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*Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales*



*Elites políticas  
en América Latina:  
socialización, trayectorias y capitales*



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# **A Scientometric Review of Global Research on Political Elites**

Una revisión cientométrica de la investigación mundial sobre las élites políticas

Uma revisão cientométrica das pesquisas globais sobre elites políticas

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## **Abstract**

Political elites are a long-established research topic in the field of political science and political sociology. Several traditional literature reviews have been published on the subject, discussing the most employed methodologies, outlining the research panorama in specific countries, or making comparative assessments of the state of the art. In an attempt to acquire a clearer understanding of the intellectual landscape of the research on political elites, we performed a quantitative scientometric review of 921 papers published between 1958 and 2021 indexed in the Scopus database. The results showed that the number of articles published has increased rapidly,

especially since 2010. The reference literature showed that political elites is a theme very closely associated with the performance of representative democracies. An overview of this study area showed that the bibliography is first ordered by countries or regions and later by subject. Among the many subjects discussed, studies about elites in former Soviet nations stand out. As we look specifically into the production in Latin America, we find a research field structured around Chile and Brazil and a division between, on the one hand, political science studies and, on the other, political sociology studies heavily influenced by the French sociology of elites.

**Keywords:** political elites; political science; scientific field; scientometrics; Latin America.

## Resumen

Las élites políticas son un tema de investigación de larga data en el campo de la ciencia política y la sociología política. Se han publicado varias revisiones bibliográficas tradicionales sobre el tema, en las que se discuten las metodologías más empleadas, se esboza el panorama de la investigación en países concretos o se realizan evaluaciones comparativas del estado de la cuestión. En un intento de adquirir una comprensión más clara del panorama intelectual de la investigación sobre élites políticas, realizamos una revisión cientométrica cuantitativa de 921 artículos publicados entre 1958 y 2021 indexados en la base de datos Scopus. Los resultados mostraron que el número de artículos publicados ha aumentado rápidamente, especialmente desde 2010. La literatura de referencia mostró que las élites políticas es un tema muy asociado al desempeño de las democracias representativas. Una visión general de esta área de estudio mostró que la bibliografía está ordenada primero por países o regiones y después por temas. Entre los muchos temas tratados, destacan los estudios sobre las élites en las antiguas naciones soviéticas. Al observar específicamente la producción en América Latina, encontramos un campo de investigación estructurado en torno a Chile y Brasil y una división entre, por un lado, los estudios de ciencia política y, por otro, los de sociología política fuertemente influenciados por la sociología de las elites francesa.

**Palabras clave:** élites políticas; ciencia política; campo científico; cientometría; América Latina.

## Resumo

Elites políticas são um tópico tradicional nos estudos de ciência política e de sociologia política. Diversas revisões tradicionais de literatura já foram publicadas sobre o tema discutindo as metodologias mais empregadas, descrevendo o panorama dos estudos em países específicos ou fazendo periodicamente balanços comparativos do estado da arte. Para ajudar pesquisadores a compreender melhor o panorama intelectual da investigação sobre elites políticas, realizamos uma revisão cientométrica quantitativa de 921 trabalhos publicados entre 1958 e 2021 e indexados na base Scopus. Os resultados mostraram que o número de artigos publicados tem aumentado rapidamente, especialmente desde 2010. A literatura de referência mostrou que o tema das elites

políticas está fortemente associado ao desempenho das democracias representativas. Uma visão geral da área mostrou que a bibliografia está primeiramente ordenada por países ou regiões e depois por assuntos. Entre os muitos assuntos discutidos destacam-se os estudos das elites dos países do antigo bloco comunista. Um olhar específico sobre a produção da América Latina revelou um campo de pesquisa estruturado em torno de Chile e Brasil e uma divisão entre estudos de ciência política e estudos de sociologia política com forte influência da sociologia das elites francesa.

**Palavras-chave:** elites políticas; ciência política; campo científico; cientometria; América Latina.

## Introduction

The term "political elite" has become commonplace in contemporary society. One repeatedly finds news headlines such as "Leaked email scandal engulfs Poland's political elite"<sup>1</sup> or "Mass Ljubljana Protest Against Political Elites on Statehood Day".<sup>2</sup> In Higley and Moore's concise definition, political elites are "persons whose strategic positions in large and powerful organizations and movements enable them to influence political decision-making directly, substantially, and regularly".<sup>3</sup> Burton and Higley identified more than 250 new references published within this research field between 1976 and 1984 alone.<sup>4</sup> The last decade has witnessed an expansion and development of empirical research on political elites. Our estimates show that between 2011 and 2020 an average of 57 documents were published per year, as indexed in the Scopus database. What are the main themes, problems, and research methods of the studies on political elites in contemporary political science? What about political science in Latin America?

Extensive literature reviews have compiled and comprehensively evaluated studies on political elites. Putnam's study stands out. By analyzing over 650 documents, the study developed a thorough overview of the study field about elites in modern societies until the 1970s.<sup>5</sup> Numerous bibliographic reviews have emerged since then, as we find an accumulated literature that periodically lists, reviews, and analyzes what has been written about political elites. Different organizational guidelines have sought to address the scientific production within this research domain. Peeler (2001) chronologically organized social science controversies about political elites in Latin America. His periodization comprises the interval from the 1960s to the late 1990s.<sup>6</sup> The debate may be summarized as follows: i) in the 1960s and 1970s, structural-functionalism and dependency theory dominated analytical perspectives; ii) in the 1970s and 1980s, the rise of dictatorial regimes in Latin America and their subsequent downfall were analyzed by way of intra-elite autonomous actions and pacts; iii) in the 1980s and 1990s, types of transitions and ongoing democratization processes

<sup>1</sup> "Leaked email scandal engulfs Poland's political elite", *Politico.Eu*, June 24, 2021, accessed on June 2021, available at <https://www.politico.eu/article/leaked-email-scandal-engulfs-poland-political-elite-mails-hacking/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Mass Ljubljana Protest Against Political Elites on Statehood Day", *Total-Slovenia-News.Com*, accessed on June 2021, available at <https://www.total-slovenia-news.com/politics/8504-mass-ljubljana-protest-against-political-elites-on-statehood-day-video>.

<sup>3</sup> John Higley and Gwen Moore, "Political Elite Studies at the Year 2000: Introduction", *International Review of Sociology* 11, no. 2 (2001): 176.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Burton and John Higley, "Invitation to Elite Theory, The Basic Contentions Reconsidered", in *Power Elites and Organizations*, G. William Domhoff and Thomas R. Dye eds., 235-53. Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1976).

<sup>6</sup> John A. Peeler, "Elites, Structures, and Political Action in Latin America", *International Review of Sociology* 11, no. 2 (2001): 231-246.

prompted intra-elite relations researchers to investigate the decisive role of elites in consolidating competitive democracies, from which emerged an entire critical literature emphasizing other actors and other factors; and iv) from the 1990s onwards, "critical juncture theory"<sup>7</sup> has shifted the debate on the role of political elites, especially party leaders, and has contributed to balance interpretations based on either class protagonism or voluntarism of the elites.<sup>8</sup>

Hoffmann-Lange organized empirical studies on political elites into four areas: i) social origin and political recruitment; ii) analysis of the careers of professional politicians; iii) actions, values, and attitudes of elites; and iv) modes of interaction between elite groups.<sup>9</sup> We also find bibliographical reviews regarding the state of the art within specific countries. Genieys called attention to the emergence of a new generation of "neo-elitist" studies, in the early 2000s in France, and summarized these researches into three approaches: comparative, historical, and centered on the role of elites in the formulation of public policies.<sup>10</sup> Setton summarized over 100 studies about elites in Brazil, emphasizing the theoretical, methodological, and empirical categories which structured this production.<sup>11</sup> The essays organized by Vommaro and Gené performed comprehensive analyses of the literature in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, systematizing the sizeable volume of contributions.<sup>12</sup>

Scholars have also organized this production around specific problems, such as the underrepresentation of women in Europe's parliamentary elite. Christmas-Best and Kjær arranged the different explanations addressing this issue into three groups of explanatory variables: cultural-historical, socioeconomic, and institutional.<sup>13</sup> Veenendaal reviewed 167 case studies on the relationship between the level of democracy, political stability, and intra-elite relations.<sup>14</sup> Codato, Lorencetti, and Prata analyzed 560 articles published between 2015 and 2018 and showed that, alongside the customary political science and political sociology literature, political communication has become the contemporary bordering research area on political elites.<sup>15</sup>

In this article, we take a different approach to the intellectual production on political elites as we stem from bibliometrics and scientometrics. Our goal is to evaluate, visualize, and understand the dynamics of scientific production within the major study area commonly known as "political elites". Bibliometrics allows us to quantitatively measure several dimensions of scientific activity through publication statistics, while scientometrics grants us a more systematic insight into the knowledge production panorama and context within a given scholarly domain. Scientometric-based reviews, more than traditional discussions about the "state of the art" regarding a given topic of interest, allow us to establish a more faithful quantitative scenario regarding the structural components of a given scientific production and the reciprocal relationships between authors, institutions, journals,

<sup>7</sup> Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

<sup>8</sup> Burton and Higley, "Invitation to Elite Theory".

<sup>9</sup> Ursula Hoffmann-Lange, "Methods of Elite Research", in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, Russell J. Dalton and Hans-Dieter Klingemann eds., 910-927 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> William Genieys, "The Sociology of Political Elites in France: The End of an Exception?", *Internationale Political Science Review/ Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 26, no. 4 (2005): 413-430.

<sup>11</sup> Maria da Graça Jacintho Setton, "Estudos sobre as elites: uma leitura da produção em periódicos - 1998-2017", *Pro-Posições* 32 (2021), available at <https://www.scielo.br/j/pp/a/ScZ5vyDmN94XBxst3M7JHj/?lang=pt>.

<sup>12</sup> Gabriel Vommaro and Mariana Gené eds., *Las élites políticas en el sur. Un estado de la cuestión de los estudios sobre la Argentina, Brasil y Chile* (Munro: Ediciones Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, 2018).

<sup>13</sup> Verónica Christmas-Best and Ulrik Kjær, "Why So Few and Why So Slow? Women as Parliamentary Representatives in Europe from a Longitudinal Perspective", in *Democratic Representation in Europe: Diversity, Change, and Convergence*, Maurizio Cotta and Heinrich Best eds., 77-105 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Wouter Veenendaal, "When Things Get Personal: How Informal and Personalized Politics Produce Regime Stability in Small States", *Government and Opposition* 55, no. 3 (2020): 393-412.

<sup>15</sup> Adriano Codato, Mariana Lorencetti and Bruna Prata, "Elites Políticas e Representação: Uma Investigação Da Literatura Contemporânea Sobre Politicos Profissionais", *Revista Brasileira de Informação Bibliográfica Em Ciências Sociais - BIB* 95 (2021): 1-23.

countries, and production periods. Furthermore, it provides subsidies for mapping large volumes of references, methodologies, as well as the relevance or absence and the rise or decline over time of certain themes.<sup>16</sup> It enables us to understand the structure, hierarchy, and internal dynamics of major areas of knowledge as much as specific scientific fields, as well as to map out central and fringe issues, types of producers, and classes of bibliographic products.<sup>17</sup>

What do scientific works focused on political elites discuss? What are the fundamental references in these discussions? Who are the most active and most prolific authors and/or institutions? In which countries has this topic garnered greater academic relevance? What are the most cited articles? What do they have in common? These are the underlying questions in our work as we set out to map the global production on the issue, with a particular focus on studies produced in Latin America since the 1990s.

We cataloged and analyzed the recurring patterns in titles and abstracts as well as reciprocal citations between authors and articles in 921 documents published between 1958 and 2021 indexed in the *Scopus* database. We used two relational bibliometric methods: co-word and co-citation, which enabled us to build major thematic networks and map the affinities and connectivity within this research domain.

This article is divided into three parts. In the next section, we outline how we built the database by mining and selecting information in the *Scopus* database and detail the meaning and function of the bibliometric measures utilized. The third section introduces the bibliometric networks and, through them, the characteristics of the scientific production on political elites. In the last section we discuss and interpret the main findings of our study, stressing the innovations and limitations of this article and providing recommendations for future corresponding research.

## Materials and methods

### *Bibliometric search and data collection*

We selected all available works about "political elites" within the *Scopus* database. We found significant shortcoming regarding the representativeness of the production, especially in Latin America. Regional coverage is largely concentrated in Western Europe (over 12,000 journals) and North America (circa 6,600 journals). In turn, we found only 790 active journals in Latin America indexed in the database (or 3.2%). Distribution between knowledge areas is equally uneven. While Health and Life Sciences account for 46% of the 25,100 journals, Physical Sciences for 28%, the entire field of Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities accounts for only 26% of the database.<sup>18</sup>

This problem is further hindered by two complications when attempting to perform an efficient search on political elites that does not return either false positives (one of our attempts resulted in over five thousand results) or false negatives (another attempt resulted in just over 20 documents).

<sup>16</sup> Howard D. White, "Authors as Citers over Time", *Journal of the American Society For Information Science and Technology* 52, no. 2 (2001): 87-108.

<sup>17</sup> Jean Tague-Sutcliffe, "An Introduction to Informetrics", *Information Processing and Management* 28, no. 1 (1992): 1-3; A. F. J. VanRaan, "Scientometrics: State-of-the-Art", *Scientometrics* 38, no. 1 (1997): 205-218.

<sup>18</sup> *Scopus, "Content Coverage Guide," Elsevier, 2020.*

On the one hand, the expression political elite often encompasses, whether in scientific or political discourse, virtually all politically relevant actors, operating as a synonym for “leaders, rulers, power groups, power networks, parties, state actors, and ruling class fractions”.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, in some political sociology approaches, as found in France for example, the most common expression stems from a Marxist affiliation: “ruling classes”.<sup>20</sup> Another problem in this area is the limited differentiation between the totality of elites and political elites more specifically. Overly inclusive definitions such as Putnam’s<sup>21</sup> or Giddens’<sup>22</sup> serve as examples. Thus, a thematic search would likely fail to encompass all relevant literature if the terms used for the search – political elite or political elites – do not appear in the titles, abstracts, or keywords.

Our advanced search equation, performed on May 25, 2021, was as follows:

**Table 1.** Advanced search string in Scopus database on “political elites”

Everything	TITLE ("polit* elit**" OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("stat* minist** AND "polit* elit**") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (congressman AND "polit* elit**") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (parliamentary AND "polit* elit**") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (deput* AND "polit* elit**") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (senat* AND "polit* elit**") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (congresswoman AND "polit* elit**") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (held AND office AND "polit* elit**") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (elected AND "polit* elit**") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("stud* of polit* elit*"))
	AND
Only Latin America	(LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Brazil") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Chile") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Mexico") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Argentina") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Ecuador") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Trinidad and Tobago") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Uruguay") OR LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Colombia"))
	AND
Except Latin America	(EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Brazil") OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Chile") OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Mexico") OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Argentina") OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Ecuador") OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Trinidad and Tobago") OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Uruguay") OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, "Colombia"))

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The search string consists of three parts: i) the first searches for the entire study corpus about political elites and its variants, such as State ministers, congressional representatives, members of the parliament, in addition to bibliographical reviews related to the theme; ii) the second part incorporates the first but filters the production from Latin America; and iii) the last part searches for productions from all other parts of the world, except Latin America.

Table 2 shows the study corpus divided into groups. In total, we analyzed 921 documents of various types, albeit mainly research articles, nearing 70% of the total (642 items).

<sup>19</sup> G. Lowell Field, John Higley and Michael G. Burton, "A New Elite Framework for Political Sociology", *Revue Européenne Des Sciences Sociales* 28, no. 88 (1990): 149.

<sup>20</sup> Raymond Aron, "Catégories Dirigeantes Ou Classe Dirigeante?", *Revue Française de Science Politique* 15, no. 1 (1965): 7-27; William Genieys, "Nouveaux Regards Sur Les Élités Du Politique", *Revue Française de Science Politique* 56, no. 1 (2006): 121-147. "Partly because of these sociohistorical reasons, the notion of elites has never been considered in France as an analytical variable or even as a useful concept with which to understand changes in political power. There have been remarkably few articles on elites published in either the *Revue française de sociologie* or the *Revue française de science politique* since the 1950s. A synthetic overview written by researchers from the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (FNSP) put the word 'elite' in quotes, clearly indicating the problems faced by political scientists in using this term or concept". Genieys, "The Sociology of Political Elites in France", 414.

<sup>21</sup> The elite comprises people close to the top of the power pyramid and who have the ability to influence political decisions. The definition encompasses diverse elite groups such as religious, military, intellectual, as well as political, with an emphasis on preponderance. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*.

<sup>22</sup> Elites are individuals who occupy formally defined positions of authority in the managerial ranks of a social or institutional organization. This definition encompasses judicial, bureaucratic, union, economic, journalistic, as well as political elites, according to positional criteria. Anthony Giddens, "Elites in the British Class Structure", *The Sociological Review* 20, no. 3 (1972): 345-372.



**Table 2.** Grouping of the analytical corpus and number of documents

corpus	source	period	documents	Type and number of documents
Only Latin America	Scopus	1990-2021	48	Article 38; Book Chapter 5; Book 2; Review 2; Note 1
Except Latin America	Scopus	1958-2021	873	Article 604; Book Chapter 126; Review 90; Book 35; Note 10; Conference Paper 5; Erratum 2; Editorial 1
Total	Scopus	1958-2021	921	Article 642; Book Chapter 131; Review 92; Book 37; Note 11; Conference Paper 5; Erratum 2; Editorial 1

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database.

The production from Latin American indexed in the Scopus database on “political elites” is very limited and our search returned only 48 documents against 873 from other parts of the world (95% of the total). Furthermore, Latin American studies have been indexed only from 1990 onwards, while for the other papers the series starts from 1958. Thus, the literature hereby analyzed may be largely unrepresentative of the region.

## Types of bibliometric analyses

We used three methods for the relational bibliometric analysis: co-word, document co-citation, and author co-citation.

Co-word studies measure the co-occurrence of terms or expressions (noun terms) in titles, abstracts, and keywords of documents in a given study corpus. The strength of the association between words is based on the number of times they occur together in the analyzed texts.<sup>23</sup> The size, position, and intensity of the connection between terms or groups of terms in a semantic network serves as an indicator, albeit indirect, of affinities between themes, problems, concepts, methods, and research techniques. One significant advantage of this relational measure is that, unlike methods based solely on bibliometric data, we can access the *approximate* content of the documents – even though the same terms may appear with different meanings and for different reasons in a scientific discourse.<sup>24</sup>

The co-citation measure refers to two elements (e.g., journals, articles, or authors) that appear together in the reference list of a third document, thus implying that these two previously published elements were cited together by a later document.<sup>25</sup> This method stems from two underlying assumptions. The more two items are cited together (authors, for example), the more likely they are related in content, thus forming a “school of thought”<sup>26</sup> or a specific thematic field. And the higher the co-citation frequency, the more relevant these two references will be for a given scientific discourse. Hence, co-citation enables us to identify theoretical traditions and intellectual structures.<sup>27</sup> Two units were used for the co-citation analysis in this study: documents (books and

<sup>23</sup> Michel Callon, Jean-Pierre Courtial, William A. Turner, and Serge Bauin, “From Translations to Problematic Networks: An Introduction to Co-Word Analysis”, *Social Science Information* 22, no. 2 (1983): 191-235.

<sup>24</sup> Ivan Zupic and Tomaž Cater, “Bibliometric Methods in Management and Organization”, *Organizational Research Methods* 18, no. 3 (2015): 429-472.

<sup>25</sup> Henry Small, “Co-Citation in the Scientific Literature: A New Measure of the Relationship between Two Documents”, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 24, no. 4 (1973): 265-269.

<sup>26</sup> Howard D. White, and Belver C. Griffith, “Author Cocitation: A Literature Measure of Intellectual Structure”, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 32, no. 3 (1981): 163-171.

<sup>27</sup> Maria Cláudia Cabrini Grácio, “Acoplamento Bibliográfico e Análise de Cocitação: Revisão Teórico-Conceitual”, *Encontros Bibli: Revista Eletrônica de Biblioteconomia e Ciência Da Informação* 21, no. 47 (2016): 90.

articles) as shown in Figure 1, and authors as shown in Figure 3.

## Science map

Our software of choice for displaying the relationship networks was VOSviewer version 1.6.15 (<http://www.vosviewer.com/>). The software allows us to construct and visualize scientometric maps for analyzing large volumes of data. The VOSviewer maps use the documents' descriptive metadata (authors, journal titles, institutional authorities, geolocations, cited references, year of publication, etc.), compiled in bibliographic indexing databases. Networks are formed based on relationships of direct citation, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, or co-authorship. VOSviewer also enables text mining to generate co-occurrence networks of the most relevant terms extracted from titles, abstracts, and keywords.<sup>28</sup>

VOS stands for "visualization of similarity".<sup>29</sup> The elements within a knowledge network are clustered according to confluence or affinity. The visualization of the different elements in the VOSviewer network is distance-based. In other words, the distance between two nodes (terms, authors, articles) indicates, approximately, the "real" relationship between them in a two-dimensional Euclidean space.<sup>30</sup> The closer the elements are to each other, the stronger the affinity between them; conversely, the farther away, the weaker the affinity. The different objects related to each other (organizations, countries, journals, etc.) are then distributed and allocated in clusters according to similarity or identity and signaled in the network by different colors. The grouping is based on undirected direct citation or co-occurrence relationships (in the case of terms) through an aggregated analysis (van Eck and Waltman 2017). The weight of the elements in the networks – whether words or references – is conveyed by the number of times they appear in the corpus. The more important an item on a network in VOSviewer, the larger its label and circle.

The network maps used the descriptive metadata of the 921 documents collected in the Scopus bibliographic database. For constructing the co-occurrence matrix of terms presented in Figure 2, VOSviewer enabled the text mining of the most relevant terms extracted from titles and abstracts. Using a thesaurus, we were able to group several spellings of the same word or variants of the same topic of interest to improve the visual arrangement of the elements on the maps.<sup>31</sup> We did not use the keywords provided by the authors of the documents as they are very imprecise nor the subject indexing terms from the Scopus database because they are too generic. Our tests with keywords did not enable the creation of clusters with any thematic or theoretical meaning.

The networks presented in the next section were based on the co-occurrence of the most relevant terms (Figure 2) and the co-citation relationships of bibliographic references (Figure 1) and authors (Figure 3), in the latter case for Latin America only.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman, "Software Survey: VOSviewer, a Computer Program for Bibliometric Mapping", *Scientometrics* 84, no. 2 (2010): 523-538.

<sup>29</sup> Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman, "Visualizing Bibliometric Networks", in *Measuring Scholarly Impact: Methods and Practice*, Ying Ding, Ronald Rousseau, and Dietmar Wolfram eds., 285-320. Basel: Springer, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> For more details on the debate about bibliometric maps based on different approaches (i.e., distance-based, graph-based, and timeline-based approaches), see van Eck and Waltman, *ibidem*.

<sup>31</sup> For example, the terms or expressions "candidates for deputy" or "candidates" were unified as "candidates". Likewise, "conceptual definition", "conceptual framework", and "conceptualization" became "concept". Or "municipal government", "municipal level", and "municipality" were grouped together under the term "local government".

<sup>32</sup> The complete information regarding the parameters for building the VOSviewer networks is available on Appendix 1.

## Results of the scientometric analysis

In the following section we present the most important findings of our research. The information is organized into two parts. The first concerns studies and authors who have written about political elites in the world. The second part focuses solely on Latin America.

### The historical evolution of the literature

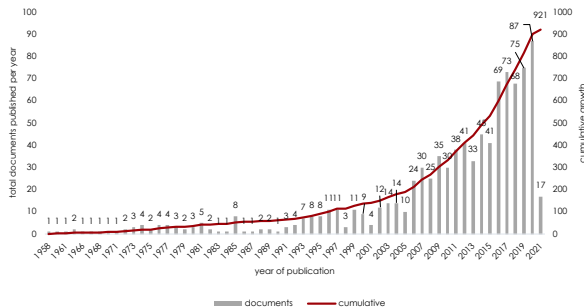
Graph 1 shows the growth in the production of manuscripts containing the term "political elite" in their titles, abstracts, and keywords within the Scopus database. The search resulted in documents published from 1958 to 2021.

The bars signal the number of documents year by year while the line indicates the accumulated value until mid-2021. There are 921 documents of various types (articles, books, chapters, conference proceedings, etc.).

The first manuscript indexed in Scopus concerning the political elite dates from 1958. Between the decades of 1960 and 1990 we found a stable situation at very low levels (an average of only 2 articles per year). We find a modest and uneven growth from the 1990s and a substantial escalation of the number of publications in the late 2000s. In 2007, 30 papers were published. Between 2011 and 2020 the average is 57 papers per year containing the expression "political elite". In 2020 alone, 87 documents were published.

In addition to the growing interest and topicality of the subject, this ascending curve reflects several things: more journals indexed in the Scopus database, the expansion of the political science community in the world, the production volume of the research teams, more streamlined communication of results, easier access to large databases, as well as the incorporation of scientific production from other regions of the world. We shall return to this last point later.

**Graph 1.** Cumulative growth (row) and total number of documents (columns) published with the term "political elite" in the Scopus database in titles, abstracts, and keywords (1958-2021)\*



\* Until May, 2021.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database.

## The global production on political elites

### The core literature about political elites

Figure 1 systematizes the most shared references among all manuscripts and provides an overview of the core literature in the field.

Document co-citation analyses are especially useful for detecting changes or stability of theoretical paradigms over time. While variations in the number of citations of a single item may be ordinary occurrences, even if they enable us to measure the impact of articles or the reputation of authors, changes in co-citation networks are far less common “and represent major shifts in research activity and scholarly orientation within a discipline”.<sup>33</sup>

The network is organized into five clusters. Table 3 shows the dominant subject and the central reference for each cluster. In general, the underlying subject in almost all 19 references is the functioning of democracies and the role of the elite within them.

The main document in the red cluster is Wright Mills’ *The Power Elite*.<sup>34</sup> The book is an analysis of military, corporate, and political elites that de facto controlled American democracy. This same cluster also includes *Polyarchy* by Robert Dahl, which redefines the method of measuring and meaning of political democracy,<sup>35</sup> and the essay by Guillermo O’Donnell, “Delegative Democracy”, which evaluates the dysfunction of personalist democracies in Latin American after the transition from military dictatorships.<sup>36</sup> Ake’s book addresses the subversion of democracy by autocratic governments in African nations.<sup>37</sup> Hence, the major issue here is the dysfunctions of democracy. Wright Mills’ book is connected to Robert Dahl’s *Who governs?*<sup>38</sup> in the green cluster, which serves as a sort of response to the former

**Table 3.** Most important documents by cluster in the co-citation network and dominant theme

cluster	color	theme	reference	title	type
1	red	problems of democracy	(Mills 1956)	The Power Elite	book
2	green	regime transitions	(Higley and Burton 1989)	The Elite Variable in Democratic Transitions and Breakdowns	article
3	blue	European integration	(Best, Lengyel, and Verzichelli 2012)	The Europe of Elites: A Study into the European-ness of Europe’s Political and Economic Elites	book
4	yellow	elite recruitment	(Putnam 1976)	The Comparative Study of Political Elites	book
5	purple	public opinion	(Zaller 1992)	The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion	book

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database and VOSviewer.

<sup>33</sup> Yorgo Pasadeos, Joe Phelps, and Bong Hyun Kim, “Disciplinary Impact of Advertising Scholars: Temporal Comparisons of Influential Authors, Works and Research Networks”, *Journal of Advertising* 27, no. 4 (1998): 55.

<sup>34</sup> C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.

<sup>35</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. Democratization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

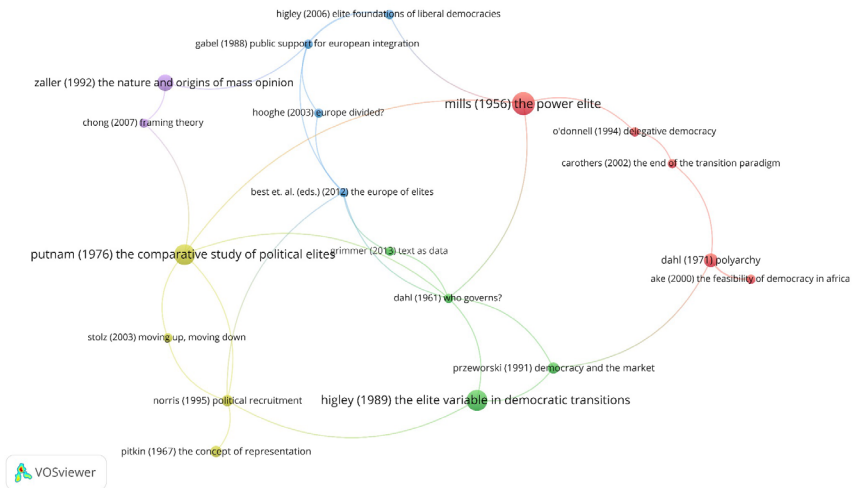
<sup>36</sup> Guillermo O’Donnell, “Delegative Democracy”, *Journal of Democracy* 5, no. 1 (1994): 55-69.

<sup>37</sup> Claude Ake, *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa* (Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

In the green cluster, the highlight is Higley and Burton's article "The Elite Variable in Democratic Transitions and Breakdowns", in which the authors argue that the variable for understand the stability/instability of political regimes and the shift from one regime to another is the degree of consensus among national elites.<sup>39</sup> Political transition processes and their complications are also the subject of Przeworski's book.<sup>40</sup> The third cluster (blue) is about the roles and preferences of political elites in European integration processes.<sup>41</sup> The yellow cluster is about recruitment<sup>42</sup> and representation theory.<sup>43</sup> Robert Putnam's book *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* serves as a kind of synthesis of these two problems.<sup>44</sup> In cluster 5 (purple), the main reference is Zaller, which explores how public opinion is influenced by the discourses of political elites.<sup>45</sup>

**Figure 1.** Co-citation network of references mentioned together in documents within the study corpus about "political elites"



Note: Visualization of the co-citation network of documents mentioned at least 4 times in the references of 921 documents. References found: 49,108. The figure shows 19 documents connected to each other and divided into 5 clusters. Only the first author of the document is listed on the network. The relationship between items is based on the number of times they are cited together in the reference list of the study corpus. The greater the weight of a document, the larger the label (title) and circle. Titles from a same group (cluster) have the same color and are visually closer together in the network. The thicker the line, the greater the interaction among documents. Only the first author appears on the network.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database.

<sup>39</sup> Burton and Higley, "Invitation to Elite Theory".

<sup>40</sup> Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>41</sup> Matthew Gabel, "Public Support for European Integration: An Empirical Test of Five Theories", *The Journal of Politics* 60, no. 2 (1998): 333-354; Liesbet Hooghe, "Europe Divided? Elites vs. Public Opinion on European Integration", *European Union Politics* 4, no. 3 (2003): 281-304; Heinrich Best, György Lengyel, and Luca Verzichelli eds., *The Europe of Elites: A Study into the Europeaness of Europe's Political and Economic Elites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>42</sup> Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race, and Class in the British Parliament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>43</sup> Hanna F. Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

<sup>44</sup> Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*.

<sup>45</sup> John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

## Most prolific authors

To better understand which authors are the most prolific and most renowned in this area of investigation, we ranked the ten most cited authors in the Scopus database. Table 4 summarizes this information and reveals the almost exclusive presence of authors from European countries (90% of cases). The sole exception is J. Higley from the United States.

The first four parameters (total number of documents in the Scopus database, total citations, total citing documents, and *h index*) measure the presence and influence of authors within the Political Science community. The last two measures (total documents within the corpus about political elites and percentage of documents about political elites over the total number of documents indexed in Scopus) serve as a criterion for the authors' presence in the area.

**Table 4.** Top 10 authors by number of citations within the study corpus about "political elites"

rank	author*	author affiliation	country	TDoc	TCit	TDCit	h-index	N Elites	% Elites
1	Walgrave, S.	University of Antwerp	Belgium	99	4.081	2.802	35	8	8,08
2	Higley, J.	University of Texas at Austin	United States	62	959	823	11	9	14,52
3	Kenny, M.	University of Sheffield	United Kingdom	57	429	408	9	4	7,02
4	Lane, D.	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom	67	403	362	13	8	11,94
5	Best, H.	University of Jena	Germany	58	386	309	11	10	17,24
6	Verzichelli, L.	University of Siena	Italy	45	323	271	9	4	8,89
7	Coller, X.	Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia	Spain	38	273	213	9	5	13,16
8	Daloz, J.-P.	Université de Strasbourg	France	32	235	194	9	7	21,88
9	Sevenans, J.	University of Antwerp	Belgium	17	142	130	6	4	23,53
10	Cotta, M.	University of Siena	Italy	26	110	91	7	4	15,38

Caption: TDoc = total documents by the author indexed in Scopus; TCit = Total citations in Scopus; TDCit = Total citing documents; h-index = h-index calculated by Scopus; N Elites = total number of documents within the corpus about "political elites"; % Elites = percentage of documents about political elites over the total indexed documents.

Note: \* co-authorships are computed separately.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database.

The authors are ranked in Table 4 under the column "TCit" (total citations). Stefaan Walgrave, member of the Department of Political Science at the University of Antwerp in Belgium, is by far the most cited author (4,081 citations), yet only 8% of his works indexed in Scopus refer to "political elites". He is also the most influential with an h index of 35. Julie Sevenans (the only woman on the list), from the same university, and who publishes in co-authorship with Walgrave, has the most prolific production strictly about the subject (23.5%) among the ten most cited authors. Walgrave's research is predominantly in the area of political communication.

## **Thematic map**

We performed a co-word test to understand how research problems are organized in the area. We analyzed the most frequent terms appearing simultaneously in the manuscripts' titles and abstracts and which subject groups tend to form. These terms serve as a reference point to estimate the content of the 921 texts in the study corpus while the clusters indicate the different thematic communities.

We used two indicators to analyze Figure 2: the ten terms with the most links and the ten terms with the greatest link strength in the network. The map is organized into nine clusters. The size of the circle and font in the map depend on the degree of nodes, the strength of links, and the amount of citations. The color of the circle represents the cluster to which it belonged, and the cluster was represented by different colors.

Clusters are formed firstly by global region or countries under study and secondly by topics of interest. Table 5 organizes this information and provides two measures about the importance and size of the groups: the number of terms that comprise each grouping and the percentage of terms in each group over the total network.

Cluster 1 (red) encompasses 176 terms distributed in the central area of the network, in which the most recurrent term is career, 53 times. The binding theme that groups the documents together is the democratic transitions of authoritarian countries. These studies focus on State elites in these countries, their characteristics, and how these governments are controlled. The cluster has five subareas. The first is devoted to culture, ethnicity, and government in states such as Iran, Russia, and China. A second group addresses the political processes of systems associated to the Soviet Union, China, and Central Asia. The third, connected to business elites, is related to Dagestan (former Chechnya). The fourth subarea addresses elections, competition, elite selection, and alternation of power, particularly in Russia, Georgia, and Armenia. The final group debates the participation of political elites in democratic transitions and State transformations, mainly in Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia.

Cluster 2 (green), on the left side on the map, is the second largest cluster with 130 terms (15.4% of the total words in the network), organized around the term *women*. This is the most important term in the entire network with 220 occurrences. These researches address electoral processes in democracies with majoritarian voting systems. Another important characteristic is the focus on comparative gender analyses in the composition of elites. We also find studies on how the social composition of dominant groups and their political careers can affect their political status.

The main term on cluster 3 (dark blue) is citizen. This is the second most important term in the entire network with 328 connections. The terms in this cluster indicate a predominant discussion around the theme of press, internet, and blogs. The most relevant texts are about mass communication and how elites are interested in and relate to the press. The articles in this cluster deal with elections, mainly in Asia and Eurasia.

Cluster 4 (yellow) includes works about public opinion, its relationship with immigration from conflict-affected countries to the European Union, and how this is accepted by political elites.

Cluster 5 (purple) comprises democratization processes in Latin American countries: regime transitions, political protests, as well as the profile of the elites. The production is divided between

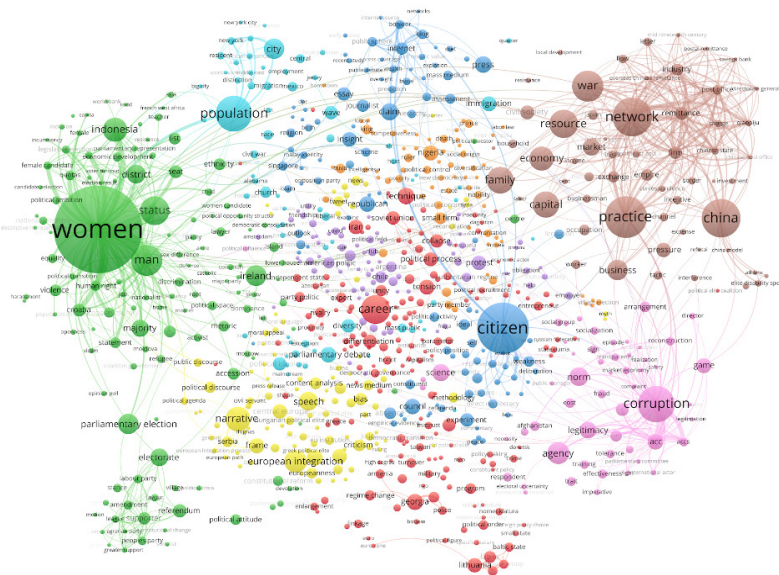
studies on the symbolic capital of social elites in Argentina and Uruguay and studies that refer to protest voting movements in Chile. We also find another group of texts about professional politicians and political capital in Central Europe and Argentina.

In cluster 6 (light blue), the productions focus on Latin America (with special interest in Chile) and post-Soviet countries (with special interest in Russia). Studies on parliamentarians and state ministers make use of varied statistical methods.

Cluster 7 (orange) groups papers that study the social origin of elites and their political strength. China and Russia are the highlights of this set. These studies are predominantly focused on post-Soviet countries and elite transformation processes in democratic transitions. Central Europe is also in the analytical spotlight with analyses on the recruitment patterns of representative elites.

Cluster 8 (brown) is about elite interpersonal relationships. These types of research address aspects such as social origins, political relationship networks, and the composition of representation offices, with a particular focus on the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. Cluster 9 (pink) is about corruption in Asia.

**Figure 2.** Co-occurrence network of the most frequent terms and their reciprocal relationships in titles and abstracts within the study corpus on “political elites”



NOTE.: Visualization of the co-occurrences network of most frequent terms and their reciprocal relationships in titles and abstracts among the 921 selected documents (total: 17,539 words) forming 9 clusters. Minimum occurrence of 4 times (terms found: 1.409). The figure shows 842 terms connected to each other (the most relevant 60%). We removed two outlier terms from the network as they hindered visualization: “Iranian politics” and “Nemtsov” (6 occurrences each). The greater the weight of a term, the larger the label and circle. Terms from a same cluster have the same color and are closer together.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database.



**Table 5.** Main research themes by cluster and predominant regions based on the thematic map of co-occurrence of terms in titles and abstracts within the study corpus on "political elites"

cluster	color	N of terms	% of the network	10 terms with most links	10 terms with the greatest total link strength on the network	predominant regions*	main themes
1	red	176	20,9	career, party politics, technique, Soviet Union, regime change, political process, expert, tension, collapse, clan	Georgia, Soviet Union, career, Kyrgyzstan, political process, Lithuania, Latvia, rivalry, technique, Estonia	Central-Eastern and Northern Europe	authoritarian countries and democratic transitions
2	green	130	15,4	status, women, man, majority, electorate, parliamentary election, center, equality, referendum, list	women, man, status, indonesia, human rights, seat, Croatia, district, electorate, supporter	North America, Central Europe	electoral processes, democracy, elite domination
3	dark blue	106	12,6	citizen, claim, limitation, press, insight, ideal, journalist, public sphere, scheme, essay	citizen, internet, banker, public sphere, blog, Singapore, press, claim, observer, limitation	Indian Ocean	mass communication and its relationship with elites
4	yellow	102	12,1	public discourse, European integration, narrative, frame, political discourse, speech, content analysis, criticism, political agenda, economic crisis	narrative, frame, Serbia, political discourse, public discourse, European integration, speech, political agenda, terrorism, European path	Belgium; Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria	public opinion, immigration, and European integration
5	purple	74	8,8	protest, American politics, authoritarian regime, Argentina, help, Chile, employer, message, obligation, comparative analysis	protest, employer, American politics, mutual society, obligation, Chile, Argentina, message, help, liege	East-Central Europe and Latin America	protests and authoritarianism
6	light blue	72	8,6	population, wave, immigration, city, quarter, diversity, parliamentary debate, fifth, big city, employment	population, city, New York, Los Angeles, immigration, wave, quarter, African American, resident, big city	Latin America and post-soviet countries	elite composition, substantive representation, and capital
7	orange	68	8,1	ruler, inability, demonstration, political control, faction, political economy, estate, death, social status, commonwealth	Nigeria, death, political control, small firm, Northern Nigeria, ruler, political economy, estate, king, inability	post-soviet countries	social origin, recruitment, political profile and strength
8	brown	59	7,0	practice, network, resource, war, economy, family, business, civil society, capital, China	network, remittance, practice, post office, firm, industry, China, Chinese state, war, Siciopiju	China and India	interpersonal relationships and local governments
9	pink	55	6,5	agency, norm, arrangement, corruption, legitimacy, science, investigation, cost, reconstruction, commission	corruption, acc, accs [anti-corruption commissions], agency, legitimacy, investigation, norm, commission, reconstruction, arrangement	Caucasus and Asia	corruption

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database and VOSviewer.

### Most cited authors

Table 6 lists and summarizes the analytical themes in the five most cited documents within the corpus on political elites (all in English) and the different techniques employed. The underlying question of the five references concerns the traditional problem of *political power*: who holds it, how it is exercised, its extent, how to stabilize it, and why renounce it.

The most influential work is *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites* edited by Axelrod in the 1970s with 1103 citations.<sup>46</sup> Robert Axelrod, from the University of Michigan, is one of the most influential political scientists in the United States working in the fields of public policy, public administration, and public law.<sup>47</sup> The practical ambition behind the volume was to "improve the quality of decision making" of the political elite. As a theoretical undertaking, the model proposed by Axelrod in Chapter 1 ("The Cognitive Mapping Approach to Decision Making") strives to understand, through mathematical representations, complex decision-making processes and subsequently prescribe solutions for governments. A cognitive map is the conceptual device through which individuals classify and interpret their surroundings, and the model was designed to

<sup>46</sup> Robert Axelrod ed., *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

<sup>47</sup> Natalie Masuoka, Bernard Grofman, and Scott L Feld, "The Political Science 400: A 20-Year Update", *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40, no. 1 (2007): 133-145.

comprehend, based on a person's belief system, the structure of their causal statements regarding a public policy issue.

**Table 6.** The five most cited documents within the study corpus on "political elites"

rank	author, year	document	underlying issue	subject	technique	type	language	citations
1	(Axelrod 1976)	Structure of decision: The cognitive maps of political elites	How is power exercised?	The study develops a new approach for analyzing decision-making based on a "cognitive map" of the contributing concepts, values, and beliefs of the political elite. Five empirical studies apply this idea to different areas such as foreign policy, parliamentary activity, transport policy, and environmental policy.	descriptive statistics; network analysis	book	English	1103
2	(Gilens and Page 2014)	Testing theories of American politics	Who holds power?	The authors examine which set of actors have influence over US public policy: ordinary citizens, economic elites, or interest groups. Through a multivariate analysis, the study demonstrates that economic elites and groups representing commercial interests have a substantial impact on US policy, while citizens and mass interest groups have little or no influence. These results confirm the theories of economic elite domination and the theoretical predictions of "biased pluralism" (in contrast to majority pluralism, in which the interests of all citizens are represented more or less equally).	logistic regression	article	English	770
3	(Rittberger 2005)	Building Europe's Parliament	Why concede power?	Analyzes how and why the political elites of European Union nations (political parties, national governments) transferred their sovereignty by delegating powers – supervisory, budgetary, and legislative – to the European Parliament. The basic reason stems from a deficit in the legitimacy of democratic representative systems.	explanatory (historical) narrative	book	English	245
4	(Marcusen et al. 1999)	Constructing Europe?	How powerful are the political elites?	Examines why different Nation-States have different relationships to a European identity – UK, Germany, and France. In sum, due to the extent that the identities of Nation-States are incorporated into the political institutions and political culture of a given country, and the leeway that political elites have to manipulate the construction of a new identity.	descriptive analysis	article	English	179
5	(Gates et al. 2006)	Institutional inconsistency and political instability	How to stabilize the exercise of power?	Analyzes how political-institutional structures – executive office elections, degree or extent of participation, and control of authorities – affect political stability in democracies and autocracies. The study then tests the hypothesis that it is in the interest of political elites to impose consistent rules upon themselves for the exercise of power to safeguard the durability of political regimes.	logistic regression	article	English	165

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database.

### ***The production about political elites in Latin America***

In this section we describe the findings of the scholarly production on Latin American elites. This corpus consists of only 48 documents (38 articles, 5 book chapters, 2 books, 2 reviews, and one note).

We begin with the co-citation network of authors mentioned together in the references of documents within this corpus (Figure 3).<sup>48</sup> Table 7 is an extension of the data from the co-citation network and isolates the most cited authors in each cluster from Figure 3, specifying the country of academic activity. As we can see, production is heavily regionalized.

<sup>48</sup> Only the names of the principal (first) authors were used in the co-citation analyses performed in this study.

**Table 7.** The five most cited authors in Latin America by cluster in the documents' reference co-citation network

rank	cluster 1 (red)	country	cluster 2 (green)	country	cluster 3 (blue)	country
1	Joignant, A. (30)	Chile	Bourdieu, P. (41)	France	Codato, A. (17)	Brazil
2	Navia, P. (27)	Chile	Gaxie, D. (23)	France	Best, H. (13)	Germany
3	Siavelis, P. (25)	Chile	Offerle, M. (18)	France	Cotta, M. (12)	Italy
4	Gonzalez-Bustamante, B. (20)	Chile	Sawicki, F. (14)	France	Serna, M. (12)	Uruguay
5	Schofield, N. (19)	USA	Weber, M. (14)	Germany	Santos, F. (11)	Brazil
	Silva, P. (19)	Chile				
	cluster 4 (yellow)		cluster 5 (purple)			
1	Limongi, F. (14)	Brazil	Magaloni, B. (6)	USA		
2	Figueiredo, A. (11)	Brazil	Robinson, J.A. (6)	USA		
3	Michels, R. (8)	Germany	Spaeth, H.J. (4)	USA		
4	Mair, P. (7)	Italy	Acemoglu, D. (3)	USA		
5	Amorim Neto, O. (6)	Brazil	Spiller, P.T. (3)	USA		

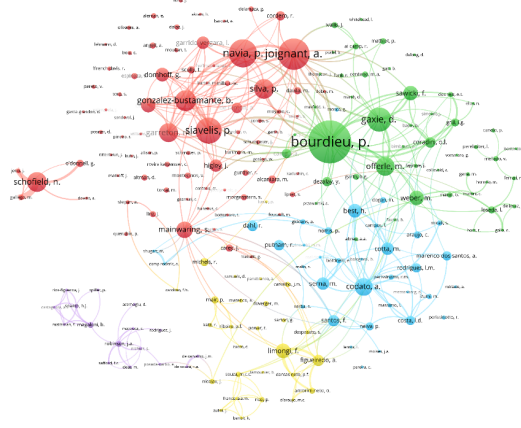
NOTE.: Number of citations in brackets

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database.

Cluster 1 (red) groups 81 authors and connects to all other clusters in the network, except for cluster 5 (purple). We find two different approaches here: one from mainstream political science, represented by Gonzalez-Bustamante, and another from French political sociology, represented by A. Joignant. The five most cited authors are from Chile and their research interests include the political trajectory and socialization processes of the parliamentary elite, the political capital of the elite, and duration of cabinet ministers in presidential democracies.

Cluster 2 (green) aggregates 47 authors and connects to all other clusters except cluster 5. This cluster includes, among others, P. Bourdieu, D. Gaxie, and M. Offerle in addition to F. Sawicki and O. Coradini. This group includes studies in the field of or influenced by French political sociology. They discuss, from a Bourdieusian perspective, the reconversion of "capitals", whether political, economic, social, family, etc., into advantages, positions, and offices in circles of political power.

**Figure 3.** Co-citation network of authors mentioned together in documents within the study corpus on "political elites" (Latin America only)



Note: Visualization of the co-citations network of authors mentioned at least 3 times in the references of 46 documents. Authors found: 1,466. The figure shows 206 authors divided into 5 clusters. Only the first author of the document is shown on the network. The relationship between items is based on the number of times they are cited together in document references. The greater the weight of an author, the larger the label (name) and circle. Authors within the same cluster have the same color and are visually closer to each other in the network. The thicker the line, the greater the interaction between authors.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database.

The blue cluster (3) is more connected to the green cluster and comprises studies in political science heavily influenced by political sociology. It consists of 45 authors and the reference authors (A. Codato, M. Serna, and F. Santos) are focused on understanding political trajectories, social origins, professional backgrounds, and the prior attributes and conditions for entry into the political arena of elites.

The yellow cluster (4) has 27 authors, and its leading theoretical approach is mainstream political science, focused on neo-institutionalist studies. The reference authors (F. Limongi and A. Figueiredo) are Brazilian scholars who stood out for their studies on legislative processes, the relationships between the Legislative and Executive branches, as well as the role of political parties in the legislative arena.

The purple cluster (5) is isolated in the network, has only 16 authors, and is related to Central America. The reference works are mostly about the Judiciary.

### ***Most prolific authors in Latin America***

To discern the most influential authors, we ranked the ten most cited authors in the Scopus database in our search strategy for Latin America only:

**Table 8.** Top 10 authors ranked by number of citations within the study corpus on “political elites” (Latin America only)

rank	author	author affiliation	country	TDoc	TCit	TDCit	h-index	N Elites	% Elites
1	Joignant, A.	Universidad Diego Portales	Chile	19	115	99	6	2	10,53
2	Codato, A.	Universidade Federal do Paraná	Brazil	23	53	49	4	3	13,04
3	Coradini, O	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Brazil	12	32	28	3	3	25,00
4	Costa, L.D.	Universidade Federal do Paraná	Brazil	7	25	22	3	3	42,86
5	Massimo, L.	Universidade Federal do Paraná	Brazil	12	21	20	2	2	16,67
6	Garrido-Vergara, L.	Universidad de Santiago	Chile	4	6	5	1	2	50,00
7	Pereló, L.	New School for Social Research	United States	6	6	6	2	2	33,33
8	Bottinelli, E.	Universidad de la República	Uruguay	2	2	2	1	2	100,00
9	Torres, J.	Universidad Diego Portales	Chile	2	2	2	1	2	100,00
10	dos Reis, E.	Universidade Federal do Maranhão	Brazil	6	2	2	1	2	33,33

Caption: TDoc = total documents by the author indexed in Scopus; TCit = Total citations in Scopus; TDCit = Total citing documents; h-index = h-index calculated by Scopus; N Elites = total number of documents in the corpus about “political elites”; % Elites = percentage of documents about political elites over the total indexed documents.

Note: \* co-authorships are computed separately

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database.

Authors are ranked according to the “TCit” column (total citations in the Scopus database). Two observations are important regarding the data. The first is the overwhelming influence of Brazil (with 5 authors on the list) and Chile (3 authors) in Latin America. Of the five Brazilian authors, three are from Universidade Federal do Paraná (Codato, Costa and Massimo). The situation is similar with Chile. Of the three authors, two are from Universidad Diego Portales (Joignant and Torres). This indicates that these two institutions serve as references for political elite studies in the region. The second observation concerns the low quantity of citations in the regional ranking. The last five authors have 6 or fewer citations in the Scopus database, in stark contrast with the international panorama (Table 4).

### **Most cited authors in Latin America**

We selected the five most cited works and identified the theme or underlying subject, the most common research technique, and the type of document. Table 9 orders the references by number of citations. All documents are articles (and not books) and the most used technique is descriptive statistics. The only work to use logistic regression is Langston.<sup>49</sup>

The subject in four of the five studies is the social or partisan “recruitment” of parliamentary elites. One study, unlike the others, concentrates on party cohesion and discipline<sup>50</sup> and emphasizes

<sup>49</sup> Joy Langston, “The Changing Party of the Institutional Revolution: Electoral Competition and Decentralized Candidate Selection”, *Party Politics* 12, no. 3 (2006): 395-413.

<sup>50</sup> Pedro Robson Pereira Neiva, “Coessão e Disciplina Partidária No Senado Federal”, *Dados* 54, no. 2 (2011): 289-318.

personal backgrounds of Senators as an explanatory variable. Three of the five references are in Portuguese, but the most cited text is in English.

## Discussion and conclusions

Scientometric literature reviews based on network maps allow a panoramic visualization of the structure and dynamics of scientific fields or even specific research themes and subjects. They can assist both beginners, by comprehensively outlining the intellectual landscape of a specific area (thus allowing, for example, to find still unexplored topics for further investigation), and more experienced researchers by keeping their knowledge up to date. Given the volume and specialization of publications and their growing trend (see Graph 1), we inescapably rely on modern computer techniques, specialized software for handling the metadata of scientific articles, as well as large document indexing databases, such as Scopus or Web of Science. Only then does it become feasible to manage thousands of references and subsequently synthesize thematic patterns in a literature of interest. Ultimately, scientometric studies can provide specific knowledge of a knowledge domain even without the direct involvement of experts in the area.<sup>51</sup>

Our systematic scientometric review quantifies multiple known and unknown assumptions about this domain. In this article we used author and document co-citation networks and key terms networks to explore past and present thematic trends in the study of political elites. We used robust bibliometric methods to analyze subsets of publications. Thus, we considered highly relevant documents within this literature.

Figure 1 shows 19 works connected to each other which are, to this day, the most essential or "classic" in the area. Our main finding regarding the reference literature is that political elites is a theme closely associated with democracy. The role of these political agents is crucial for explaining the good or bad functioning of modern representative governments as well as shifts from non-democratic to democratic or semi-democratic political regimes.

**Table 9.** The five most cited documents within the study corpus about "political elites" (Latin America only)

rank	Author, year	document	Underlying question	subject	technique	type	lan- guage	Citations
1	(Langston 2006)	The Changing Party of The Institutional Revolution	partisan-political recruitment	Compares the recruiting process of Senate candidates from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) of Mexico based on their professional background in two different contexts: when the PRI was hegemonic and when it ceased to be hegemonic. Throughout the non-competitive period (elections of 1976, 1982, and 1988), recruitment was centralized and nationalized, and power was concentrated in the PRI leader. In the competitive period (in the 2000 election cycle), recruitment became decentralized and electorally slanted towards more popular politicians.	descriptive statistics; logistic regression	article	English	38

<sup>51</sup> Chaomei Chen and Min Song, "Visualizing a Field of Research: A Methodology of Systematic Scientometric Reviews", edited by Wolfgang Glanzel, *PLoS ONE* 14, no. 10 (2019): e0223994.

2	(Codato, Costa, and Massimo 2014)	Classificando ocupações prévias à entrada na política	social recruitment	Discusses the classification and measurement of social positions of origin for studying the recruitment of political elites. The article presents a new criterion for addressing the variable "occupation prior to a parliamentary career" when codifying professions based on greater or lesser affinity with institutional policy. By studying the profile of candidates and elected officials for federal deputy in Brazil in 2005 and 2010, the study showed that social and gender cleavages are reinforced by the type of professional activity performed prior to a parliamentary activity, even before institutional filters produce their effects.	descriptive statistics	article	Portuguese	12
3	(Neiva 2011)	Coesão e disciplina partidária no Senado Federal	political profile	Analyzes the behavior of political parties in the Brazilian Senate between 1989 and 2009 by assessing their degree of discipline/internal cohesion in roll-call votes. As in the Chamber of Deputies, parties in the Senate have a high degree of unity, albeit for different reasons, among which the organizational characteristics of both Houses and the political profile of senators.	descriptive statistics	article	Portuguese	9
4	(Cordero and Funk 2011)	La política como profesión	partisan-political recruitment	Explores the relationship between the social composition of the Chilean political elite and changes in political parties in the periods before and after the military dictatorship. By analyzing the social characteristics and political trajectory of parliamentarians, the article argues that changes in parties may be explained by two processes: democratization of the political system and professionalization of the political elite.	descriptive statistics	article	Spanish	8
5	(Perissinotto, Costa, and Tribess 2009)	Origem social dos parlamentares paranaenses	social recruitment	Traces the socioeconomic and educational profile of parliamentarians in the state of Paraná, Brazil, from 1995 to 2006. It then tests the hypothesis of a possible correlation between the position of political parties within the ideological spectrum (left, center, and right) and the social origin of the analyzed parliamentarians (high, medium, and low social strata). The hypothesis was not confirmed. In the case of Paraná, ideologically distinct parties recruit their cadres from the middle classes and the political class is highly homogeneous: male, white, and Roman Catholic.	descriptive statistics	article	Portuguese	6

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Scopus database.

Figure 2 identified nine different thematic groups related to two interconnected issues, authoritarianism, and democracy, and allowed us to see how this production and debate is highly regionalized. Important clusters in the network of terms and themes are associated with Eastern Europe and China. The red cluster addresses authoritarian countries or democratic transition processes, and relates to all other clusters, being the centerpiece of the link between them.

Figure 3 revealed how research on elites is also regionalized in Latin America, with a particular emphasis on the clusters in Chile and Brazil. Based on the number of citations, we identified that A. Joignant, from Universidad Diego Portales, is the reference author in the region and that Universidade Federal do Paraná, in Brazil, concentrates the research on political elites with the most prolific production.

### Limitations of the analysis

Some limitations of this study due to methodological problems should be noted. Given our use of a single indexing database (Scopus), all pertinent production in Argentina regarding the political sociology of elites was entirely excluded from this cartography. Out of more than 900 papers, we found only 48 from Latin America, revealing the deficits of these bibliographic databases in their coverage of languages other than English. Hence, our study corpus is not thoroughly representative of the region's production. On the other hand, if such documents were highly relevant, they should have been cited in the literature comprising our initial selection.

One must also consider that the main search term – "political elite(s)" – is very generic, and

even when specifying political offices (minister, deputy, etc.), our study corpus may have overlooked some productions which, for example, might prefer not to use the word "elite", whether due to ideological or methodological preferences. Given that the analysis of the 921 papers underscored how scientific production is thematically fragmented and nationally regionalized, a problematic consequence of this type of review is that it groups together researches that utilize the same terms but may not make much sense when placed together. As it seems, each region has its own logic, thus presenting a challenge when attempting to project a thoroughly coherent intellectual map of the global production.

On the other hand, precisely because we have identified the thematic fragmentation and regional nature of the research communities on political elites, our study may guide further pathways for searching this subject and provide a more accurate investigation into the ever-increasing volume of this type of research and production.

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization: AC, MB, RS, RP, ML; Methodology: AC, RP, RS; Software: AC, RP; Validation: MB, RS, ML; Investigation: AC, MB, RS, RP; Data Curation: RP; Writing - Original Draft: MB, RS; Writing - Review & Editing: AC, RS, ML; Visualization: MB, RP; Funding acquisition: AC. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement: Data is available upon request.



## Appendix. Protocols for reproducing figures 1, 2 and 3 in the VOSviewer software (version 1.6.15)

	Figure 1. Co-citation (references)	Figure 2. Co-word	Figure 3. Co-citation (authors)
Type:	Map based on bibliographic data	Map based on text data	Map based on bibliographic data
Source of data:	Scopus (May 26, 2021)	Scopus (May 26, 2021)	Scopus (May 26, 2021)
Timespan:	1958-2021 (921 documents)	1958-2021 (921 documents)	1990-2021 (48 documents)
Type of analysis:	Cited references co-citation	Co-occurrence links between terms	Author co-citation
Unit of analysis:	cited references	terms	cited authors
Fields from which terms will be extracted:	document references	Title and abstract fields	document references
Counting method:	Full counting	Full counting	Fractional counting
Include Thesaurus	yes	yes	no
Total of terms/documents/authors:	49,108 references	17,539 terms	1,891 authors
Minimum number of occurrences/citations:	4	4	3
Meets the threshold:	61	1,409	266
Number of terms/authors selected:	19 connected	845 <sup>(a)</sup>	253 <sup>(b)</sup>
Visualization	Network	Network	Network
Normalization Method:	Association	LinLog/modularity	LinLog/modularity
Layout: Attraction: Repulsion:	1 -1	1 -1	3 -1
Clusters: Min. cluster size: Merge small clusters:	5 1 yes	9 50 yes	5 10 yes
Flip figure:	yes, vertically	no	yes, vertically
Visualization: Scale: Weights:	1.79 citations	0.92 occurrences	1.19 citations
Labels size variation:	1.00	0.77	0.74
Lines: Size variation: Max. lines:	1.00 700	1.00 700	1.00 700

Note: (a) (a) We removed two terms from the network as they hindered visualization: "Iranian politics" and "Nemtsov" (6 occurrences each). The visualization includes 842 terms (1 term was removed as it was not connected to the network); (b) of the 266 terms that reached the threshold, only 253 were connected.

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# Relutantes a pagar? Elites econômicas e desempenho do Estado no Chile

¿Renuentes a pagar? Élités económicas y desempeño del Estado en Chile

Unwilling to Pay? Business Elites and State Performance in Chile

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## Resumo

O que pensam os grupos sociais mais endinheirados acerca do pagamento de impostos? Qual é a visão desses grupos a respeito do papel do Estado? Como essas percepções diferem do desempenho fiscal do Estado chileno? Embora o Chile seja considerado um dos países com a maior capacidade estatal na América Latina, a sua política de impostos compartilha várias características com países de menor rendimento na região, a saber, a limitada redistribuição e a retrógrada estrutura tributária, apresentam uma deficiente habilidade no enfrentamento à desigualdade. Este artigo se baseia em uma apurada análise do rendimento do Estado, incluindo a comparação do Chile com o Uruguai e Portugal, bem como 32 entrevistas com membros da elite econômica chilena. Neste artigo analisaremos as percepções da elite econômica em relação aos impostos e o papel redistributivo do Estado, assim como as divergências entre a qualidade dos gastos do governo e as percepções desta elite. A desconfiança das elites nas ações do Estado leva à falta de vontade ou indisponibilidade para pagar impostos, os quais, em primeiro lugar,