

MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE OF WORLD ORDER STUDIES: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The concept of "world order" is pivotal in understanding international relations and global dynamics. This bibliometric study maps the landscape of world order research, analyzing publication trends, intellectual structures, and future directions from 1990 to 2023. Using the Scopus database, 6762 relevant documents were identified and analyzed through keyword, co-authorship, co-citation, and bibliographic coupling analyses. The study highlights the increasing volume of publications, with major contributions from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Leading journals such as "International Affairs" and "Third World Quarterly" are key platforms for world order discourse. Influential works by scholars like G.J. Ikenberry and Amitav Acharya have significantly shaped the field. Several thematic clusters were identified, focusing on polarity, power dynamics, economic shifts post-2008 financial crisis, and China's rising influence. Future research should explore the evolving multipolar world order, the role of emerging powers, and the impact of technological advancements on geopolitical stability. This analysis not only synthesizes existing literature but also provides a conceptual framework for future research, addressing gaps and proposing new directions in the study of world order.

Keywords

Bibliometric analysis, World Order, Co-citation analysis, International Relations, International Order.

Resumo

O conceito de «ordem mundial» é fundamental para compreender as relações internacionais e a dinâmica global. Este estudo bibliométrico mapeia o panorama da investigação sobre a



ordem mundial, analisando as tendências de publicação, as estruturas intelectuais e as orientações futuras entre 1990 e 2023. Utilizando a base de dados Scopus, foram identificados e analisados 6762 documentos relevantes através de análises de palavras-chave, coautoria, cocitação e acoplamento bibliográfico. O estudo destaca o volume crescente de publicações, com contribuições importantes dos Estados Unidos, Reino Unido e Canadá. Revistas importantes, como «International Affairs» e «Third World Quarterly», são plataformas fundamentais para o discurso sobre a ordem mundial. Trabalhos influentes de académicos como G.J. Ikenberry e Amitav Acharya moldaram significativamente o campo. Foram identificados vários grupos temáticos, com foco na polaridade, dinâmica de poder, mudanças económicas após a crise financeira de 2008 e a crescente influência da China. Pesquisas futuras devem explorar a evolução da ordem mundial multipolar, o papel das potências emergentes e o impacto dos avanços tecnológicos na estabilidade geopolítica. Esta análise não apenas sintetiza a literatura existente, mas também fornece uma estrutura conceitual para pesquisas futuras, abordando lacunas e propondo novos rumos no estudo da ordem mundial.

Palavras-chave

Análise bibliométrica, Ordem Mundial, Análise de co-citação, Relações Internacionais, Ordem Internacional.

How to cite this article

Dahiya, Khushbu & Kumar, Pardeep (2025). Mapping the Landscape of World order Studies: a Bibliometric Analysis. *Janus.net, e-journal of international relations*. VOL. 16, Nº. 2, November 2025-April 2026, pp. 3-21. DOI <https://doi.org/10.26619/1647-7251.16.2.1>

Article submitted on 29th November 2024 and accepted for publication on 30th September 2025.





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Introduction

The concept of the World Order is fundamental to understanding international relations and global developments. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson used the term 'new world order' after World War I to envision a system for maintaining international peace and security, coinciding with the establishment of the League of Nations. This political order had already been in place in the Western world for several centuries (Grinin, L. 2016). A "world order" in its true global sense has never existed that accommodated the needs, desires, and wishes of all. The modern international order, often regarded as having its origins in the Peace of Westphalia, was established in Western Europe at a peace conference. This conference, known as the "Peace of Westphalia," accommodated the practical realities of it (Kissinger, H. 2015). However, it wasn't until the post-World War II era that the true implications of Westphalia began to manifest in the form of a bipolar world order. The bipolar world order that emerged after World War II was characterized by the dominance of two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 heralded the dawn of a unipolar world order characterized by American hegemony and the ascendancy of liberal democracy and free-market capitalism as the prevailing norms of governance. In the twenty-first century, the world order stands at a crossroads, buffeted by a confluence of geopolitical, technological, and environmental upheavals that have upended traditional paradigms of power and governance. This concept has recently become the focal point of academic discourse, given its pervasive influence on diplomatic relations, trade dynamics, security paradigms, and human rights discourse. In recent years, the concept of world order has been used more often to depict changes in today's international system. Following the 2008 financial crisis and China's growing economic power, experts and scholars frequently argue that the United States has lost its dominant position. They suggest that a significant shift away from unipolarity is taking place (Brooks & Wohlforth, 2016). As a result, there is growing interest among government analysts, policymakers, and the academic community in comprehending the concept of world order. However, the field of world order is vast and diverse, encompassing a wide range of disciplines and perspectives, including studies focusing on polarity and power dynamics among nations. This diversity poses a significant challenge for researchers attempting to synthesize an objective review of world-order literature under a single framework. The interdisciplinary



nature of the field results in a multitude of theories, methodologies, and interpretations. As a result, achieving a comprehensive understanding of world order necessitates navigating through a complex tapestry of ideas and approaches, making the task of providing a unified analysis challenging. The increasing number of publications makes it essential to take a meta-perspective of the world-order research field.

Rationale of the study

The contemporary global order is often described as being in a state of crisis, yet there is little agreement on whether this crisis is intrinsic to the order itself or indicative of a deeper systemic issue. While the literature on changing power dynamics, global challenges, the decline of the West, the rise of regional groupings, shifts in the global power hierarchy, and the increasing importance of maritime security is rapidly expanding, clarity and consensus on the emergence of a post-Western or post-American world order remain lacking. Previous research has predominantly addressed historical perspectives on world order, Euro-centric pluralistic international order, the American concept of order, the decline of US hegemony, the decline of the West, the emerging Asian century, and the post-American world order. However, these studies have yielded inconclusive results, and scholars hold differing views on the polycentric nature of the world order and whether we are moving towards a new world order or if this is merely rhetorical. Currently, the rise of various multi and mini-lateral groups in different global regions suggests signs of multipolarity. Key questions remain unanswered, such as whether economic relations are supplanting political ones in the international arena, the validity of the Asian century narrative, the role of non-state actors, and the roles of Western stable powers and rising powers like China, Japan, Brazil, and India in these changing dynamics. Moreover, there is a notable gap in bibliometric studies on the topic of world order. Despite the extensive qualitative and quantitative research available, there has been little effort to systematically analyze and map the scholarly literature on this subject using bibliometric methods. This represents a significant gap in the existing research, as bibliometric studies could provide valuable insights into the evolution, trends, and key contributors to the discourse on world order. This study aims to bridge this gap by providing a thorough bibliometric analysis of world order. The following research questions will be addressed by this study:

RQ1: What publication trend is the world order field currently experiencing? Which countries, organizations, authors, and articles have had the biggest impact on this field?

RQ2: What is the current state of the field's intellectual structure? In what way might it be incorporated to create a conceptual framework?

RQ3: What are the future directions for this field of study, and what research trends are now influencing world order research?

The research offers an intricate examination of thematic clusters, identifying potential avenues for future research within each cluster. Furthermore, the knowledge domains have been defined, which has prepared the way for the development of a conceptual framework, an essential instrument for addressing potential gaps in existing literature.

The article's structure is as follows: The initial section provides an explanation of the research methodology, outlining the process of data retrieval and screening.



Subsequently, the analysis and findings section delineate the results of co-citation and co-occurrence networks. This is followed by an examination of clusters identified through bibliographic coupling analysis and the proposal of future research directions. A subsequent section introduces a conceptual framework derived from cluster themes. Finally, the discussion segment delves into the theoretical and practical implications as well as the study's limitations.

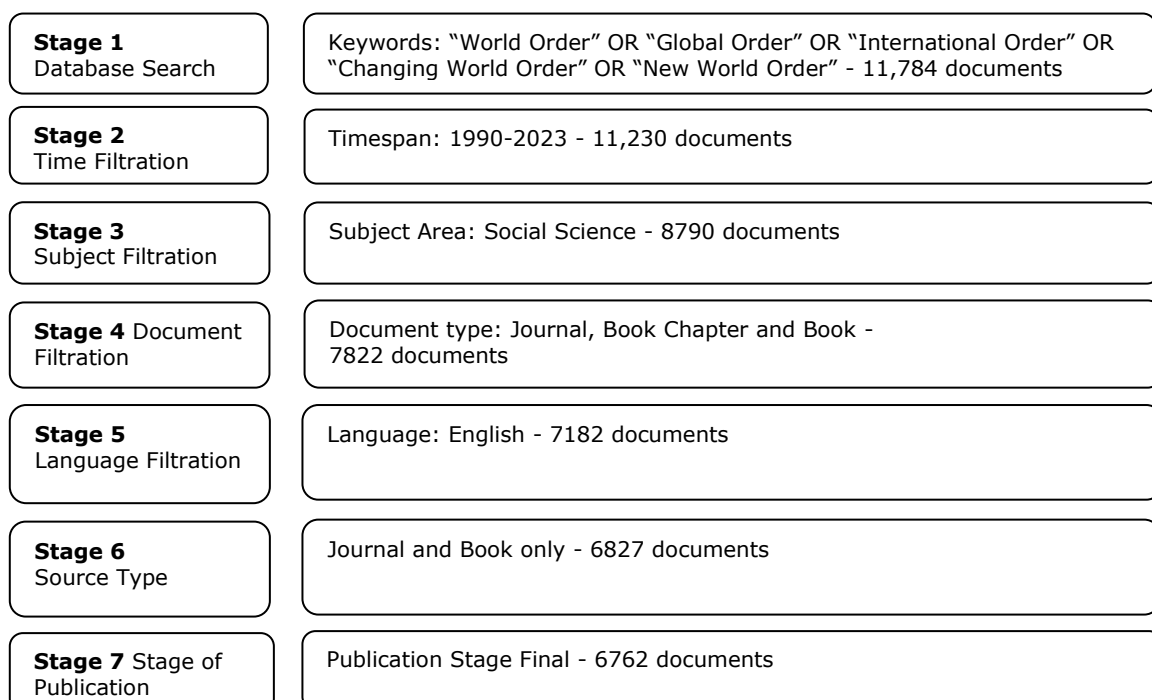
Material and Methods

In the current article, bibliometric analysis is employed for three key reasons, contributing to the growing number of systematic literature reviews using this approach. Firstly, bibliometric analysis assists in organizing and categorizing literature on any subject, offering a structured perspective on the advancement of knowledge in a particular field through scientific mapping. Secondly, this method facilitates retrospective analysis by identifying trends, research areas, overarching themes, and subtopics within the field. Lastly, it provides an overview of trends such as prominent authors, papers, journals, and nations related to the subject being researched, thereby supporting specific areas and sources of interest in the discipline. Synthesizing various outputs and knowledge gained through different bibliometric methodologies enables researchers and practitioners to identify research gaps and establish future research directions.

Methodology for Searching and Retrieving Data”

The retrieval, selection, and analysis of data from the literature were done using a multi-stage method (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Flow Diagram of Search Strategy



Source: Author (s)



The first stage involved conducting an extensive search in the Scopus database by selecting keywords such as World Order, Global Order, International Order, Changing World Order, and New World Order. The keyword selection was not limited to 'World Order' alone. The next step was figuring out which database to use to gather articles. As a dependable database for gathering articles for quantitative analysis, Scopus is highly recognized throughout the world (Guerrero-Baena et al., 2015; Duran-Sanchez et al., 2019); Valenzuela-Fernandez et al., 2019). We combed over articles in the World Order field using the Scopus database.

This database is considered to be the largest multidisciplinary collection of peer-reviewed literature in the field of social sciences (Norris & Oppenheim, 2007). As of now, Scopus contains over 94 million documents with more than 2.4 billion cited references. It is important to note that these numbers are subject to change as the database is regularly updated. The data was accessed on April 8, 2024, and includes influential articles dating back to 1979 up to 2024, with a larger concentration of articles from 1990 onwards. The database includes various types of documents such as research articles, book chapters, reviews, letters, and notes, totaling more than 11,230. After the initial extraction of documents based on selected keywords, the next step involved the elimination of irrelevant documents. A wide range of papers from several disciplines, including food science, psychology, marketing, and other facets of life, were included in the list. As such, it needed to be carefully screened. After removing articles by scrutinizing the headline and keywords and restricting the topic to social sciences, we were left with 8790 documents. After more screening that looked at the language, source type, and document type, the total was reduced to 6827. Upon choosing the ultimate publication phase, we ultimately found 6762 papers that pertain to the field of world order.

The collection of studies involved gathering bibliographic data in CSV format from Scopus. The data obtained from the Scopus database included various metrics such as h-index, citations per paper and author, total publications and citations. We also tracked multiple forms of citation and publication information using Scopus IDs. The VOS Viewer, a tool for clustering and creating network (.net) files, was used to process the CSV file. The tool helped in visually representing co-occurrence and co-authorship networks and calculating network centralities. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the study on a global scale, network analyses such as keyword analysis, co-authorship analysis, co-citation analysis, and bibliographic coupling analysis were performed. The study period's most common themes were identified through keyword analysis.

The relationships between contributing authors, institutions, and nations were investigated by the co-authorship analysis. In addition, this analysis contributes to our understanding of the collaboration network, which can help us comprehend a particular research topic even better (Bhukya et al., 2022; Randhawa et al., 2016).



Findings and analysis

Trends and development of World Order research

Main Information

After extracting the search query from the Scopus database, I identified the main features provided in Table 1. The dataset includes a total of 6,762 documents spanning from 1920 to 2023. On average, each item has 12.28 citations and 329408 references. The consistent citation of these materials suggests that the study of international order has been ongoing for quite some time, possibly even before World War II, highlighting the enduring relevance of this academic field.

Table 1. Main Information Regarding Selected Articles

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1990:2023
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	2981
Documents	6762
Annual Growth Rate %	13.83
Document Average Age	9.69
Average citations per doc	12.28
References	329408
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	1559
Author's Keywords (DE)	8658
AUTHORS	
Authors	6801
Authors of single-authored docs	4105
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	5142
Co-Authors per doc	1.32
International co-authorships %	7.705

Source: Author (s)

Annual Publication Trends

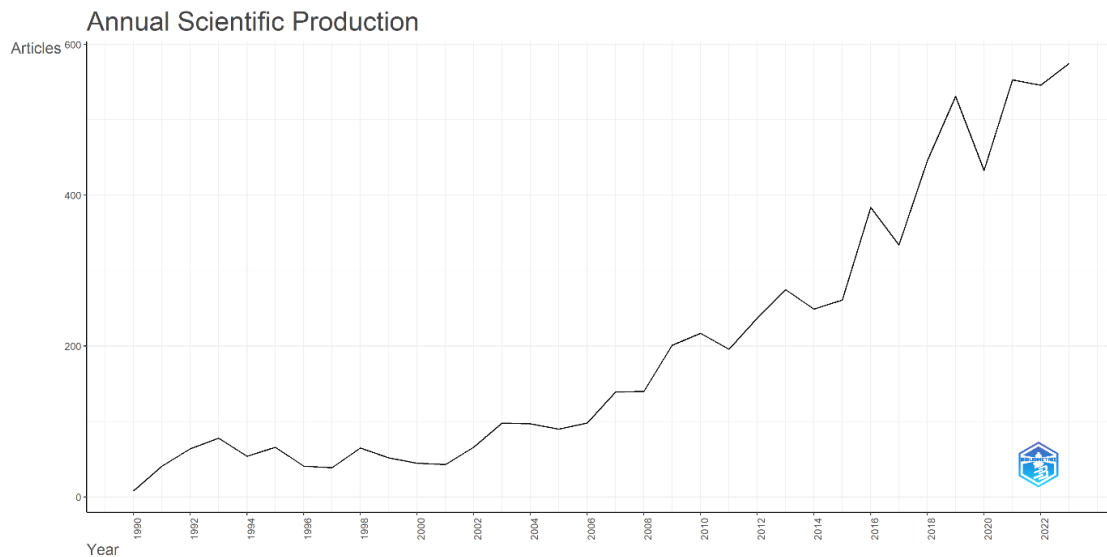
Figure 2 highlights the annual growth in scientific publications on world order from 1990 to 2023. From 1990 to 2000, article production remained low, fluctuating between 0 and 200 annually, indicating limited scholarly interest. A gradual increase occurred between 2001 and 2007, with a noticeable rise from 2005, as publications surpassed 200 per year by 2007. From 2008 to 2015, the number of articles increased steadily, reaching around 400 annually by 2015, reflecting growing academic attention, likely due to evolving global geopolitical dynamics.

In recent years, from 2016 to 2023, the growth rate accelerated, surpassing 500 articles per year from 2017 onwards, and approaching 600 by 2023, marking the highest level of scholarly output on world order to date. This trend reflects the increasing relevance of



world order studies in response to contemporary global challenges, underscoring the field's importance within international relations and related disciplines.

Figure 2. Annual Publications Trend



Source: Author (s)

Most Productive Journals

In order to comprehend the most eminent publications on the topic of World Order, this study determined the top 10 contributing journals (see Table 2).

Table 2. Most Productive Journals

TOP 10 CONTRIBUTING JOURNALS							
S.No.	Name of the Journal	Publisher	TP	TC	AC	h	g
1.	International Affairs	Oxford University Press	93	3985	42.84	33	62
2.	Third World Quarterly	Taylor & Francis	85	3022	35.55	30	53
3.	International Politics	Palgrave Macmillan	70	611	8.72	13	20
4.	Globalizations	Taylor & Francis	55	489	8.89	13	18
5.	Review of International Studies	Cambridge University Press	55	1986	36.10	21	44
6.	European Journal of International Relations	Sage	53	1584	29.88	21	39
7.	International Relations	Sage	50	835	16.7	15	27
8.	Cambridge Review of International Affairs	Taylor & Francis	43	363	8.44	10	17
9.	Millenium: Journal of International Studies	Sage	39	1010	25.89	18	31
10.	Pacific Review	Taylor & Francis	38	413	10.86	12	18

Source: Author (s)



Table 2 lists the top 10 contributing journals in the field of international affairs, detailing metrics such as total publications (TP), total citations (TC), average citations per publication (AC), h-index, and g-index. "International Affairs" leads with 93 publications and the highest average citations (42.84), reflecting its strong impact. "Third World Quarterly," published by Taylor & Francis, follows with 85 publications and notable citation metrics (AC of 35.55). "International Politics," from Palgrave Macmillan, has 70 publications but a lower average citation rate (8.72). "Globalizations" and the "Review of International Studies" (Cambridge University Press) have 55 publications each, with the latter having a significantly higher citation impact (AC of 36.10). Other notable journals include the "European Journal of International Relations" (Sage) with 53 publications and strong citation metrics, and "Millennium: Journal of International Studies" (Sage), which, despite fewer publications, maintains a solid citation profile. The "Pacific Review" (Taylor & Francis) rounds out the list with 38 publications. These journals collectively contribute significantly to the discourse on international affairs, as evidenced by their citation and publication metrics.

Country-Perspective Overview

Table 3. Top Publishing Countries on World Order

TOP 10 PUBLISHING COUNTRIES			
S.No.	Country	TC	Average Article Citation
1.	USA	6518	13.40
2.	UK	6408	15.60
3.	Canada	1553	11.10
4.	Australia	1378	10.10
5.	Germany	1296	11.40
6.	China	1217	8.40
7.	Netherlands	963	19.70
8.	South Africa	617	14.70
9.	Denmark	586	16.30
10.	Sweden	502	13.60

Source: Author (s)

The table on the "Top 10 Publishing Countries" lists countries by their total number of citations (TC) and the average number of citations per article. The USA tops the list with 6518 citations and an average of 13.40 citations per article, showcasing its dominant role in academic publishing. The UK follows closely with 6408 citations and a higher average citation rate of 15.60, indicating a strong influence in highly cited research. Canada ranks third with 1553 citations and an average of 11.10, highlighting its significant yet smaller contribution compared to the USA and UK. Australia and Germany round out the top five, with citation counts of 1378 and 1296 and average citations per article of 10.10 and 11.40, respectively, demonstrating their active participation in global research. China, the Netherlands, South Africa, Denmark, and Sweden complete the list, with the Netherlands standing out for its high average citation rate of 19.70, suggesting its



research is particularly impactful. This table illustrates the geographic distribution of academic influence and highlights the country's leading in scholarly contributions.

Most Cited Documents (Global)

Table 4. Most Cited Documents (Global)

S.No.	Author(s)	Document Title	Source Title	TC
1.	Ikenberry GJ (2009)	After Victory: Institution, Strategic Restraint, & the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars	Princeton University Press	927
2.	Mazower M. (2009)	No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the UN	Princeton University Press	713
3.	Adler E. (1992)	Conclusion: Epistemic Communities, World Order and the creation of a reflective research program	International Organization	677
4.	Balakrishnan Rajagopal (2003)	International Law from Below: Development, Social Movements and Third World Resistance	Cambridge University Press	661
5.	Ikenberry GJ (2018)	The End of Liberal International Order?	Oxford University Press	561
6.	Andrew Hurrell (2007)	On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society	Oxford University Press	548
7.	Ikenberry GJ (2011)	Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and transformation of the American World Order	Princeton University Press	490
8.	Mark Purcell (2003)	Citizenship and the Right to the Global City: Reimagining the Capitalist World Order	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	449
9.	Amitav Acharya (2014)	Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies	International Studies Quarterly	431
10.	Stefan Halper (2004)	America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order	Cambridge University Press	392

Source: Author (s)

The "Most Cited Documents (Global)" table provides a list of the top ten most cited documents in the context of world order studies. At the top is Ikenberry, G. John. (2019) book "After Victory: Institution Strategic Restraint & the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars," published by Princeton University Press, with 927 citations. This work explores how victorious powers use institutions to maintain post-war order with historical cases



such as the post-Napoleonic era, the aftermath of World War I, and the post-World War II period to understand how leading states establish enduring international orders. Following this is Mazower, M. M. (2009) book "No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the UN," also from Princeton University Press, with 713 citations, discussing the UN's formation in the context of decolonization. It offers a critical examination of the historical and ideological roots of the United Nations. (Adler & Haas, 1992) article on epistemic communities in "International Organization" is third with 677 citations, contributing to the understanding of knowledge networks in international relations. It explores the concept of epistemic communities and their role in shaping international policy and world order. Rajagopal's 2003 book "International Law from Below," which discusses development, social movements, and third-world resistance, has 661 citations. Rajagopal challenges the traditional, top-down approach to international law, which often reflects the interests of powerful states and elites, and instead highlights the role of grassroots movements in shaping legal norms and practices. Ikenberry appears again with his 2018 article "The End of Liberal International Order?" at 561 citations which critically examines the challenges and uncertainties facing the liberal international order in the contemporary global landscape. These documents are pivotal in shaping contemporary understandings of international relations and global governance.

Top Contributing authors

Table 5. Most Productive Authors

S.No.	Author Name	TC	TP	h	g	M	PY_start
1.	Ikenberry, GJ.	3447	27	18	27	0.667	1998
2.	Falk, R.	195	24	8	13	0.267	1995
3.	Acharya, A.	1198	18	10	18	0.303	1992
4.	M Smith	165	14	6	12	0.286	2004
5.	Cox, RW.	693	13	6	13	0.182	1992
6.	Philips Andrew	194	13	7	13	0.467	2010
7.	Thakur, R.	213	13	4	13	0.235	2008
8.	Buzan, B.	776	12	7	12	0.250	1997
9.	HE K	107	12	4	10	0.444	2016
10.	Held, D.	273	12	6	12	0.182	1992

Source: Author (s)

The "Top Contributing Authors" table identifies the most influential scholars in world order studies, ranked by total citations (TC), total publications (TP), h-index, g-index, m-index, and the year they began publishing (PY_start). G.J. Ikenberry leads with 3447 citations and 27 publications, known for his influential work on international relations and the liberal world order. His research advocates for multilateralism and the strategic use of international institutions to promote global cooperation. Richard Falk, with 195 citations

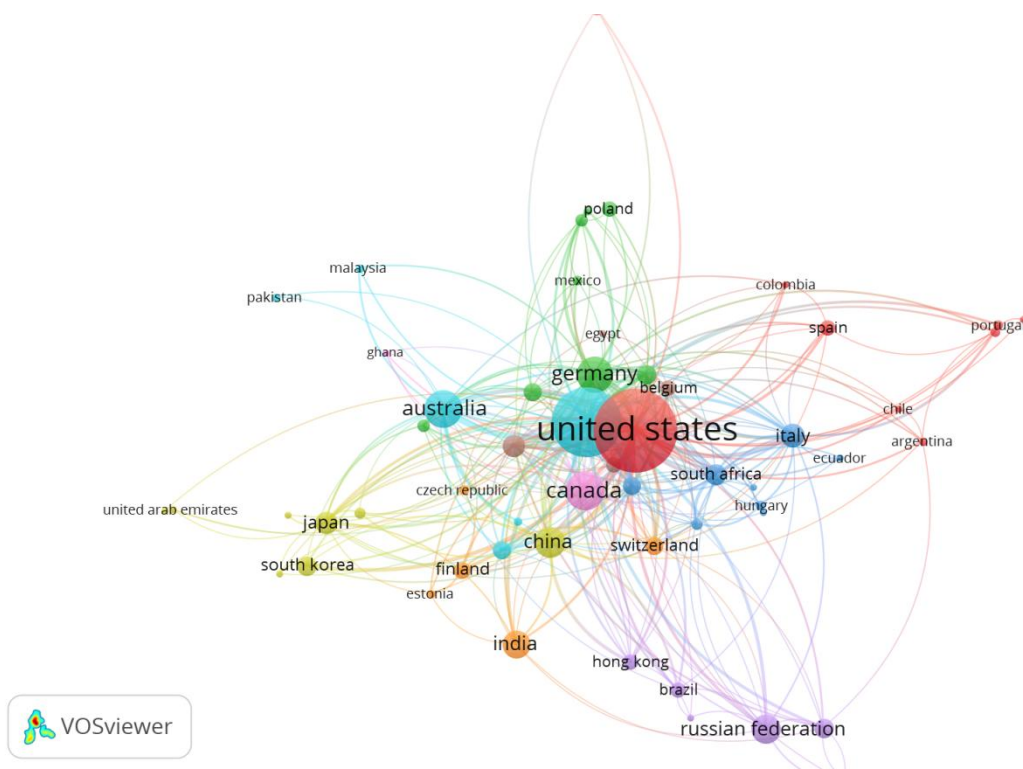


and 24 publications, has significantly contributed to discussions on global governance and human rights. Amitav Acharya, with 1198 citations and 18 publications, focuses on regionalism and non-Western contributions to international studies, particularly in his book *The End of American World Order*, which examines the rise of a multipolar world. M. Smith (165 citations) and Robert Cox (693 citations) have also contributed, with Cox recognized for his critical theory approach. Andrew Philips and Ramesh Thakur, both with around 13 publications, explore global security and international institutions. Barry Buzan, with 776 citations, is notable for his work on security studies and international society theory. Ke He and David Held, each with 12 publications, have contributed to political theory and global democracy. These scholars have significantly shaped the field of global order and international relations through their research and theoretical contributions.

Co-authorship network of countries in world order

The dynamics and structure of the world order knowledge area will now be visualized. The co-authorship network serves as an example of how academics from different universities and nations collaborate on projects related to academia (Donthu et al., 2020)

Figure 3



Source: Author(s)

The graph in Figure 3 displays a network of co-authorship among 57 countries that have co-authored at least six scientific publications. This network consists of 316 links and 979



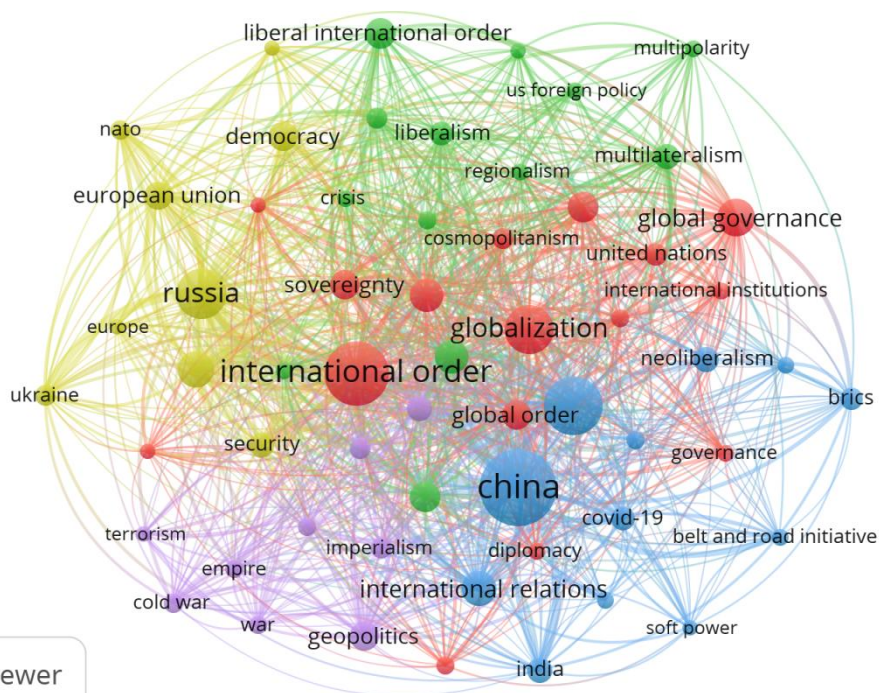
total link strength, forming ten clusters of different colors based on the relatedness of articles from various nations. In Figure 3, each node represents a country, and its co-authorship links with other countries are indicated by the edges. The size of the node reflects the amount of co-authorship linkages, with the United States being the largest node with 50 links and 331 total link strength. Australia and the UK have the thickest margins, suggesting that researchers based in China primarily collaborate with organizations in the US.

In a study article, scholars from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany collaborated with Chinese scholars. The United Kingdom is a member of cluster six (sky blue) and is the second largest circle. The largest cluster (red), consisting of eight members, shows collaboration among authors from institutions in democratic countries with governance based on representative democracy principles. All the countries in the red cluster actively participate in initiatives to promote international peace and security.

Co-occurrence of keywords in world order

Keyword co-occurrence or co-word analysis can be used to expand on the content of each topic cluster and suggest future prospects for certain study domains (Donthu et al., 2021) According to (Goel et al., 2021), there is a greater probability of a similar topic among keywords that belong to the same cluster. We developed a term thesaurus file based on recommendations from (Van Eck et al., 2010)

Figure 4



Source: Author (s)

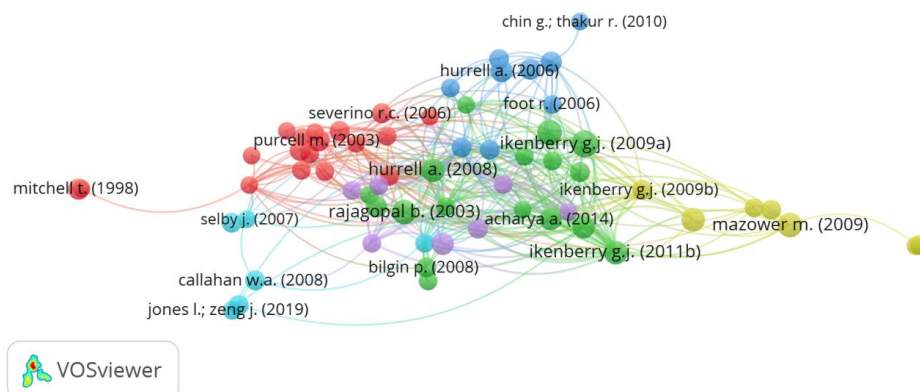


The research paper displays a graph showing the significance and relationship between key topics. There were 59 keywords that appeared more than 30 times, resulting in 1029 connections with a total connection strength of 3181. The network formed five clusters, each represented by a different color. The size of the colored circles corresponds to the frequency of the keyword's appearance. The thickness of the lines connecting the keywords indicates the strength of their relationship - the thicker the line, the stronger the correlation between the two words.

The investigation focused on the use of terms related to international order and China. The first cluster (red) includes 16 elements such as united nations, sovereignty, power, legitimacy, international society, international law, international institutions, human rights, governance, globalization, global order, global governance, diplomacy, cosmopolitan, and climate change. In this cluster, "international order" is the most frequently used term, with 52 links and a total link strength of 309. The second largest node (blue) in the network is China, indicating its significance in the research topic. The third cluster includes 12 items related to world order, soft power, neoliberalism, international relations, India, global south, development, COVID-19, China, BRICS, Belt and Road Initiative, and Africa. The second cluster (green) covers 13 items such as US foreign policy, regionalism, populism, multipolarity, multilateralism, liberalism, liberal order, liberal international order, identity, hegemony, globalization, foreign policy, and crisis. The fourth cluster (yellow) focuses on democracy, European Union, Europe, EU, NATO, Russia, security, Ukraine, and United States. Lastly, the last cluster (purple) discusses key issues including cold war, empire, geopolitics, imperialism, Japan, nationalism, new world order, terrorism, and war.

Bibliographic coupling of documents

Figure 5



Source: Author (s)

Referencing two documents with the same reference is known as bibliographic coupling (Zainuldin & Lui, 2022). If two articles have a sizable number of similar citations, that



indicates a strong coupling strength (Jain et al., 2021). As a result, there is a good chance that articles referencing the same references will have content overlap. According to (Koseoglu et al., 2016) and (Zainuldin & Lui, 2022), it provides an active approach to analyzing the topic's intellectual structure. To obtain the knowledge clusters in our cross-listing experiment, we therefore used bibliographic coupling. Cluster construction requires a minimum of 115 times the threshold level because many publications have been cited together. In the final eight clusters, there were 64 entries.

Cluster 1: Foundational Theories and Early Research

The largest network node is Cluster 1, which is indicated in red (see Figure 5). The red cluster centers around foundational theories and seminal works, with "Mitchell T. (1998)" as a prominent document. This cluster likely includes key early research that has significantly influenced the field. The documents here may discuss core theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and pioneering studies that set the stage for subsequent research. The strong internal connections suggest that these works are frequently cited together, indicating their foundational importance in establishing the basic principles and concepts within the field.

Cluster 2: Comprehensive Reviews and Key Theories (Late 2000s - Early 2010s)

The second largest network in the dataset is Cluster 2, which is indicated by the green tint. The green cluster features comprehensive reviews and key theoretical contributions published in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Notable documents include "Ikenberry G.J. (2009a, 2009b, 2011b)" and "Acharya A. (2014)". This cluster likely delves into discussions on global governance, institutionalism, and international political theories. The documents within this cluster are highly interconnected, suggesting that these works are pivotal in synthesizing existing knowledge and proposing new theoretical insights that have shaped contemporary understandings in the field.

Cluster 3: Mid-2000s Theoretical and Empirical Studies

Bubbles in the colour blue are used to symbolize Cluster 3. The blue cluster consists of documents primarily focused on theoretical frameworks and empirical studies conducted around the mid-2000s. Key documents in this cluster include works by "Hurrell A. (2006, 2008)", "Foot R. (2006)", and "Chin G.; Thakur R. (2010)". The topics covered likely involve international relations, governance, and policy studies. The cluster's interconnectedness reflects a rich body of research that builds on shared theoretical underpinnings and addresses common empirical questions, contributing to the development and refinement of theories during this period.



Cluster 4: Emerging Trends and Specialized Research

The yellow cluster includes more recent or specialized documents, with "Mazower M. (2009)" as a key work. This cluster likely addresses emerging trends or niche areas within the broader field. The topics may involve newer theoretical approaches, specific case studies, or contemporary issues that reflect ongoing developments and shifts in research focus. The connections within this cluster indicate that these documents are exploring cutting-edge ideas or responding to recent developments in the field.

Cluster 5: Regional and Security Studies (Mid to Late 2000s)

The purple cluster comprises a mix of theoretical and empirical studies from the mid to late 2000s, with key documents like "Bilgin P. (2008)" and "Rajagopal B. (2003)". The research in this cluster likely deals with regional studies, security issues, and specific geopolitical events. The documents are interconnected, suggesting that they share common themes and contribute to a cohesive body of literature that addresses regional dynamics and security concerns from various perspectives.

Cluster 6: Cultural, Social, and Interdisciplinary Research

The cyan cluster focuses on cultural, social, and interdisciplinary aspects, with key documents such as "Callahan W.A. (2008)", "Selby J. (2007)", and "Jones L.; Zeng J. (2019)". This cluster likely explores cultural analysis, social impact studies, and interdisciplinary research that bridges multiple fields. The interconnectedness within the cluster indicates a shared interest in understanding the social and cultural dimensions of the broader field, contributing to a more holistic and multifaceted perspective.

These cluster headings and explanations provide a structured overview of the different thematic areas represented in the bibliographic coupling diagram, highlighting the key focuses and contributions of each group of documents.

Scope for further study

A bibliometric analysis of world order identifies key areas for further research. Non-Western contributions from the Global South call into question Western-centric perspectives, underlining the importance of investigating how these voices impact global discourse. The growing impact of developing countries such as China, India, and the EU emphasizes the need of analyzing multipolarity using publishing trends to identify relevant scholars and themes. The roles of regional organizations in international stability and policy, as well as the intersections of technology, AI, and cybersecurity with governance, need to be addressed. The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed global priorities, emphasizing health security and global governance changes. These ideas can serve as a foundation for rigorous, future-oriented research.



Figure 6



Source: Author (s)

Limitations of study

The bibliometric method described has certain drawbacks. The included publications do not represent the full body of research; rather, they are merely a sample. Because the study is limited to the top articles rather than the whole sample, a single publication has a greater influence on the findings of the analysis. An examination of co-citations gives preference to earlier works. We concentrated on the major ideas and frameworks that underpin the field of study in order to stay within the parameters of our paper. New trends, such as digital sensory marketing, may be underrepresented. Despite the fact that impartiality is a major benefit of bibliometric research, some arbitrary decisions, like determining the number of components and the threshold for top publications, still affect the outcome. The emphasis on publications with high FLs tends to exaggerate how unique each research stream is. Research streams in a subject of interconnected studies generally overlap. There is a chance of oversimplification when putting a few facts together in a framework. We appreciate its usefulness in offering a roadmap for situating research issues within larger contexts and highlighting paths to advance dialogue.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving landscape within world order studies. Examining a dataset encompassing more than 6,700 documents indexed in the Scopus database from 1990 to 2023, our study reveals a discernible upward trajectory in scholarly output, indicative of the increasing prominence and interest in international relations and global governance over the past three decades. Noteworthy scholars such as G.J. Ikenberry, R. Falk, and A. Acharya have significantly influenced the discourse through their seminal works, contributing to a deeper understanding of concepts such as global governance, regionalism, and the dynamics of geopolitical relationships. The analysis of co-citation and bibliographic coupling networks unveils robust patterns of collaboration among scholars across various



geographical regions, illustrating the truly globalized nature of research in this field. These collaborative networks not only highlight the interconnectedness of ideas but also underscore the diverse perspectives that enrich the study of world order dynamics. Moreover, this study identifies several thematic clusters that have emerged as focal points of research, including the role of emerging powers in shaping global order, the effectiveness of international institutions in addressing transnational challenges, and the implications of technological advancements on geopolitical landscapes. By synthesizing extensive literature into actionable insights, this analysis lays a solid foundation for further inquiry into how these themes will continue to shape the future of international relations and global governance. By illuminating key trends and identifying areas for future exploration, this study fosters ongoing discussions and advancements in our understanding of world order in the 21st century.

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