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ABSTRACT

This study applied network analysis methodology using scientometric metadata to elucidate the main research trends related to the field of knowledge identified as women's social innovation, based on geopolitical criteria. Bibliometric information was organized into six groups: publications originating exclusively from the United States, international articles with U.S. co-authorship, articles from the Anglosphere excluding the U.S., articles from the BRICS bloc, articles exclusively from Latin America, and articles from the rest of the world. The search yielded 546 publications on this topic in journals indexed in the Scopus bibliometric system during the period from 1971 to March 2026. Network analysis based on the degree of thematic centrality by country groups yielded the following results: a) the U.S. was responsible for 25% of the total activity; b) the output of the BRICS countries on the topic equaled that of the US; c) domestic and international trends in U.S. research differ in thematic emphasis; d) three highly central themes for the Anglosphere excluding the U.S. were absent for the BRICS countries, and e) central themes for Latin America and the rest of the world were not central for the Anglosphere including the U.S. It is concluded that scientometric analysis is a useful tool for documenting research trends on women's social innovation with a geopolitical emphasis.

Keywords: Scientometrics; Geopolitics; Social Innovation; Women.

RESUMEN

En este estudio se aplicó la metodología de análisis de redes a partir de metadatos cienciométricos para dilucidar las principales tendencias temáticas de investigación relacionadas al campo de conocimiento identificado como innovación social femenina, a partir de criterios geopolíticos. La información bibliométrica se organizó en 6 grupos: publicaciones de origen exclusivamente estadounidense, artículos internacionales con coautoría estadounidense, artículos de la anglósfera sin EE. UU., artículos del bloque BRICS, artículos exclusivamente latinoamericanos y artículos del resto del mundo. La búsqueda generó 546 publicaciones con esa temática en revistas acreditadas en el sistema bibliométrico Scopus durante el periodo comprendido entre 1971 y marzo de 2026. El análisis de redes, basado en los grados de centralidad temática por grupos de países, arrojó los siguientes resultados: a) EE. UU. fue responsable del 25% del total de la actividad; b) la producción de los países BRICS sobre el tema igualó a la producción estadounidense; c) las tendencias doméstica e internacional de la investigación estadounidense difieren en énfasis temático; d) 3 temas de alta centralidad para la anglósfera sin EE. UU. estuvieron ausentes para los BRICS, y e) temas centrales para Latinoamérica y el resto del mundo no lo fueron para la anglósfera, incluido EE. UU. Se concluye que el análisis cienciométrico es una herramienta útil para documentar tendencias de investigación sobre innovación social femenina con un énfasis geopolítico.

Palabras clave: Cienciometría; Geopolítica; Innovación Social; Mujeres.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of women-led social innovation refers to any positive transformation of the physical, structural, or social environment—created by or for women—that has a medium- or long-term impact on the community. This concept is closely linked to how women navigate social, institutional, and cultural obstacles to strengthen social cohesion and promote social well-being and prosperity (Ghouse; McElwee, 2026; Nikghadam-Hojjati; Marchetti; Barata, 2026). In this sense, the concept encompasses dimensions of valence, duration, and agency—or, where applicable, the direct beneficiary group of that transformation.

For Cajaiba-Santana (2014), social innovation is a complex process involving social change that is legitimized and conditioned by institutions—and, in this case, by women's capacity to transform structures; that is, the concept includes forms of interaction and organization capable of addressing social issues.

Therefore, for this research, women-led social innovation can be defined as the set of initiatives, practices, and solutions aimed at addressing social needs through new forms of participation, organization, cooperation, and the creation of opportunities for the community.

One way to examine how women-led social innovations have unfolded in recent history is through a documentary study based on the work of various authors worldwide who have highlighted or reported on these transformations.

In this context, scientometric analysis serves as a tool that—using a systematic and replicable methodology applied to a finite dataset with specific characteristics—allows for the determination of research trends on a given topic based on criteria specified by the researchers.

Network analysis makes it possible to uncover central thematic trends and associations between authors and their countries of origin, thereby identifying the main trajectories characterizing the work of scientists from various disciplines within the subject area under study.

Scientometric analysis based on economic blocs, such as the Anglosphere or the BRICS bloc (Humpe; Mcmillan; Schöttl, 2025) is one of the ways to look at the production of academic articles and examine the geopolitical trends of research, which, for the purpose of the topic of social innovation led by women, could be useful as a working hypothesis.

The Anglosphere is a geopolitical concept that groups together English-speaking countries (especially the U.S., the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) that share institutional schemes such as democratic parliaments and values such as individualism, free markets and the primacy of law, and goes beyond just sharing the language. Although it is a controversial concept, this article chose to use it, with the understanding that it refers to a block of countries that share intense historical, political and cultural ties (Bennett, 2004).

The purpose of this essay focused on detecting the main thematic axes in which research has occurred around social innovations related to the female gender in the world, as well as the thematic coincidences and divergences between geopolitical groups such as the Anglosphere, the BRICS, Latin America, Asia, Africa, discovering the trends of interest in collaborative alliances and their omissions, this in order to map the current situation of social innovations led by women in the world and document the gaps that require addressing in particular thematic areas that are socially relevant.

METHOD

To document and analyze the sources of information on the subject, a search was carried out in the Scopus bibliometric database. The Elsevier company launched the Scopus database more than two decades ago, and it is currently one of the largest databases with abstracts and citations that includes a wide sector of scientific journals (Baas et al., 2020). According to 2019 figures and the projection of these authors, Scopus would currently comprise approximately 97 million records, including articles, books, indexed conferences, with content rigorously selected and independently re-evaluated: according to some critics of Scopus, one of the main characteristics of this database is that it consists of a closed set of records, with an updated count of citations among its own records (Rozemblum; Alperin; Unzurrunzaga, 2021).

The search in Scopus was carried out establishing as inclusion criteria those publications that had the English term “women” in the title, and the terms “social” and “innovation” in the abstract or keywords.

To ensure a degree of source homogeneity, the search was limited to articles and reviews, excluding books, book chapters, conference papers, errata, and editorial notes. To further ensure that other publication types were excluded, the “source type” filter was applied, restricting results to journals.

The dataset generated by Scopus was exported to an Excel-compatible .csv file, where fields were organized based on key metadata, including authors, title, source, citations, publication year, and keywords.

Additionally, a text file containing full article details was downloaded; this included—in addition to the metadata—the document identifier, the abstract, and the authors' academic affiliations. Based on the article title, author keywords, and abstract, the most thematically relevant terms were identified for each article within the study population. A column of new keywords was generated based on frequency of occurrence across the title, abstract, and author keywords (ranging from one to five technical terms per article), and terms sharing the same root were standardized; for instance, this simplification process involved assigning the word "science" as the common denominator for the English terms "science", "scientific", and "scientist". Obvious terms common to all studies—such as "woman", "female", and "social innovation"—were removed, resulting in a list of distinct terms that constituted the study's thematic scope. After eliminating redundancies, synonyms, and variations of the same keyword, a database was created containing all possible keyword-pair combinations for each article. The procedure described above was carried out manually, without the use of algorithms; this same method was used to construct a second database—derived from the initial one—containing keyword pairs for each record (article). If an article had only a single entry (an unusual occurrence, though it did happen), the term was repeated in both column 1 and column 2. Conversely, if a record contained three keywords—for example, "politics", "feminist", and "activism"—it would result in three rows representing the pairs "politics" and "feminist", "politics" and "activism", and "feminist" and "activism". Records with up to four keywords—such as a 2025 article from India featuring the terms "economy", "digital inclusion", "low-income", and "commerce"—would yield six rows of term pairs: "economy" and "digital inclusion", "economy" and "low-income", and "economy" and "commerce", followed by "digital inclusion" and "low-income", "digital inclusion" and "commerce", and "low-income" and "commerce". This resulting database was used to feed the NodeXL Pro software for the thematic centrality analysis of the articles. The final databases generated in this manner for each of the six country clusters are available upon request to the author.

RESULTS

Following the bibliographic search procedure, a total of 546 articles meeting the inclusion criteria were identified, published between 1971 and March 2026.

CITATIONS

To date, five articles have received more than 200 Scopus citations; these originated from Germany, Italy, the United States (two articles), and a German-U.S. collaboration (Bruckmüller; Branscombe, 2010; Cook; Fonow, 1986; Krasnova et al., 2017; Tasca et al., 2012; Valente et al., 1997). The topics addressed included the glass ceiling in female leadership, gender-based differences in social media usage, mental health, female scientific output, and contraception.

CLASSIFICATION

The results are organized as follows: first, indicators for the United States are reported—whether as the sole country of origin for the research or as a collaborating nation; next, a third group reports contributions from countries constituting the Anglosphere (excluding the U.S.); subsequently, data for BRICS nations are presented; and finally, trends regarding social innovations focused on female participation in the remaining countries are outlined. The text concludes with a reflection on the commonalities and divergences found in the bibliometric data.

Table 1 | Key scientometric indicators of articles on women's social innovation for the six proposed geopolitical groups

Scientometric indicators	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6
Total articles	98	36	68	118	23	203
Number of nodes	81	45	65	69	25	84
Maximum topic centrality degree	31	13	16	25	6	27
Topics with centrality of 3 or higher	44	18	28	39	8	53
Maximum authors per article	15	41	12	10	9	22
Maximum citations	243	210	146	148	36	256
Year of first publication	1972	1999	1987	1995	2010	1971

Source: Authors' own elaboration. Note: Group 1= U.S. domestic version; Group 2= U.S. with international co-authors; Group 3= 5 Anglosphere countries, excluding the U.S. (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom); Group 4= BRICS bloc (10 countries); Group 5= Latin America (5 countries); and Group 6= rest of the countries (67).

To determine the relative thematic importance for each geopolitical group, Tables 2 and 3 were constructed based on scientometric centrality indicators. A general cutoff point of a minimum centrality degree of 3 was applied—meaning each node or topic had to be connected to at least three other topics—thereby generating a list of thematic importance for each region. This criterion was adopted to consistently exclude articles with low centrality. To compare centrality values across groups, centrality degrees were converted into percentage values based on the maximum centrality value within each group.

Table 2 presents percentage values for 14 topics related to women-led social innovation (WLSI) found in U.S. publications—covering both domestic interests (Group 1) and international outreach (Group 2)—within a comparative table that includes the other four groups. The cross-group analysis of this table reveals the following trends: a) "entrepreneurship" within WLSI was of central importance to the BRICS bloc, Latin America, and the rest of the world, but not to the Anglosphere in any of its three forms (Groups 1–3); b) a similar trend was observed regarding "empowerment" in WLSI, which was significant for Groups 6, 5, and 4 but virtually absent from domestic U.S. research; c) the opposite trend was recorded for "health" in WLSI; this was a top-priority topic for the Anglosphere (Groups 1–3) and the rest of the world, whereas it held moderate importance for BRICS nations and was entirely absent from Latin American publications (Group 5). The lack of data for Latin America (Group 5) across most WLSI topics accounts for this gap. It is worth highlighting three additional aspects derived from Table 2: d) WLSI research on "ethnic groups" and "pregnancy" was central for Group 3 (the Anglosphere excluding the US); e) WLSI research by Group 2 (U.S. international interest) was notable regarding the topics of "HIV" and "opioid use" compared to the other groups; f) finally, the topics of "rights", "pregnancy", and "aging" were absent from WLSI research in Groups 4, 5, and 6, whereas they had a presence of moderate importance for the Anglosphere (Groups 1 to 3).

Table 2 | Percentage indicators of thematic centrality for articles on women's social innovation, organized into five geopolitical groups. Part 1

Topics	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
entrepreneur	9.6	53.8	50.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
empowerment	9.6	46.2	18.8	64.0	83.3	92.6
employment	32.3	23.1	50.0	36.0	50.0	59.2
health	100.0	100.0	100.0	40.0		96.3
ethnic group	35.5	30.8	87.5	40.0		33.3
leadership	19.4	23.1	18.8	44.0		63.0
digital	16.1	30.8	68.8	60.0		44.4
rights	22.6	23.1	37.5			18.5
pregnancy	16.1	30.8	43.8			22.2
aging	29.0	30.8	18.8			
rural	9.6	53.8		32.0		44.4
HIV	25.8	46.2		16.0		14.8
healthcare	16.1	30.8		20.0		18.5
opioid use	22.6	30.8				

Source: Own elaboration. Note: Group 1= U.S. domestic version; Group 2= U.S. with international co-authors; Group 3= 5 countries from the Anglosphere, without the U.S. (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom; Group 4: BRICS block (10 countries); Group 5: Latin America (5 countries) and Group 6: rest of the countries (67).

Table 3 presents a comparative analysis of 27 additional topics covered in WLSI research that showed centrality values of 3 or higher for each geopolitical group. The five predominant trends observed in this table are summarized as follows: a) four topics stood out for their central role in Latin American research (G5)—"economy", "education", "science", and "community"—which, in contrast, were absent or showed very low incidence rates in U.S. domestic publications (G1); b) the topic of "sustainability" held significant (though diminishing) importance for groups G6 (rest of the world), G5 (Latin America), and G4 (BRICS bloc), yet was completely absent for Anglosphere countries (G1, G2, and G3); c) the topics of "mental health" and "violence" received considerable attention from Anglosphere countries (excluding the US), in contrast to the BRICS bloc (G4), which recorded the lowest levels of proportional intra-group centrality; d) a "feminist" thematic orientation in WLSI research was significant for groups G3 (Anglosphere excluding the U.S.) and G6 (rest of the world), low for G4 (BRICS) and G2 (U.S. international output), and absent for G5 (Latin America); and finally, e) the topics of "youth" and "contraception" were particularly relevant in U.S. international WLSI research (G2), in contrast to their complete absence in the U.S. domestic landscape (G1).

Table 3 | Percentage indicators of thematic centrality for articles on women's social innovation, organized into five geopolitical groups. Part 2

Topics	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
economy	19.4		37.5	48.0	100.0	44.4
education	22.6		37.5	32.0	66.7	40.7
environment	9.6		18.8	16.0		25.9
family	12.9		25.0	32.0		29.6
literature	22.6		18.8	24.0		18.5
mental health	19.4		75.0	12.0		22.2
politics	32.3		31.3	16.0		48.1
feminist	22.6		56.3	20.0		51.9
violence	22.6		56.3	12.0		25.9
limited resources	38.7		25.0	40.0		37.0
religion	9.6		37.5	12.0		29.6
technology	19.4		31.3			44.4
commerce	9.6			24.0		14.8
reproduction	32.3			20.0		37.0
sustainability		23.1		56.0	66.7	85.2
youth		69.2		28.0		29.6
contraception		30.8				11.1
STEM				16.0		25.9
gender stereotypes				16.0		33.3
farmers				12.0		44.4
agriculture				20.0		48.1
fashion				44.0		
science					83.3	11.1
community					66.7	29.6
migration						48.1
motherhood						33.3
social media				12.0		25.9

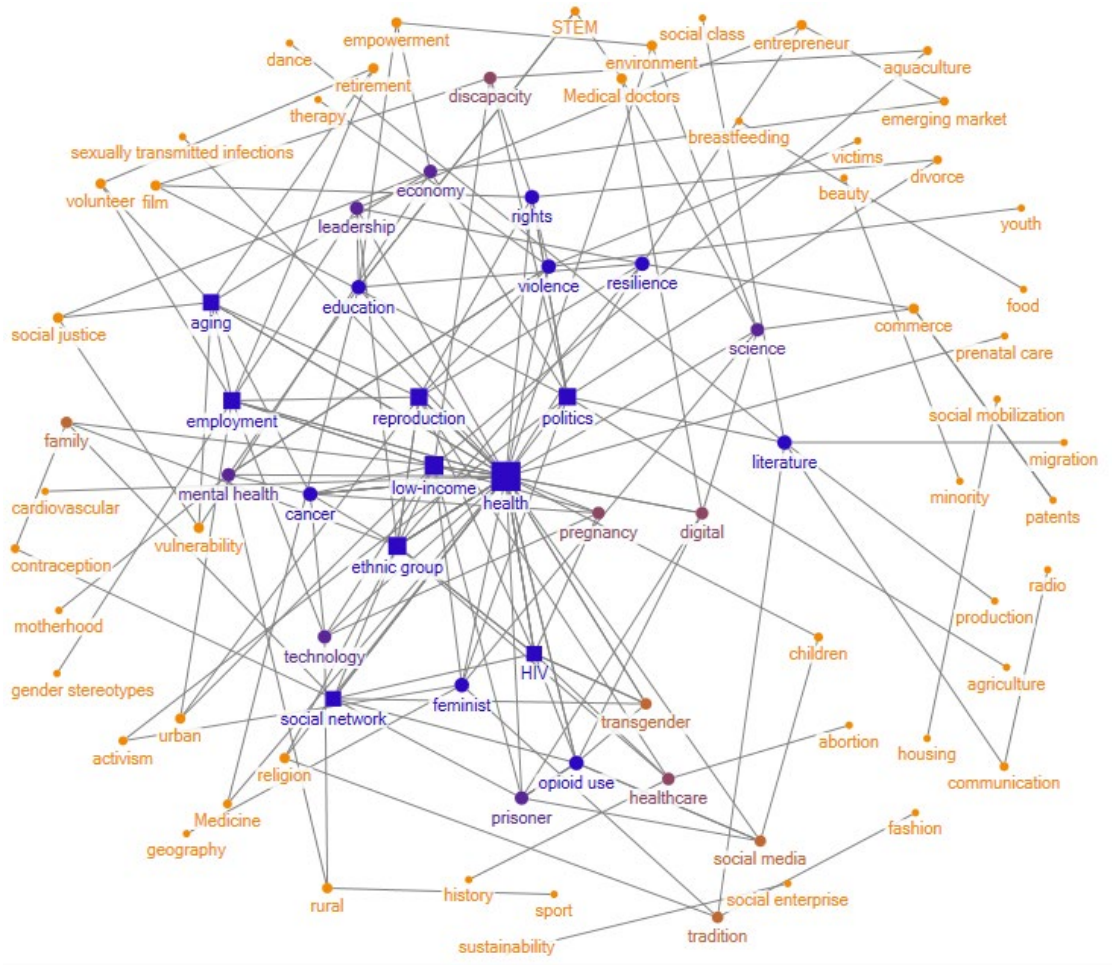
Source: Compiled by the author. Note: Group 1= U.S. domestic version; Group 2= U.S. with international co-authors; Group 3= 5 Anglosphere countries, excluding the U.S. (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom); Group 4 = BRICS bloc (10 countries); Group 5 = Latin America (5 countries); and Group 6 = rest of the countries (67).

Presented below is an analysis—broken down by thematic networks and geopolitical groups—of the global distribution of research on women's social innovation, based on the proposed six-group taxonomy.

Given the disproportionate share of research originating from the U.S. within bibliometric databases—accounting for nearly 25% of the total—it was decided to split its output into two groups: one comprising authors exclusively from that country, and another consisting of collaborative articles involving

the U.S. Between 1971 and 2026, the U.S. published 98 articles independently (G1) and 36 articles in collaboration with other countries (G2). Figure 1 presents the thematic network analysis of this output. As shown in the figure, the most frequently addressed topic by U.S. researchers was “health”. In Figure 1 and subsequent figures, topics are represented as interconnected nodes; the color, shape, and size of the nodes indicate their degree of centrality within the network. Nodes with lower centrality appear as small orange circles, while those with higher centrality are represented as large blue squares. Thematic centrality degrees in Figure 1 range from 1 to 31; for instance, the “digital” node—colored burgundy and shaped as a medium-sized circle—had a centrality level of 5, meaning it was connected to five other thematic nodes within this collection of articles. In this figure, nodes with centrality values of 7 or higher are represented by squares.

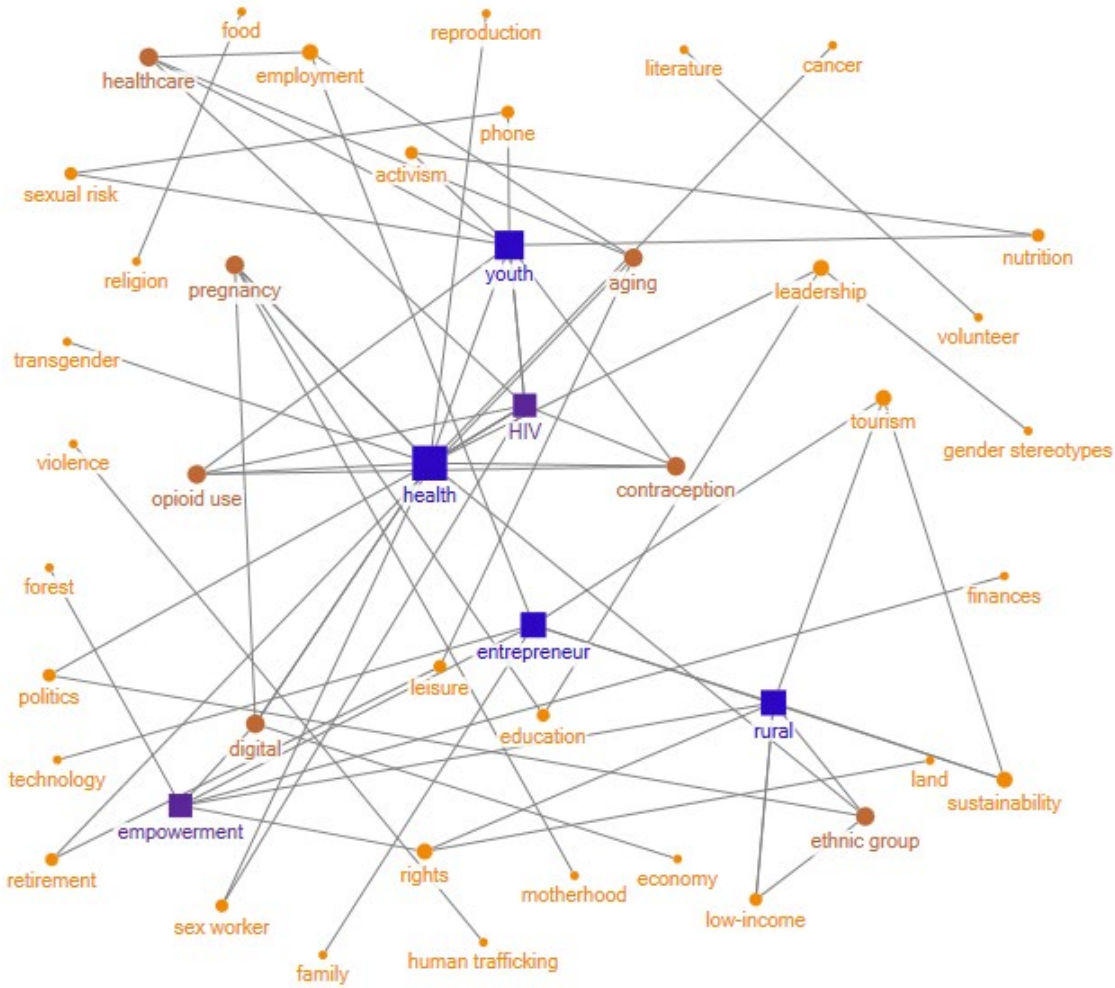
Figure 1 | Thematic network of 98 articles produced exclusively by the United States



Source: Prepared by the author.

The second group concerning women's social innovation—resulting from U.S. collaboration with other countries—is illustrated in Figure 2 via a thematic network based on 36 articles published in Scopus journals between 1999 and March 2026. That figure displays 45 nodes with centrality degrees ranging from 1 to 13. As in the previous figure, the color, shape, and size of the nodes varied according to the centrality of the publications' thematic nodes.

Figure 2 | Thematic network of 36 articles published by the United States in collaboration with other countries



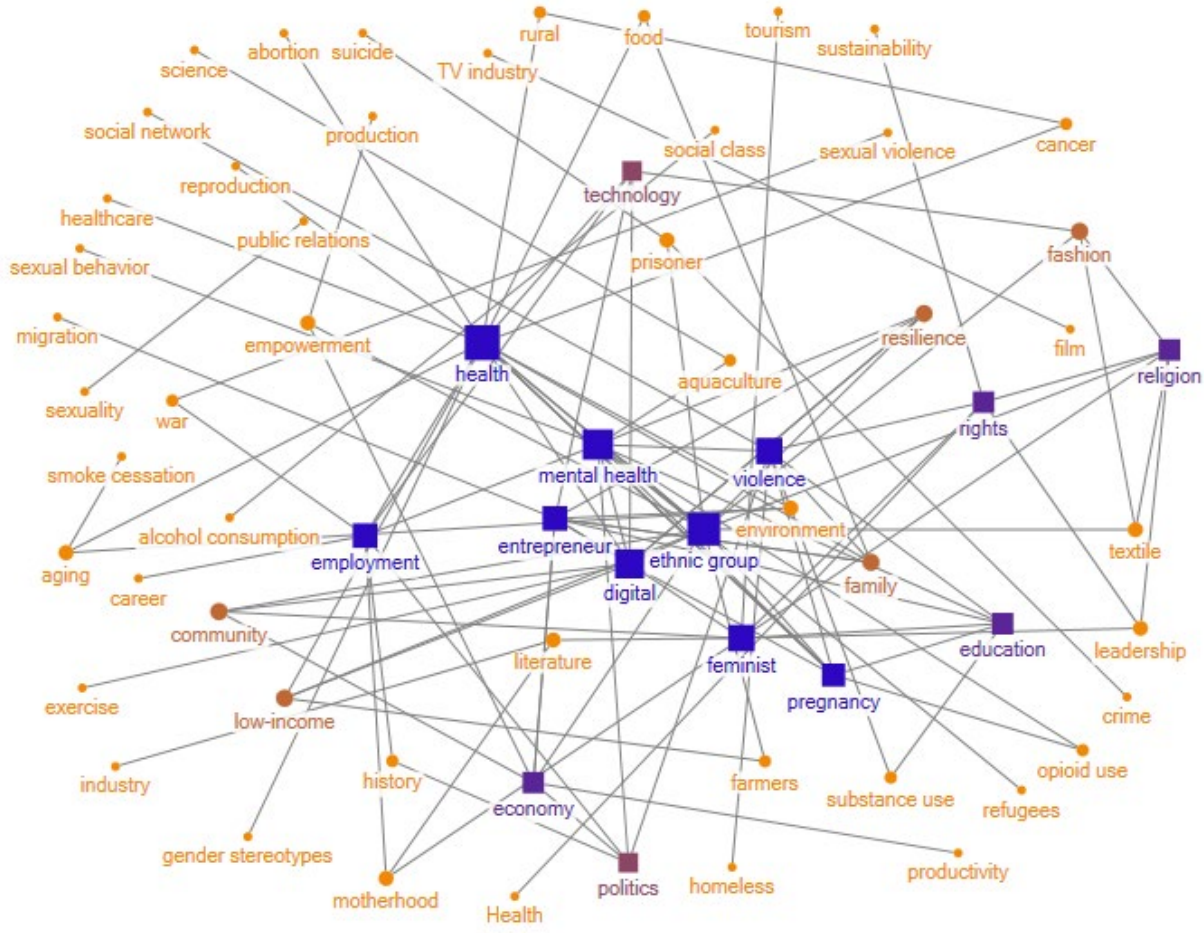
Source: Prepared by the author.

The topics most frequently researched by the U.S. in collaboration with other countries included health, youth, rural issues, entrepreneurship, and women's empowerment in social innovation. A comparison of Figures 1 and 2 reveals a contrast not only in the number of nodes but

also in the central themes of the two networks, depending on whether the research was domestic to the U.S. or international.

Although the U.S. leads the Anglosphere, the other member countries may or may not exhibit comparable scientometric trends regarding the research covered in this study. To investigate these similarities or differences, a third country group was created—comprising the Anglosphere excluding the U.S.—which, based on a search for academic output on the subject, included five countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Figure 3 presents a thematic network analysis based on 68 articles dealing with women's social innovation in these five Anglosphere countries (excluding the U.S.). In this figure, square-shaped nodes represent items with a centrality degree of 4 or higher.

Figure 3 | Thematic network of articles on women's social innovation published by Anglosphere countries, excluding the U.S.



Source: Prepared by the author.

There were 68 articles meeting the Scopus search criteria produced by countries in the Anglosphere (excluding the U.S.), published between 1987 and March 2026. These articles generated 65 interconnected thematic nodes, with a maximum centrality of 16 achieved by the topic "health" indicating that this topic was connected to 16 other topics within this group's output. As shown in Table 1, the maximum citation count for this group was lower than that of the two preceding groups; the highest figure was 146 citations for an article by an Australian author regarding the greater tendency of female entrepreneurs to make environmentally conscious decisions compared to their male counterparts (Braun, 2010). As this case aptly illustrates, citation counts are orthogonal to centrality within this dataset; the presence of recurring research themes does not guarantee higher citation rates, and vice versa. In Figure 3, the nodes related to the topics "sustainability" and "environment" appear with medium and small sizes and peripheral importance.

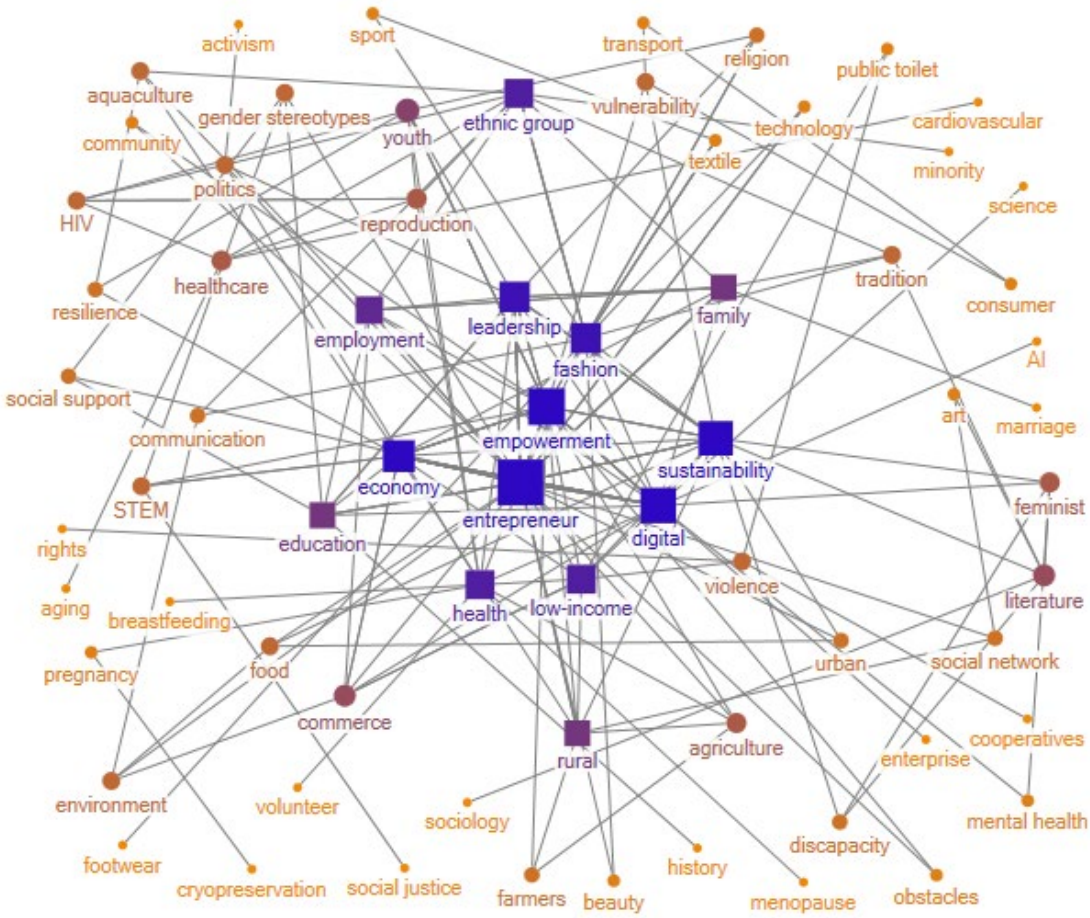
The fourth group in the network analysis consisted of countries from the BRICS economic bloc. Given the current geopolitical climate—particularly in the wake of the joint offensive by Israel and the United States against Iran on February 28, 2026—it is timely, and perhaps essential, to examine data on female social innovation through the lens of the countries comprising this group.

As of the writing of this study in March 2026, the BRICS economic bloc formally comprises ten countries: the five founding members from June 2009 (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and five countries that subsequently joined as official members (Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia). It is important to note that the inclusion of an article in a specific group was based on the defining criteria for groups 1 through 6, applied in that order; thus, for example, if an article was produced by authors affiliated with institutions in both China and the U.S., it was assigned to Group 2 (U.S. international collaborations) rather than Group 4 (BRICS bloc). Similarly, if an article was published by authors affiliated with the UK and Venezuela, it was assigned to Group 3 (Anglosphere, excluding the U.S.) rather than Group 5 (Latin America).

Group 4 produced 118 articles in Scopus-indexed journals that met the established inclusion criteria for research on women's social innovation. From these articles, 69 nodes were derived, with a maximum centrality score of 25. To date, the three most cited articles in this group have garnered 148, 74, and 46 Scopus citations, respectively, and were published exclusively by authors from Indonesia,

China, and India (Kapoor, 2019; Osei; Zhuang, 2020; Setini et al., 2020). The topics covered were: a) financing for women's self-help groups in impoverished circumstances; b) strategies to reduce female poverty in the agricultural sector; and c) mapping the trajectory of women's entrepreneurship in the development of creative businesses. Figure 4 presents the network analysis for this set of articles. Within the BRICS group, the nodes with the highest centrality—listed in descending order—represented the following themes in the context of women's social innovation research: "entrepreneurship", "empowerment", "digital", "economy", and "leadership".

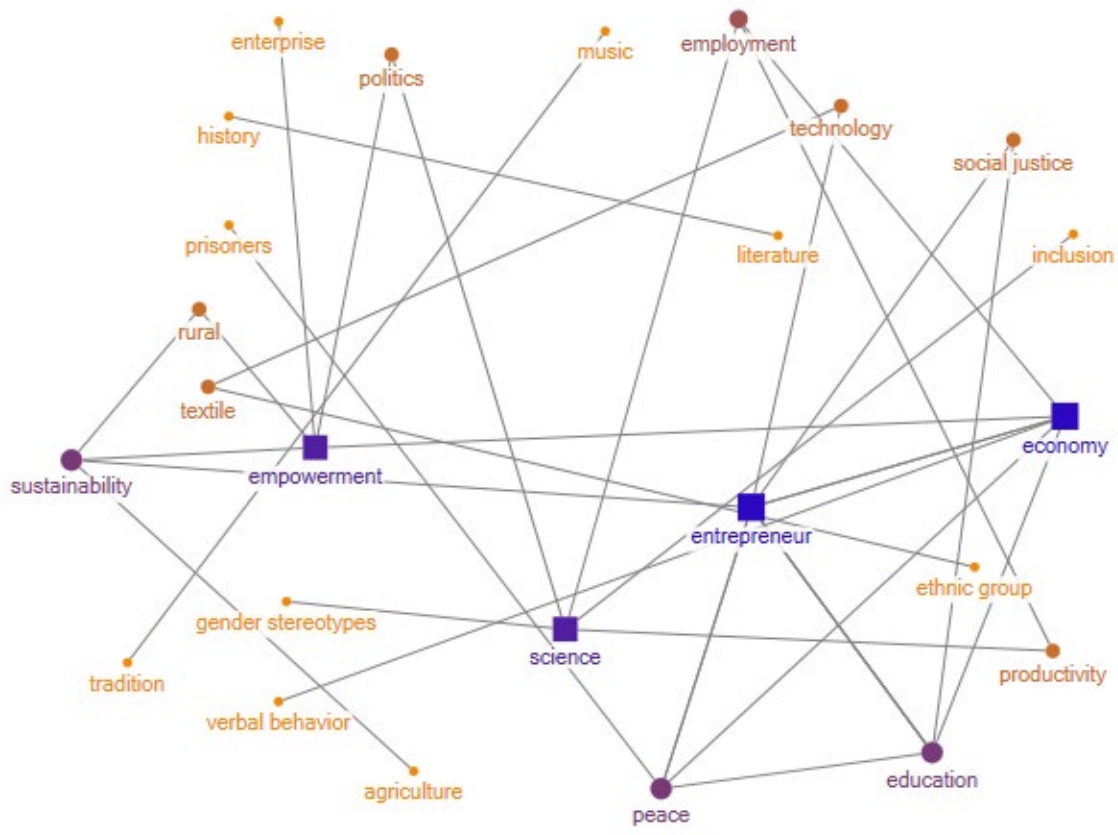
Figure 4 | Thematic network of 118 articles published by BRICS countries



Source: Prepared by the author.

The next group was made up of 6 Latin American countries (Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru) responsible for publishing research on WLSI in the region. From 2010 to date, 23 articles have been published in journals with Scopus registration. The most cited article of the group was a Mexican publication on indigenous empowerment in Zapotec women and has received 36 citations (Maguirre, Ruelas; De la Torre, 2016). Figure 5 presents the nodes resulting from the network analysis of this documentary production with themes of minimum centrality of 3. It is observed that the themes with the highest centrality for the group were: “economy”, “entrepreneurship”, “empowerment”, “education” and “sustainability”. The absence of topics such as: “health”, “feminist”, “ethnic groups”, “mental health” and “violence”, all important for Group 3, stands out.

Figure 5 | Network of publications on women’s social innovation (WLSI) from Latin American countries

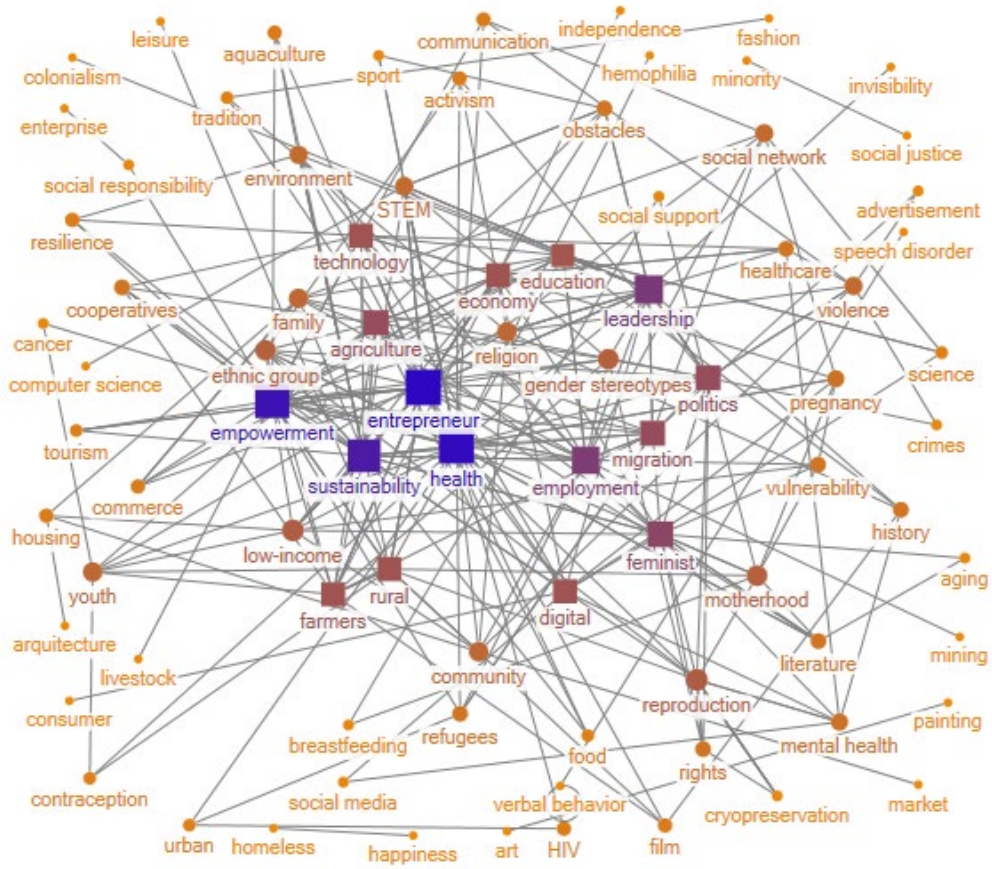


Source: Prepared by the author.

Finally, the remaining articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria for the first five groups were assigned to Group 6, designated as “Rest of the World”. This category comprised 203 articles, the earliest published in 1971, covering research on WLSI from 66 countries across four continents (Africa, Asia, Europe, and Oceania).

Figure 6 presents the network analysis of Group 6 publications on the subject. The total number of thematic nodes was 84, with a maximum centrality of 27. As in the previous figures, the image displays all nodes, with their color, size, and shape scaled in proportion to their degree of centrality. In this figure, topics with a centrality degree of 10 or higher are represented by square shapes. The analysis reveals that the most prominent nodes were, in descending order: “entrepreneurship”, “health”, “empowerment”, “sustainability”, and “leadership”.

Figure 6 | Network of 203 articles published by the rest of the world, excluding the Anglosphere, the BRICS bloc, and Latin America



Source: Prepared by the author.

In summary, the scientometric analysis of research on women's social innovation yielded five key findings regarding differential trends based on the geopolitical affiliation of the authors; these findings are listed below: a) overall, U.S. publications—comprising both domestic works (those with exclusively local authorship) and international ones—accounted for 25% of the total publications analyzed; b) the topics addressed in U.S. publications and their centrality differed between domestic and international orientations, particularly regarding "youth", "contraception", and "rural" issues; c) differences were also observed between U.S. research and that of the rest of the Anglosphere, with the primary distinction being the latter's emphasis on "mental health" and "ethnic groups"; d) countries in the BRICS bloc, Latin America, and the rest of the world have emphasized the themes of "entrepreneurship", "empowerment", and "sustainability", in contrast to the Anglosphere; and e) the combined output of BRICS countries (N=118) practically equaled the total U.S. output (N=121) regarding the study's subject matter—after accounting for an overlap of 13 publications, which were credited to the U.S. in the analysis. Collaborative work involving the U.S. and BRICS nations included partnerships with Brazil, India, China, Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates, and South Africa.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to analyze global trends in research on women-led social innovation based on academic publications in journals indexed in the prestigious bibliometric database Scopus, employing a scientometric methodology based on thematic network analysis and geopolitical criteria. Despite criticisms regarding the marked Anglophone bias in Scopus record content—which reflects disparities in the global distribution of resources and geopolitical power—this analytical exercise is valid. It reveals key trends in women-led social innovation within a controlled scope, using standardized metrics that allow for international comparison of the subject matter. Precedents exist for using this type of methodology to elucidate the state of the art in a disciplinary field through geopolitical criteria (Re; Jia; Xie, 2026); however, publications with this orientation remain scarce, despite their inherent advantages and undeniable capacity to facilitate an understanding of the interrelationships between variables within a specific field of knowledge. Specifically, the use of NodeXL-PRO software and the search conducted via the Scopus bibliometric engine enabled the

creation of a database with sufficient data to detect robust trends across country groups defined by geopolitical criteria. This made it possible to document points of convergence and divergence regarding the attention paid to specific topics and research regarding women's social innovation. The main strength of this research lies in its presentation of a thematic centrality analysis—grouped by country—that allows comparisons using standardized parameters. This analysis could serve as a starting point for future interdisciplinary studies incorporating econometric, sociological, public health, and development criteria. Such studies could interpret the implications of concentrating geopolitical scientific activity on specific topics while neglecting or omitting others in different regions of the world—an undertaking that fell outside the scope of the present study. There are two de facto limitations to this research that affect the generalizability of its conclusions. The first is that the study relied exclusively on the Scopus bibliometric search engine, which features a marked predominance of publications from the Anglosphere; other countries are underrepresented—not only due to language barriers but also because of the inclusion criteria used to accredit the journals within that system. In addition to language bias, there is the underrepresentation of Global South countries and a thematic bias favoring STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) over the social sciences. Some scholars note that Scopus indirectly diverts researchers outside the Anglosphere, discouraging them from addressing local topics of social relevance to their own contexts while rewarding them for publishing on subjects of central interest to the Anglosphere (Vessuri; Guédon; Cetto, 2014).

Despite these valid criticisms, exercises like the one presented here would not be feasible using bibliometric databases from the Global South—which tend to be more localized and limited in scope—for two reasons: a) these databases do not employ a closed citation counting system, and b) they likely lack sufficient appeal to attract participation from actors within the Anglosphere or other major geopolitical blocs.

Consequently, the scope of the conclusions is limited to the Scopus publishing platform. As previously noted, Scopus is a bibliometric database owned by the publishing company Elsevier and is dominated by bibliographic sources published in English—a fact that reflects global asymmetries regarding the visibility of scientific output.

A valid question is whether the findings concerning publication trends in this field would have differed had a different, equivalent database been used—such as WoS—or databases with narrower coverage focused on Latin America, such as SciELO, Redalyc, Latindex, LA Referencia, or Dimensions. This question could only be fully answered through empirical means by conducting a comparable analysis using one of the databases.

Authors such as Rozemblum, Alperin, and Unzurrunzaga (2021) have pointed out a potential conflict of interest within the Scopus database favoring journals from its own publishing house (Elsevier), alongside concerns about metrics management errors (Bravo-García; Montoya-Roncancio, 2026); however, the database operators themselves maintain that their metrics management is impeccable and note that Elsevier-published journals account for only 9.9% of total Scopus publications (Baas et al., 2020).

A second implicit limitation is the possibility that there are women-led social innovations—impacting social groups across various regions of the globe—that remain undocumented in scientific journals recognized by national and international bibliometric databases; unfortunately, the lack of documentation makes it impossible to measure the phenomenon or draw conclusions about it.

It can be concluded that further efforts—such as the exercise illustrated here—are needed using other search engines to understand current progress and shortcomings in comprehending complex phenomena, particularly those affecting vulnerable population sectors that play a decisive role in collective well-being.

Future analyses should link women-led social innovation with the issue of social inclusion, as the two topics are interconnected.

The scientometric analysis of research on women-led social innovation presented here revealed distinct trends based on the categorization of publications according to the geopolitical affiliations of their authors. Mapping scientific activity in the field of women-led social innovation makes it possible to identify thematic gaps or opportunities; addressing these is essential to creating greater opportunities for vulnerable groups and transforming society, thereby improving the adverse conditions women face in their communities—conditions that currently limit their scope of action.

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