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THEMATIC AND CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE *JOURNAL OF WORLD ECONOMY (REVISTA DE ECONOMÍA MUNDIAL)* USING SCIMAT

ANÁLISIS TEMÁTICO Y CONCEPTUAL DE LA REVISTA DE ECONOMÍA MUNDIAL MEDIANTE SCIMAT

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ABSTRACT

This paper carries out a bibliometric study of the *Journal of World Economy (Revista de Economía Mundial)* for the period 2008 to 2021 using the SciMAT software, with the aim of discerning how the published research has evolved and the main areas of study have developed, as well as to indicate future lines that could be prioritized. The results obtained reveal that “economic growth” has been the journal’s main theme through the entire period and that “European Union” has been the basic area of research. At the same time, few articles have referred to highly topical issues such as the green transition of the world economy.

Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, Science Mapping Analysis, SciMAT, *Revista de Economía Mundial*.

RESUMEN

En este trabajo se realiza un estudio bibliométrico de la Revista Economía Mundial entre 2008 y 2021, empleando el software SciMAT, con el objetivo de conocer cómo ha evolucionado la investigación, las principales áreas de estudio desarrolladas y señalar posibles líneas futuras que puedan priorizarse. Los resultados obtenidos han permitido identificar como tema motor de estudio para todo el período: “economic growth” y como temática básica de investigación “European Union”. Sin embargo, son pocos los trabajos referidos a otros temas de gran actualidad como la transición verde de la economía mundial.

Palabras clave: análisis bibliométrico, Science Mapping Analysis, SciMAT, Revista Economía Mundial.

JEL Classification / Clasificación JEL: F0.

1. INTRODUCTION

Scientific journals are a major instrument for the dissemination and communication of scientific advances. Over recent decades, the evaluation of published scientific research has increased in relevance as a way of assessing the sector's performance and the resources allocated by society, and to provide scientists and scholars with feedback on their work (Van Leeuwen *et al.*, 2001). The practice of bibliometrics applies mathematical and statistical methods to scientific literature and to the authors who produce it, with the aim of objectively and rigorously examining and evaluating the scientific activity undertaken, revealing the evolutionary nuances experienced by a specific field or journal and shedding light on the knowledge developed and on emerging areas within that field or publication (Donth *et al.*, 2021; Callon *et al.*, 1983). For González-Valiente *et al.* (2021), two relevant procedures are typical in bibliometrics: performance analysis and Science Mapping Analysis. The first aims to evaluate agents (countries, universities, researchers) and the impacts of their activity on bibliographic databases. Science Mapping Analysis shows the structural and dynamic aspects of scientific research (Börner *et al.*, 2003), identifying thematic areas while establishing a frame of reference for researchers and future work.

The *Journal of World Economy* (*Revista de Economía Mundial*, or REM) is among the main scientific journals published in Spain and focused on the study and analysis of the global economic reality; it is included in the most important international indices, serving as a reference for evaluation of the curricula of researchers from Spain's universities. Created and largely financed by the World Economic Society (*Sociedad de Economía Mundial*, or SEM), the journal is Open Access, with an open license recognized by the Berlin Declaration (CCBY-CC), and it has received the Quality Seal of Scientific Journals from the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT), which recognizes the editorial and scientific quality of publications. In addition, its trajectory of more than 20 years has made the journal a reference source for researchers who deal with the various aspects that comprise international economic relations, the effects deriving therefrom, and the positive and negative externalities shaping their evolution. No detailed analysis of this journal had been undertaken before the present work.

The objective of this research is to carry out a study of the performance of the *Journal of World Economy* and its authors and their production, along with a Science Mapping Analysis to research the evolution of the many issues

addressed in that publication, including aspects of composition, identifying and visualizing the main thematic areas appearing between 2008 (when this journal was first indexed in the Journal Citation Report) and 2021 (the most recent year for which information was available when this research commenced). The work undertaken is in line with that of López-Robles *et al.* (2019), González-Alcaide *et al.* (2021), and López-Robles *et al.* (2021), all of which focused on in-depth evaluation of a certain scientific publication.

This document is comprised of four sections, including this Introduction. The following section details the methodology and indicators used in this research. The third section presents the results obtained. Finally, the main conclusions derived from the study are collected in section four.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1. DATA

Analysis is performed using the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), a database produced by Clarivate Analytics that forms part of the Web of Science Core Collection. The SSCI has since 1956 indexed and evaluated those international scientific publications with the greatest impact in each thematic area, providing bibliometric information and citation analysis in the Social Sciences for some 2,000 journals. The search term employed within the database was “Revista de Economía Mundial”, and a total of 707 results were obtained, 523 of which correspond to the period 2008-2021; these have been distributed by type of document, as shown in Table 1.

First, the citations received by each publication were subjected to analysis. Second, all data was downloaded in plain text format and entered into the SciMAT software to create a knowledge-base and permit Science Mapping Analysis to be performed. In this case, it was decided to carry out analysis for two consecutive periods (2008-2014 and 2015-2021) to generate a sufficient mass of publications for more detailed study (Cobo *et al.*, 2012). The date of data collection was August 31, 2022.

TABLE 1. TYPES OF PUBLICATIONS IN THE REM, ACCORDING TO SSCI

Type of publications	Number of publications (N = 523)	
	n	%
Article	398	76.10
Article; Proceedings Paper	1	0.19
Biographical	6	1.15
Book Review	70	13.38
Editorial Material	41	7.84
Review	7	1.34
Total	523	100.00

Source: Web of Science. Own elaboration.



To improve and ensure the quality of the data processed, a technique was applied in which concepts having the same meaning or representing the same topic were reviewed and grouped (for example, “Economic-Reforms”, “Economic-Reform”, and “Economic Reform” were grouped together as “Economic Reforms”), while terms with an ambiguous meaning were removed.

2.2. METHODOLOGY

This work falls within the field of bibliometric performance analysis, in accordance with Glenisson *et al.* (2005) and Moed (2011), and it provides a longitudinal study that follows the case study as a research technique. The bibliometric approach has been based on two elements: i) analysis of performance indicators, considering the production and impact of authors and publications; and ii) study of the evolution of the journal through Science Mapping Analysis, spatially representing the interrelation between articles and topics, which further facilitates teaching, understanding, and demonstrating complex relationships between topics of interest for the development of a scientific field (Cobo *et al.*, 2012).

As regards the performance of organizations and authorship, the journal's publications have been compiled and analyzed along with the bibliographic information available in the SSCI database of the Web of Science. This portion of the analysis was completed by applying the H-index and H-Classics scores (Hirsch, 2010; Martínez *et al.*, 2014). For analysis of the evolution of the journal, the SciMAT bibliometric software was used; distinct from other software, this allows the evaluation of performance in a subject or area of knowledge of a set of publications, as well as the performance of a single scientific journal. The stages taken under this approach are: i) detection of the topics covered by the research field through ‘co-word analysis’ (Börner *et al.*, 2003); ii) visualization of the research topics and their thematic networks (Callon *et al.*, 2003; Van Eck & Waltman, 2009); iii) analysis of the evolution of the themes through the different periods studied, in order to detect the main general thematic areas of the research field and their interactions (Kandylas *et al.*, 2010; Rosvall & Bergstrom, 2010); and iv) performance analysis of the different periods, themes, and thematic areas through quantitative and impact measures (Cobo *et al.*, 2012).

The co-word analysis for two-dimensional visualization (Strategy Diagram), obtains groups of keywords and their interconnections (Lopez-Robles *et al.*, 2021), and these groups are considered ‘topics’. Each research topic is characterized by two parameters (with centrality on the *x*-axis and density on the *y*-axis). The measure of these two parameters can be used to classify subjects into four groups or quadrants, as represented in Figure 1A.

Topics in the upper right quadrant (QI) are highly developed and relevant to knowledge in the scientific field. These are called ‘motor topics’ of the scientific specialty, as they present both strong centrality and density, also being externally related to concepts applicable to other topics. Topics in the

FIGURE 1A. STRATEGIC DIAGRAM

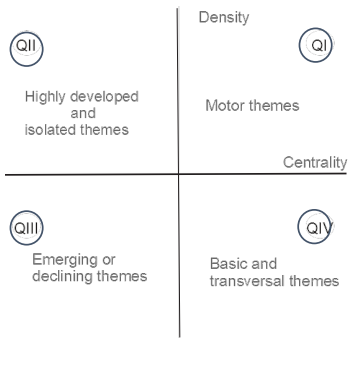
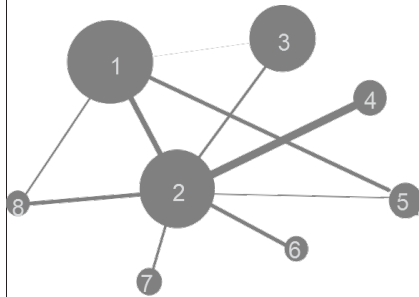


FIGURE 1B. THEMATIC NETWORK



Source: Own elaboration from Cobo et al. (2012).

upper left quadrant (QII), called ‘peripherals’, maintain well-developed internal ties, but their external ties are marginal in the overall development of the scientific field. The themes of the lower left quadrant (QIII) are characterized by their low centrality and density, representing ‘declining’ or ‘emerging’ themes (depending on the case). Finally, the themes in the right lower quadrant (QIV), identified as ‘basic and transversal’, are important for the field of research; these are of low density but high centrality. It should be noted that the motor, basic, and transversal issues signal the development and consolidation of a field of knowledge.

In each theme, the keywords and their interconnections draw a thematic network. This is labeled using the name of the most significant keyword in the associated topic (usually identified by its core keyword). Figure 1B visualizes several keywords that are interconnected, in which the volume of the spheres is proportional to the number of documents corresponding to each keyword, and the thickness of the link between two spheres (i, j) is proportional to the equivalence index (e_{ij}) (Cobo et al., 2012).

In analysis of the evolution of the topics covered, Figure 2A graphically presents the process followed. In the first place, the data are divided into two consecutive study periods (period 1 and period 2), with three themes detected in the first and four themes in the second (along with their associated thematic networks). Solid lines (lines 1 and 2) mean that the linked topics share the same name: both topics are tagged with the same keywords, or one topic’s tag is part of the other topic (topic name E {topic links}). A dotted line (line 3) means that topics share elements other than the topic name (topic name E / {topic links}). The thickness of a linking line is proportional to the inclusion index, and the volume of a sphere is proportional to the number of published documents associated with each topic (other measures could be citations). The vertical lines separate the different periods.



FIGURE 2A. THEMATIC EVOLUTION

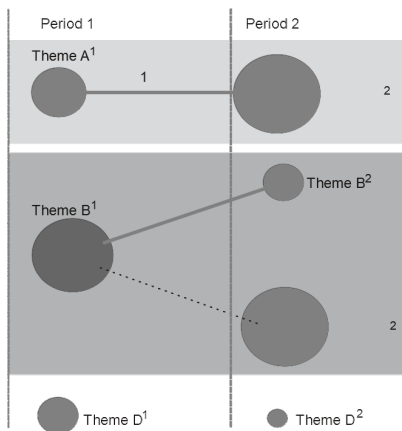
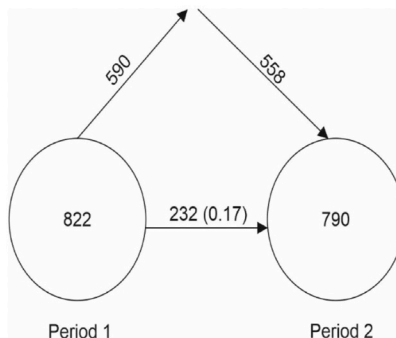


FIGURE 2B. STABILITY BETWEEN PERIODS



Source: Own elaboration.

To conduct a performance analysis of the different periods, themes, and thematic areas through quantitative and impact measures, it is important to take into account the general overlap between two consecutive periods. This can be measured through the Stability Index (Henderson *et al.*, 2009; Small, 1977), the equation for which is similar to that of the Jaccard Index ($\text{items}_{ij} / (\text{items}_i + \text{items}_j - \text{items}_{ij})$) for the case of two consecutive periods (Braam *et al.*, 1991). In general, the overlap measures the number of keywords shared between successive sub-periods. To graphically depict “stability” through the different periods, the proposal here followed was that of Price and Gursej (1976), represented in Figure 2B. The circles represent the periods and their number of associated keywords. The horizontal arrow represents the number of keywords shared by both periods, and the similarity index between them is given in parentheses. The top incoming arrow represents the number of new keywords in period 2, and the top outgoing arrow represents keywords that are present in period 1 but not in period 2.

3. BIBLIOMETRIC PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS: AUTHORSHIP AND PRODUCTION

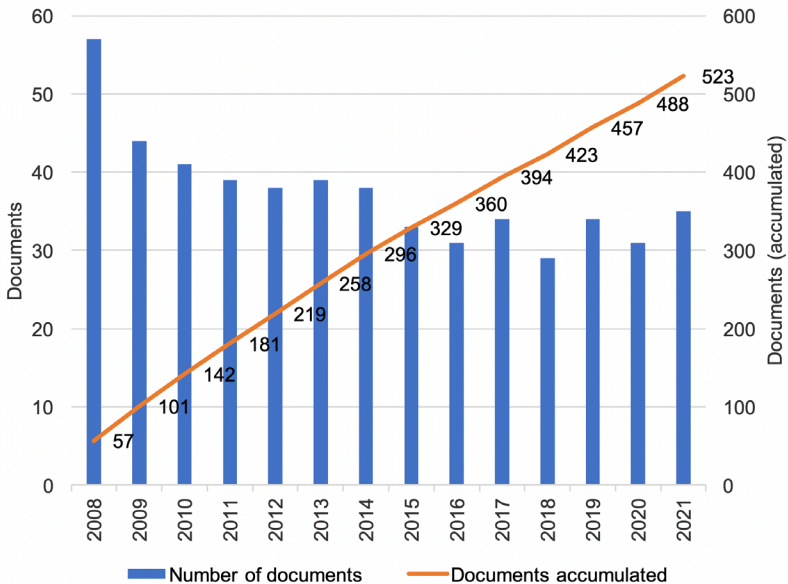
This section assesses the bibliometric performance of the *Journal of World Economy* (REM) in terms of publication, citations, and impact. The bibliometric performance analysis is structured into four sections: i) production and impact of published documents; ii) production by authors, countries, organizations, and funding agencies; iii) analysis of H-Classics; and iv) study of the content of the publications through Science Mapping Analysis.

3.1. PUBLICATIONS AND CITATIONS

In 2008, the REM began to be indexed in the SSCI database, and in June 2009 it appeared for the first time in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR), reaching an impact factor of 0.5 in 2022. Since then, it has maintained constant publication activity and growth in the number of documents, reaching a total of 523 in 2021, as represented in Figure 3. Overall, a downward trend in annual production is observed, with a minimum in 2016 of only 29 published works (at 5.54% of total), compared with 57 in 2008, or 44 in 2009. In recent years, however, the trajectory has been slightly upward, with 34, 33, and 35 documents in 2019, 2020, and 2021, respectively.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of citations received per year for the defined time period, with the number of references obtained totaling 725, or 654 after discounting self-citations. According to the information provided by the SSCI, the average number of citations per article is 1.39. When interpreting these data, it should be taken into account that, as noted by Wang (2013), a publication needs between three and seven years to reach its maximum point of citations due to the window of time that exists between its edition and its use as a reference; thus the most referenced publications are generally those registered in previous years. In any case, the strong results in productivity for

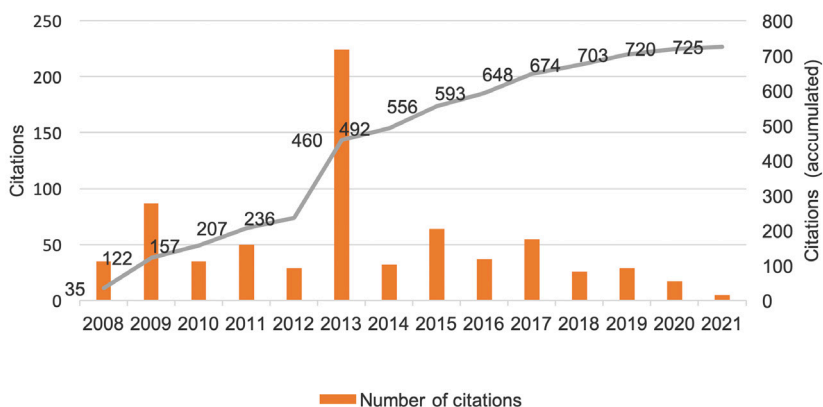
FIGURE 3. ANNUAL DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLICATIONS IN THE REM (2008-2021)



Source: Web of Science.



FIGURE 4. ANNUAL DISTRIBUTION OF CITATIONS IN THE REM (2008-2021)



Source: Web of Science.

the year 2013 (with 224 references, or 63.44% of the total) are worthy of further inquiry.

3.2. THE MOST PRODUCTIVE AUTHORS AND ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Table 2 shows the most productive authors in the 2008-2021 period as a whole, or those publishing three or more documents in the REM (0.5% of total). Overall, the data reveal that the journal presents a high degree of dissemination in terms of signatories, with more than 82% having published less than three articles, and this contributes to the variety of topics covered and approaches addressed. However, in terms of productivity, two authors stand out: De Paz Bañez and Aceytuno, with 14 works each; at some distance behind these are signatories with seven, six, and five publications (including Berzosa, Nieto, Ortíz, Sequeiros, Larru, Macias, and Unceta), each responsible for just over 1% of the total.

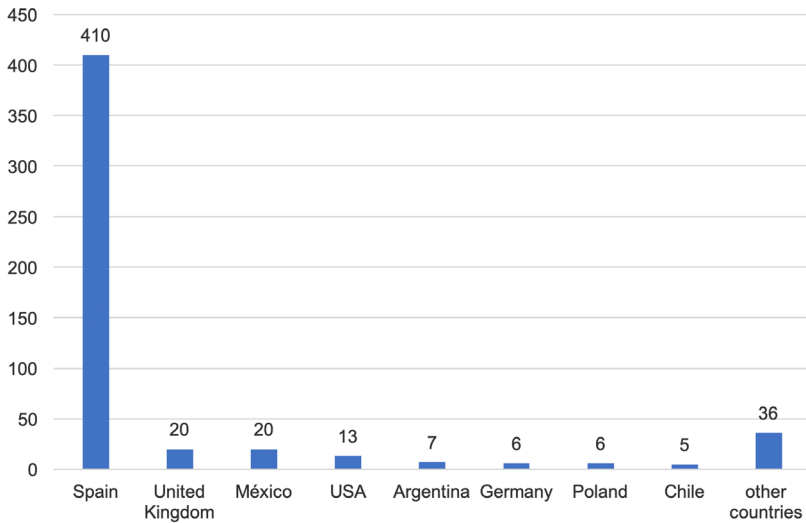
Figure 5 represents the countries of origin of the researchers who appeared as the first signatory in a published REM article. The data show a strong national character, with more than 400 papers by scientists working at universities and research centers located in Spain. Among other European countries, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Poland stand out with 20 and 6 publications respectively. Countries in the Americas present significant participation – an aggregate volume of 59 papers and a share in the total of 11.28%, with Mexico and the United States contributing most to these figures. Elsewhere, Asia, Africa, and Oceania register low participation, not exceeding 1.5% of the

TABLE 2. THE MOST PRODUCTIVE AUTHORS IN THE REM (2008-2021)

Publications (N=523)		
Number	% of Total	Authors
14	2.68	De Paz Bañez, M.
14	2.68	Aceytuno, M.
7	1.34	Berzosa, C.
6	1.15	Nieto, J
6	1.15	Ortiz, F.R.
6	1.15	Sequeiros, J.
5	0.96	Larru, J.
5	0.96	Macias, A.
5	0.96	Unceta, K.
4	0.76	Benitez-Aurioles, B.
4	0.76	Olivie, I.
4	0.76	Vivel, M.
3	0.57	Asensio, M.J.
3	0.57	Lucena, J.
3	0.57	Guardiola, J.
3	0.57	Lado-Sestayo, R.
421	82.41	Rest of authors

Source: Web of Science. Own elaboration.

FIGURE 5. MAIN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF REM PUBLICATIONS (2008-2021)



Source: Web of Science.



total, which may have conditioned the journal's focus on issues related to the world economy.

Table 3 presents the most productive organizations (both Spanish and foreign) represented in the REM, with more than five publications each between 2008 and 2021 (or 1% of the total). Two aspects stand out in analysis. First is the predominance of Spanish institutions, which represent 90.47% of the aggregate of the most productive organizations. Among foreign universities and research centers, ten had an article published in the REM during the period of observation. Second, the relative concentration among Spanish universities is surprising, with researchers from only 33 receiving publications from nationwide total of 77 universities in 2022 (BBVA, 2023).

TABLE 3. THE MOST PRODUCTIVE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REM (2008-2021)

Publications (N=523)	Institution
61	Complutense University of Madrid
49	University of Huelva
30	University of Sevilla
24	Autonomous University of Madrid
24	University of the Basque Country
22	University of Santiago de Compostela
14	University of Cantabria
14	University of A Coruña
14	University of Málaga
13	University of Castilla-La Mancha
12	University of Barcelona
13	University of Oviedo
11	University of Granada
10	San Pablo CEU University
10	University of Alcalá
10	University of Zaragoza
9	University of Jaén
9	University of Valencia
8	National Autonomous University of Mexico
5	University of León
7	National University of Distance Education (UNED)
6	University of Deusto
5	Rey Juan Carlos University
5	Polytechnic University of Valencia
5	University of London

Source: Web of Science.

3.4. ANALYSIS OF THE AUTHORS AND THE MOST CITED PUBLICATIONS

Table 4 presents in descending order those authors who appeared as first signatory and received more than five citations (1% of the total) during the period analyzed, along with the institution to which they belonged and the language of publication. The data show a high concentration of references in a small number of researchers, who may be said to represent the main protagonists of the journal's impact. Sixteen authors were responsible for 52% of the total citations obtained: Liñán, in a prominent position with 178, Fernández with 39, and Romero with 22. Second, the predominance of articles in English is very significant, with the most cited researchers having chosen that language for presentation of their results. Third, in relative terms, the weight of scientists from institutions outside Spain is surprising, with ten from a total of 23 (43.47%) belonging to universities and research centers outside Spain. This phenomenon may favor diffusion of the journal due to the dissemination-effect of foreign signatories among networks of contacts.

TABLE 4. AUTHORS WITH MORE THAN 5 CITATIONS (2008-2021)

No. of citations	%	Author, first signatory	Institution of first signatory	Language of publication
178	24.55	Liñán, F	U. of Sevilla	English
39	5.38	Fernández, J.	U. of Sevilla	English
22	3.03	Romero, I.	U. of Sevilla	English
14	1.93	Brown, A.	U. of Leeds	English
14	1.93	Gasparini, L	U. Nacional of La Plata	English
13	1.79	Addabbo, T.	Università degli Studi di Moofna e Reggio Emilia	English
13	1.79	Hidalgo, A.L.	U. of Huelva	Spanish
12	1.66	Guzman, J	U. of Sevilla	Spanish
12	1.66	Holgado, M.D.M.	U. of Granada	English
11	1.52	Choi, A.	U. of Barcelona e	English
10	1.38	Delgado, F.J.	U. of Oviedo	English
9	1.24	Bonizzi, B.	U. of Winchester	English
8	1.10	Ferreiro, J.	U. of the Basque Country	English
8	1.10	Giménez, G.	U. of Zaragoza	English
8	1.10	Jaén, I.	U. of Sevilla	Spanish
8	1.10	Muringani, J.	U. of Stavanger	English
7	0.97	Brikci, N.	Save the Children United Kingdom	English

Source: Web of Science.

Analysis of the most cited publications was conducted through the H-index scores (Hirsch, 2010) obtained during consultation of the SSCI for the REM journal, resulting in a value of 11. Using this value as a reference, the most

relevant publications are identified and their titles are presented (in the original language) in Table 5, also indicating authorship, type of publication, and number of citations registered in the Web of Science.

TABLE 5. H-CLASSICS FOR REM

Order	Title (authors, year of publication)	First author affiliation	Type of document	Citations
1	British and Spanish entrepreneurial intentions: a comparative study (Liñan <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	Univ. of Sevilla	Article	122
2	Necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship: the mediating effect of culture (Fernández <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	Univ. of Sevilla	Article	56
3	Cognitive aspects of potential entrepreneurs in Southern and Northern Europe: an analysis using GEM-DATA (Fernández <i>et al.</i> , 2009)	Univ. of Sevilla	Article	39
4	Fragmentation and complexity: analysing structural change in the Chicago regional economy (Romero <i>et al.</i> , 2009)	Univ. of Sevilla	Article	22
5	The extent and variegation of financialisation in Europe: a preliminary analysis (Brown <i>et al.</i> , 2017)	Univ. of Leeds	Article	14
6	Chronicle of a deceleration foretold: income inequality in Latin America in the 2010s (Gasparini <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	National Univ. of La Plata	Article	14
7	Gender differences in labor force participation rates in Spain and Italy in the great recession (Addabbo <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	Univ. di Modena e Reggio Emilia	Article	13
8	Political economy of development the retrospective construction of an academic branch (Hidalgo, 2011)	Univ. of Huelva	Article	13
9	Behavior of the woman entrepreneur: a global perspective (Guzman & Rodríguez, 2008)	Univ. of Sevilla	Article	12
10	A synthetic indicator to measure the economic and social cohesion of the regions of Spain and Portugal (Holgado <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	Univ. of Granada	Article	12
11	Predictors and effects of grade repetition (Choi <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	Univ. of Barcelona	Article	11

Source: Web of Science.

During the period analyzed, eleven articles were registered with 328 citations (including self-citations) and 317 without. According to the SSCI, the average number of citations per article was 29.8. Further examining this information, it becomes evident that some articles were retained as references beyond the seven-year period, suggesting that these publications form part of the 'core' of the REM (Wang, 2013). Regarding language, 100% of the most cited papers published in the journal were in English. Finally, in almost all cases, this research was carried out in collaboration between two or more signatories, favoring the complementarity and reliability of the results achieved.

3.5. ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION MAP OF THE REM

3.5.1. DISPLAY OF THE TOPICS

In order to visualize and analyze the evolution of the main themes in the REM, the data was divided into two consecutive periods: 2008-2014 and 2015-2021.

PERIOD 2008-2014

In this period, three ‘motor themes’ of high density and centrality stand out; these comprise the first quadrant (QI) and include three questions about the world economy: the financial crisis of 2008 and its causes and effects; entrepreneurship as a method of confronting unemployment in a crisis situation; and microcredits as an instrument for access to financing by the most disadvantaged. Works that analyze the causes of the 2008 financial crisis (Verela & Verela, 2008; Calvo, 2008; Alonso *et al.*, 2011) were complemented by others dealing with: its effects on the evolution of the currency exchange rate (Cerón, 2010); public deficits, indebtedness, and anti-crisis actions applied (Rodríguez, 2010); negative consequences on the well-being of citizens (Rodríguez, 2011); and the advance of European monetary integration (Rodríguez, 2013; Steinberg & de Molina, 2012), especially as regards the public debt market (Alonso & Cendejas, 2012).

Entrepreneurship, the second driving theme, considers diverse aspects of this economic practice as a strategy for dealing with unemployment. Among the issues analyzed, the study of education stands out as a determining factor in the entrepreneurial activity of university students (Fayolle & Toutain, 2013); the contextualization of university spin-offs (Aceytuno & Cáceres, 2009); support for the creation of spin-off entities in universities of the United Kingdom and Spain (Beraza & Rodríguez, 2014); and the relationship between entrepreneurship and sociodemographic and/or cultural factors (Álvarez & Valencia, 2008; Liñán *et al.*, 2013; Jaén *et al.*, 2013) and innovation (Cáceres & Aceytuno, 2008). Other aspects analyzed include self-employment across the different stages of the economic cycle (Congregado *et al.*, 2012; Carmona *et al.*, 2015) and the influence of European host economies on the self-employment of immigrants (Ruiz & García, 2013). Microcredits as an instrument for financing entrepreneurial activity constitutes the third theme, mostly comprised of various works within a special section of issue No. 19 of the journal. Also in this area are studies by: Gutierrez and Goitoso (2011) on the variables associated with the social and financial objectives of microfinance institutions; Gutierrez and Unceta (2009) assessing the role of microfinance as an instrument of access to financial services for the poorest populations; Marbán (2008) on microfinance in India; and others.

The second quadrant (QII) brings together peripheral topics of high density, including issues around “international organizations”, particular countries, and “low-income countries” as a group. Significant among the published works on

international organizations are those referring to the OECD; in 2011, when that institution celebrated its 50th anniversary, the journal dedicated a special section (in issue No. 28) to the OECD, coordinated by Clifton and Díaz-Fuentes. That issue of the REM featured participation from the institution's then-Secretary General, Angel Gurría, who together with other academics and researchers with professional experience in the subject critically examined from diverse perspectives the nature, approach, scope, and limitations of the OECD in the global economic context (Nieto, 2011; West, 2011; Kellow & Carroll, 2011; Clifton & Díaz-Fuentes, 2011). Other works that analyzed aspects related to activity developed or promoted by the OECD included those by González-Moralejo and García (2010) and Portela and Neira (2012). The second cluster (particular countries) presents a wide diversity of aspects covered, with the common denominator of focus on a specific national economy. Among the main issues: the sustainability of the Spanish economy's current account (Donoso & Martín, 2012), the U.S. economy during the Bush and Reagan years (Aguado, 2008), and the impact of the financial crisis in Brazil (Paiva, 2009). Finally, the third cluster within QII refers to low-income countries, with studies on the measurement of well-being (Cuenca & Rodríguez, 2010), debt sustainability (Macías, 2010), and cooperation in international finance (Macías, 2011).

The third quadrant (QIII) is composed mostly of 'declining' topics, including divergent themes like "monetary policy" and "poverty". Works focusing on actions by monetary authorities – and specifically the European Central Bank – in response to the 2008 financial crisis form the first aggregate, including (among others) articles by González-Páramo (2012), Sánchez and Maza (2013), and Escario (2011), which offers an empirical overview of the link between public deficits, monetary growth, and inflation. As regards the cluster on poverty – a real concern of certain urgency, affecting over 10% of the world population – among the papers examining aspects of this topic were those appearing in a special section of issue No. 27, which focused on Africa, the continent with the largest volume of population living below the poverty line, with less than \$1.90/day. Other relevant works included research dealing with the measurement of poverty (Pérez, 2008; Beamonte *et al.*, 2013), the relationship between education and poverty (Sianes *et al.*, 2014), and Fernández *et al.* (2013) on poverty and recession in the euro area.

Trade relations between countries can facilitate productive specialization and contribute to the growth of production. Among the basic and transversal themes appearing in the fourth quadrant (QIV) are "international trade", the "European Union" (representing the most advanced integration process in the world), and "economic growth". In research dealing with the first of these issues, some articles focus on institutional aspects such as agreements around intellectual property rights (TRIPS plus) (Araujo *et al.*, 2008) or the accession of Vietnam to the WTO (Olivieri & Steinberg, 2014), while others focus on export and import flows (Curzel, 2010; Yagüe & March, 2010; Fujii, 2010). Within the European Union, the second cluster, the real and financial links between partner countries are intensified and deepened, and this group features more than 30

papers covering a wide variety of aspects such as expansion of the EU (Nieto, 2009), fiscal pressures, and the convergence of fiscal policies in EU countries (Delgado & Presno, 2010). Nonetheless, the aggregate that accumulates the most research here is “economic growth”, with works addressing aspects as diverse as financing and development cooperation – to which a large part of issue No. 36 is devoted (Belga & Boni, 2014; Macías *et al.*, 2014; Martínez & Zabala, 2014, Muñoz & Torres, 2014; Sianes & Ortega, 2014; Unceta *et al.*, 2014). Also notable are works that analyze implicit inequality in the economic growth of countries (Choi, 2010).

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In the second period, the QI quadrant (high density and centrality) groups together three themes: first, “economic growth”, the most important in terms of the number of works, and which is found to have evolved from QIV to QI over time; also, not identified in the previous period, are the concepts “market” and “test”. In the 21 issues of the Journal published between 2015 and 2021, many and varied aspects related to economic growth were covered; among the most cited publications in this block are Muringani *et al.* (2019), which analyzes the relationship between the quality of decentralized governments and economic growth, and Giménez *et al.* (2015), which deals with the influence of human capital on increases in production and innovation. Works focused on the study of financial markets, the labor market, and international goods and services markets together compose the “market” cluster, with studies including: Brown *et al.* (2017) and Bonizzi and Churchill (2017), referring to finance; Addabbo *et al.* (2015), analyzing gender differences in the labor market; Prieto (2017) on geographic labor mobility; and works examining the activity of companies in the international market, including Bajo-Rubio and Berke (2018) and Carril and Milgram (2018). The third cluster of this quadrant, brought together under the term “test”, results from changes over recent decades to the methodologies applied in analysis of the world economy in its many aspects, where statistical testing related to hypotheses and econometric models has come to predominate. This area includes among other works the research by Rodríguez *et al.* (2020), who use multilevel modelling to analyze the effect of good governance on business creation, and that by Jordá-Borrell *et al.* (2018), which (based on PLS-SEM modelling) researches the factors influencing the adoption of ICT innovations in companies.

The second quadrant contains two heterogeneous clusters: “debt” and “trade”. The first, with almost 20 works, includes those that analyze the high level of indebtedness that countries generally present and, given that situation, the need to increase public spending when dealing with the COVID-19 crisis (Albert & Tercero-Lucas, 2020; Ruiz, 2020; Cruz *et al.*, 2020; Carrasco & Tovar-García, 2020). Other studies in this block analyze the effect of the monetary policy applied during the 2008 crisis on the profitability of sovereign debt (Borralló & Hierro, 2015), and how development aid influences the debt sustainability of countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Mongongo *et al.*, 2019).

The second cluster, trade, includes papers on foreign trade flows, especially those that study global value chains (García & Solís, 2014; Lladós *et al.*, 2018; Martí & Puerta, 2019; Campos-Romero, & Rodil-Marzábal, 2020; Chema & Noguera, 2020) but also those focusing on intra-European trade (Rodil *et al.*, 2015; Bolera *et al.*, 2019), offshoring processes (Martínez & Merino, 2019), and exports of knowledge-intensive services (Dávila *et al.*, 2014).

The third quadrant contains a single cluster: “financial crisis”, with more than 15 publications including: García-Arias *et al.* (2017) and Rodríguez (2016) on the crisis in the euro zone; Otero-Iglesias *et al.* (2017) on the determinants of Spain’s financial crisis; and Gallego and Arahuetes (2019) on the macroprudential and fiscal measures taken by a sample of ten advanced economies, before and after the recent international financial crisis.

Finally, two clusters constitute quadrant QIV in the second period: a basic topic around EU issues, as in the previous period, and another focused on Latin America. The works on the EU are very numerous (totaling 50) and cover aspects as diverse as economic and social cohesion in the regions of Spain and Portugal (Holgado *et al.*, 2019), financing problems of the EU (Nölke, 2017), and the role of Russia as a strategic partner to the EU (Podadera & Garashchok, 2019). In the cluster on Latin America, most notable are works on inequality and poverty, including those appearing in the special section of issue No. 43 (Gasparini *et al.*, 2016; Junquera, 2016; Solimano, 2016; Moreno *et al.*, 2016).

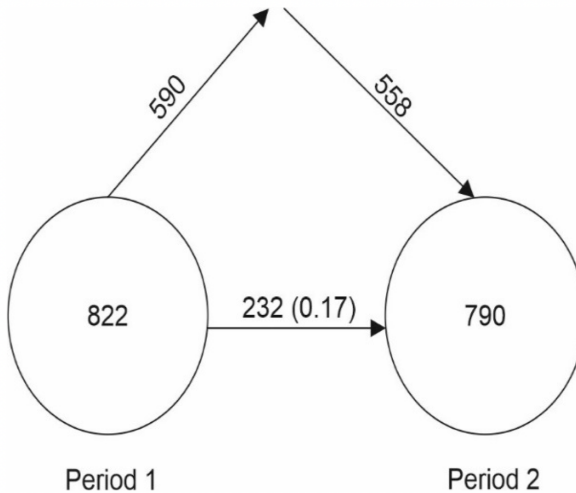
3.5.2. EVOLUTION OF THE TOPICS IN THE *REVISTA DE ECONOMÍA MUNDIAL*

This sub-section studies the thematic evolution of the REM’s overall field of research by way of the topics covered. First, analysis is made of the evolution of the number of words, and the amount of those shared by published works across the different periods. Journal terminology evolves over time, and the changing contents of articles are expressed by changes in the descriptive keywords used. New themes constantly arise with their associated keywords while others disappear.

Figure 6 shows the evolution of keywords in the REM, mapped in the style of Soilla and Suha Gürsey (1975). The circles symbolize the two periods, with the number of keywords from each period represented inside. The arrow connecting the periods expresses the number of keywords shared between them, while the similarity index (overlapping fraction) is shown in parentheses. The top outgoing arrow responds to keywords that are no longer present (*i.e.*, discontinued) in the subsequent period, and the top incoming arrow represents the number of new keywords in the period. In the period 2008-2014, there are 822 keywords, 232 of which persist into the next period studied (2015-2021). The similarity index between the first and second periods is 0.17.

Numbers of keywords varied throughout the two time periods, and the number of keywords shared by both periods varied by 32 between the first and second periods. This means that the REM consolidates its terminology.

FIGURE 6. OVERLAPPING FRACTIONS (INCOMING AND OUTGOING KEYWORDS BETWEEN SUCCESSIVE PERIODS)



Source: SciMAT software and WoS database.

On the other hand, new keywords entering into use in the second period numbered 558.

Following analysis of the keywords, the thematic evolution of the journal's field of research was examined by way of the thematic areas covered, as represented in Figure 7. In the diagram, solid lines indicate linked topics that share a name (where both topics have the same name, or else the name of one forms part of the other). A dotted line means that the themes share elements other than the name. The thickness of the edge is proportional to the inclusion index score, and sphere volume is proportional to the number of published articles pertaining to each topic.

In relation to the evolution of the REM, it is observed that the publication dealt quite frequently with the topic of "economic growth" in both in the first and second periods, through issues such as income inequality, economic policies, productivity, increasing returns, development, and demand. A second block focused on the European Union, initially through topics such as the welfare state, convergence, integration, and research methodologies, represented by the tests considered. In the second period, these themes evolved toward issues related to innovation, social exclusion, government, financing, regional disparity, and quality of life. The third and penultimate block featured articles related to debt, the financial crisis, and monetary policy; finally, a fourth block was related to trade – focused in the first period (2008 to 2014) on institutional aspects and merchandise flows between countries, then evolving in

FIGURE 7. THEMATIC EVOLUTION OF THE REM



Source: SciMAT software and WoS database.

the second period (2015 to 2021) into questions of value chains, globalization, productivity, and relocation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Bibliometric analysis is a scientific method that has gained popularity in recent years, permitting in this case a retrospective study of documents published in the *Journal of World Economy (Revista de Economía Mundial, or REM)* between 2008 and 2021 – years in which the journal was indexed in

the SSCI. Evaluation of a large volume of data on published research, along with Science Mapping Analysis based on the SciMAT software for bibliometric analysis, has produced some interesting conclusions around the performance of the journal as well as certain structural and dynamic aspects that determined its contents over the time period considered.

In the overall period analyzed, the REM published 523 documents receiving 725 citations (according to the SSCI database of the Web of Science), with the most productive authors being De Paz Bañez, Aceytuno, Berzosa, Nieto, Ortíz, Sequeiros, Larru, Macía, and Unceta, each with a share equal to or greater than 1% of the total. At the same time, the most cited articles (with more than 20 citations each) were by Liñán, Fernández, Romero, Brown, Gasparine, Addabbo, Hidalgo, Cuevas, Molina, Choi, and Delgado. Therefore, no coincidence was found between the most productive and the most cited researchers. In general, works published in English acquired the highest number of citations.

The Spanish organizations registering the highest rates of publication in the REM were the Complutense University of Madrid, the University of Huelva, the University of Seville, the Autonomous University of Madrid, the University of the Basque Country, the University of Santiago de Compostela, the University of Cantabria, the University of A Coruña, and the University of Malaga, each with more than ten research articles in the time period considered. At the international level, the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the University of London, the National Polytechnic Institute (Mexico), the Poznan University of Economics & Business (Poland), and the University of the Republic (Uruguay) stand out. Taken together, the data warn of certain concentration in the geographical origins of these institutions; it would be worthwhile for the journal to expand its spatial dispersion by making advances in the publication of research results from a greater number of institutions, both national and international.

In terms of intellectual structure, the topics most relevant to the nucleus of the journal's area of knowledge are those classified as 'motor' and 'basic'. Between 2008 and 2014, the terms "crisis", "entrepreneurship", and "microcredits", were all driving themes, alongside the basic themes "European Union", "economic growth", and "trade". In the subsequent period, between 2015 and 2021, the main motor themes discovered were "test" (as a part of a methodology for empirical analysis), "market", and "economic growth", while the main basic themes were "European Union" and "Latin America". Clearly, the two main themes from these two areas that helped to inform the identity of the REM during this overall period were "European Union" and "economic growth", together reaching a total of 209 articles, or 39.96% of all published documents. At the same time, in the evolution of the topics addressed by the journal, a certain bias was detected toward concentration of the above-mentioned aspects; contrary to trends observed in other international journals, relatively few documents focused on contemporary issues such as the circular economy, the effects of climate change on the productive activity of the world

economy, the green transition, or achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Finally, it should be noted that while bibliometric analysis is an effective method for summarizing and synthesizing a body of literature, it is not exempt from limitations. Moreover, the data here analyzed were obtained from the Web of Science, which has its own limitations associated with availability of information; this database has incomplete coverage and shows a clear bias in favor of the English language, being dominated by North American publications, which conditions the calculation of the impact index. Additionally, assessment of the quality of a publication by way of this index alone (and failing to take into account the opinions of specialists in the field) represents in itself a significant simplification. Nevertheless, this analysis may be considered useful as a reference for building research agendas and for its specific assessment of the evolution of the performance of the *Journal of World Economy* in recent years.

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