A Bibliometric Review of Global Research on Constituency Service (1975–2024)

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Abstract

This review examines the scientific research on constituency service from 1975 to 2024, leveraging a dataset of 161 documents from the Scopus database. Statistical analysis using tools such as Bibliometrix RStudio and VOSviewer reveals a dynamic trajectory, with a historical start in 1975 through the article by Clarke et al. and a significant spike in publications after 2000. The annual growth rate is 0.0%, indicating a stable number of documents added yearly. The dataset contains documents with an average age of 12.2 years, denoting an extensive historical presence. Notable contributors include Lindsay J. Benstead (Portland State University) and Mihail Chiru (University of Oxford), who contributed three articles, and Cox & McCubbins's (1986) article, which received the highest number of citations at 619, demonstrating their noteworthy influence on constituency service discourse. The Journal of Legislative Studies emerged as the primary source with eleven articles, followed by the "Representation" and "Parliamentary Affairs" journals with nine and eight articles, respectively. Leading universities, such as the University of California, Harvard University, and Stanford University, lead research efforts in the constituency service field, confirming the United States' position as a paramount contributor with 118 articles. This bibliometric review provides a global overview of research trends in constituency service, political representation, personal vote, clientelism, and parliamentary questions. It highlights recent advances, dominating issues, key topics, and thematic evolution. The findings offer valuable insights for scientific inquiry and encourage future research and development initiatives.

Keywords

Introduction

Substantive representation theory stems from the idea that legislators should be good at their jobs and fight for the fundamental interests of the people they serve. In other words, the chosen leaders must speak and act on behalf of their people as a reflection of representative democracy (Hayes & Hibbing, 2017). Representatives' actions and how they support the people they serve are examples of substantive representation, which entails fighting to realize constituents' voices and needs through parliamentarian and non-parliamentarian channels. Aside from focusing on legislators' parliamentary performance, global researchers also pay more attention to exploring the dynamics of constituency services or non-parliamentary dedications that legislators provide directly to their constituents.

There are four types of responsiveness to support substantive representation: policy responsiveness, allocation responsiveness, service responsiveness, and symbolic responsiveness. Policy responsiveness assesses whether or not legislators' actions align with the needs of their constituents. Allocative responsiveness refers to legislators' ability to meet the needs of specific groups of constituents. Service responsiveness is the study of the non-legislative services that lawmakers offer to the people they serve. Legislators engage in highly symbolic actions in a given situation to provide support and make people feel supported (Eulau & Karps, 1977). Researchers often use these four types of responsiveness to frame their study of how well legislators do their jobs as representatives.

This bibliometric study focuses primarily on service responsiveness, constituency service, or casework. Prior studies have examined that topic intensively. In the past, researchers have looked into how well people's representatives speak for them in Parliaments and how well legislators meet the needs of voters in the real world. These different studies show that the most essential thing in modern politics is the relationship between leaders and the people they lead. Researchers have discovered how well representatives look for the people's interests by focusing more on constituency services. They have also examined how constituency service affects public trust, political involvement, and the quality of democracy in general.

Constituency service is critical because it reflects how the representatives address their electoral districts' needs, interests, and objectives. Legislators ensure that their constituents' voices resonate in the legislative process and advocate for their interests through various channels. These services include responding to citizen complaints, providing information about public policy, meeting with voters, and implementing social or development programs in their electoral areas. The main goal is to maintain good relationships between legislators and voters, make politics more legitimate, and encourage future votes for them. Legislators prioritize their constituents and intensively participate in community events to enhance their image as trustworthy public servants and increase their reelection chances

(Kerevel, 2015). Constituency service will ensure that people's representatives advocate for their constituents during political decision-making and actively prioritize their needs and interests. By meeting with constituents directly, either in person, through dialogue, or modern contact tools, people's representatives can better understand the problems, hopes, and ambitions of the people they work for.

Legislators can focus on their constituents by making sure regions receive benefits, assisting constituents, requesting public funding in a constituency, and posing parliamentary questions based on constituents' interests. Through constituency hours and pork-barrel projects, legislators who care about their constituents frequently do things that make them more well-known to those constituents (Ciftci & Yildirim, 2019). Members of Parliament (MPs) will have considerable differences in how much attention they pay to different geographic areas. If people's representatives decide to serve their constituents, they will always try to ensure their actions align with what the constituents need. Offering services to constituents can improve their likelihood of winning elections (Russo, 2011). Legislators often combine casework, information sharing, outreach, and political initiatives to serve constituents. This concept encompasses a variety of modes and purposes or reflects both instrumental and expressive functions (Arter & Raunio, 2018).

This article is the first bibliometric review to collect results on constituency service research worldwide from December 1975 to February 2024. This review gathers and analyzes academic literature discussing various aspects of constituency service. These include how responsive the services are, how legislators serve their constituents, how constituency service affects democracy, and the problems and issues with this practice. The author used bibliometrics to identify patterns, trends, and changes in research over a given period by examining the number of published articles, the most important publications, the institutions and countries that conducted the most research on this topic, and the main themes discussed in the literature.

This review aims to give an in-depth look at how constituency service research has changed over the last few decades and show how issues related to these services have grown, reflecting political, social, and technological changes. In addition, this article points out gaps in the existing research that could help guide future studies in this area. This bibliometric review allows the author to look into constituency service and how it affects democracy and political representation in general. The author achieves this by examining new findings and addressing unanswered questions. This article is a previous research summary that significantly amplifies our knowledge of how constituency services work worldwide. This article will be valuable to policymakers, political professionals, and academics seeking to understand, evaluate, and enhance how politicians serve their constituents in various countries.

Methodology

The author used Scopus for the bibliometric review of constituency service. It has all the relevant papers from December 1975 to February 2024. In the search protocol, the author used terms like "service responsiveness," "constituency service," and "casework". It found 1485 documents. The author only looked at papers about the social sciences to narrow the search. That turned up 831 documents. Next, the author sorted these documents based on their peer-reviewed characteristics, like articles, reviews, and conference papers. It gave the author a list of 666 valuable documents. This study excluded 27 books, 124 book chapters, seven notes, three short surveys, three editorial notes, and one letter.

After discarding ten papers that were not in the English language, 656 documents remained. Identifying relevant publications by removing duplications and screening these documents' titles, abstracts, and keywords was necessary. Each document needed to focus on legislators' vital role in providing services to their constituents and be conducted in the modern political environment. These factors contributed to the discovery of 161 critical documents for further study. Using the Bibliometrix RStudio and VOSviewer programs, the author analyzed 161 meticulously selected papers. By carefully following the steps, this analysis can fully reveal trends, patterns, and connections in the existing literature about how lawmakers serve their constituents. These tools enable the author to identify key ideas, keyword relationships, and the productivity profiles of writers, institutions, and countries contributing to this field. Bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of research progress and trends while identifying knowledge gaps that require further investigation.

Using the Bibliometrix RStudio research method and VOSviewer together has various substantial benefits. Bibliometrix RStudio enables researchers to conduct complex and in-depth studies on the writing process, including analyzing time trends, author productivity, and connections between ideas (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). VOSviewer can also visualize the intellectual structure of the resulting idea network (Firmansyah & Hidayat, 2024), similar to Bibliometrix RStudio. That makes it easy for researchers to find patterns in bibliometric data (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) . Using these two tools together gives researchers a more comprehensive understanding of the study landscape. Guleria & Kaur (2021) and Duan (2023) have demonstrated a combination of these tools. Using Bibliometrix RStudio and VOSviewer, they gained deep insights into research trends and knowledge structures in different fields of study.

Results

Primary Information About the Data Set

Table 1 displays the critical details of the data set used in this bibliometric study. The material spans the years from December 1975 to February 2024. The author examined

161 papers from eighty-six journal sources. The growth rate is 0% , meaning the number of articles added each year is stable, even though the data covers a long period. Several papers have been around for a long time, as their average age is 12.2 years. Constituency service has attracted the interest of many scholars, with the average citation of each paper being 32.83 times. The papers included 153 extra keywords and 348 author keywords.

Additionally, 259 people contributed to the project. One author wrote sixty-nine papers, while two or more authors worked on seventy-eight papers. 10.49% of the authors collaborated with authors from other countries, demonstrating much teamwork between researchers from different countries.

Table 1 Primary Information About the Data Set

Description	Results
Timespan	December 1975–February 2024
Sources (Journals)	86
Documents	161
Annual Growth Rate %	0
Document Average Age	12.2
Average citations per doc	32.83
Keywords Plus	153
Author's Keywords	348
Authors	259
Authors of single-authored docs	69
Single-authored docs	77
Co-Authors per Doc	1.75
International co-authorships %	10.49

Note: Biblioshiny using RStudio.

Constituency Service Research by the Journal

Eighty-six journals have published various articles. According to the number of journal papers (Figure 1) , the body of research on constituency service varies, with contributions from multiple academic platforms. As a result, the Journal of Legislative Studies had the most articles (11), followed by " Representation" (9 articles) and " Parliamentary Affairs" (8 articles) . With seven articles each, the journals " American Political Science Review" and " Legislative Studies Quarterly" also published more. Multiple high-quality academic journals publish studies on constituency service, not just one.

The fact that these journals are top-rated shows how important they are to the conversation about constituency service. They offer analysis and insight from various academic frameworks and points of view. A wide range of publications demonstrates that the

topic is also very varied, covering areas of parliamentary studies and political representation. The literature on constituency service is very comprehensive because it spans many scholarly journals, whereas only a few are primary sources. Each journal offers a diverse set of insights and perspectives on the topic.
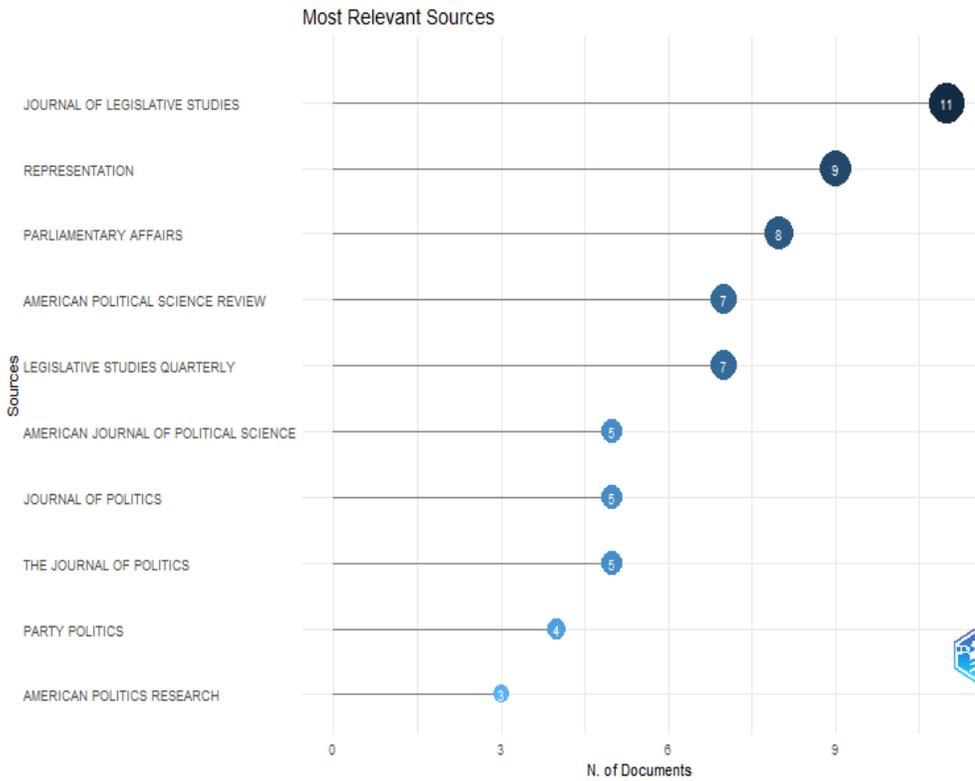

Figure 1 Top Ten Most Productive Journals (1975–2024)
Source: Biblioshiny using RStudio

Figure 2 shows how the ten most active journals listed above have added to the research on constituency service. Journal articles reveal trends and changes in the study's focus.
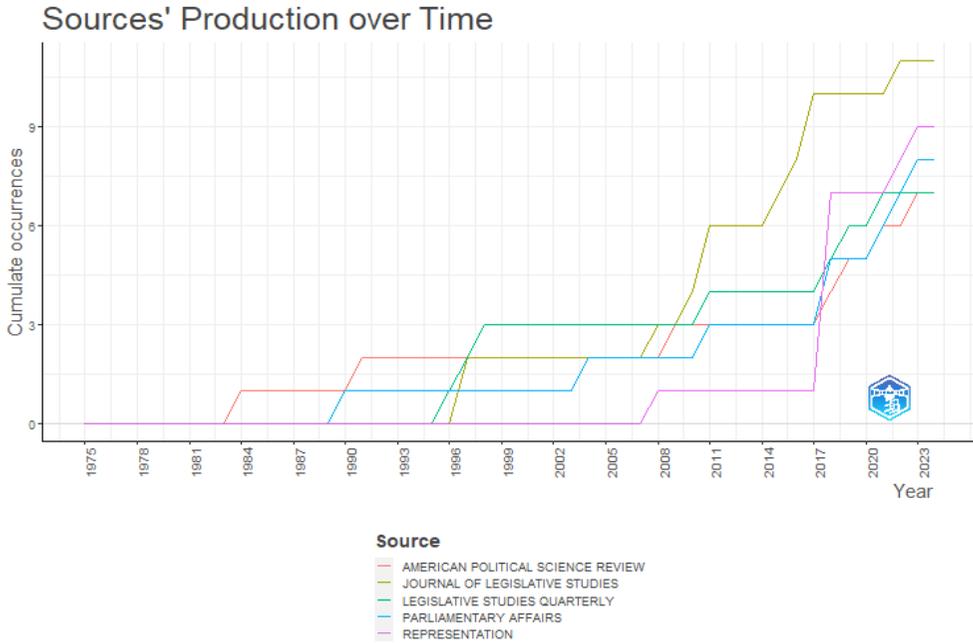
Figure 2 Sources' Production Over Time (1975–2024)
Source: Biblioshiny using RStudio

Most Productive Scholars

Two hundred and fifty-nine authors worked on a study on constituency service issues from December 1975 to February 2024. Table 2 shows a list of the ten most productive academics. This information shows how different top thinkers in the field have helped shape the academic discussion on this topic over the last few decades. Lindsay J. Benstead from Portland State University has written three pieces for several journals. Mihail Chiru from the University of Oxford also gave the same amount. Pippa Norris from Harvard University, David Arter from the University of Tampere, and Scott Ashworth from Princeton University are also on the list. Each has written two critical articles that help us understand the meaning and scope of constituency service. Researchers Nathalie Brack from the Université libre de Bruxelles and Jonathan Bradbury from the University of Wales Swansea, who may not be as well known, made meaningful contributions through their study and thinking.

Table 2 Top 10 Most Productive Scholars (1975–2024)

Author	Affiliation	Articles	Fractionalized
Lindsay J. Benstead	Portland State University	3	2,5
Mihail Chiru	University of Oxford	3	3
Pippa Norris	Harvard University	2	2
David Arter	University of Tampere	2	2
Scott Ashworth	Princeton University	2	1,5
Nathalie Brack	Université libre de Bruxelles	2	0,833333333333333
Jonathan Bradbury	University of Wales Swansea	2	0,833333333333333
Bruce E**.** Cain	Stanford University	2	0,666666666666667
Mia Costa	Dartmouth College	2	2
John A**.** Ferejohn	Stanford University	2	0,666666666666667

Note*:* Biblioshiny using RStudio*.*

Most Productive Institutions

Figure 3 below shows the ten most productive affiliates at creating knowledge about constituency service, along with the number of papers each affiliate wrote from a list of 170 institutions. This data gives us a general idea of how much each school has contributed to the growth of academic literature in this area. The University of California has the most articles (10), which confirms it as the foremost school in constituency services studies. Both Harvard and Stanford University wrote six pieces showing the importance of these well-known schools. Aside from Georgetown University, other schools like Portland State University, Princeton University, and the University of Pennsylvania have also made pivotal contributions by writing three or more articles in this area. The graph compares the number of studies conducted at different institutions. It shows how diverse academics have contributed to the body of knowledge about how to serve political constituencies.
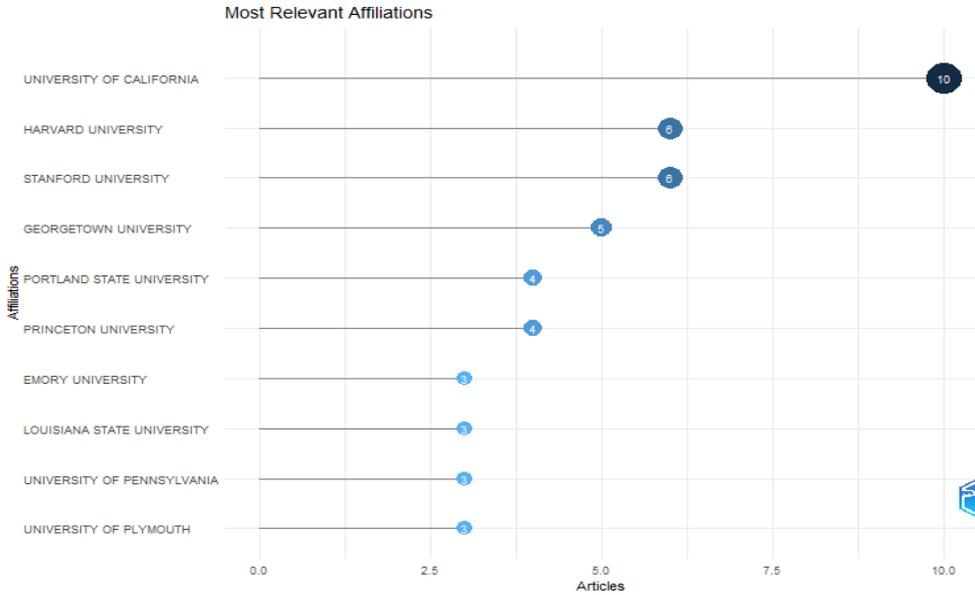
Figure 3 Top Ten Most Productive Affiliations (1975–2024)
Source: Biblioshiny using RStudio

Country Scientific Production

Thirty-three countries contributed to research on constituency service from 1975 to 2024, as shown in Table 3. This data demonstrates how much each country has contributed to the growth of academic writing in this area. With 118 articles, the United States has the most scholarly works, making it the leading country in supporting studies on constituency service. The United Kingdom also made an enormous difference by contributing twenty-five articles. Then, countries such as Ireland, Belgium, and Germany each wrote six to eight pieces, demonstrating how different countries have contributed to the growth of this literature. Countries like Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ghana, Italy, and Romania also made essential efforts by writing three to five articles each. Several countries, like Bangladesh, Chile, China, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden, only contributed one article. That demonstrates how distinct the countries are in contributing to the study.

Table 3 Country Scientific Production (1975–2024)

Country	Frequency
United States	118
United Kingdom	25
Ireland	8
Belgium	7
Germany	6
Canada	5
Denmark	5
Finland	4
Ghana	4
Italy	4
Romania	4
Australia	3
Austria	3
France	3
Hungary	3
Malaysia	3
South Africa	3
Switzerland	3
Iceland	2
Netherlands	2
Norway	2
Serbia	2
South Korea	2
Bangladesh	1
Chile	1
China	1
Japan	1
New Zealand	1
Philippines	1
Singapore	1
Slovenia	1
Spain	1
Sweden	1

Note*:* Biblioshiny using RStudio.

Figure 4 below displays production-over-time data for five major countries. The data reveals patterns in the types of academic work from different countries, demonstrating that research on constituency service is diverse around the globe. It also illustrates how this field of study has become global, with contributions from all over the world.
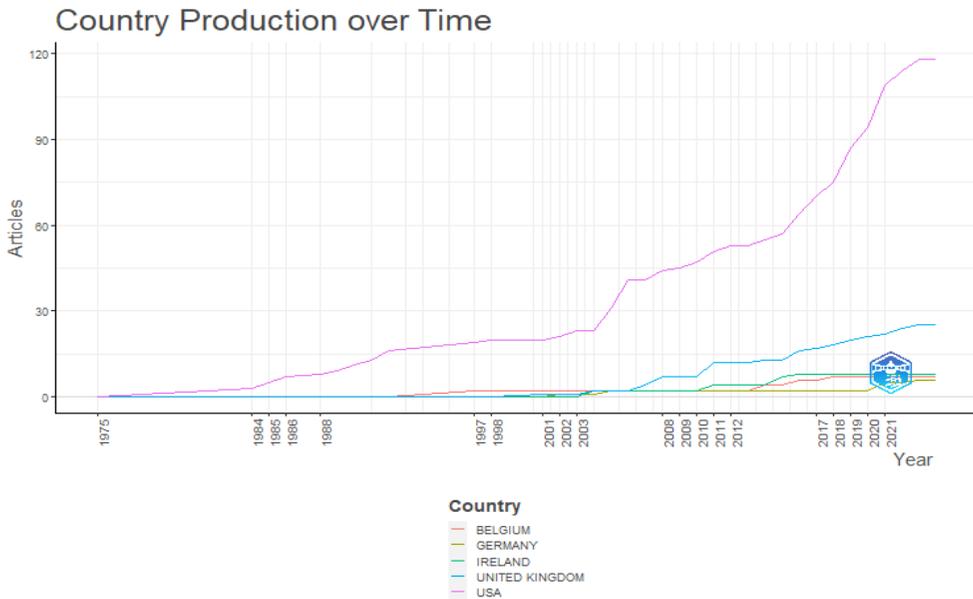

Figure 4 Country Production Over Time (1975–2024)
Source: Biblioshiny using RStudio

Most Global Cited Documents

Other works have referenced 145 out of the 161 papers in the Scopus database. The number of citations for each paper ranges from 1 to 619. It demonstrates how well-known and accepted this study is in constituency service. It also gives us an idea of how widespread its effects and importance are in the scientific literature. Table 4 displays Global's twenty-five most-cited papers from 1975 to 2024. The total citations (TC) for each article were different, with some articles receiving many citations, such as Cox & McCubbins' 1986 work, which received 619 TC. It also shows the TC per year and the normalized TC, providing a comprehensive understanding of each work's importance and influence. For instance, while Cox and McCubbins' work has high TCs, Distelhorst & Hou (2017) have more TCs per year, which means they have had a more considerable effect in less time. Normalized TC also gives readers an idea of how influential a paper is to the scientific literature. This table provides valuable information about how studies have helped with constituency service worldwide.

Table 4 Top 25 Most Global Cited Documents (1975–2024)

Paper	TC	TC per Year	Normalized TC
Cox & McCubbins (1986)	619	15,8717949	1,67523681
Stratmann & Baur (2002)	261	11,3478261	1
Jackson & Lilleker (2011)	231	16,5	3,5106383
Heitshusen et al. (2005)	197	9,85	2,00338983
Hall (1992)	193	5,84848485	1,89215686
Lancaster & Patterson (1990)	177	5,05714286	1,475
Golden (2003)	156	7,09090909	3,25
Cain et al. (1984)	154	3,75609756	1
Adler & Lapinski (1997)	139	4,96428571	1,85953177
Lancaster (1986)	120	3,07692308	0,32476319
Martin (2011a)	114	8,14285714	1,7325228
Distelhorst & Hou (2017)	102	12,75	4,896
Bowler (2010)	101	6,73333333	1,83636364
Ashworth & Mesquita (2006)	98	5,15789474	2,55208333
Ashworth (2005)	96	4,8	0,97627119
Iversen & Rosenbluth (2008)	94	5,52941176	2,36477987
Norris (1997)	94	3,35714286	1,25752508
King (1991)	85	2,5	1,31782946
Keefer & Khemani (2009)	78	4,875	1
Russo (2011)	78	5,57142857	1,18541033
McClendon (2016)	71	7,88888889	4,50793651
Gaines (1998)	69	2,55555556	1
Taylor (1992)	67	2,03030303	0,65686275
Norton & Wood (1990)	63	1,8	0,525
Lowande et al. (2019)	61	10,1666667	3,93548387

Note*:* Biblioshiny using RStudio.

Co-Citation of Cited Authors

The author set twenty citations as the minimum because this research domain had more than five thousand authors. The final analysis identified thirty-six authors. Figure 5 shows the network of authors who have jointly cited other writers. The research displays a three-cluster solution in diverse colours. Many of the studies in Cluster 1 (red lines) are about how and why MPs serve their constituents and how that affects people's voting habits. All of the studies in this cluster show how important it is for politicians to directly serve their constituents, as well as how things like the election situation, the proposed legislation, and

the structure of the legislature can change how legislators act. Norton & Wood (1990) investigate whether constituency service in a district influences a personal vote by demonstrating how it might affect elections. To make comparisons, Heitshusen et al. (2005) look at how elections work and what MPs focus on in various countries, such as Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the UK. Martin's (2011b) research on voting systems, legislative organizations, and electoral organizations gives valuable insights into how these things affect the dynamics of constituency service. According to André et al. (2014), local service is important and challenging in multilevel democracies. Lastly, Brack et al. (2016) summarize a particular issue by stressing the importance of constituency service and stretching the conversation to political situations larger than individual districts.

In Cluster Two (blue lines), the main focus of work is to compare district services in different political systems. The research by Cain et al. (1983) and Cain et al. (1984) examines how constituency services influence people's choice of MPs and representatives. They show what the two countries have in common and what makes them different. Norton and Wood (1990) learn more about how MPs' service to their constituents changes people's voting habits. They study how vital this service is to the election process. King's 1991 study examines the link between serving the district and holding incumbency advantages because incumbents are already in office. Readers can better understand how service-giving influences election outcomes. Norris (1996) and Norris (1997) extensively discuss the challenges of district service and its potential as a political enigma. Collins & Butler (2004) also examine political mediation in Ireland. They look at how campaigns work in both mainstream and underground media. McAllister (2015) discusses how politics is becoming more personal in Australia and how campaigns are increasingly focused on specific politicians.

Understanding the role and behaviour of lawmakers among their constituents is the main focus of Cluster Three (green lines), especially in the United States. In 1977, Fenno intensively studied US House members and how they dealt with their constituents. This study sheds light on how representation works. This group also includes Cain et al. (1983) and Cain et al. (1984), which compare constituency services in Great Britain and the United States. These studies help us understand how service delivery varies between government systems. Jacobson & Kernell (1983) comprehensively examine how elections work by looking at candidates' plans and decisions in congressional elections. McAdams & Johannes (1988) discuss the connection between legislators, their rewards, and elections. That helps us understand the factors that influence election results. Parker (1989) asks what people think about what motivates lawmakers and urges a fresh look at factors other than elections. Finally, Mayhew (2004) discusses the election connection in Congress, focusing on the relationship between how legislators act and the motivations they face in elections.
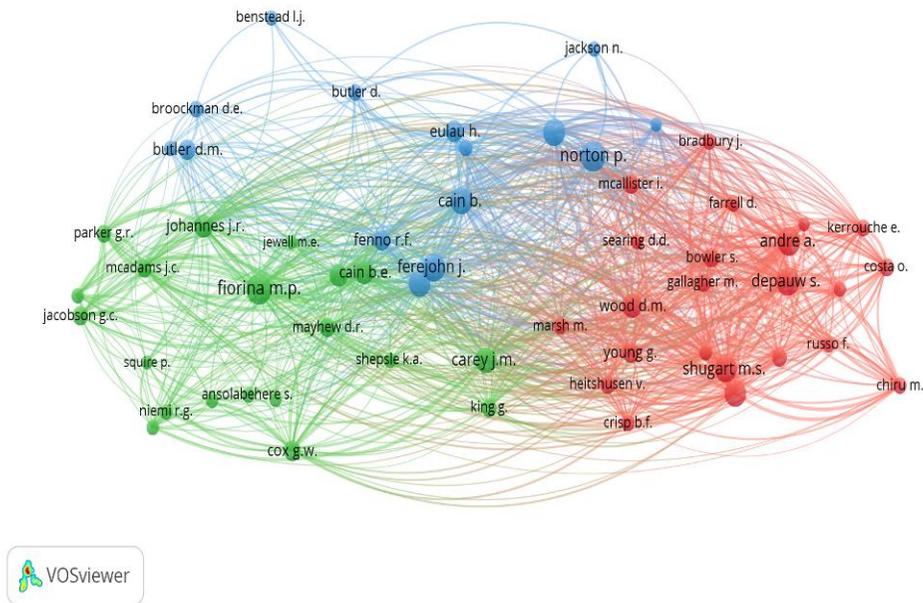
Figure 5 Co-Citation Network of Cited Authors (1975–2024)
Source: Visualized and Analyzed Using the VOSviewer Software

Keyword Co-Occurrence

The 348 keywords are taken from 161 different papers. Keyword co-occurrence analysis revealed a fascinating look at how people worldwide talk about country-based issues related to constituency service. The United Kingdom is the most critical research topic and locus, appearing six times in the data. There is a strong focus on British views, policies, and studies in this area. The US, Italy, and Hungary are remarkably close behind, each getting three mentions. These countries receive considerable attention or importance in discussions. Countries like Scotland, Switzerland, Ghana, Ireland, and South Africa, which appear twice further down the list, indicate that they are still part of the ongoing discussion, albeit with less emphasis.

At the same time, many different countries are mentioned once. These include Australia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, the Philippines, Tunisia, Belgium, Chile, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Singapore, Jamaica, South Korea, Japan, Northern Ireland, Indonesia, Kenya, Romania, Spain, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovakia, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Australia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, the Philippines, Mongolia, Australia, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Singapore, Jamaica, South Korea, Japan, Northern Ireland, and the Netherlands. This intricate web of global representation offers a glimpse into the diverse viewpoints that influence issues in the

field, displaying the interconnectedness of study, policy, and practice across borders and cultures.

The author then removed the keywords related to country-based issues through the VOSviewer application, resulting in 320 keywords, but the largest group of connected items has 242, as shown in Figure 6.
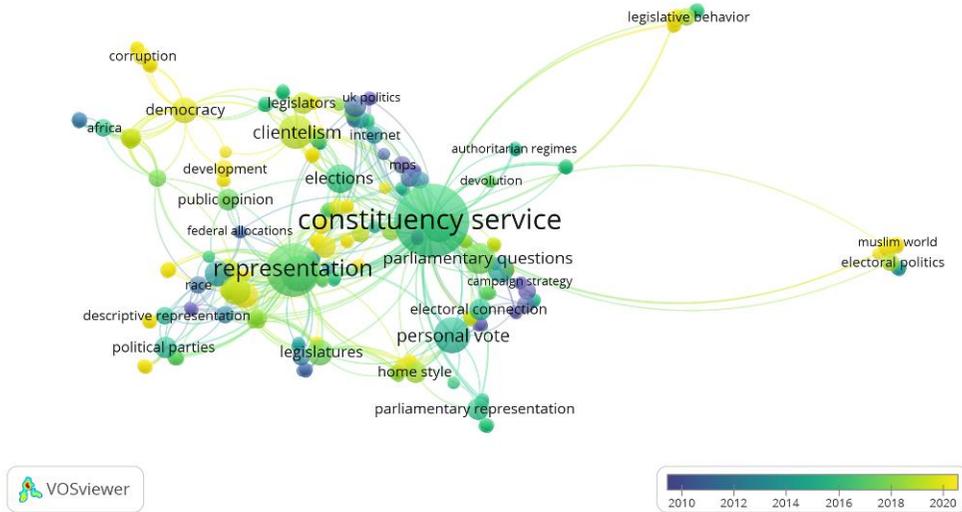

Figure 6 Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis (1975–2024)
Source: Visualized and Analyzed Using the VOSviewer Software

Three hundred and forty-eight keywords were examined, and Figure 7 below shows the ten most common ones. These keywords give us helpful information about the focus of prior studies: constituency service (n = 33), representation (n = 17), personal vote (n = 8), political representation (n = 8), clientelism (n = 7), Parliament (n = 6), parliamentary questions (n = 6), elections (n = 5), field experiments (n = 5), and Congress (n = 4). The repeated appearance of these words reflects various essential aspects of research on legislators' constituency services, such as political representation, client-patron relationships, legislative-parliamentary interactions, and empirical research on political processes.
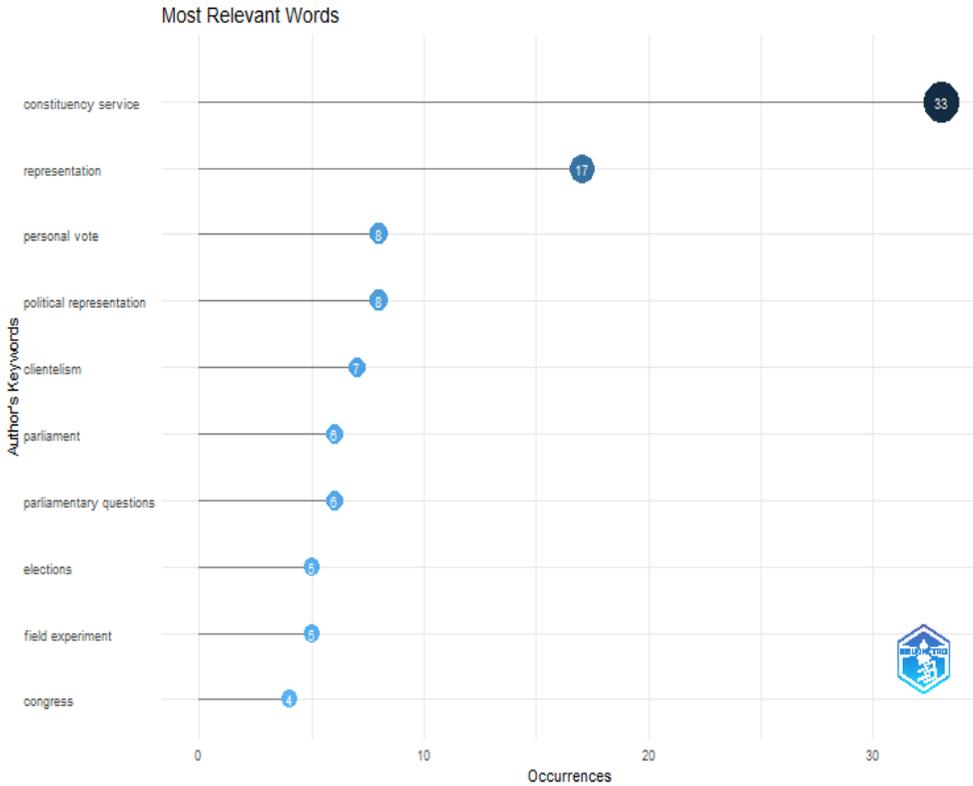
Figure 7 Top Ten Most Relevant Keywords (1975–2024)
Source: Biblioshiny using RStudio

Thematic Evolution of Constituency Service Research

Figure 8 shows how the connection patterns between keywords changed from 1975 to 2016 and 2017 to 2024. For example, the relationship between "elections" and "clientelism" shows a prominent jump in the evaluated weight and an improvement in the index from the first to the second period. It means that people are more interested in the connection between clientelism practices and the voting process. However, the relationship between "constituency service" and "political representation" weakens from the first to the second period. That shows that the focus of the study has shifted from constituency service to political representation. The relationship between "constituency service," "representation," and "personal vote" becomes more stable from the first period to the second period. The focus of these studies remained consistent throughout the period under examination. These analyses help us see how research themes and goals shift over time. In constituency service, the things people learn are changing. That is likely due to the growing interest from researchers in other fields.

Figure 8 Thematic Evolution (1975–2024)
Source: Biblioshiny using RStudio

Discussion

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the main topics or dominant issues in constituency service research, cross-national and temporal variations in themes, criteria for studying legislators' constituency service responsiveness, and future research directions. By exploring these various aspects in depth, the author aims to present a comprehensive picture of how constituency service research has developed over time and across multiple geographic contexts. This review also helps identify gaps in the current literature and offers insight into future research directions to deepen our understanding of the relationship dynamics between legislators and constituents.

Principal Topics in Constituency Service Research

Research on constituency service in political science has significantly developed from 1975 to 2024. During this period, various principal topics or dominant issues have emerged, forming a comprehensive academic discussion regarding the services that politicians provide to their constituents. Analyzing keywords, scholarly production, and thematic trends has helped track essential elements that have become the centre of attention in this field.

One of the primary topics frequently is "constituency service" itself, which refers to how members of Parliament or legislature help and support their constituents. That includes helping with personal problem-solving, giving information, and ensuring constituents' voices are heard in the legislative process (Saward, 2010). Moreover, "representation" was another important topic. Representation in this context explores how parliamentarians represent the interests and desires of their constituents. Research in this area often focuses on the effectiveness of representation, fairness in representation, and various models of political representation. It helps in understanding the extent to which representatives can meet the expectations and needs of their constituents.

"Personal vote" is also a pivotal concern. This term refers to the support received by politicians based on their efforts in serving constituents (Norton & Wood, 1990). Research in this area often focuses on how direct interactions between politicians and constituents can influence election outcomes, providing insight into the importance of personal relationships between representatives and voters. "Clientelism" was another frequently discussed topic. Clientelism refers to the practice in which politicians provide goods or services to constituents in exchange for political support (Demarest, 2022). This phenomenon often occurs in many countries, especially those with political systems prone to corruption. Research on clientelism provides insight into political dynamics that can affect the integrity and effectiveness of democracy.

In the legislative context, "parliament" and "parliamentary questions" also appear. This research area examines the role of parliaments in the legislative process and how legislators use parliamentary questions to serve their constituents and hold the government to account. It shows how parliamentarians can use formal mechanisms to meet their constituents' needs (Martin, 2011a). "Elections" and "field experiments" are additional paramount topics. Election topics address how constituency service influences voter behaviour and election outcomes (Gaines, 1998), while field experiments test hypotheses about constituency service in actual conditions (Habel & Birch, 2019). These two topics provide noteworthy insights into how constituency service could influence political dynamics and voter behaviour. "Congress" is also a frequently discussed topic, especially in the context of the United States. This research domain examines the role of Congress or the legislature in providing constituency services and how this affects the relationship between representatives and their voters.

In brief, constituency service research has multiplied from 1975 to 2024, with several key topics and dominant issues emerging. The main focus of previous research has been on how parliamentarians provide services to their constituents, including personal favours, political representation, and the dynamics of clientelism. These studies also highlight the role of parliaments and Congress in the legislative process and the influence of

constituency services on voter behaviour and election results. Analysis of keywords and thematic trends reveals that topics such as "constituency service," "representation," and "personal vote" are taking centre stage, reflecting the importance of personal relationships between politicians and constituents in modern political dynamics.

Cross-National Trends and Underlying Causes

Research on constituency service in political science shows noteworthy cross-national and temporal variations. From 1975 to 2024, research topics and themes have evolved. The analysis of country-based scientific production and country-based issues related to constituency service shows significant variations in research focus and discussion between countries. That means constituency service research spans diverse countries with unique political and social contexts influencing dominant research themes.

Country-based analysis of scholarly production highlights meaningful divergences in the contributions of developed and developing countries to research on constituency services. Several developed countries that stand out in scientific output include the United States, United Kingdom, Italy, France, Germany, Canada, Norway, China, Singapore, and others. These developed countries have significantly contributed to developing academic literature on this topic, reflecting a strong focus on the study of constituency service.

Apart from developed countries, several developing countries also play a role in the scientific production of constituency services studies, such as Malaysia, South Africa, Serbia, Bangladesh, Chile, New Zealand, Slovenia, and the Philippines, contributing to this research showing broad global interest. These reflect the complexity and relevance of this topic in a worldwide political and academic context and highlight the participation of developed and developing countries from across continents in developing our understanding of constituency service.

Another aspect that supports these cross-national trends is that the political system significantly influences constituency services research. In countries with established democratic systems, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany, there is high academic interest in constituency services. It is due to the direct relationship between elected officials and their constituents, a fundamental aspect of democratic governance. In democratic systems, public officials are expected to actively listen to and respond to citizens' needs and concerns, making constituency services a critical research area for understanding the dynamics of these interactions.

In countries with authoritarian or hybrid political systems, such as China and Singapore, the study of constituency services often takes on unique dimensions. Research in this context focuses more on how governments manage relationships with constituents in a more controlled or centralized framework. Such studies explore the balance between control and service delivery in maintaining regime stability and legitimacy. In more closed systems,

constituency services tend to maintain power and reduce public dissatisfaction (Distelhorst & Hou, 2017; Tan, 2013), adding a different dimension to research in this area.

Contrasting case studies provide deeper insight into how political systems influence constituency services research. For example, in South Korea, which has a dynamic democracy, there is extensive research on constituency services, focusing on electoral dynamics and citizen engagement (Chang, 2012; Cho, 2014). These studies explore how people's representatives interact with their constituents in a competitive and open political environment. On the other hand, North Korea, with its authoritarian regime, has had almost no academic interest in the field of constituency services due to the absence of a democratic process and a highly controlled political environment. Instead, scientists from other countries delve into the contemporary conditions of its despotic state management patterns (Cha & Anderson, 2012; Dukalskis, 2013).

The comparison between Singapore and Malaysia is also enjoyable. Although both countries have robust government control, research on Singapore emphasizes efficiency and technology integration in constituency services, reflecting highly organized governance. Singapore is often considered a country with a pragmatic and innovative approach to managing public services, including constituency services (Ng, 2018; Ong, 2015). Meanwhile, in Malaysia, which has a more diverse political landscape and more substantial democratic elements, research focuses more on political representation and clientelism (Ong, 1976; Shah, 2021).

Australia, as a stable democracy, makes significant contributions to constituency services research. Australian research often emphasizes transparency, accountability, and the role of parliamentarians in serving their constituents. The Australian political system allows for relatively open and responsive relationships between representatives and citizens, an essential focus in the study of constituency services. Prior studies explore how parliamentarians use formal and informal mechanisms to meet the needs of their constituents, as well as how parliamentary structures influence these services (Halligan et al., 1988; Heitshusen et al., 2005; McAllister, 2015; Studlar & McAllister, 1996).

Overall, a country's political system dramatically influences the intensity and focus of research on constituency services. Countries with democratic systems show broader and deeper research into the direct relationship between people's representatives and constituents. At the same time, authoritarian regimes focus on managing these services in a context of tighter control. All prior relevant studies provide valuable insights into how constituency services are understood and implemented in various political contexts and how political systems influence the research's dynamics and focus.

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom is the leading research locus or focus from a country-based issues perspective. Prior studies focused on UK views, policies, and dynamics

in constituency service. The United States, Italy, and Hungary follow, reflecting these countries' significance. Several countries such as Switzerland, Ghana, Ireland, and South Africa are also part of the ongoing conversation, albeit with less emphasis. The presence of these countries in these studies demonstrates the diversity of views and global contributions to constituency service research. On the other hand, many countries are mentioned only once in the data, but they demonstrate the diversity of global views that influence issues in this area.

Federal or provincial entities with semi-national status have also been the locus of constituency services research, particularly Scotland, Wales, and Quebec. Although these regions are not independent countries, their unique political context influences research on constituency services. Based on research by Russell & Bradbury (2007) and Bradbury & Mitchell (2007), the constituency work of members of the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd shows adjustments to the devolution of power in the region. Koop's (2011) research also highlights the adaptation of constituency associations in Scotland and Wales in response to devolution in the UK. The study by Baxter et al. (2016) explores how members of the Scottish Parliament use social media platforms such as Twitter to serve their constituencies, highlighting the role of technology in the modern political context.

Meanwhile, Franks' (2007) research examines the role of members of the Canadian federal Parliament in serving their constituents in the context of Canadian federalism. The study by Clarke et al. (1975) and Koop (2012) provides insights into constituency service by provincial legislators and members of the Canadian Parliament, highlighting differences in service responsiveness between federal and provincial MPs. Overall, this research provides a broad picture of how constituents are served across a range of political contexts, from devolution in the United Kingdom to federalism in Canada, with attention to the role of technology in transforming constituency services.

Such a combination of country-based scholarly production and country-based issues data suggests that constituency service has significantly impacted states, with distinctions in focus and priorities among them. This diversity reflects the complexity of understanding the topic worldwide and the importance of cross-cultural perspectives in its research.

Research on constituency service also shows salient temporal variation, reflecting changes in academic focus and the issues that dominate each period. From 1975 to 2024, several research topics and themes experienced crucial changes regarding the intensity and attention researchers gave. For example, topic trend analysis shows that the keyword "constituency service" reached peak attention in 2020. There is increasing interest in how representatives provide services to their constituents in the modern political context. In those years, research focused on how changes in technology and social media affected

constituency service and how politicians could reach and serve their constituents more effectively.

From 2014 to 2016, there was an influential influx of research on " political representation." That suggests that in this period, academic attention shifted to how people's representatives represented the interests and desires of their constituents. Research explores models of representation, fairness in representation, and the effectiveness of political representation in various contexts. Furthermore, from 2016 to 2022, " clientelism" attracted remarkable attention. Clientelism, which refers to politicians providing goods or services to constituents in exchange for political support, has become an essential focus in research. That reflects concerns about the integrity of the political process and how these practices affect election outcomes and the quality of democracy.

Additionally, research on the "personal vote" received more attention from 2011 to 2018. It suggests that researchers want to understand how personal interactions between politicians and constituents could influence political support and election outcomes. This research is crucial for understanding the relationship dynamics between people's representatives and voters in a changing political context. In the same period, " representation" and " parliament" continued to rise, indicating that the study of how representatives work within parliaments and how they represent their constituents remains a pivotal focus. This research includes an analysis of the role of Parliament in the legislative process, the formal mechanisms parliamentarians use to serve constituents, and how parliamentary structures influence constituency service.

Thus, prior studies on constituency service show significant cross-national and temporal variations. From the various countries involved, each with unique political and social contexts, topics and themes that reflect local and global dynamics in constituency service emerged. Temporally, these studies confirm an evolution in academic focus, with such issues as constituency service, political representation, clientelism, and the personal vote taking the principal spot in specific periods. These provide valuable insight into how constituency service research develops and changes, and guide future research directions.

The emerging trends reflect changes in academic focus and broader political and social dynamics that influence how constituency services are understood and practised. One of the main reasons why trends are changing is the development of technology and social media. Politicians' increased use of social media to communicate with constituents in the last decade has become a noteworthy phenomenon. Social media allows politicians to reach constituents directly and effectively, changing how constituency services are delivered. Research that peaked in 2020 showed great interest in how these technologies influence interactions between politicians and constituents, as well as how politicians can use digital tools to serve the needs of their constituents more effectively.

Research trends also reflect changes in political practices in different countries. The increased interest in "clientelism" from 2016 to 2022 reflects heightened concerns about political practices that could undermine the integrity of democracy. Clientelism, in which politicians provide goods or services to constituents in exchange for political support, is a critical focus because of its impact on the electoral process and the quality of democracy. This trend is vital for understanding how these practices can influence election outcomes and the integrity of the political process.

An increasing trend in research on "political representation" from 2014 to 2016 suggests that there is greater attention to how representatives represent the interests and desires of their constituents. Increased awareness and public demands for more accountable and transparent representation have driven that change. Research in this period explored models of representation, fairness in representation, and the effectiveness of political representation in various contexts. This trend reflects changes in public expectations of representatives and increased attention on how politicians can more effectively represent the interests of their constituents.

Research on constituency service also reflects different political dynamics in diverse countries. For example, in the United States, research often focuses on aspects such as representation, elections, and the relationship between politicians and voters. That is due to the highly decentralized political system in the US, where politicians have a pressing responsibility to serve their constituents directly. In the UK, research explores how MPs interact with constituents and how constituency services influence election outcomes and public confidence in the political system. Local and regional political dynamics have influenced interest in constituency service in other countries such as Italy and Hungary. For instance, with Italy's complex multiparty system, research highlights how constituency service plays a role in maintaining political stability and building coalitions. In Hungary, political change and democratization drive research on how constituency services are developing and how politicians can be more effective in serving their constituents.

In summary, trends in research on constituency service occur due to various interrelated factors, including technological developments, changes in political practice, transnational political dynamics, and changes in academic focus. Technology and social media developments have changed how politicians interact with constituents. In contrast, changes in political practice reflect concerns about the integrity of the political process and the quality of democracy. The different political dynamics in multiple countries provide unique contexts for research, and changes in academic focus reflect theoretical and methodological developments in political science. These factors shape trends in constituency service research, providing valuable insight into how this research develops and changes over time.

Criteria for Studying Legislators' Constituency Service Responsiveness

This bibliometric analysis of global constituency service research is critical for identifying new developments and trends in the field. The author looks at trends, principles, and related structural aspects from both an evaluative and a relational point of view. The 161 studies in this bibliometric analysis explore a wide range of issues related to constituency service, showing how complicated and multidimensional the interactions between legislators and constituents are and the various interests involved in politics. By mapping these topics, we can learn much about how political systems work in developed and emerging countries. Studying the use of political representation and constituency service in different scenarios helps us gain insight into their applications.

Prior studies offer a comprehensive glimpse into the multifaceted landscape of constituency service, spanning various geographical and socio-political contexts. One noticeable aspect is the geographic focus, with studies examining constituency service dynamics in diverse settings, including African democracies, European countries, Southeast Asian nations, and even specific regions within larger countries like the Scottish Parliaments. Researchers delve into the intricate relationship between electoral dynamics and representation within this geographical diversity. For instance, studies explore how opposition parties engage with urban poor communities in African democracies, highlighting the role of political representation in addressing marginalized groups' needs (Resnick, 2012). Similarly, investigations into electoral institutions and the personal vote shed light on how electoral systems shape politicians' behaviour and constituents' perceptions of representation (Martin, 2011b).

The research also delves into the motivations and behaviours of legislators, offering insights into their strategic decision-making processes. By examining issues such as campaign strategies and responsiveness to constituent needs, scholars seek to understand the complex interplay between party loyalty and the imperative to serve constituents effectively (Chiru, 2018). Moreover, institutional analysis plays a crucial role in understanding constituency service dynamics. Studies investigate how formal and informal institutions influence politicians' behaviour, particularly in authoritarian regimes where constituency service may take on unique dimensions (Ong, 2015). Additionally, research on legislatures' role in democratic development underscores the importance of institutional structures in shaping political representation and governance outcomes (Mattes & Mozaffar, 2016).

Methodological diversity is another important factor. Researchers use many different methods, such as content analysis (Baxter et al., 2016; Demarest, 2022; Jackson & Lilleker, 2011; Lim, 2018; Martin, 2011a; Sebők et al., 2017; Yende & Yende, 2022), field experiments (Gaikwad & Nellis, 2021), regression analysis (Wood & Young, 1997), and case studies (Bundi, 2018). This methodological pluralism allows for a nuanced understanding of

constituency service dynamics, accommodating the complexity of political representation in different contexts. Furthermore, the intersectionality of factors influencing constituency service emerges as a prominent theme. Scholars explore how factors such as gender (Benstead, 2016; Hogan, 2008; Kage et al., 2019; Thomas, 1992; Thomsen & Sanders, 2020; Yoon, 2016), ethnicity (Bratton, 2006; Dinesen et al., 2021; McClendon, 2016), socioeconomic status (Habel & Birch, 2019; Liew et al., 2020), and religion (Jahan, 2014; Kolpinskaya, 2016) intersect to shape politicians' behaviour and constituents' experiences of representation. This recognition of intersectionality underscores the need for a holistic approach to understanding political representation and its impact on diverse communities.

Previous research has also demonstrated a keen interest in the policy implications of constituency service. Studies investigate how effective representation can lead to better policy outcomes, with topics such as participatory budgeting (Im et al., 2014) and policy feedback (Simonovits et al., 2021) garnering attention. Scholars aim to inform policy-making processes and promote more inclusive and responsive political systems by examining the link between political representation and governance outcomes.

Based on the findings of several prior studies, the following criteria, as presented in Figure 9, can serve as a benchmark for assessing the extent to which legislators respond to constituents' needs beyond their routine parliamentary duties:
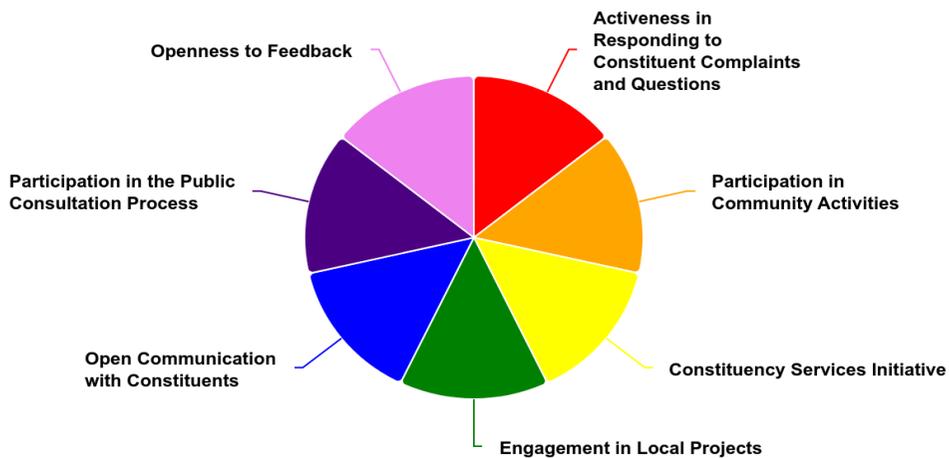

Figure 9 Criteria for Studying Legislators' Constituency Service Responsiveness
Source: Author's Work

The criteria for studying legislators' constituency service responsiveness encompass a variety of dimensions that shed light on legislators' effectiveness and engagement with their constituents beyond the legislative agenda. Firstly, activeness in responding to constituent complaints and questions reflects legislators' proactive approach to addressing the concerns

and queries raised by their constituents (Butler et al., 2023; Jaeger, 2019). This criterion emphasizes the importance of accessibility and responsiveness in fostering a sense of representation and accountability. Secondly, participation in community activities refers to legislators' involvement in grassroots initiatives and local events (Appelstrand, 2002). By actively engaging with the community, legislators gain firsthand insights into the needs and aspirations of their constituents, thereby enhancing their ability to advocate effectively on their behalf.

The constituency service initiative criteria highlight legislators' efforts to provide practical assistance to constituents, ranging from resolving legal issues to offering individualized problem-solving support (Arter, 2018). This proactive stance underscores legislators' commitment to facilitating access to resources and support systems for their constituents. Engagement in local projects measures legislators' involvement in community development initiatives (*pork barrels*) aimed at improving the welfare and infrastructure of their constituencies (Ames, 1995). This criterion underscores the role of legislators as catalysts for positive change and progress at the local level.

Open communication with constituents emphasizes the importance of transparent and accessible communication channels between legislators and constituents. Whether through public meetings, online forums, or other mediums, effective communication fosters mutual understanding and trust between representatives and the people they serve (Auel & Umit, 2018). Participation in the public consultation process assesses legislators' engagement in consultative forums and dialogue sessions to solicit constituent feedback and input. By actively listening to constituents' aspirations and viewpoints, legislators demonstrate a commitment to inclusive decision-making and democratic governance (Linde & Peters, 2020).

Finally, openness to feedback measures legislators' willingness to receive constructive criticism and input from constituents and their readiness to incorporate this feedback into their policy-making processes (Brandsma, 2019). These criteria underscore the importance of responsiveness and adaptability in meeting constituents' evolving needs and expectations. Collectively, these criteria provide a comprehensive framework for assessing legislators' responsiveness and engagement with their constituents, contributing to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of representative democracy and governance.

The two extra criteria, " the role of channelling constituent aspirations into the parliamentary realm" and "formulation of responsive policies," highlight essential aspects of legislators' work in the parliamentary realm and show how committed they are toward responsive policies. The first criterion emphasizes the pivotal function of legislators as conduits between their constituents' concerns and the legislative process. It reflects the proactive efforts of legislators to voice the needs, desires, and concerns of the communities they represent within the formal settings of parliamentary proceedings. Legislators strive to

ensure that the formulation of policies and laws considers and hears the voices of their constituents through speeches, debates, and advocacy in parliamentary sessions (Caplan et al. , 2021) . Legislators play an essential role in articulating the diverse aspirations and interests of their constituents within the decision-making processes of the parliamentary realm.

The second criterion highlights legislators' responsibility to develop and advance policies that address their constituents' pressing needs and aspirations. Beyond advocating for constituent concerns, legislators actively participate in the legislative process to propose, shape, and champion policies responsive to their communities' evolving socioeconomic, cultural, and political landscape (Lucas et al. , 2019). By engaging in policy formulation, legislators seek to translate the voices and priorities of their constituents into concrete legislative measures aimed at promoting the welfare, progress, and prosperity of society as a whole (Hansson-Forman et al., 2021). Legislators proactively shape governance and policy outcomes to reflect the interests and aspirations of the communities they serve.

These two criteria represent the multifaceted nature of legislators' engagement within the parliamentary arena, reflecting their commitment to policy responsiveness and dedication to effectively representing their constituents' interests and concerns. By channelling constituent aspirations and actively formulating responsive policies, legislators play a crucial role in bridging the gap between governance and society, thereby contributing to the advancement of democratic governance and the well-being of communities.

Future Research Directions

One of the primary results of this bibliometric analysis is that constituency service research has grown a lot since the 1980s. This growth is mainly because more specialists want to investigate how voting systems change from being based on parties to being based on candidates (Carey & Shugart, 1995), a massive trend in countries in the Global North. As democracy spreads and society and politics undergo momentous changes, many wealthy countries have also changed how they run general elections. This change is easily seen in the United States and the United Kingdom. In these two countries, political campaigns are less about the candidate's party affiliation and more about the candidate's personality and personal themes.

In more developed liberal democracies, legislators do constituency services to show their people they are knowledgeable, which builds reputations and goodwill (Stokes et al., 2013) . Many other countries in Europe and beyond also see this trend, where traditional political parties no longer have total power over the general election process. These changes show how democratic politics constantly changes, with voters, politicians, and political parties having different relationships over time. Candidate-based voting systems are pervasive in

countries in the Global North. However, they make it harder to obtain fair and long-term representation in these political systems, which are getting more complicated.

It is essential to figure out how changes in the political system affect constituency service in countries in the Global South because changes in election systems, or a lack thereof, can have profound consequences. Researchers have extensively studied developed countries like the US and the UK, but there needs to be more research on countries in the Global South. Researchers must investigate how changes, or lack of changes, in electoral systems impact the provision of constituency service in countries in the Global South. More research in this area will help us understand how politics works and how different voting systems affect the relationships between politicians and the people they represent worldwide.

The limited frequency of keywords such as "internet," "social media," and "Twitter" within the dataset suggests that the topic of technological influence on constituency service has yet to receive substantial attention in academic research. Each keyword appears only twice, indicating a relative dearth of comprehensive studies exploring the intersection of technology and political engagement in the constituency service domain. This scarcity of research highlights a salient gap in the existing literature, underscoring the need for further investigation into the role of technology in shaping political representation and citizen engagement strategies. Given the transformative impact of digital platforms on modern communication dynamics, understanding how technology influences constituency service is crucial for comprehensively assessing the evolving nature of political participation and governance.

The study of technological influence on constituency service offers a promising avenue for future research. Scholars can delve deeper into various aspects of this topic, including the efficacy of online platforms in fostering constituent communication, the impact of social media on political accountability, and the implications of the digital divide for equitable access to political information and services. Future researchers can contribute valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of political representation in the digital age by directing scholarly attention to this under-explored area. This research direction holds the potential to enhance our understanding of how technology shapes the relationship between elected representatives and their constituents, ultimately informing more effective strategies for fostering inclusive and responsive democratic governance.

Conclusion

Constituency service is a critical aspect of political representation, in which representatives demonstrate their leadership skills and build a strong image. This practice has evolved, significantly increasing scientific writing from December 1975 to February 2024. Our study reveals that the number of articles contributed to this field has grown, indicating a shift in researchers' interests and focus. The enormous number of articles published on

constituency service demonstrates various topics and methods. The collaboration between researchers from different countries is evident, highlighting the importance of global cooperation in understanding and addressing issues in democratic constituency service. The United States produces the most scientific work in this area, followed by the United Kingdom and a few European countries.

Various scholars have contributed to the literature's growth, with the United States having the most citations, the UK having the highest average number of citations per paper, Germany having the highest average number of citations per article, and Ireland and Finland making essential contributions. Global's 25 most-cited documents demonstrate this area's diverse topics and research methods. Analyzing the collaboration networks between countries, experts, and institutions provides valuable insights into the connections and primary research themes within constituency service. Academic interest has evolved over the last few decades, with more research on political representation and the relationship between representatives and their voters. Analyzing the evolution of themes over time provides a better understanding of how research in this field continues to develop and adapt to social and political changes.

In summary, this bibliometric review offers a detailed exploration of constituency services research, emphasizing its critical role in understanding the dynamic interactions between elected officials and their constituents. Growing academic interest across various disciplines highlights these interactions' importance in global political systems. By exploring a variety of political contexts, from democratic states to semi-autonomous regions, this review highlights how local political structures, cultural dynamics, and technological advances influence constituency service practices. This comprehensive analysis illuminates the complexity of constituency services and provides a basis for future research to improve the effectiveness of political representation and governance worldwide

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