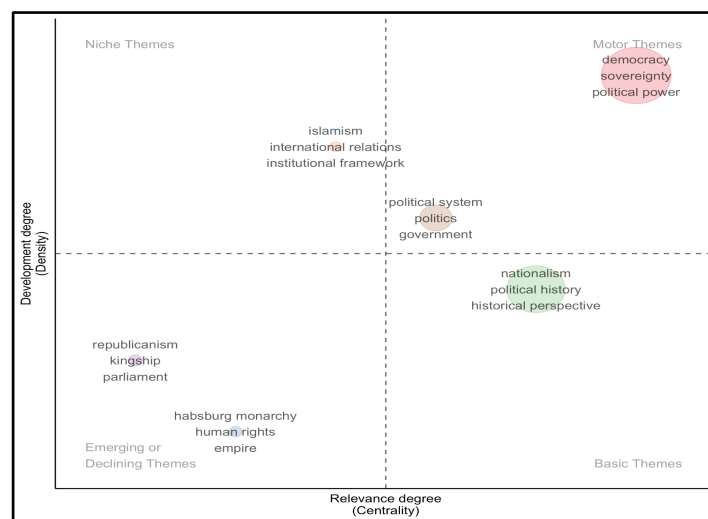


Fig. 12. Thematic map based on centrality and density

Figure 12 classifies research themes according to their centrality (relevance) and density (development), revealing the maturity and future direction of the field. The Motor Themes quadrant is dominated by democracy, sovereignty, and political power, indicating that these themes are not only well-developed but also highly interconnected with the broader literature. Their strong centrality suggests that contemporary monarchy research is increasingly framed within debates on political legitimacy, constitutional authority, and governance rather than traditional dynastic or historical narratives. This finding reflects a notable shift in scholarly attention from descriptive historical studies towards analysing monarchy as an active political institution within modern democratic systems. Conversely, nationalism, political history, and historical perspective are positioned as Basic Themes, indicating that they provide the conceptual foundation of the field but remain comparatively underdeveloped internally. Although these topics are frequently examined, their lower density suggests that research has largely focused on descriptive historical accounts, leaving opportunities for more theory-driven and comparative investigations that connect nationalism with constitutional monarchy, political legitimacy, and state governance.

The Niche Themes, comprising Islamism, international relations, and institutional framework, exhibit high internal development but relatively low centrality. This suggests that while these topics have established specialised research communities, they remain weakly integrated into mainstream monarchy scholarship. Greater integration of these themes with governance, comparative politics, and constitutional studies could substantially enrich the intellectual diversity of the field. The Emerging or Declining Themes include Habsburg monarchy, empire, human rights, republicanism, parliament, and kingship. Given the extensive historical literature on Habsburg and imperial studies, their position is more likely to indicate declining research prominence rather than genuine emergence. This pattern suggests that contemporary scholarship is gradually moving beyond traditional historical case studies towards broader institutional and governance-oriented perspectives. However, themes such as human rights and parliament may represent promising areas for future investigation, particularly in understanding how constitutional monarchies respond to contemporary democratic expectations, institutional reforms, and public accountability.

Overall, the thematic map demonstrates that monarchy system research is undergoing an intellectual transition. While historical and constitutional studies continue to provide the discipline's foundation, the research frontier is increasingly shaped by democracy, sovereignty, political power,

and governance. At the same time, the limited development of interdisciplinary themes indicates opportunities to integrate insights from political science, international relations, public administration, and institutional theory, thereby expanding the theoretical breadth and practical relevance of future monarchy research.

4. Discussion

This study set out to map the intellectual landscape of monarchy system research through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of 4,083 Scopus-indexed publications spanning the period from 1908 to 2025. By addressing the four research questions, the findings collectively demonstrate that monarchy studies have evolved from a predominantly historical field into a multidisciplinary and increasingly governance-oriented domain.

With respect to RQ1, the analysis reveals a sustained expansion in monarchy system research, particularly post-2005, culminating in peak annual publication output in 2025. An annual growth rate of 5.10 percent demonstrates that scholarly interest in monarchical governance has intensified alongside the global expansion of democratic systems. Rather than fading into historical obsolescence, monarchies continue to attract academic scrutiny due to their institutional adaptability and dynamic executive roles within contemporary governance structures. This conceptual development remains anchored in foundational texts, with works by previous studies [19, 20, 21] continuing to exert strong citation influence. Although recent publications from 2024 and 2025 exhibit typical citation lag, the marked surge in overall volume reflects a broader intellectual shift: viewing monarchies not merely as historical remnants or ceremonial relics, but as evolving political institutions central to ongoing debates on legitimacy, sovereignty, and regime stability.

In evaluating the primary contributors, sources, institutions, and geographic distribution (RQ2), the analysis demonstrates a pronounced structural concentration within Western academic centres. Leading journals such as *History of European Ideas*, *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, and *The Historical Journal* act as key intellectual conduits. Individual scholars, like McCargo [21] exert significant influence, particularly regarding Southeast Asian political dynamics. Geographically, research output remains anchored in elite institutions within the United States and the United Kingdom, such as the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford. However, international co-authorship remains remarkably low at 5.41 percent, indicating that monarchy scholarship operates predominantly within localised national or regional research silos.

Regarding RQ3, the bibliometric mapping confirms a major paradigm shift in monarchy system research, transitioning from traditional historiography toward comparative political science. While the field's foundation remains anchored in European state-building, territorial cartography, and imperial governance through historical analyses of the Habsburg and Spanish monarchies [19,22], contemporary scholarship has increasingly reoriented toward modern institutional dynamics. Led by previous scholars [23-25], current discourse focuses on authoritarian resilience, regime stability, democratic pressures, political legitimacy, and constitutional adaptation, particularly within Middle Eastern dynastic systems. This thematic evolution underscores a broader intellectual transformation, rather than relying solely on descriptive historical inquiry, modern scholarship examines institutional continuity and political adaptation in tandem, positioning monarchies as active institutions that dynamically interact with modern governance, sovereignty, and nationalism.

In relation to RQ4, the thematic map identifies democracy, sovereignty, and political power as the primary motor themes shaping the current and future research agenda. However, critical issues such as human rights, constitutional reform, parliamentary authority, digital governance, and public accountability remain comparatively underdeveloped despite their growing societal relevance.

Furthermore, the literature exhibits a pronounced geographical imbalance. While European constitutional systems and specific cases like Thailand receive extensive coverage, non-European constitutional frameworks, particularly in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, remain significantly underrepresented. Addressing these gaps requires future inquiries to bridge specialised subfields by integrating political economy, public administration, and institutional theory to examine how monarchies navigate contemporary democratic expectations, maintain legitimacy, and adapt to modern governance challenges.

Overall, this study offers several significant contributions to political science, comparative constitutional law, public administration, and institutional history. By delivering a comprehensive bibliometric synthesis spanning over a century of scholarship, it unifies a literature historically fragmented across regional specialisations and methodological paradigms. Combining performance analysis with science mapping, the findings clarify the field's intellectual structure by identifying key contributors, foundational texts, and evolving thematic trajectories. Crucially, this analysis demonstrates that monarchies should no longer be viewed merely as historical anomalies or ceremonial vestiges, as traditionally framed in classic constitutional scholarship [1]. Instead, the evidence establishes that monarchies operate as adaptive political institutions capable of projecting soft power, maintaining state stability, and navigating democratic pressures. Furthermore, by detailing the structural shift from European historiography toward modern political economy, regime survival, and strategic co-optation [5,20,26], this study offers a clear roadmap for developing integrated, cross-regional theoretical frameworks.

From a practical perspective, these findings offer vital insights for constitutional designers, institutional reformers, and political strategists operating within monarchical frameworks. The literature demonstrates that constitutional monarchies serve as institutional anchors, preserving national identity, administrative continuity, and political trust during intense societal, economic, or political transitions. Understanding the operational mechanisms of monarchical legitimacy, particularly within the dual governance and parliamentary models analysed [2], provides policymakers with actionable frameworks for balancing executive authority with democratic accountability. Furthermore, in regions undergoing structural reform, insights drawn from rentier political economies, dynastic governance, and institutional resilience, as explored by previous study [4-6,10], clarify how executive monarchies maintain regime stability and mediate state-society relations. Within specific national settings, such as Malaysia, these empirical insights justify expanding policy-oriented research on its unique rotational constitutional monarchy system. Evaluating how monarchical institutions intersect with governance quality, nation-building, and constitutional continuity can directly inform public discourse, educational initiatives, and future policy deliberations regarding the crown's evolving role in modern democratic societies.

Despite its comprehensive scope, several methodological limitations must be acknowledged. First, the dataset relied exclusively on publications indexed within the Scopus database, following the data extraction protocol outlined by Zakaria *et al.* While Scopus offers extensive coverage across the social sciences, relevant monographs, book chapters, or journal articles indexed solely in Web of Science, Google Scholar, or regional databases may have been excluded. Second, the search criteria were restricted to English-language documents. This linguistic boundary necessarily omits crucial non-English scholarship, including rich vernacular archives, legal commentaries, and domestic political analyses published in native languages across European, Middle Eastern, and Asian monarchies. Third, the extraction string relied on the specific Boolean term TITLE-ABS-KEY (("monarch* system*")). While this strategy successfully captured 4,083 highly relevant documents, specialised studies focusing on related concepts such as royal houses, sultanates, dynastic rule, or

executive crowns without explicitly citing monarchical systems may have fallen outside the search boundary.

To address the geographical, thematic, and methodological imbalances identified in this study, future research must prioritise several key areas. Scholars should actively work to expand comparative research beyond traditional European historical cases and Middle Eastern absolute regimes. There is an urgent need for empirical studies examining underrepresented non-European constitutional frameworks, particularly in Southeast Asia. In particular, Malaysia's unique rotational constitutional monarchy system represents an understudied model of institutional moderation, state identity, and federal cohesion that warrants rigorous comparative analysis. Additionally, future research should investigate how monarchical institutions adapt to 21st-century technological and societal shifts. Important emerging areas include the role of digital governance, social media diplomacy, institutional transparency, and public trust in preserving royal legitimacy amid modern democratic expectations. Finally, fostering cross-regional and international co-authorship networks will be essential to bridge existing research silos and build robust, globally generalizable theories of monarchical governance.

5. Conclusions

This study provides a quantitative bibliometric synthesis of Scopus-indexed scholarship on monarchy systems, analysing 4,083 documents published between 1908 and 2025. By systematically mapping publication trajectories, citation networks, thematic clusters, and institutional structures, this paper outlines the intellectual evolution of Scopus-indexed scholarship on monarchy over more than a century. The findings confirm that monarchy research has grown steadily, transitioning from foundational historiographical studies of European imperial state-building, exemplified by Elliot [19] and Biggs [22], toward multidisciplinary examinations of democratic consolidation, political legitimacy, and governance quality, as advanced by Bjørnskov [20], Josua [5], McCargo [21] and Yom [25].

Despite this thematic maturation, the domain's intellectual structure remains geographically and methodologically uneven. Output continues to be dominated by Western institutions, particularly within the United States and the United Kingdom, while international cross-border collaboration remains limited. Furthermore, non-European constitutional monarchies, most notably in Southeast Asia such as Malaysia, remain significantly underrepresented despite their theoretical relevance to modern political science. Addressing these imbalances through geographically diversified, interdisciplinary, and collaborative inquiry will be crucial for advancing the discipline. As monarchies continue to navigate complex political, digital, and constitutional landscapes, this mapping provides an empirical foundation to guide future academic research and policy deliberations.

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