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A Bibliometric Study on the Publications Investigating Democracy in Turkey
Türkiye'de Demokrasiyi İnceleyen Yayınlarla İlgili Bibliyometrik Bir Çalışma

Abstract

This study investigates the bibliometric characteristics of publications on democracy in Turkey, a country arguably having recently gone through a particular democratic backsliding. Focusing on SSCI and A&HCI between 1980 and 2019, a total of 691 publications were found: articles (83.79%) and book reviews (11.43%), with a particular increase of publications starting with the late 2000s. Most of the publications were written in English (95%), under the research category of Political Science. Turkish Studies was the journal where most of the publications appeared. The phrases that were mostly used within abstracts were the Justice and Development Party, the European Union, the Middle East, and democracy in Turkey. The results show that publications on democracy tend to appear mostly in regionally focused journals, be written mostly in the Political Science research category and in English, highlight the contemporary democratic advances and deficiencies of the countries, and be mostly within comparative frameworks.

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Öz

Bu çalışma, son zamanlarda özel bir demokratik gerileme geçirdiği iddia edilen ülke Türkiye'de, demokrasi üzerine yayınların bibliyometrik niteliklerini incelemektedir. SSCI ve A&HCI'de 1980 ile 2019 arasında toplam 691 yayın bulunmuştur: makaleler (%83,79) ve kitap incelemeleri (%11,43) 2000'lerin sonunda özel bir artış göstermektedir. Yayınların çoğu İngilizce (%95), Siyaset Bilimi, araştırma kategorisinde yazılmıştır. En çok yayının basıldığı dergi Turkish Studies'dir. Yayın özetlerinde en sık kullanılan ibareler Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Avrupa Birliği, Ortadoğu ve Türkiye'de demokrasi'dir. Sonuçlar, demokrasi üzerine yayınların ağırlıkla bölgesel odaklı dergilerde çıktığını, çoğunlukla Siyaset Bilimi araştırma kategorisinde ve İngilizce yazıldığını, ülkelerin güncel demokratik ilerleme ve eksikliklerine dikkat çektiğini ve özellikle karşılaştırmalı çerçevede olduğunu göstermektedir.

Keywords
Democracy, Turkey, Turkish politics, Web of Science, bibliometrics

Anahtar kelimeler
Demokrasi, Türkiye, Türk siyaseti, Web of Science, bibliyometri

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Introduction

Bibliometrics, earlier called "statistical bibliography" (Hood and Wilson, 2001, p. 291), is a field that studies publication patterns by using quantitative analysis and statistics (McBurney, M. K. & Novak, 2002; Diodato and Gellatly, 1994). Bibliometrics focuses on the particular characteristics of publications and documents (Yozgat and Kartaltepe, 2009, p. 149); and *author, article, journal, organization, subject area* are among the main units of this field (Padrós-Cuxart, Riera-Quintero, and March-Mir, 2016). Researchers have used bibliometric methods for more than a century (Pritchard & Wittig, 1981), but there is still no research on the bibliometrics related to publications on democracy. This paper aims at filling the literature gap by focusing on the publications investigating democracy in Turkey as indexed in SSCI and A&HCI of the Web of Science.

It is widely argued that Turkey, founded in 1923, goes through a particular democratic backsliding under the rule of Tayyip Erdogan (Yılmaz and Turner, 2019; Yilmaz and Bashirov 2018). According to the V-Dem Institute, Turkey has autocratized in the last ten years and "lost its status as a democracy in 2014" (Freedom House, 2021) (V-Dem Institute, 2020, pp. 14-16). According to the Freedom House, Turkey is not a free country; and on its index 2021 on political rights and civil liberties, Turkey scored only 32 out of 100 (Freedom House, 2021). Last but not least, the recent yearly country report of the European Union (EU) argued that in Turkey "the serious backsliding of the respect for democratic standards, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms continued" (European Commission, October 6, 2020). The ongoing interest in Turkey because of its place among the Islamic countries and within the turbulent of the/in the Middle East region as well as the significant recent downfall of Turkey according to the democracy indices led us to conduct a bibliometric analysis focusing on the publications about democracy in Turkey as indexed in SSCI and A&HCI of the Web of Science.

In addition to rapid changes in the ranks of Turkey in the democracy indices, we chose this topic because little is known about the scientific publications on democracy in Turkey. Here a brief information about the definition of democracy and the Turkish political history within the context of democracy is in order. Etymologically speaking, democracy implies the "rule of the people" (Heywood, 2017[1992], p. 34). A democratic ideal today is the one that "seeks to guarantee equality and basic freedoms; to empower ordinary people; to resolve disagreements through peaceful dialogue; to respect difference; and to bring about political and social renewal without convulsions" (Beetham, Carvalho, Landman and Weir 2008, p.17). High-quality democratic regimes require "a truly democratic rule of law that ensures political rights, civil liberties, and mechanisms of accountability which in turn affirm the political equality of all citizens and constrain potential abuses of state power" (O'Donnell 2004).

Turkey, established in 1923 after the fall of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1923), has been an electoral democracy since 1950, although it encountered periodic military intervention and putsches. This military tutelage, based on the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service

Law, ended in the late 2000s under the conservative Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party [JDP]; Burak, 2011, p. 156; Caliskan, 2017, p. 100; Somer, 2016, p. 1031). The JDP, self-declared a "conservative democrat" party, and its leader Erdogan have been ruling over Turkey since 2002. Despite the Islamist background of the founding figures, this party, founded in 2001, showed neoliberal and democratic aspirations in the beginning (Tansel, 2018). The JDP government took the necessary democratization steps and made the access negotiations with the EU open in 2005. However when "the absorption capacity" of the EU that had first appeared during the Copenhagen Summit in 1993, was back on the table rather intensively after the enlargement of 2004 (Emerson, Aydin, de Clerck Sachsse and Noutcheva, 2006; İçener and Phinnemore, 2006) and it was clear that Turkey's accession negotiations would be conducted without a real membership perspective the EU's democratization effect on Turkey has significantly decreased (Caliskan, 2017; Çınar, 2015, p. 178). The JDP has arguably widely changed after its success at the 2007 national elections and adopted authoritarian tendencies through time. Also under the JDP rule, Turkey adopted a presidential regime in 2018, a system according to some scholars that would take Turkey to dictatorship (Kalaycıoğlu 2005; Yılmaz 2020). "The supreme power of the President, erosion of checks and balances and separation of powers", "the intensifying crackdown on the political opposition, academia, media and civil society" as well as the High Election Board's decision on the re-run of the municipal election in Istanbul in 2019 are among the particularly stressed recent examples of Turkey's democratic roll-back (Yılmaz and Turner, 2019; see also Yilmaz and Bashirov 2018; Somer, 2016).

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Thus, conducting a bibliometric examination of publications on democracy in Turkey can provide important insights about Turkey's relation with democracy and help researchers to familiarize with the bibliometric indicators on social sciences.

We have two research questions:

1. What are the bibliometric characteristics of publications on democracy in Turkey according to the numbers of publications, document types, languages, publication dates, research category areas, sources, authors' names and affiliations, as appeared in SSCI and A&HCI of the Web of Science from 1980, the year the last coup d'état took place in the country, to 2019?
2. What do the abstracts and keywords of the publications tell us about the Turkish politics in time within the context of democracy?

Previous Research

There is no research on the bibliometrics related to publications on democracy. Hence, the present study is the pioneer in both Turkey and other countries. Bibliometrics is a relatively new field of research in social sciences, and the only articles touching upon politics in Turkey

belong to Cansun and Arık (2018, 2019). Of these, Cansun and Arık (2018) conducted a bibliometric analysis of Thomson Reuters' Web of Knowledge (WoK) with a focus on political science publications about Turkey from 1900 to 2016. They found that there was a total of 1280 publications—articles (65.20%) and book reviews (26.33%)—and highlighted a continuous increase in the number of publications, mainly after the 1950s and significantly particularly after the 2010s. According to the researchers, most of the publications were single-authored and written in either English (88.2%) or German (9.61%). Z. Onis (14), A. Carkoglu (11), and M. Heper (8) were the most published authors, while the top three universities with which the most published authors were affiliated were Ihsan Dogramaci Bilkent University (60), Koc University (46), and University of London (34). Most of the publications on political science in Turkey were under the research categories of International Relations (420), Social Issues (123), and Business Economics (105). Based on the frequently appearing words, the authors found that the items were related to Turkey–EU relations in the 2000-2010 period, and to Turkey's domestic politics and the rule of the JDP in the 2011-2016 period. Based on the continuous increase in the number of political science publications about Turkey, the authors predicted a rise in the number of publications in the future as well.

In another study, Cansun and Arık (2019) focused on political science publications with an address in Turkey from 1900 to 2016. They found 809 publications: mostly articles (70%) and book reviews (26%), written mainly in English (95.18%) or German (3.21%). They drew attention to the continuous increase in the number of publications after the 1950s and a significant increase in the 2010s. In particular, they highlighted the fact that 87% of the political science publications with an address in Turkey were published between 2000 and 2016. The top journals publishing the items were Political Studies Review, South European Society and Politics, and Europe-Asia Studies. The researchers who published the most were Z. Onis (16), A. Carkoglu (14), and H. E. Sener (13); the institutions with which the most published researchers were affiliated were Ihsan Doğramacı Bilkent University (159), Koç University (94), and Middle East Technical University (72). Most of the publications were under the research categories of International Relations (190), Business-Economics (127), and Social Issues (82), and most of the publications on Political Science with an address in Turkey focused on Turkey-EU relations, Turkish political parties economy, social issues, and democracy.

Methods

Aiming to contribute to the bibliometrics of social sciences and particularly to the bibliometrics of politics and democracy, we obtained the data from SSCI and A&HCI of the Web of Science. We selected "the advanced research mode" and chose "democracy" and "Turkey" as topic. We included *all of the publications* on this topic from 1980 to 2019. We converted the bibliometric data to xlsx and txt formats for further analysis. We used Excel for basic analyses and AntConc (Anthony, 2019) for corpus analysis of the texts obtained from the keywords

and abstracts of the publications. The paper follows the thread of earlier bibliometric political science research focusing mainly on the language of publications, document types and categories, publications years, authors and affiliations, journals, abstracts and keywords (Chi, 2012; Cansun and Arik, 2018; Akboga and Arik, 2017).

Results

There were 691 publications on democracy and Turkey published between 1980 and 2019. As Table 1 shows, 656 of them (95%) were written in English, followed by Turkish (16, 2.3%), German (11), Italian (2), French (2), Spanish (1), Slovene (1), Portuguese (1), and Norwegian (1). *Media Values and Democratization: What Unites and What Divides ReligiousConservative and Pro-Secular Elites?* (Somer, 2010), *Understanding July 15: The Parameters and Results* (Alkan, 2016), Kemalism and Bolshevism Unequal brothers and their historical legacy (Plaggenborg, 2018), *The Golden Generation, from religious community to coup d'etat. A historical/political profile of Fethullah Gülen's movement* (Cantelmo, October 2017), *Military Authoritarianism and Democracy in Turkey* (Bozdemir, 1984), *Media Education in Turkey: Toward a Multi-Stakeholder Framework* (Orhon, 2009), *The Case of the Relation Between Religion and State in Turkey* (Bratuz, 2009), *The mediatic leading role of crowds in social movements* (Torres, 2016) and *The tug of war between Secularism and Islamism in Turkey* (Heradstveit, 1999) could be given as examples to the publications written in the above-mentioned languages respectively.

Table 1
Languages of publications

Language	N	%
English	656	94.93
Turkish	16	2.32
German	11	1.59
Italian	2	0.29
French	2	0.29
Spanish	1	0.14
Slovene	1	0.14
Portuguese	1	0.14
Norwegian	1	0.14

Document Types and Categories

The two main types of documents were articles and book reviews; over four-fifths of the publications (83.79%) were articles, whereas book reviews constituted roughly ten percent (11.43%). There were also proceedings papers (2.46%), editorial material (2.32%), reviews (1.88%), letters (0.58%), notes (0.29%), and early access (0.14%) (Table 2). *Inter-societal security trilemma in Turkey: understanding the failure of the 2009 Kurdish Opening* (Kardas and Balci, 2015) could be given as an example to articles and *Turkey's Difficult Journey to Democracy: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back* to book reviews (Ecevit, 2016). *The Turkish parliament on democracy* (Doganay, 2007) is an example to proceeding papers, *Are There Women Out There?: Democracy Vigils and the Politics of Representation after the Failed Coup Attempt in Turkey* (Akinerdem, 2017) to editorial materials, *Making sense of Turkey's transition from democracy* (Koker, 2019) to reviews, *Letter from Ankara* (Cinar, 2015) to letters, *Letting Go - Turkey, More Democracy, More Army* (Pope, 1995) to notes, *The values predicting patriotism attitudes in Turkey* (Yazici, 2019) to early access.

Table 2
Types of publications (Some publications were categorized more than once)

Type	No	%
Article	579	83.79
Book Review	79	11.43
Proceedings Paper	17	2.46
Editorial Material	16	2.32
Review	13	1.88
Letter	4	0.58
Note	2	0.29
Early Access	1	0.14

Publications on democracy in Turkey were classified mostly in the WoS category of Political Science (239), followed by Area Studies (162), International Relations (91), Sociology (52), and Social Sciences Interdisciplinary (51).

Publications by year

As shown in Figure 1, the numbers of publications on democracy in Turkey seems to be relatively low in the 1980 and the 1980s, whereas there has been an exponential increase in the number of publications starting in the late 2000s (y = 1.49E-92e^0.107x; $R2 = .97$).
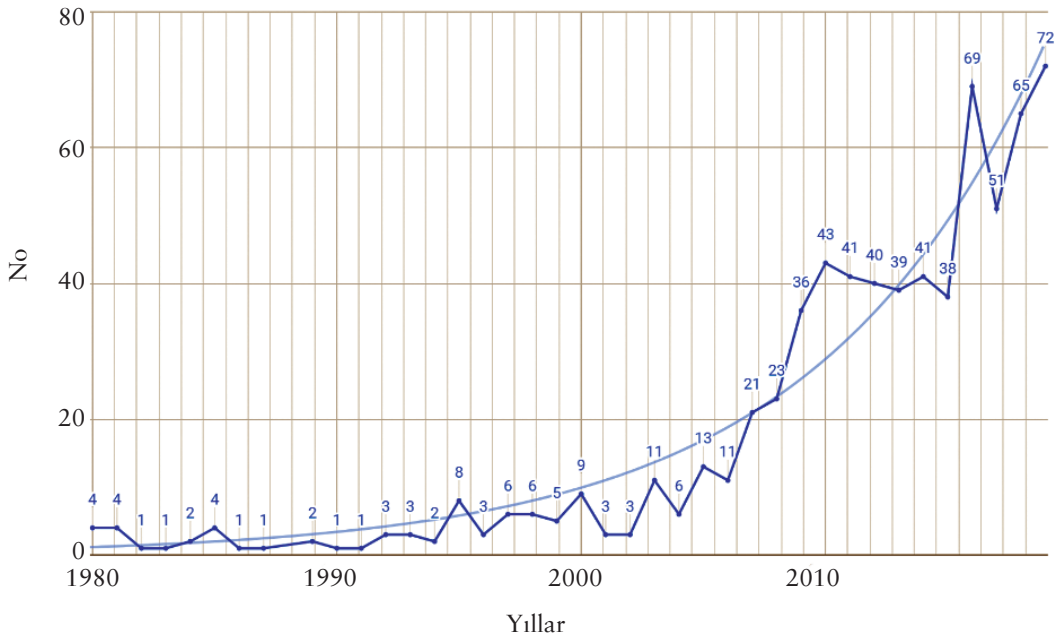
Figure 1
Number of publications on democracy in Turkey by decade

Authors and Their Affiliations

The most published authors, such as M. Heper (12), M. Somer (10), and S. Sayarı (6, Sayarı as Sayari in Web of Science), were of Turkish origin. *Islam and Democracy in Turkey: Toward a Reconciliation?* (Heper, 1997), *Understanding Turkey's democratic breakdown: old vs. new and indigenous vs. global authoritarianism* (Somer, 2016) and *The emergence of a new Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti* (Sayari, 2007) could be exemplary of their publications. In the top 20 there were only two non-Turkish-origin authors: T. A. Borzel (4, Börzel as Borzel in Web of Science) and Y. Hazama (4). T. A. Borzel is a German political scientist working on European Integration at the Freie Universität Berlin; hence, she worked on Turkey within the EU framework. Meanwhile, Y. Hazama, a Japanese political scientist from the Institute of Developing Economies in the Japan External Trade Organization, has MA and PhD degrees from Turkish universities and has a particular interest in Turkish politics. *The noble west and the dirty rest? Western democracy promoters and illiberal regional powers* (Borzel, 2015) and *Hegemonic preservation or horizontal accountability: constitutional review in Turkey* (Hazama, 2012) could be exemplary of their publications.

The most published authors were mostly affiliated with universities in Turkey: Ihsan Doğramacı Bilkent University (46), Koç University (39), and Middle East Technical University (26). However, among the top 18 affiliations (N > 6, 39% of all publications), there were three universities outside of Turkey: the University of London (14), New York University (8), and Princeton University (7).

The Journals (top 10)

Academic works on democracy in Turkey appeared in several journals (Table 3). Turkish Studies is the journal where most of the publications appeared (56), followed mainly by Democratization (24), South East European and Black Sea Studies (23), South European Society and Politics (22), Party Politics (16), and Philosophy Social Criticism (16). As for the main focus of these journals, Turkish Studies and New Perspectives on Turkey publish mainly studies on Turkey, Bilig publishes studies on the Turkic World, and South East European and Black Sea Studies, South European Society and Politics, and Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies publish on regional issues and specifically mention Turkey or the Ottoman regions among the focus elements. The rest of the journals have a broader/international spectrum of focus.

Table 3
Journals that publish on democracy in Turkey

Journal	N	%
Turkish Studies	56	7.88
Democratization	24	3.38
South East European and Black Sea Studies	23	3.23
South European Society and Politics	22	3.09
Party Politics	16	2.25
Philosophy Social Criticism	16	2.25
New Perspectives on Turkey	13	1.83
Bilig	12	1.69
Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies	12	1.69
Third World Quarterly	12	1.69

Abstracts

A total of 540 articles had an abstract since 1992. There were 9,042 types and 93,309 tokens so that when an article had an abstract, the abstracts consisted of a total of 173 words on average.

N-gram analysis on the phrases that consisted of at least three-word sequences (N > 20) showed that the most frequently used phrases, except for those with small words such as "in terms of", were "Justice and Development Party" (67), "the European Union" (39), "the Middle East" (36), and "democracy in Turkey" (23).

Keywords

A total of 376 articles had a list of keywords since 1997. There were 1172 types and 3670 tokens so that when an article had keywords, those keywords consisted of a total of ten words on average.

N-gram analysis showed that the most frequently used phrases were "European Union" (22), "Turkish politics" (18), and "civil society" (17).

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, we focused on publications indexed in Thomson Reuters' SSCI and A&HCI between 1980 and 2019. We found that there were 691 publications in total and that they were mostly written in English. The particularly high number of publications in English is not surprising because English-language journals tend to be overrepresented in SSCI and A&HCI of the Web of Science. This was also observed in bibliometric studies on Turkish politics (Cansun and Arık, 2018; Cansun and Arık, 2019) and Turkish sociology (Akboga and Arik, 2017). Turkish is the second-most-used language in publications on Turkish democracy because 1) it is the language of the country of research and 2) some of the journals that published the related articles originated in Turkey and, therefore, accepted works written in Turkish. The items were mostly articles followed by book reviews. These findings were also observed in social sciences in general (Cansun and Arık, 2018; Cansun and Arık, 2019; Arik, 2013; Arik, 2015; Akboga and Arik, 2017). Publications on democracy in Turkey were classified mostly in the WoS category of Political Science, followed by Area Studies and International Relations. These results suggest that democracy is one of the topics studied in the fields of Political Science and International Relations. The presence of Area Studies could be explained by the fact that several journals, for example, Bilig and South European Society and Politics, are categorized under this rubric. Previous works focusing on the bibliometrics of political science publications about Turkey (Cansun and Arık, 2018, Cansun and Arık, 2019) had roughly mentioned the same top three research categories of International Relations, Social Issues, and Business Economics. The similarity could be explained by the fact that democracy as a research topic is studied mostly by political scientists.

The number of publications on democracy in Turkey was relatively low in the 1980s and the 1990s. This could be explained in two ways. First, Turkish political science (Cansun and Arık, 2018, Cansun and Arık, 2019) and sociology (Akboga and Arik, 2017) publications

indexed in WoS were also low during this period. Second, the depoliticization process and the particularly oppressive academic atmosphere that Turkey experienced after the coup d'état of 1980 might have resulted in lower numbers of publications on democracy during that period. Our results show a particular rise in 1995 and 2003. The rise in numbers in 1995 could be explained by Turkey's joining the EU's Customs Union within the same year, as the pro-EU politicians and researchers considered this incident to be an important step toward full membership and, hence, toward the (further) democratization of Turkey. The rise in 2003 could be explained by Turkey's embracement of the first EU harmonization package in 2002 and the establishment of the EU Harmonization Committee within the Turkish Parliament in 2003. This harmonization meant Turkish legislation's adaptation to the acquis communautaire, the EU's legal framework. There is also a particular increase in the number of publications on democracy in Turkey starting with the late 2000s, which could be explained by 1) the expansion of Web of Science starting in 2005, 2) the significant rise in the number of political science publications on Turkey in 2010s (Cansun and Arık, 2018; Cansun and Arık, 2019), and 3) the increased interest in researching democracy in Turkey. Lastly, the significant and continuous increase in the number of publications on democracy starting with the late 2000s could be explained by researchers' increasingly critical approach toward the JDP government on democratic matters (e.g., Müftüler-Baç and Keyman, 2015; Öktem and Akkoyunlu, 2016).

Our findings showed that the most published authors were of Turkish origin and also that they were mostly affiliated with universities in Turkey, namely, Ihsan Doğramacı Bilkent University, Koç University, and Middle East Technical University. However, among the top 18 affiliations, there were three universities outside of Turkey (the University of London, New York University, and Princeton University). These findings suggest that Turkish scholars published within these particular American and British universities when they were graduate students or visiting scholars. The fact that Cansun and Arık (2018, 2019) who wrote on the political science publications about Turkey found roughly the same authors and affiliations shows the high performance of the same researchers and universities; therefore, it is not surprising to observe these top Turkish universities.

The results showed that the highest number of publications appeared in journals focusing on Turkey, such as Turkish Studies and New Perspectives on Turkey. However, publications on democracy in Turkey also appeared mostly in regional journals, such as South East European and Black Sea Studies and South European Society and Politics. Finally, they also found a place in journals with a larger spectrum of focus, such as Democratization, Party Politics, and Philosophy Social Criticism. With these findings, we differ from previous works. Journals focusing specifically on Turkey or the Turkic World were not among the journals that most published on political science about Turkey (Cansun and Arık, 2018; Cansun and Arık, 2019).

We found that the most frequently used phrases were the Justice and Development Party, the European Union, the Middle East, and democracy in Turkey. The JDP is the party

that has ruled Turkey since 2002. Because the number of publications on democracy in Turkey has increased particularly after the late 2000s, it is expected that researchers will study this ruling party and its policies. The frequent use of the JDP also suggests that publications on democracy tend to focus on contemporary politics. The findings also indicated that the EU was one of the most frequently used words in publications on democracy in Turkey. This is because the EU has had a positive impact on the democratization of Turkey because the accession criteria of the EU, known as the Copenhagen Criteria (adopted in 1993), requires, among others, the "stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities" (Müftüler-Baç, 2002). The Middle East was also used frequently in the publications because the Middle East Turkey's neighbour just like the EU and the presence of neighbourhoods in the publications signifies the presence of comparative works. Turkey aspires to be a role model in the Middle East, whereas the EU is a role model to Turkey in democratic matters. In fact, whether Turkey could be a role model to Muslim countries has always been a hot topic (Altunışık, 2005), particularly lately, with the emergence of the Arab Spring (Göksel, 2012; Kubicek, 2013), during which largely Muslim countries were shaken by pro-democracy uprisings starting in the spring of 2011 (Robins, 2015). The Middle East is certainly known to have democratic deficiencies (Ottaway and Carothers, 2004), but Western powers also limit the flourishing of democracy in the region through their interventions, as they are highly interested in the area's oil resources (Mitchell, 2011) and the security of Israel (Hinnebusch, 2006). Previous research also showed that these frequently used words and phrases appeared in the political science publications on Turkey: Cansun and Arık (2018) found words related particularly to Turkey–EU relations, the country's domestic politics, and the rule of the JDP, whereas Cansun and Arık (2019) found words related to the EU and democracy. Hence, these findings indicate that it is rather political scientists who work on democracy in Turkey and that political scientists work on democracy mainly in relation to the EU in these scientific publications.

We also found that the most frequently used keywords were the European Union, Turkish politics, and civil society in publications related to Turkish democracy. We have already discussed the importance of the EU on the democratization of Turkey. The publications particularly highlighted the positive impact of the EU and civil society on the democratization of Turkey. Previous research argues that democracy is highly likely to be consolidated where the participation in civil society is high (e.g., Putnam, 1995). Hence, it is no surprise to see civil society among the most frequently used keywords in publications on democracy in Turkey. The presence of Turkish politics among the most-used keywords is also expected because the evaluation of democracy is highly based on the conditions and practices of the political arena (Tilly, 2007, p. 7-8). Hence, the publications on Turkish democracy are framed by Turkish politics. In this sense, our findings are in line with the previous bibliometric research on political science publications (Cansun and Arık, 2018; Cansun and Arık, 2019) also found keywords related to the EU and democracy.

This study, being the first research on bibliometrics of democracy, contributes to several research areas, mainly bibliometrics, political science, and sociology. To start, this study is based on a bibliometric research method and, therefore, contributes naturally to bibliometrics, which lacks studies in social sciences. This study is yet another contribution to political science, because it reveals the main characteristics of the Turkish political life in time. Finally, this study contributes to sociology. It shows the emergence of the importance of civil society in democracy in scientific studies related to Turkish democracy. To widen the contributions of this line of research, there is also a need to study publications in other indices (such as ProQuest) and cover other types of publications (such as theses and dissertations).

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