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Studying the Forgotten: A Bibliometric Analysis on Minorities in the Soviet Union

This article presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of scholarly research on ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union over the period 2001–2025. The study is based on 484 peer-reviewed articles indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection, reflecting the expansion of structured academic metadata and the increasing scholarly interest in post-Soviet studies over the past two decades. The primary aim is to identify key thematic developments, patterns of international collaboration, and the intellectual structure of this interdisciplinary research field. The analysis employs VOSviewer software and integrates several bibliometric techniques, including keyword co-occurrence analysis, co-authorship network mapping, and bibliographic coupling. The dataset was carefully cleaned and standardized using a thesaurus approach to ensure consistency in keywords and author affiliations. This methodological framework allows for a systematic visualization of relationships between research topics, authors, and countries. The results reveal four major thematic clusters that define the field: (1) migration, diaspora, and identity transformation, focusing on acculturation and integration processes; (2) state governance, nationalism, and minority rights, emphasizing language policy and ethno-political dynamics; (3) public health, demographic inequality, and socioeconomic outcomes, highlighting disparities in well-being and population trends; and (4) localized case studies, particularly in the Baltic region, addressing religion, education, and minority integration at the regional level. The findings demonstrate a steady increase in academic output, particularly after 2015, indicating a growing global interest in Soviet minority issues. The United States, Israel, Russia, and Germany emerge as the leading contributors, while post-Soviet countries such as Ukraine, Estonia, and Georgia show increasing research activity and integration into international academic networks. The co-authorship and bibliographic coupling analyses further reveal strong transnational collaboration patterns and shared intellectual foundations across national research communities. Overall, the study provides a systematic overview of Soviet minority research, offering new insights into its thematic composition, geographic distribution, and interdisciplinary nature. It contributes to a deeper understanding of how academic discourse on minorities has evolved and highlights key directions for future research in post-Soviet and comparative studies.

Keywords: Soviet Union, ethnic minorities, bibliometric analysis, post-Soviet studies, migration, identity, ethnicity, academic networks, VOSviewer, historiography

Introduction

Academic discussions about Soviet Union research on ethnic, religious, and national minorities have developed through multiple stages. The Soviet government presented internationalism and ethnic equality as official principles, but its actual policies led to extensive minority group surveillance, forced assimilation, deportation, and cultural destruction. The post-Soviet era revived questions about historical injustice, identity politics, and interethnic relations, sparking new scholarly interest in history, political science, sociology, and international relations.

Academic publications about Soviet minority experiences have surged in the last twenty years due to rising geopolitical tensions and ongoing debates about national memory and ethnic hierarchies in post-Soviet societies. The research field requires systematic analysis to study its structure and development, although individual studies have focused on these topics separately.

This research analyzes 484 peer-reviewed articles from the Web of Science Core Collection, published between 2001 and 2025, to investigate the bibliometric data. The paper employs VOSviewer software to display and interpret the intellectual structure of the field by analyzing keyword co-occurrence, citation, and co-authorship networks. The research methodology enables the identification of key themes alongside prominent authors and their institutional partnerships, as well as geographic research locations.

The main goals of this research include (1) presenting quantitative data about Soviet minority scholarship, (2) identifying thematic clusters and temporal patterns in the literature, and (3) revealing research gaps that future interdisciplinary studies can address. This article enhances post-Soviet studies research by pre-

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senting a method to analyze how memory and identity studies are represented in contemporary academic scholarship.

The research period spans from 2001 to 2025, as it combines methodological requirements with historical significance. The Web of Science Core Collection indexes peer-reviewed publications from the early 2000s because it provides consistent and reliable indexing. The database lacks sufficient metadata for Soviet minority studies conducted prior to 2001, rendering bibliometric analysis impossible for this period. The post-2000 period introduced significant changes to academic research methods. The combination of technological advancements, expanded archival access, and shifting worldwide priorities has led to the development of themes such as digitalization, diaspora network analysis, and health inequality among displaced people. The humanities and social sciences experience broader changes by integrating data-driven approaches with interdisciplinary studies and policy-relevant frameworks into traditional historical narratives. The chosen timeframe allows researchers to study both the persistent elements and new developments within the field.

Unlike existing qualitative and case-based studies, this article provides a systematic, data-driven mapping of the intellectual structure of Soviet minority research. By combining multiple bibliometric techniques, it not only identifies dominant themes but also reveals transnational collaboration patterns and interdisciplinary linkages. This approach contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how scholarly discourse on minorities has evolved over time.

Materials and Methods

The bibliometric evaluation used Web of Science Core Collection data, a well-established multidisciplinary citation database, as its source. A Boolean search string was created to retrieve all academic publications about minorities in the Soviet Union that appeared in the database fields of titles, abstracts, and keywords.

The study focused on peer-reviewed articles published between 2001 and 2025, which appeared in at least one of the Web of Science indexes: SSCI, A&HCI, ESCI, and SCI-Expanded. The analysis included 484 documents that resulted from removing duplicates and non-relevant entries after applying filters to the dataset.

The metadata contained in titles, abstracts, authors affiliations, keywords, citations, and source journals were exported into BibTeX format. A BibTeX file containing author name and keyword terminology inconsistencies underwent cleaning before preprocessing for standardization. VOSviewer used a thesaurus file to merge synonyms while standardizing keyword variants such as “USSR” and “Soviet Union.”

The cleaned dataset underwent analysis using VOSviewer, a bibliometric mapping tool designed to display scientific landscapes. The research applied four different analytical approaches to the data. The keyword co-occurrence analysis revealed the dominant research themes using complete counting with a threshold of ≥ 7 occurrences. This threshold was selected to balance network density and interpretability, ensuring that only the most significant and recurring terms were included in the analysis. The study revealed fundamental thematic areas in the literature.

The tool displayed connections between authors and countries through co-authorship analysis while highlighting the main centers of international academic collaboration. The bibliographic coupling analysis measured the similarity of reference lists between countries to detect shared intellectual foundations and citation practices. The research investigated publication sources, Web of Science categories, and index databases that contributed to the field.

The VOSviewer modularity-based clustering algorithm generated clusters of keywords, along with the corresponding countries. To support qualitative assessment, the researcher performed manual cluster interpretation and thematic coding of clusters into categories (migration, integration, state policy, and public health).

While bibliometric analysis provides valuable insights into the structure and evolution of a research field, it also has methodological limitations. In particular, VOSviewer-based analyses rely on co-occurrence and citation patterns, which reflect the frequency of terms and relationships rather than their contextual meaning. As a result, important nuances in how concepts such as identity, inequality, or minority rights are interpreted across different studies may not be fully captured.

Additionally, the clustering algorithm used in VOSviewer groups keywords based on statistical proximity, which may not always correspond to clearly defined theoretical or disciplinary boundaries. This can lead to the merging of conceptually distinct themes or, conversely, the fragmentation of closely related topics

across clusters. Therefore, the interpretation of clusters requires careful qualitative assessment and domain knowledge.

Despite these limitations, VOSviewer remains a widely accepted and robust tool for mapping scientific knowledge, particularly in large datasets where manual analysis is not feasible. Its use in this study enables a systematic and reproducible overview of the intellectual structure of Soviet minority research.

Results

The annual number of publications about minorities in the Soviet Union from 2001 to 2025 shows a steady increase in scholarly attention to this topic over time (Fig. 1). The number of publications increased from just two articles in 2001 to a peak of 35 articles in both 2021 and 2022. A polynomial trend line shows a consistent upward trend in the number of publications over 25 years, indicating a growing academic interest in the subject.

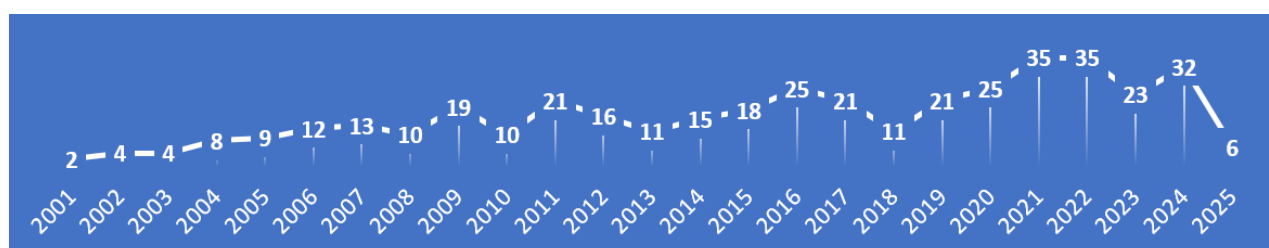


Figure 1. The annual number of publications on minorities in the Soviet Union

The first five years, from 2001 to 2005, showed minimal research activity, as the annual publication count remained below ten articles. The number of publications experienced its first significant increase from 2006 to 2011 before reaching its highest point at 21 articles in 2011. The number of publications decreased from 2012 to 2013 before starting a steady growth pattern, which became more pronounced after 2016. The period from 2020 to 2024 proved to be the most productive, generating more than 140 articles, which accounted for approximately 30 % of the entire dataset. The significant drop in 2025 publications to 6 items is due to the current year's data not being fully available.

Most of the 484 indexed documents about minorities in the Soviet Union consist of peer-reviewed journal articles. Journal articles account for 90-95 % of total publications, as shown in Figure 2, which indicates that academic journals have been the primary source of minority research in the Soviet Union.

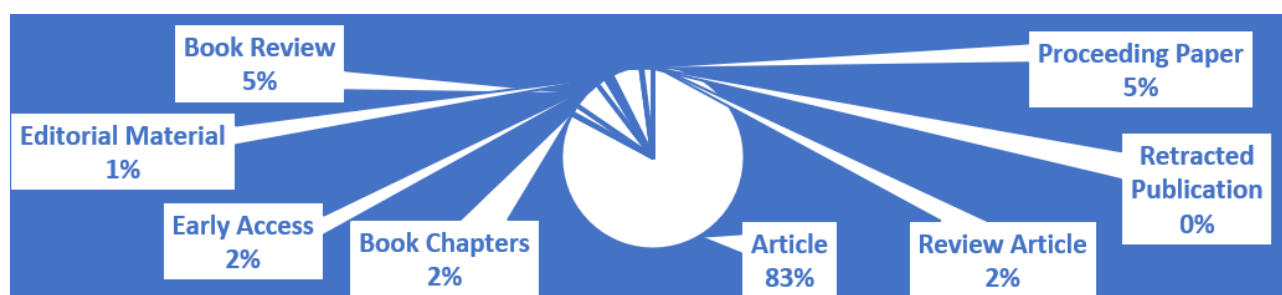


Figure 2. Distribution of document types in the dataset

The dataset contains a minimal representation of other document types. These include:

- Books and book chapters, each comprising a small fraction of the total dataset; a limited number of book reviews, review articles, and editorial materials;
- A few conference proceedings, meeting abstracts, and items categorized as early access;
- The field demonstrates high-quality control through its minimal number of retracted publications.

The distribution pattern reflects the academic advancement of the field, as well as its established position within scholarly peer-reviewed journal publications. The prevalence of journal articles confirms the reliability of bibliometric network analysis using co-citations, authorship, and keyword frequencies.

The research on Soviet minority groups between 2001 and 2025 reveals which authors produced the most publications, as shown in Figure 3. The most active contributors have released between 3 and 6 articles throughout the study, indicating that key researchers have maintained a balanced scholarly output.

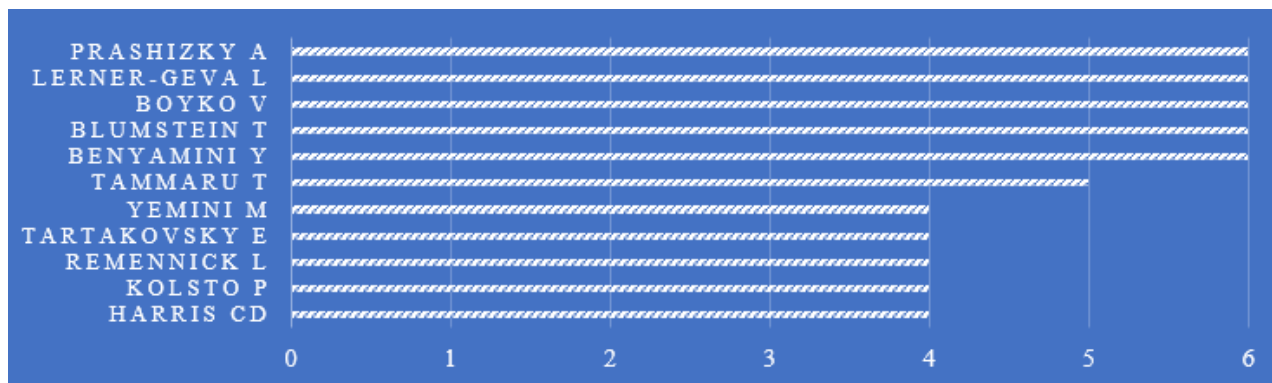


Figure 3. Most productive authors of Soviet minority research

The top five authors produced six publications, demonstrating their continuous interest in the subject matter throughout the years. Tartakovsky E, Kolstø P, and Spies DC join the list with four or more publications each. The list demonstrates both regional and disciplinary diversity, as affiliations likely extend across political science, demography, sociology, and post-Soviet studies.

The five authors who published three times each (O'Loughlin J., Kot V., Leetmaa K., Goerres A., Ayalon L.) demonstrate a moderately collaborative and distributed scholarly field that lacks strong dominance from either a single scholar or institution. These findings suggest a growing yet decentralized body of research shaped by a combination of individual contributions and thematic clusters. The 484 publications in the dataset are assigned their Web of Science (WoS) subject category classification, as shown in Figure 4.

The field of history leads the literature, while Political Science and Area Studies follow closely because research on Soviet minorities remains historically focused and region-specific. International Relations, along with Ethnic Studies and Sociology, make essential contributions to the field due to their interdisciplinary nature.

These fields collectively engage with themes such as nationalism, identity, post-imperial transition, and state-society relations. The humanities, as well as multidisciplinary and educational research fields, demonstrate an increasing scholarly interest in memory politics, minority narratives, and curriculum content within Soviet and post-Soviet contexts.



Figure 4. Most popular Web of Science subject categories

The dataset reveals emerging interest in minority policies by including less common disciplines, such as Economics and Geography, which examine the spatial and developmental aspects of minority policies, population movements, and regional disparities. The tree map demonstrates how this research area combines historical analysis with contemporary policy, sociological inquiry, and international frameworks.

The citation topics at the meso-level, as presented in Figure 5, reveal unexpected disciplinary connections between Soviet minority literatures. The citation topic "Healthcare Policy" (1.156) leads the list with 13 documents, as it reveals unforeseen connections between historical minority treatment and public health discourse, including access to healthcare, discrimination in medical services, and the epidemiological impacts of forced displacement. Modern history (10.144) and Psychiatry (1.21) are among the most often cited top-

ics, with five mentions each. This indicates a two-pronged focus on the historical background of Soviet minority policies and their psychosocial effects. Relatedly, Palliative Care (1.112) and HIV (1.66) are mentioned in several studies, which may be related to minority vulnerability, healthcare infrastructure in the Soviet periphery, or stigma within medical institutions.

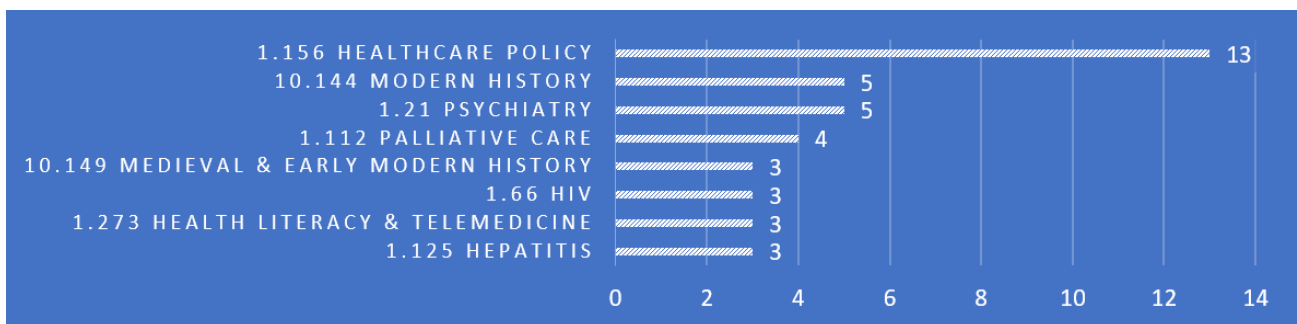


Figure 5. Most common meso-level citation topics

Other topics, such as Medieval and Early Modern History (10.149), Health Literacy and Telemedicine (1.273), and Hepatitis (1.125), also appear with moderate frequency, indicating that the thematic scope of the literature extends beyond the historical and public health domains. These findings show the interdisciplinary nature of minority studies in the Soviet context and reveal the presence of adjacent research streams, especially in the medical humanities, epidemiology, and policy analysis.

Figure 6 illustrates the micro-level citation topics, providing a more detailed picture of the thematic focus of the literature on minorities in the Soviet Union. As expected, the term “Soviet Union” (10.279.1137) is the most frequently cited in the dataset, appearing in 84 records, which confirms the dataset’s primary focus. This is followed by “Russia” (10.279.1743) with 11 mentions, consistent with the country’s position as the leading actor in historical and post-Soviet discussions of minority treatment.

The term “Self-rated health” (1.156.436) emerges in 10 publications, showing its relevance to minority status and subjective health results. It is beneficial for researching the long-term well-being of displaced or marginalized groups. The topic of “Collective memory” (10.245.1462) is cited in 8 studies, underlining the salience of memory politics, trauma, and the legacy of repression in post-Soviet identity construction.

Three topics appear less frequently but remain significant because they each appear in three publications: “International students” (6.11.1255), “Cold War” (10.245.1619), and “Maternal mortality” (1.156.381). The literature on Soviet minorities occasionally intersects with migration studies, geopolitical conflicts, and public health inequalities. The results demonstrate the wide range of research topics in this field, which combines medical, psychological, and sociocultural approaches with traditional historical studies.

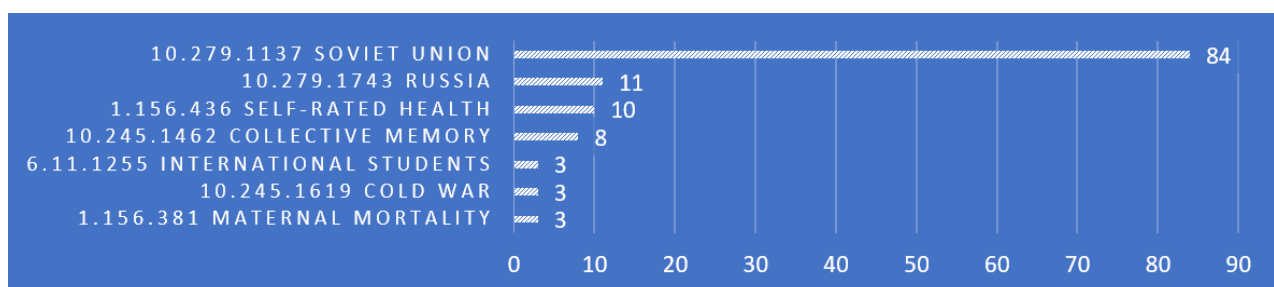


Figure 6. Most common micro-level citation topics

The analyzed literature aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as shown in Figure 7. The dataset shows Goal 10: Reduced Inequality as the most frequently appearing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). The literature focuses on ethnic, national, and religious minority groups in the Soviet Union who experienced discrimination, social exclusion, and historical injustices.

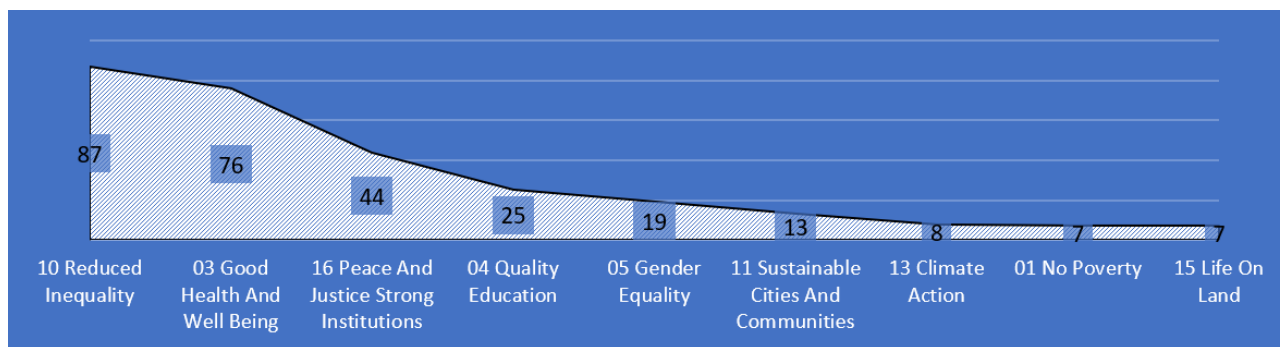


Figure 7. Distribution of the literature by the Sustainable Development Goals

The most important goals are Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, and Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. These are related to health and well-being, mental health, and the legal and institutional frameworks that affected minority rights during and after the Soviet period. Other SDGs that appear include:

- Goal 4: Quality Education, which is relevant to studies on access to education and the language of instruction for minorities;
- Goal 5: Gender Equality, in research that explores the intersection of ethnicity and gender; Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, which highlights the urban-rural divide in minority integration;
- Goal 13: Climate Action and
- Goal 15: Life on Land, which are only marginally represented, possibly reflecting recent expansions of environmental justice topics;
- Goal 1: No Poverty, which remains under-addressed, although poverty intersects structurally with minority marginalization.

These results suggest that the literature strongly aligns with the concept of social and institutional inequality. Still, there is a growing multidisciplinary interest in health, governance, education, and sustainability within the context of Soviet and post-Soviet minority experiences.

Figure 8 shows the distribution of the analyzed publications across different Web of Science (WoS) citation indexes. Most of the articles, 296 out of 484, are indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), indicating that the topic of minorities in the Soviet Union is primarily studied through the social science disciplines of political science, sociology, and area studies.

The Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) is the second most widely used indexing category, with 109 publications demonstrating the research field's emphasis on historical and cultural aspects. The Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) contains 73 articles, which indicates that new scholarship from recent years has not yet entered the major citation indexes.

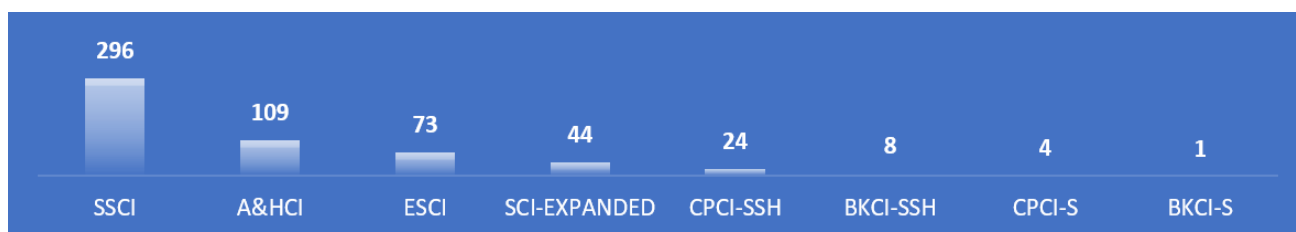


Figure 8. Distribution of publications by the Web of Science index

Less prominent but still notable are: Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED) — 44 articles indicating interdisciplinary crossovers into health, demography, and environmental studies; Conference Proceedings Citation Index — Social Science & Humanities (CPCI-SSH) — 24 articles highlighting academic engagement through conference participation; Book Citation Index — Social Sciences & Humanities (BKCI-SSH) — 8 entries, and one entry in Book Citation Index — Science (BKCI-S); Conference Proceedings Citation Index — Science (CPCI-S) — only four records show minimal presence in science-focused conference outputs.

The research field maintains its foundation in the social sciences and humanities while extending its reach into public health and interdisciplinary studies. The most active institutions participating in minority

studies about the Soviet Union through publications from 2001 to 2025 are presented in Figure 9. The Russian Academy of Sciences leads the list with 16 publications, maintaining its position as the leading institution for historical and ethnographic research on the former Soviet space.

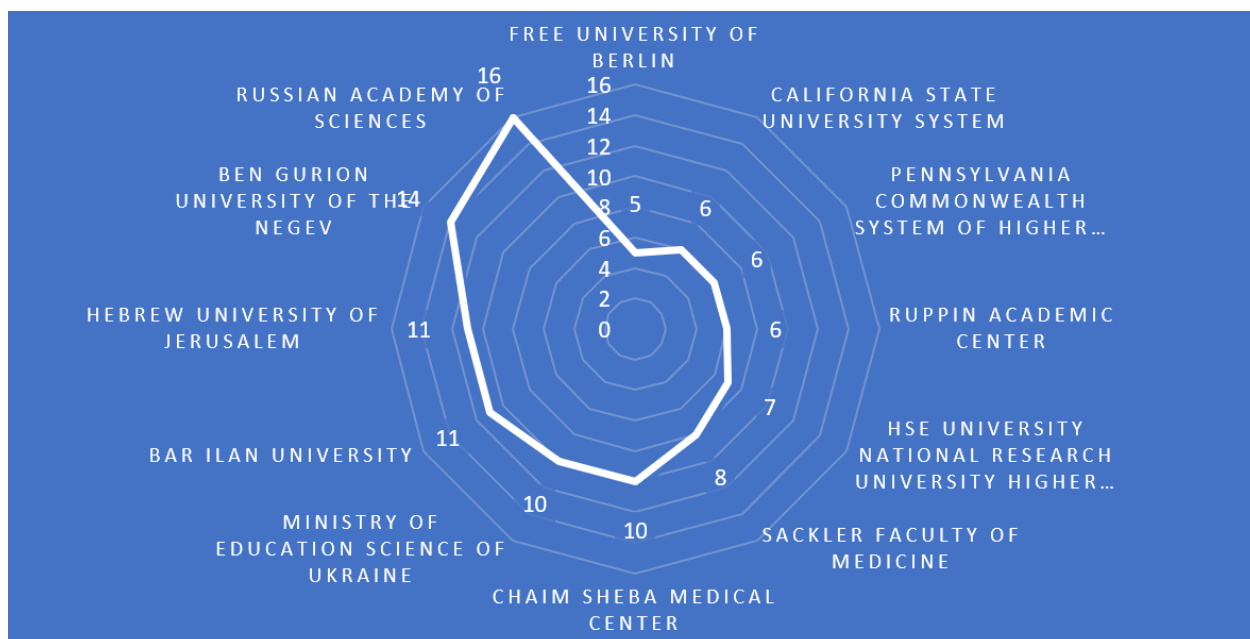


Figure 9. Most productive institutional affiliations

After Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, with 14 publications, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Bar-Ilan University share second place with 11 publications each. The high visibility of Israeli institutions in this field reflects their enduring academic commitment to research on Soviet Jewish migration and diaspora studies, as well as the historical trajectory of Russian-speaking minorities.

Two publications, one from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the other from Chaim Sheba Medical Centre, demonstrate that post-Soviet countries engage in state-funded research and medical and psychosocial studies of minority populations. Among the prominent contributors are the Sackler Faculty of Medicine, with eight publications, and HSE University (Higher School of Economics) in Russia, which contributed seven publications. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Commonwealth System of Higher Education and the California State University System each produced six publications.

The Free University of Berlin contributes five publications to the research discourse about ethnic and national minorities in the Soviet context from Western European academia. The results indicate that scholars are part of an extensive academic network that covers Russia, Israel, Ukraine, the United States, and European countries. The research demonstrates the field's interdisciplinary nature by incorporating historical analysis with sociological methods, public health approaches, and diaspora studies.

The distribution of scholarly literature on Soviet minorities from 2001 through 2025 appears in Table 1. Two journals, *Europe-Asia Studies* and *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, dominate the publication list with eight entries each, as they focus on the post-Soviet and Eastern European regions. The *Ethnic and Racial Studies* journal, along with eight publications, demonstrated the necessity of global ethnic and racial frameworks in studying Soviet minority history. The *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *Journal of Contemporary History and Post-Soviet Affairs*, and *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* each published six articles as leading academic journals.

Table 1

Number of publications by Web of Science journal titles

Web of Science Journals	# of publications
<i>Europe Asia Studies</i>	8
<i>Jahrbucher Fur Geschichte Osteuropas</i>	8
<i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i>	6
<i>International Journal of Intercultural Relations</i>	6
<i>Journal of Contemporary History</i>	6
<i>Post Soviet Affairs</i>	6
<i>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</i>	5
<i>Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity</i>	5
<i>Noveishaya Istoriya Rossii Modern History of Russia</i>	5

Multiple journals with four to five publications feature the following titles: Nationalities Papers

- East European Politics and Societies
- Eurasian Geography and Economics
- Istoriya Elektronnyi Zhurnal
- Russian Review
- Slavic Review

The distribution indicates that research output is published in various significant journals covering history, ethnic studies, political science, and post-socialist transitions. Both national and regional journals demonstrate the worldwide academic fascination with Soviet minority policies through their combined presence.

The United States contributes the highest number of publications (108) within the dataset, as shown in Figure 10. The substantial number of Slavic and Eurasian studies programs at American universities, along with their access to archival materials and diaspora research networks, explains this result.

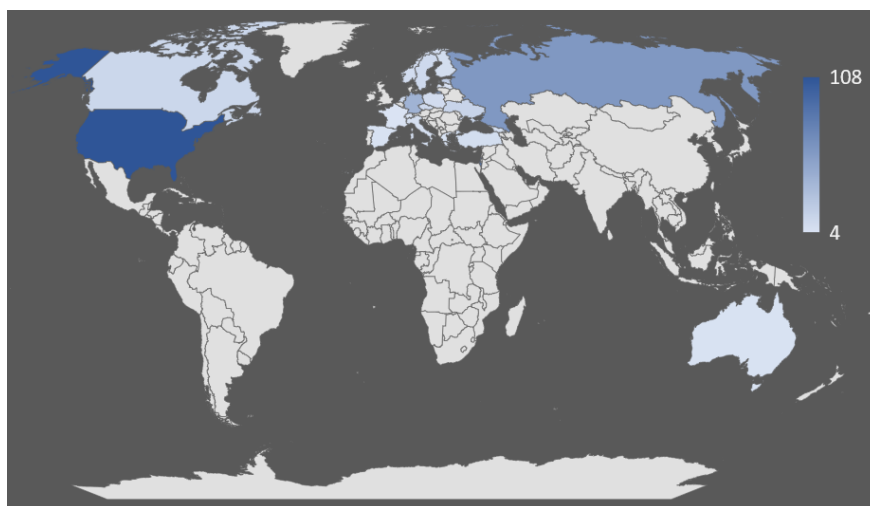


Figure 10. Number of publications by country/region

Research activity on Soviet Jewish migration, identity, and memory demonstrates Israel's exceptional position through its 81 published articles. The third position belongs to Russia, as the USSR's core successor state, with 59 publications, followed by Germany and England, which have 39 and 32 publications, respectively. The United States dominates the field with 108 publications, primarily due to its numerous Slavic and Eurasian studies programs and strong connections to archival research and diaspora studies.

Several nations that emerged from the former Soviet territory demonstrate high research productivity through their contributions, including 20 publications by Estonia, 15 by Ukraine, 11 by the Czech Republic,

8 by Georgia, and 6 by Latvia. Academic researchers from post-Soviet nations are increasingly investigating historical and contemporary issues related to ethnicity and national minority repression.

The countries of Canada, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, and Poland each conducted moderate research, resulting in 13, 11, 10, 9, and 9 publications, respectively. Academic interest in Soviet minority policies has spread across the globe, as evidenced by the release of between 4 and 5 scholarly articles by China, Australia, Switzerland, Greece, Spain, and France.

Research output spans multiple regions of the world, as academics from Western institutions and post-Soviet institutions collaborate. The VOSviewer network visualization in Figure 11 shows 50 keywords that appeared more than 7 times in the dataset. The visualization illustrates the conceptual framework of research on minorities in the Soviet Union, with keywords organized into four major clusters based on their co-occurrence patterns.

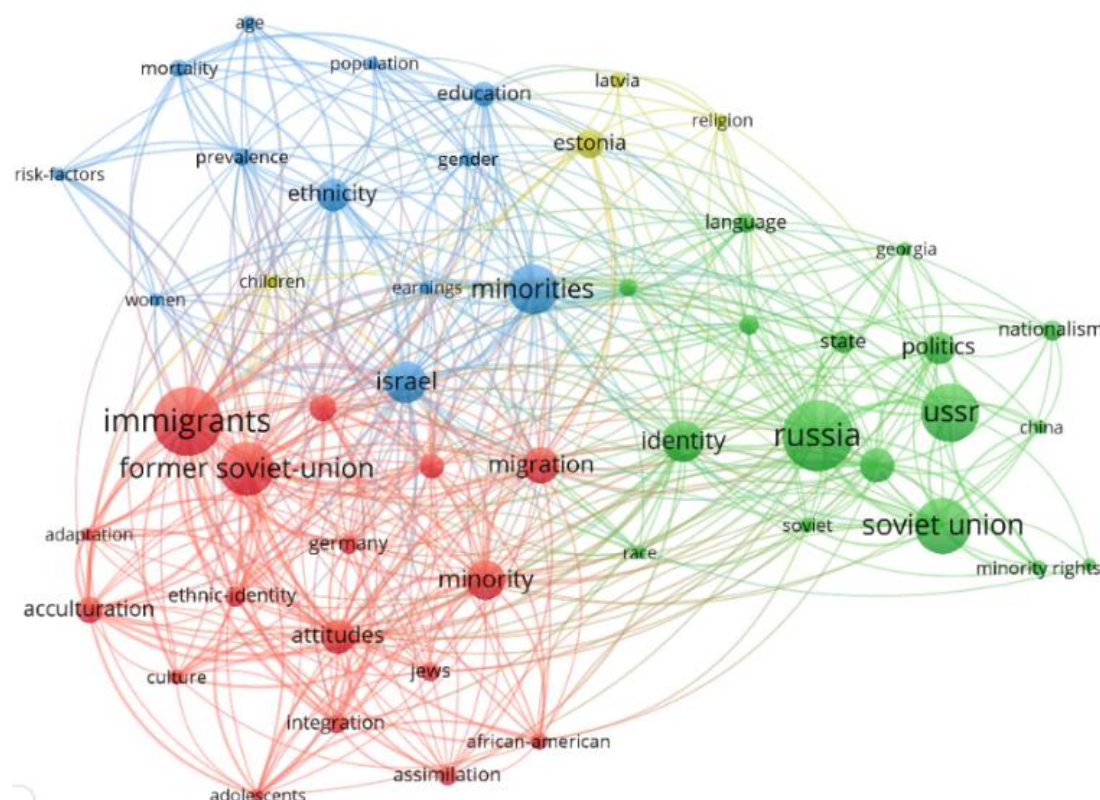


Figure 11. Keyword Co-occurrence network (keywords ≥ 7 occurrences; N=50)

The most important terms are “immigrants”, “former Soviet Union”, “Russia”, “Soviet Union”, “identity”, “ethnicity”, and “minorities”, which act as conceptual hubs linking other thematic keywords.

1. Cluster 1 (red) — migration, integration, and identity transformation. Keywords: immigrants, migration, acculturation, assimilation, ethnic identity, attitudes, culture, discrimination, integration, adolescents, former Soviet Union, Germany, Jews. This cluster encompasses research on post-Soviet diaspora experiences, particularly emigration from the USSR to Germany, Israel, and the U.S. It focuses on identity negotiation processes, such as acculturation and assimilation, often analyzed in terms of attitudes, discrimination, and cultural integration. The inclusion of adolescents suggests a psychological and sociological angle on second-generation immigrants.

2. Cluster 2 (green) — state, language, and ethno-political frameworks. Keywords: *Soviet Union*, *Russia*, *USSR*, *nationalism*, *politics*, *state*, *identity*, *language*, *minority rights*, *ethnic minorities*, *Ukraine*, *Georgia*, *China*. This cluster reflects literature concerned with the political and legal status of minorities within the Soviet Union and its successor states. The research in this cluster investigates language policy, national identity, and state-minority relations, focusing on the Caucasus (Georgia), Ukraine, and Central Asia (China’s Soviet borderlands). The research focuses on nationalism, governance, and ethno-political ideology, with an emphasis on their influence on minority rights discourses.

3. Cluster 3 (blue) — public health, demography, and socioeconomic conditions. Keywords: *ethnicity, education, gender, age, mortality, risk factors, earnings, women, population, prevalence, minorities, Israel*. This group represents a quantitative and health-focused strand of the literature, often using survey or epidemiological data to assess minority outcomes. The focus on education, gender, health disparities, and mortality highlights how social inequality among minorities, particularly Jews and other Soviet-born groups in Israel, is analyzed in terms of well-being, earnings, and demographic risk factors. The emergence of public health-related topics within the dataset requires careful interpretation. While some studies directly address health inequalities among minority populations, including access to healthcare, mortality, and mental health outcomes, others may reflect interdisciplinary citation practices rather than a fully established research sub-field. In this sense, the public health cluster can be understood as both an emerging thematic direction and a point of intersection between social sciences and medical research. This overlap highlights the growing importance of health-related perspectives in examining the long-term consequences of marginalization and displacement in Soviet and post-Soviet contexts.

4. Cluster 4 (yellow) — regional case studies and religion. Keywords: *children, religion, Latvia, Estonia*. This cluster is smaller, but it focuses on local case studies, especially in the Baltic States. It focuses on religion, children's rights, and ethnic education — themes often underrepresented in macro-level Soviet studies. It may reflect the experiences of minority religious communities and post-Soviet integration policies in Latvia and Estonia.

The network demonstrates extensive interlinkages between clusters, indicating that the field maintains a high level of interdisciplinary integration. The co-occurrence map illustrates the broad and dynamic academic engagement with Soviet minority research from historical, political, sociological, and health-oriented perspectives.

The co-authorship network by country in Figure 12 illustrates how scholars from various nations collaborated on publications about Soviet minorities between 2001 and 2025. The United States is the central hub of research collaboration, maintaining strong partnerships with Israel, Germany, Russia, Canada, and numerous European nations. The United States demonstrates global academic leadership through its prominence in Slavic and post-Soviet studies.

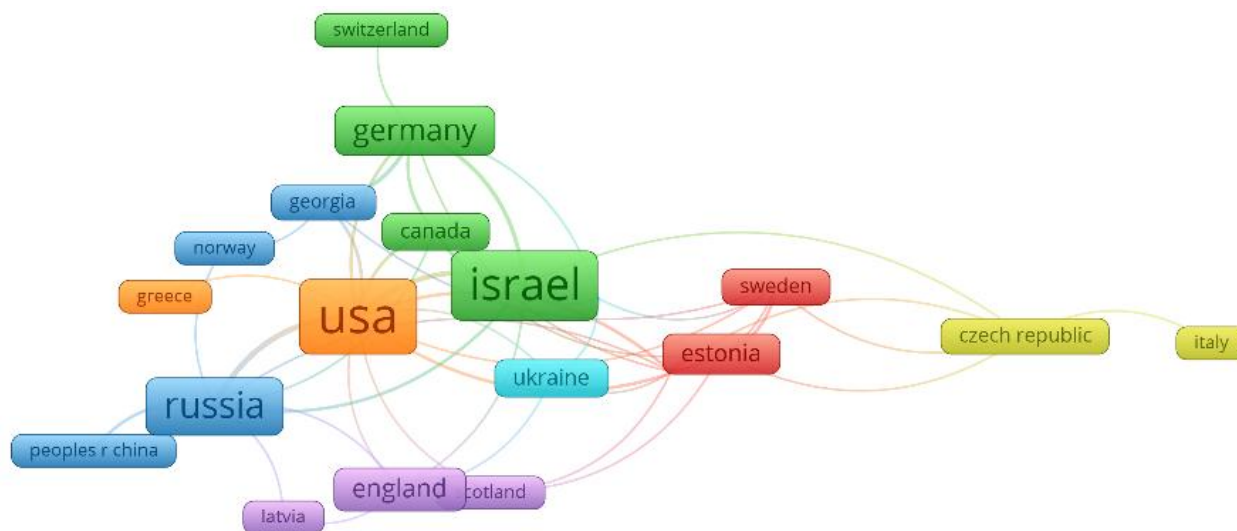


Figure 12. International Co-authorship network in publications

Research on Soviet Jewish migration and diasporas and minority integration receives strong support from Israel, which maintains strong research connections with Germany, Ukraine, Finland, and Canada. The three central nodes of Germany, England, and Russia demonstrate their enduring academic networks in Eastern European and ethnic studies. The periphery includes smaller yet active contributors such as Estonia, Sweden, the Czech Republic, and Italy.

These entities maintain their connections through regional case studies and focused collaborations concentrating on Baltic and Central European areas. The academic connection between Estonia and Ukraine serves as a bridge that links post-Soviet regional scholarship to broader global academic networks. The visu-

alization illustrates the international nature of the field through its representation of established academic centers and emerging regional contributors. The formation of scholarly networks appears to be influenced by both migration patterns and proximity to the former USSR.

The color scale (Fig. 13), which indicates the average publication year, reveals that the USA, England, and Australia were among the first contributors (darker shades). At the same time, countries such as Latvia, Ukraine, and Russia have become more active in recent years (lighter yellow tones). This trend indicates a growing interest in the topic within post-Soviet countries during the 2015–2020 period. This is likely due to increased regional funding, archival accessibility, and geopolitical relevance.

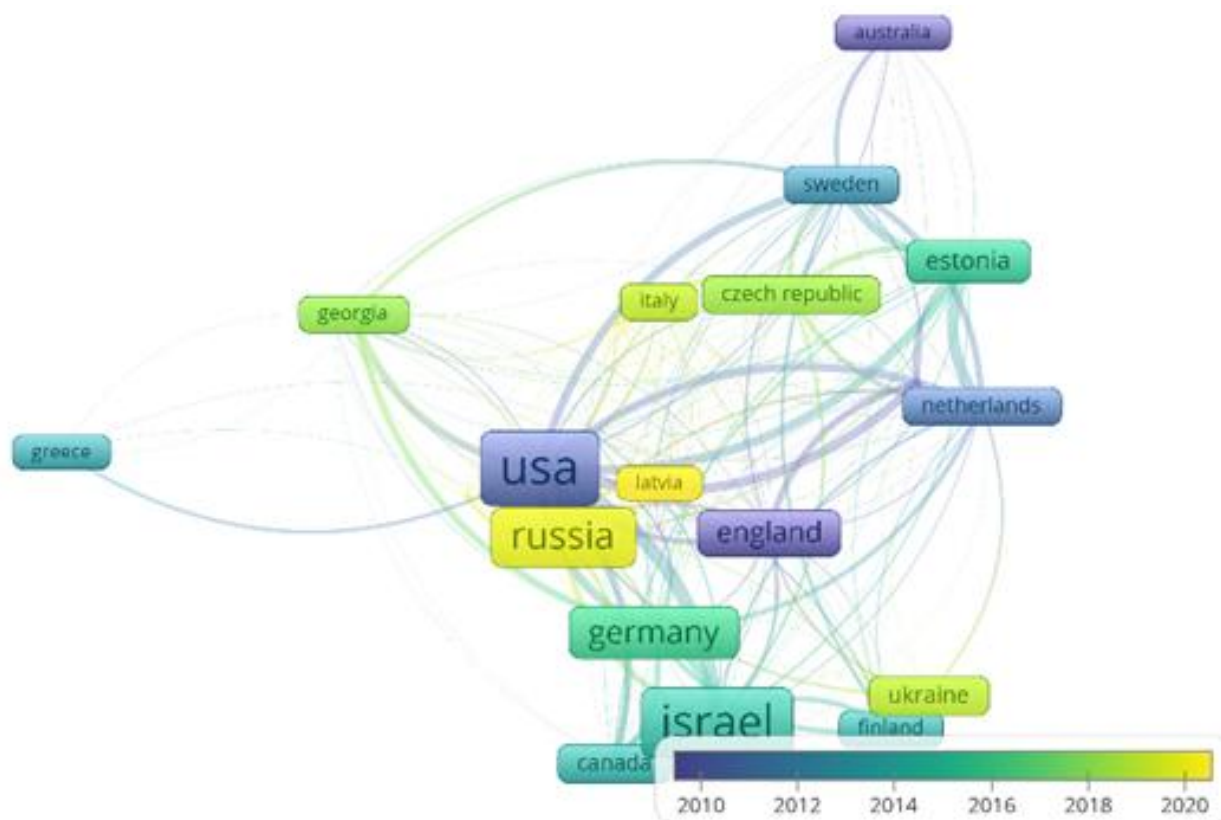


Figure 13. Bibliographic coupling network by country (Average year of publication)

Greece, Georgia, and Sweden are peripheral countries with fewer connections, indicating more specialized or isolated citation patterns. Meanwhile, Estonia, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic form a moderately interconnected bloc, often bridging post-Soviet and Western European scholarship.

The coupling indicates not just co-authorship but conceptual and methodological similarity, with the USA–Israel, Germany–Russia, and England–Netherlands forming robust citation communities. This clustering highlights the transnational scholarly alliances and the geopolitical flow of knowledge related to Soviet minority studies.

Discussion

Previous qualitative and historical studies provide an essential background for interpreting the bibliometric patterns identified in this study. Early scholarship emphasized the Soviet Union’s contradictory approach to ethnicity, combining formal declarations of equality with assimilationist and coercive practices, which Kolack (1985) described as an “unfinished revolution” [1].

More recent research has focused on post-Soviet transformations, particularly the integration and identity reconstruction of former Soviet minorities in countries such as Germany and Israel [2]. At the same time, studies of contemporary Russia demonstrate the persistence of Soviet-era ethnic governance through modified “indigenization” strategies at the regional level [3]. Research on Stalinist repression further documents the breadth of minority persecution, especially among religious and deported groups [4].

Comparative analyses of multi-ethnic governance in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe highlight the role of institutional design and security concerns in producing unequal minority outcomes [5]. Despite this rich qualitative literature, systematic bibliometric analysis remains rare. One of the few quantitative contributions maps post-Soviet academic output but does not focus specifically on minority-related intellectual structures or collaboration networks [6].

This study addresses this gap by providing a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of 484 articles published between 2001 and 2025, using Web of Science data and VOSviewer to identify thematic clusters, research networks, and underexplored directions in Soviet minority studies.

This bibliometric study presents an extensive analysis of the development of minority research in the Soviet Union across the period from 2001 to 2025. Multiple significant findings about intellectual structure, thematic diversity, and geographic diffusion of scholarship emerge from keyword co-occurrence analysis, co-authorship mapping, and bibliographic coupling.

The keyword co-occurrence map revealed four separate thematic clusters, which included (1) migration, identity, and acculturation, (2) state political frameworks of minority treatment, (3) health, gender, and demographic disparities, and (4) localized religious and ethnic studies in the Baltic states. These clusters demonstrate how the field combines multiple disciplines, as historical research is combined with political science, public health, and sociological approaches. Research topics such as acculturation, language policy, collective memory, and mortality demonstrate sophisticated comprehension of how Soviet-era structural inequality, together with repression and forced migration, influenced minority populations before and after the Soviet period.

Beyond their descriptive value, the identified clusters also reflect distinct theoretical orientations within the field. For instance, the migration and identity cluster is largely grounded in frameworks of acculturation, transnationalism, and diaspora studies, whereas the state and ethno-political cluster draws more heavily on theories of nationalism, institutional governance, and post-imperial state formation. Similarly, the public health cluster incorporates approaches from epidemiology and social determinants of health, which differ significantly from the interpretive and historically grounded methods used in regional case studies.

This divergence suggests that Soviet minority studies are not only interdisciplinary but also methodologically fragmented, with limited integration between quantitative and qualitative traditions. While this diversity enriches the field, it may also constrain the development of a unified analytical framework. Strengthening connections between these approaches—particularly by integrating historical analysis with quantitative evidence—could enhance the explanatory power of future research and contribute to a more cohesive understanding of minority experiences in the Soviet and post-Soviet context.

Co-authorship analysis by country exposed robust research networks that link researchers from the United States with those in Israel, Germany, and Russia. The critical position of Israel highlights its essential role in examining Jewish migration from post-Soviet territories and diasporic communities, alongside German and United States scholarly traditions in Eastern European studies. Research collaboration and regional academic work have increased the participation of Eastern European countries, including Ukraine, Estonia, and Georgia.

The bibliographic coupling map reveals that different national academic groups rely on the same sources to build intellectual alliances. Research conducted in the USA–Israel, Germany–Russia, and England–Netherlands demonstrates strong coupling, as these groups employ common methodological approaches and share epistemic frameworks. The time-based overlay reveals that Russia and Latvia have increased their academic activity over the last ten years, indicating both a rise in national identity politics and academic openness.

These research findings indicate that Soviet minority studies have expanded beyond their traditional Cold War historiographical scope. The field now encompasses modern priorities, including migration policy, identity construction, and structural inequality, due to current political tensions and historical reassessments.

Although the research methods in this study are bibliometric, its results have significant value for policy development, particularly in post-Soviet nations and countries with substantial diaspora populations from the former USSR. The research findings demonstrate specific gaps and themes leading to the following recommendations.

Post-Soviet and Western states should provide financial backing to integrate minority histories into both educational curricula and public communication systems. Public awareness about deportation, discrimination, and cultural suppression will help achieve reconciliation and minimize interethnic tensions.

The repeated emphasis on public health disparities and demographic vulnerabilities in the literature requires policymakers to focus on improving minorities' access to healthcare services with culturally sensitive care, especially for older migrants, women, and displaced ethnic groups.

The research indicates that language policy and acculturation are crucial areas that necessitate multilingual support systems in educational institutions, employment sectors, and administrative settings. Language rights promotion, together with inclusive integration models, will minimize the marginalization of ethnic minorities.

Academic funding bodies should support transnational and interdisciplinary research projects that include scholars from underrepresented post-Soviet countries. Western institutions should partner with regional institutions to advance research combining historical context with local knowledge.

The existing research, including epidemiological and policy studies, should serve as the basis for governments and NGOs to create evidence-based protection strategies for minority rights. Statelessness, internal displacement, and political representation need specific targeted interventions because they remain insufficiently addressed.

Conclusions

This bibliometric study of 484 articles, spanning 2001 to 2025, reveals fresh perspectives on minority scholarship in the Soviet Union. The study analyzed Web of Science data using VOSviewer visualization tools to identify essential thematic domains, research collaboration patterns, and intellectual communities.

The field of Soviet minority studies has evolved from traditional historical approaches to a modern, multidisciplinary framework that encompasses policy research, health studies, migration analysis, and memory studies. The research identifies four major thematic clusters, highlighting the increasing scholarly contributions from post-Soviet nations, particularly over the last few years. The study illustrates how leading institutions and countries direct the academic discourse through their co-authorship networks and bibliographic coupling between Western and post-Soviet academic institutions.

The research provides a meta-analysis of existing studies to understand their content, authors, and research methods. The research identifies potential research areas that need further investigation, particularly regarding gendered minority experiences, religious communities, and health inequality. Future studies should consider two potential enhancements: expanding their dataset to include non-English and regional-language publications and integrating qualitative content analysis to enhance bibliometric findings.

The period from 2001 to 2025 was chosen for analysis because it contains structured bibliographic metadata in the Web of Science Core Collection. The lack of an indexed database restricts earlier scholarship's inclusion in large-scale bibliometric evaluation. The selected period shows how Soviet minority studies evolved into interdisciplinary research that became more globally connected. The emergence of clusters dedicated to digitalization, diaspora connectivity, and health outcomes demonstrates how research agendas have evolved to merge historical analysis with modern significance. Future research should expand on this study by incorporating pre-2000 literature from various archives while analyzing post-Soviet knowledge production trends.

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Г. Дадабаева, И. Ковалева

Ұмытылғандарды зерттеу: Кеңес Одағындағы азшылықтар туралы зерттеулердің библиометриялық талдауы

Мақалада 2001–2025 жылдар аралығында Кеңес Одағындағы этникалық азшылықтарға арналған ғылыми зерттеулерге кешенді библиометриялық талдау жүргізілген. Зерттеу Web of Science Core Collection деректер базасында индекстелген 484 рецензияланған мақалаларға негізделген, бұл соңғы онжылдықтарда құрылымдалған ғылыми метадеректердің қолжетімділігінің артуын және посткеңестік зерттеулерге деген қызығушылықтың өсуін көрсетеді. Жұмыстың негізгі мақсаты — осы пәнаралық зерттеу саласының тақырыптық бағыттарын, халықаралық ғылыми ынтымақтастық үлгілерін және интеллектуалдық құрылымын анықтау. Зерттеу барысында VOSviewer бағдарламасы қолданылып, негізгі сөздердің бірлесіп қолданылуы, авторлар арасындағы серіктестік желілері және библиографиялық байланыстар талданды. Деректер жиынтығы кілт сөздер мен авторлық аффилиациялардың бірізділігін қамтамасыз ету мақсатында алдын ала өңделіп, стандартталды. Бұл әдіс зерттеу тақырыптарын, авторлар және елдер арасындағы өзара байланыстарды жүйелі түрде визуализациялауға мүмкіндік береді. Нәтижесінде төрт негізгі тақырыптық кластер анықталды: (1) көші-қон, диаспора және сәйкестіктің өзгеруі, даму мен интеграция процестерін қамтиды; (2) мемлекеттік басқару, ұлтшылдық және азшылықтардың құқықтары, тіл саясаты мен этносаяси үдерістерге бағытталған; (3) қоғамдық денсаулық, демографиялық теңсіздік және әлеуметтік-экономикалық айырмашылықтар, халықтың әл-ауқаты мен демографиялық көрсеткіштеріндегі теңсіздіктерді сипаттайды; (4) Балтық елдеріне қатысты жергілікті зерттеулер, дін, білім беру және азшылықтарды интеграциялау мәселелерін қарастырады. Зерттеу нәтижелері ғылыми жарияланымдар санының тұрақты өсуін, әсіресе 2015 жылдан кейін айқын артқанын көрсетеді. АҚШ, Израиль, Ресей және Германия жетекші елдер ретінде анықталды, ал Украина, Эстония және Грузия сияқты посткеңестік мемлекеттерде зерттеу белсенділігі артып, халықаралық ғылыми желілерге интеграция күшейіп келеді. Сонымен қатар қосалқы автор және библиографиялық байланыстар талдауы әртүрлі елдердің ғылыми қауымдастықтары арасындағы тұрақты ынтымақтастық пен ортақ интеллектуалдық негіздерді көрсетеді. Жалпы алғанда, мақала зерттеу саласының тақырыптық құрылымын, географиялық таралуын және пәнаралық сипатын жүйелі түрде сипаттап, кеңестік және посткеңестік кеңістіктегі этникалық азшылықтарға қатысты ғылыми дискурстың дамуын тереңірек түсінуге үлес қосады.

Кілт сөздер: Кеңес Одағы, этникалық азшылықтар, библиометриялық талдау, посткеңестік зерттеулер, көші-қон, сәйкестік, этникалық тиістілік, академиялық желілер, VOSviewer, тарихнама.

Г. Дадабаева, И. Ковалева

Изучая забытых: библиометрический анализ исследований о меньшинствах в Советском Союзе

В статье представлен комплексный библиометрический анализ академических исследований, посвящённых этническим меньшинствам в Советском Союзе за период 2001–2025 гг. Исследование основано на 484 рецензируемых статьях, индексируемых в базе Web of Science Core Collection, что отражает расширение доступности структурированных научных метаданных и рост интереса к постсоветским исследованиям в последние десятилетия. Основной целью работы является выявление ключевых тематических направлений, моделей международного научного сотрудничества и интеллектуальной структуры данной междисциплинарной области. Анализ выполнен с использованием программы VOSviewer и включает методы библиометрического анализа, такие как совместная встречаемость ключевых слов, анализ сетей соавторства и библиографическое сцепление. Набор данных был предварительно очищен и стандартизирован с применением тезаурусного подхода для обеспечения согласованности ключевых слов и аффилиаций авторов. Это позволило визуализировать взаимосвязи между исследовательскими темами, авторами и странами. Результаты позволили выделить четыре основных тематических кластера: (1) миграция, диаспора и трансформация идентичности, включая процессы аккультурации и интеграции; (2) государственное управление, национализм и права меньшинств, с акцентом на языковую политику и этнополитические процессы; (3) общественное здоровье, демографическое неравенство и социально-экономические различия, отражающие диспропорции в уровне благополучия и демографических показателях; (4) локальные кейс-стади, преимущественно в странах Балтии, посвящённые вопросам религии, образования и интеграции меньшинств. Полученные результаты демонстрируют устойчивый рост научной активности, особенно после 2015 года, что свидетельствует о возрастающем глобальном интересе к проблематике советских меньшинств. Ведущими странами по количеству публикаций являются США, Израиль, Россия и Германия, тогда как Украина, Эстония и Грузия демонстрируют рост исследовательской активности и интеграцию в международные научные сети. Анализ соавторства и библиографического сцепления выявляет устойчивые транс-

национальные связи и общие интеллектуальные основания между национальными научными сообществами. Таким образом, статья представляет системный обзор исследований, раскрывает их тематическую структуру, географическое распределение и междисциплинарный характер, а также способствует более глубокому пониманию эволюции научного дискурса о меньшинствах в советском и постсоветском контексте.

Ключевые слова: Советский Союз, этнические меньшинства, библиометрический анализ, постсоветские исследования, миграция, идентичность, этничность, академические сети, VOSviewer, историография.

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