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Legal framework, public health and economic environment in Latin American Countries in the context of COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract---A documentary review was carried out on the production and publication of research papers related to the study of the legal framework, public health and economic environment in the context of COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America. The purpose of the bibliometric analysis proposed in this document is to know the main characteristics of the volume of publications registered in Scopus database during the period 2020-2021 in Latin American countries, achieving the identification of 350 publications. The information provided by this platform was organized by means of tables and figures, categorizing the information by year of publication, country of origin, area of knowledge and type of publication. Once these characteristics were described, a qualitative analysis was performed in relation to the position of different authors on the proposed topic. Among the main findings of this research, it was found that Brazil, with 197 publications, was the Latin American country with the highest scientific production. The area of knowledge that made the greatest contribution to the construction of bibliographic material referring to the study of the legal framework, public health and the economic environment during the COVID-19 pandemic was the social sciences, with 145 published documents; and the type of publication that was most used during the period indicated above was the journal article, which represented 79% of the total scientific production.

Keywords---Legal Framework, Public Health, Economic Environment, COVID-19.

Introduction

In March 2020, the World Health Organization decreed the pandemic generated by the rapid growth in the number of people infected by the COVID-19 disease, originated in China and causing great uncertainty in world markets and the economy of all countries, affecting multiple sectors of the economy (Inter-

American Development Bank, 2020). According to economic analysts, the current economic crisis affecting the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) could experience worse levels than those recorded by the economic crisis overcome in 2008 and 2009, as stated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2020, even worse than the consequences of the Great Depression in the 1930s, generated in the United States due to the fall of the New York stock market (Deza et al., 2020).

In the midst of this crisis, fundamental rights have been violated, thus evidencing a great gap of social inequality in the midst of which communities have less access to elements such as electronic devices, Internet connectivity, among others. In this context, coverage in health and education has been hindered, mainly since these rights went from being attended in person to remote or virtual, in response to the social distancing measures ordered by governments as a prevention against the increase in cases of contagion and death by COVID-19. And also, there has been a difficult access to adequate food due to the scarcity of economic resources, thus undermining food security to ensure the ideal supply of a balanced diet in each household (Vigevano, 2021). Therefore, in Latin America and the Caribbean, international organizations such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) pronounced themselves in cases in which the policies adopted to mitigate the impact of the current pandemic, violate the Fundamental Rights of society, stating the following:

The COVID-19 pandemic may seriously affect the full enjoyment of the human rights of the population by virtue of the serious risks to life, health and personal integrity posed by COVID-19; as well as its immediate, medium and long-term impacts on societies in general, and on individuals and groups in situations of special vulnerability (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2021)

This statement by the IACHR is based on Article 27 of the American Convention on Human Rights in the Pact of San José (ACHR, 1969), which establishes that States have the obligation to respect and guarantee human rights even in exceptional circumstances, and the measures they take to confront the pandemic must be proportional to the protection of life and health and compatible with international obligations. For this reason, it is important to know the current implications of the measures adopted by the governmental entities and their real impact on society, with the purpose of analyzing whether the protection of Fundamental Rights and the State as guarantor of their fulfillment are really recognized, from the legal framework proposed to face the pandemic to the public health policies and the economic environment of the Latin American nations. For this reason, a documentary review has been proposed in this research to answer the following question: how has the production and publication of research papers on the study of the legal framework, public health and economic environment in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America during the period 2020-2021?

General Objective

To analyze, from a bibliometric and bibliographic perspective, the production of high-impact research papers on the legal framework, public health and the

economic environment within the framework of COVID-19 during the period 2020-2021 in Latin American countries.

Methodology

A quantitative analysis is made on the information provided by Scopus under a bibliometric approach on the scientific production concerning the study of the legal framework, public health, economic environment in the framework of COVID-19 at the Latin American level. Likewise, it is analyzed from a qualitative perspective, examples of some research works published in the area of study mentioned above, from a bibliographic approach to describe the position of different authors on the proposed topic. The search is carried out through the tool provided by Scopus and the parameters listed in Table 1 are established.

Methodological design

Table 1
Shows the methodological design proposed for this research

	PHASE	DESCRIPTION	CLASSIFICATION
PHASE 1	DATA COLLECTION	The data collection is carried out by means of the search tool in the Scopus electronic page.	Published documents whose study variables are related to the Legal Framework, Public Health, Economic Environment within the framework of COVID-19. Research papers published by authors affiliated with Latin American institutions. Research papers published during the period 2020-2021 Without distinction of area of knowledge. Without distinction of type of publication.
PHASE 2	CONSTRUCTION OF ANALYSIS MATERIAL	The information identified in the previous phase is organized. The classification will be made by means of graphs, figures and	Co-occurrence of words. Year of publication Country of origin of the publication. Area of knowledge. Type of

		tables based on data provided by Scopus.	publication
PHASE 3	DRAFTING OF CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL DOCUMENT	After the analysis carried out in the previous phase, the study proceeds to the drafting of the conclusions and the preparation of the final document.	

Source: Own elaboration (2021).

Results

The results of the proposed bibliometric analysis are presented below, as well as the development of the bibliographic review of some examples to determine the position of different authors on the subject referenced in this article.

Co-occurrence of words

Figure 1 shows the relationship between the keywords used in the development of the research, which allows to identify the scope and impact of the research published on the topic proposed in this article.

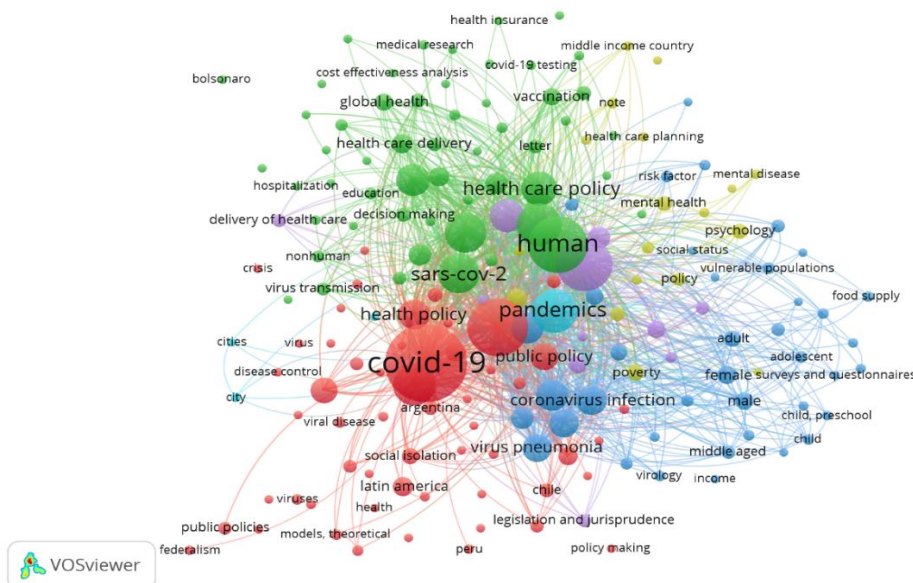


Figure 1. Co-occurrence of words

Source: Own elaboration (2021), based on data provided by Scopus

Once the identification of the publications has been carried out through the execution of Phase 1 of the Methodological Design proposed for the present document, it is possible to establish that within the analysis of the frequency in the use of the keywords, those that show greater dominance are COVID-19, framing the current context of the study of the different variables such as health policies, pandemic, public policies, vulnerable population, poverty, legislation and jurisprudence, decision making, among others that confirm the pertinence of the majority of the publications with the topic proposed in the present document. It is important to highlight that all the research analyzed is framed in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on aspects of great relevance in Latin American countries, such as the legal framework, health policies and economic environment that involve issues of interest for governmental actors in search of the reduction of social inequality and equity.

Distribution of scientific production by period of publication

Figure 2 shows how scientific production is distributed according to the year of publication, taking into account that the period to be analyzed corresponds to the years 2020 and 2021.

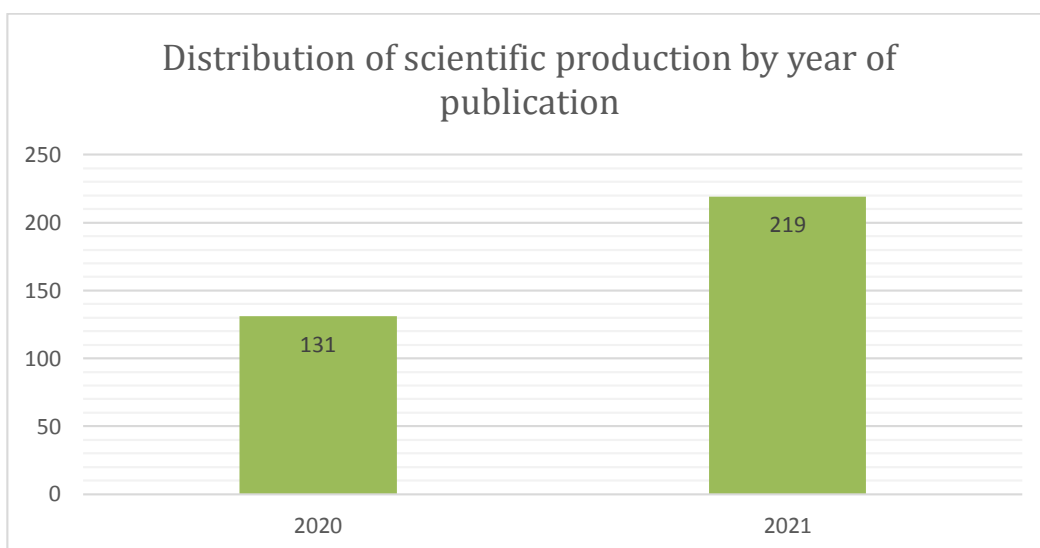


Figure 2. Distribution of scientific production by year of publication
Source: Own elaboration (2021), based on data provided by Scopus

With the purpose of establishing a concise review of the data obtained in the proposed bibliometric analysis, it is necessary to distinguish the scientific production given by the Scopus database, by time periods, taking into account that the implications within the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic as a health crisis, took place between the years 2020-2021, for which it is counted that the production obtained an increase of great importance from 2020 with 131 publications and 2021 with a considerable figure of 219 registered productions. This is why it is necessary to emphasize the scientific article of 2021 entitled "*Changes in mobility and socioeconomic conditions during the outbreak of COVID-19*" (Dueñas & Olmos, 2021). The objective of this study was to analyze the

governmental measures taken due to the confinement in the city of Bogota as the capital of Colombia, in a meticulous exploration of its mobility network, its changes and evolution between January and July 2020, for which it was concluded that the socioeconomic conditions of a given population group must be in accordance with the measures adopted by the government.

However, in the face of an unprecedented crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, drastic measures were taken in all sectors of society, harming in any case the societies with the worst socioeconomic conditions. Likewise, the research work published in 2020 is highlighted, consigned in the scientific article entitled “*Public policies in crisis contexts: a comparative analysis of the formulation of economic policies in Brazil in 2008 and 2020*” (Valentin, Machado, & Mountian, 2020). The purpose of this study was to establish a comparative analysis of the public policies determined by the Brazilian government in two different scenarios: the economic crisis of 2008 and the health crisis of 2020. The premise for this comparison is based on the fact that current situations and events transform, change and improve the state policies of governments and that they vary according to the contexts and their nature. The results of this study show that the policies determined in the 2008 crisis were based on existing measures developed in similar situations and that in the specific case they were transitory and determined by the executive branch.

On the other hand, in what was agreed by the government in 2021, the measures represented a real challenge, since the appearance of COVID-19 and its consequences were unknown and on a large scale in the world, so the policy formulation process not only involved the health sector, but all areas of society from the economic, political and, of course, the social spheres.

Distribution of scientific production by country of origin

Figure 3 shows the distribution of scientific production according to the nationality of the authors.

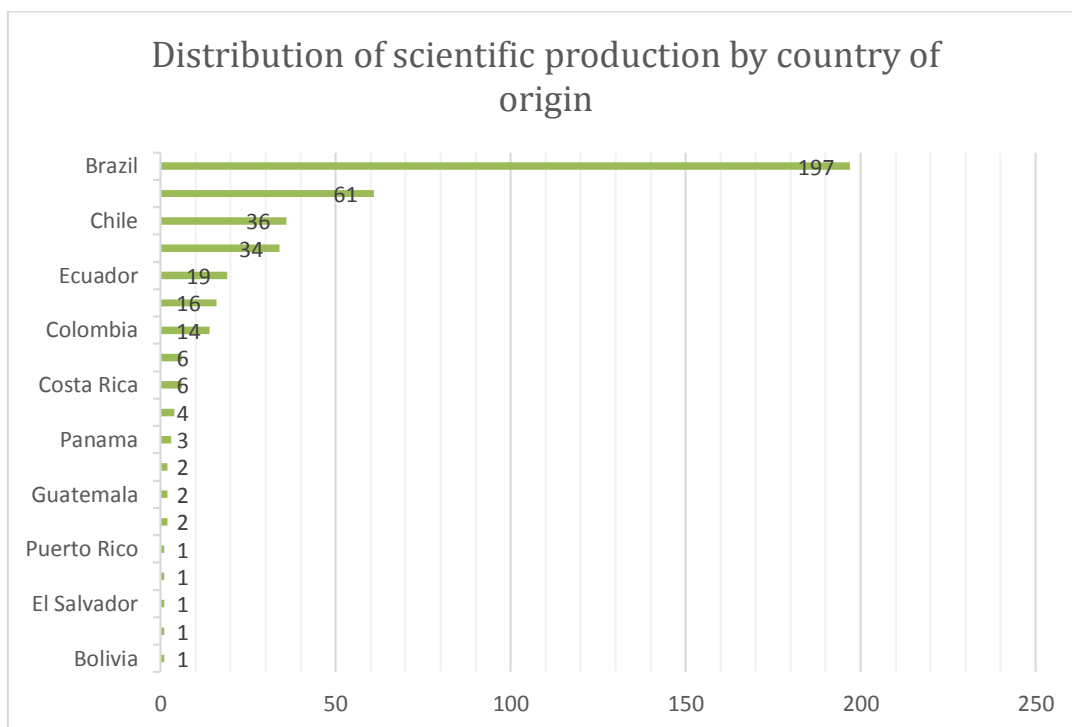


Figure 3. Distribution of scientific production by country of origin
Source: Own elaboration (2022), based on data provided by Scopus

Brazil was the country with the highest number of publications registered in Scopus during the period 2020-2021 with a total of 197 research papers. In second place were authors affiliated with Mexican institutions with 61 papers, followed by Chile and Argentina with 36 and 34 publications, respectively. Ecuador is in fifth place with 19 publications, including the article entitled “*Emprendimiento rural post-COVID-19: Consideraciones para una recuperación económica sostenible*” (Post-covid 19 rural entrepreneurship: considerations for sustainable economic recovery), by Espinoza et al (2021), with the purpose of reviewing and studying successful cases of proposals for economic reactivation through state policies that promote the development of productive projects in rural areas of Ecuador. This is a governmental effort that must be supported by a legal framework that regulates commercial activities in search of equal opportunities, as well as the evaluation of the social impact from a microeconomic perspective.

At this point it should be noted that the production of scientific publications, when classified by country of origin, presents a special characteristic and that is the collaboration between authors with different affiliations to both public and private institutions; and these institutions can be from the same country or from different nationalities, so that the production of an article co-authored by different authors from different countries of origin allows each of the countries to add up as a unit in the overall publications. This is best explained in Figure 4, which shows the flow of collaborative work from different countries.

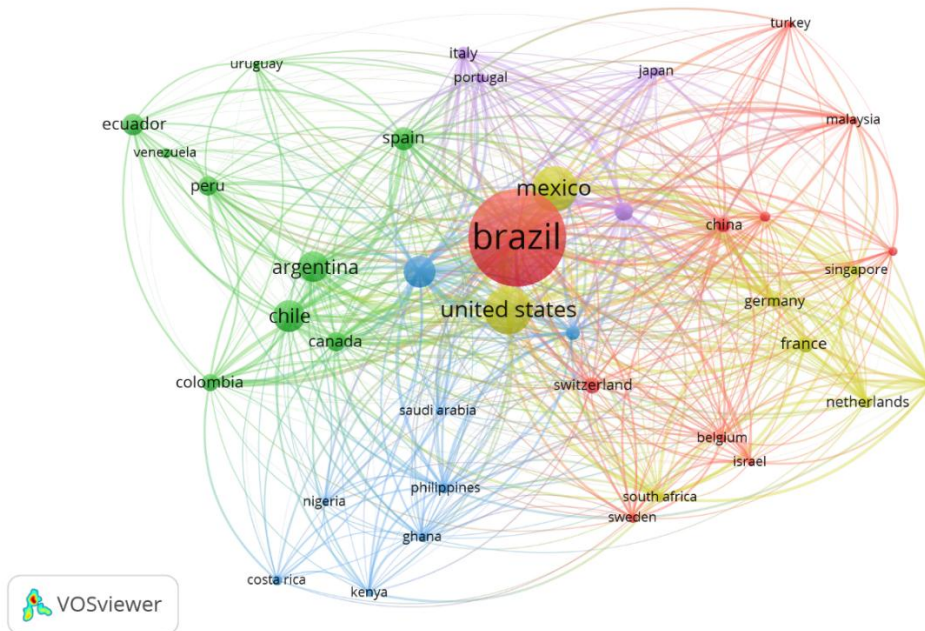


Figure 4. Co-citations between countries

Source: Own elaboration (2022), based on data provided by Scopus

Within the publications identified through the Scopus search, it is possible to establish that Brazil presents the largest number of publications with the participation of international authors affiliated to institutions in the United States, Mexico, China and Switzerland. Another group of collaborations is made up of authors from Chile, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, Spain, Colombia and Canada. A clear example of research papers with the participation of authors from different countries was the one entitled “*Health care guidelines and policies during the COVID-19 pandemic in Mexico: a case of health inequalities*” (Bautista-González, et al., 2021), which had the participation of Mexican and United Kingdom authors and whose purpose was to generate an exploratory review of the health policies published during the COVID-19 pandemic by health institutions in Mexico in response to the health crisis that triggered a large number of deaths due to the aforementioned disease, which led governments to make decisions regarding investment for the acquisition of specialized equipment for the treatment of symptoms, coverage, health personnel, aid to the most needy, among others.

Distribution of scientific production by area of knowledge

Figure 5 shows the production of scientific publications distributed according to the area of knowledge through which the different research methodologies are executed.

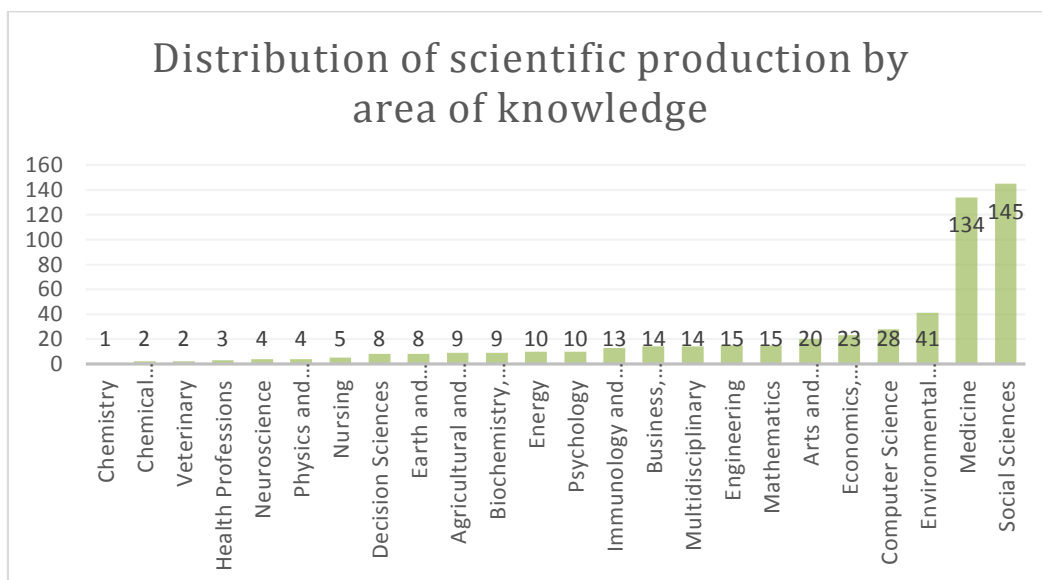


Figure 5. Distribution of scientific production by area of knowledge
Source: Own elaboration (2022), based on data provided by Scopus

The appearance of COVID-19 and its impact at a globalized level, brought with it problems of all kinds and in all possible fields of human development in society. Therefore, the different areas of knowledge turned their interest in the search for knowledge and problems related to this topic, as shown in Figure 5. Thus, the area of social sciences gained great relevance, according to data from the Scopus database in terms of research variables with 145 publications, followed in second place by the area of medicine with 134 publications and continued by the area of environmental sciences with 41 publications. It is necessary to indicate that, according to the descriptive approach of this research, it is important to emphasize the article in the area of social sciences entitled “*The effectiveness of governmental measures during the first wave of the outbreak*” (Ratto, Cabrera, Zacharias, & Azerrat, 2021). The objective of this article was to analyze the effects of the measures adopted by the different governments of the countries that make up Latin America, through a cross-sectional analysis, taking into account the number of daily cases in the first wave of the pandemic from the start date until September 14, 2020 and the results obtained from the COVID-19 Dashboard database of the University of Johns Hopkins and the Oxford Data Set.

It was found that the policies have had to be changed in order to be effective and approximate the required results, however, they have been key to achieve a break point within the new normal as a conjunctural event. Measurements should be periodic in terms of resources to determine measures, as they exert a substantive conditional influence on policy management during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Type of publication

Figure 6 shows how the bibliographic production is distributed according to the type of publication chosen by the authors.

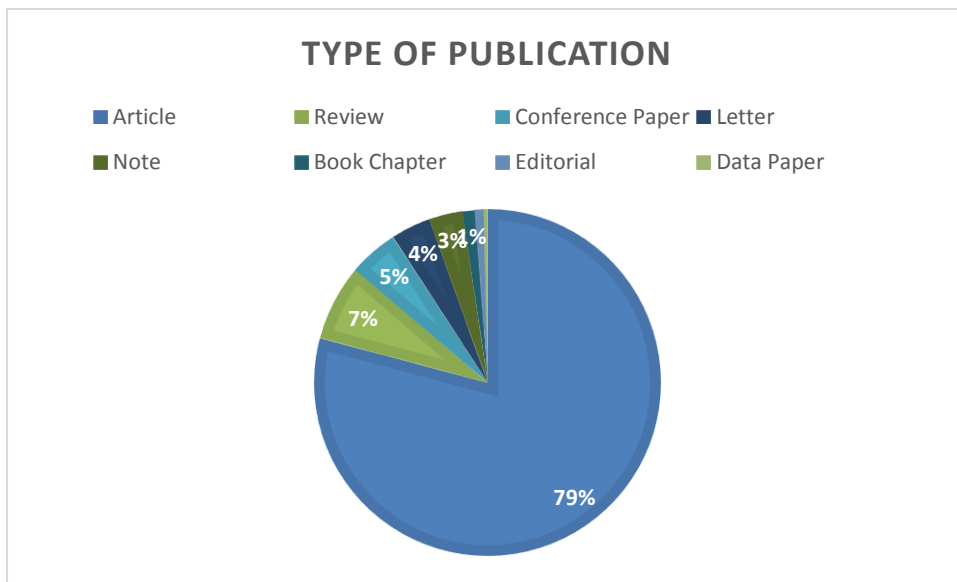


Figure 6. Type of publication

Source: Own elaboration (2022), based on data provided by Scopus

In the proposed research and from the information provided by the Scopus database, according to the variables used, it is found that of the scientific production under review, different types of publication were used by the different authors of the writings, as shown in Figure 6, being the Scientific Article the most used, since its dissemination provides new knowledge and also does not have previous publications. Thus, 79% of the total has been with this type of publication, followed by the Review with a total of 7% of the total, in addition to Conference Articles and Letters with 5% and 4%, respectively.

In view of the above, it is necessary to highlight the 2020 review entitled “*The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in Latin America: the need for multidisciplinary approaches*” (Callejas et al., 2020), whose purpose was determined in the analysis of the challenges represented by the health impact of COVID-19, and its implications of economic and social nature, and is that the pandemic virus, its etiology, its expansion and circulation have been the cause of significant mortality in all age groups and regions of the world. This situation led Latin American governments to establish control measures from the different governmental entities and the recognition of a new legal framework to define the objectives to mitigate the crisis and according to the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO). This chain of events has only demonstrated that governments require integrated policies based on proven scientific facts, in accordance with the resources to promote a good financial market and in favor of the social and human needs of the population.

In addition, the use of notes, book chapters and editorials are very important element, as shown in Figure 6, which also allow to interpret the legal framework, public health and the economic environment and its impact from the pandemic in Latin American countries from various points of view.

Conclusions

Due to the development of the bibliometric analysis carried out in this document, it is possible to conclude that, within the Latin American community, Brazil was the country with the highest number of publications indexed in the Scopus database referring to the study of three of the most important aspects in governmental management, such as the legal framework, public health and the economic environment in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding in this way that the efforts of the scientific community were focused on the measurement of the impact that this pandemic generated in society from the micro and macroeconomic perspectives. This is supported by the identification of the area of Social Sciences as the main theoretical source to frame the studies registered in Scopus, since a total of 145 publications were made based on disciplines derived from this area of knowledge.

It is important to highlight the relevance of knowing the current state of the literature published on the subject proposed in this article, since in this way it is possible to evaluate what has been done so far to mitigate the serious consequences left in its wake by the COVID-19 pandemic and to take as an example case of success in the economic reactivation of some countries, and replicate it in those whose models have not been effective in overcoming the crisis. In this way, it is expected that knowing the current strategies and evaluating their effects will allow to advance in the design of new alternatives to make countries overcome situations such as the one experienced since 2019 and which intensified in 2020 due to all the restrictive measures to reduce the high number of infections and deaths due to the mentioned disease.

It should be clarified that any policy proposed by governments is framed in a jurisprudence that legalizes the actions of the different governmental and non-governmental entities, so its study also guarantees a theoretical basis to constitute important support material in future similar situations. Any policy established for economic reactivation seeks the return of normality in the commercial activity that was affected by measures such as the mandatory restrictive quarantine, which greatly harmed the economy of households and that at the date of writing of this document, is still a subject of study by the scientific community in support of governments for the reduction of the inequality gap so marked by the passage of the pandemic by COVID-19.

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