

IMPROVING SCIMAGO JOURNAL & COUNTRY RANK (SJR) SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION THROUGH REFERENCE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: In order to re-categorize the SCImago Journal & Country Rank (SJR) journals based on Scopus, as well as improve the SJR subject classification scheme, an iterative process built upon reference analysis of citing journals was designed. The first step entailed construction of a matrix containing citing journals and cited categories obtained through the aggregation of cited journals. Assuming that the most representative categories in each journal would be represented by the highest citation values regarding categories, the matrix vectors were reduced using a threshold to discern and discard the weakest relations. The process was refined on the basis of different parameters of a heuristic nature, including 1) the development of *several tests applying different thresholds*, 2) the designation of a *cutoff*, 3) the *number of iterations* to execute, and 4) a *manual review* operation of a certain amount of multi-categorized journals. Despite certain shortcomings related with journal classification, the method showed a solid performance in grouping journals at a level higher than categories —that is, aggregating journals into subject areas. It also enabled us to redesign the SJR classification scheme, providing for a more cohesive one that covers a good proportion of re-categorized journals.

Keywords: Reference Analysis, Journal Classification, Subject Categorization, Multidisciplinary Databases, SCImago Journal & Country Rank.

Introduction

Problems related to the classification of scientific knowledge have been widely discussed by scholars and researchers from different disciplines throughout history. In the limelight of the Library and Information Science field stand contributions by figures such as Dewey, Otlet, Ranganathan or Hjørland, for instance. According to Glänzel (Glänzel & Schubert 2003) "classification of science into a disciplinary structure is at least as old as science itself". However, the facet of human knowledge that Chen described as a "complex and dynamic network" (Chen 2008) likewise complicates the development of any reliable and representative disciplinary classification scheme that might allow to effectively delimit different subjects or disciplines configuring this highly complex network.

Knowledge takes place as a result of the curiosity and interest of human beings focused on explaining the surrounding environment and the phenomena taking place. To this end, it is necessary to conduct research-related processes that may be considered inherent to human being and essential to reach knowledge. Nowadays, research is influenced by factors such as its strong relationship with society, the ultra-specialization of areas and disciplines of knowledge, the competitiveness exercised by increasing practitioners, groups and research institutions, or the dynamism resulting from new trends and fashions. All this gives rise to a considerable growth of literature, as well as a constant restructuring and redefinition of the areas and disciplines of scientific knowledge, which ultimately interferes with our ability to design and implement classification systems that represent scientific knowledge.

Databases, regarded as great repositories responsible for storing the results of scientific research, require the use of efficient classification schemes. This is a vital need not only when searching and retrieving information, but also for preparing cohesive and reliable bibliometric analyses. Isabel Gomez (Gómez et al. 1996), in the context of growing interdisciplinary research, underlined the meteoric changes involving disciplines and journals (titles changing, journals merging, etc.), or the establishment of classification systems targeted to the specific interests of each particular database as common problems regarding the organization of recorded scientific knowledge. Although a number of models can be adopted to classify the contents of the various scientific databases, two major multidisciplinary databases — the ISI Web of Science (WOS) (Thomson Reuters 2010) and Scopus (Elsevier 2002)— both opted to use a similar model of classification that relies upon one hierarchical scheme encompassing a number of areas (first level) and subject categories (second level). All the source journals collected by these databases are placed in one or more area and category on the basis of criteria such as title, scope or citation patterns. Thus, in contrast to databases with a more specialized coverage, such as Medline or INSPEC, where papers are directly assigned to categories, under the WOS or Scopus classification model, journals are classified into categories, while the papers covered by them are assigned to source categories through indirect assignment.

Both WOS and Scopus have become key tools for the development of bibliometric surveys which, in the face of science evaluation, aid decision-making on the part of scientific administrators and politicians concerned with funding and the efficient assignment of resources. As far back as 1963, Weinberg (Weinberg 1963) claimed that the extensive growth of science required more resources in a society of limited resources, meaning it was necessary to choose among different areas or fields of science (*scientific choice*) and between the various institutions receiving government assistance (*institutional choice*). He therefore put forth a number of useful criteria for prioritizing when selecting, divided into *internally generated within the scientific field* itself, and *externally generated out of the field*, which included aspects such as technological, scientific and social merit. It is clear that bibliometric and scientometric analysis as developed from data covered by major scientific databases must be considered essential instruments in the evaluation process and in selecting the best ones within a system mainly based on merit. However, in order to ensure that surveys have high credibility and precision, it is necessary to define and delimit in a reliable manner each one of the subject fields and subfields of knowledge generated through research. For this reason the design of a flexible and adaptable classification model for categorizing scientific literature is held to be an essential matter.

Review

This work introduces a proposal to improve the categorization of Scopus database journals included at the SCImago Journal and Country Rank (SJR) portal (SCImago Lab 2007) using journal reference analysis, one of the many techniques applied in the vast arena of scientific literature for the classification, categorization and delimitation of subject fields. Narin (Narin 1976) was a pioneer in proposing that papers be classified by allocating them to the category of journals to which they belonged. He held that citation recount was useful not only for bibliometric purposes, but also for the classification of publications. In earlier work (Narin, Carpenter, & Nancy 1972), using references and citation analysis, different graphic models were developed to represent the relations established between a set of journals and the disciplines they pertained to. In papers published with Pinski (Narin, Pinski, & Gee 1976) (Pinski & Narin 1976), he used the analysis of bibliographic references to aggregate journals into different groups and subject categories.

Glänzel employed reference analysis to develop an item-by-item classification model applicable at the level of items (papers) rather than at the source level. Firstly, he analyzed paper reference lists of the Science Citation Index (SCI) *multidisciplinary* and *general journals* (Glänzel, Schubert, & Czerwon 1999). He then applied a methodology similar to that used with papers published in journals covered by the *Social Science Citation Index* (SSCI) (Glänzel and others 1999). Finally, in a further contribution, Glänzel (Glänzel & Schubert 2003) devised a new classification scheme applicable to all areas of scientific knowledge (science, social sciences, and arts & humanities) with scientometric evaluation purposes. The three-step building process included, at step 3, the classification of papers appearing in journals with ambiguous or poorly defined categories (i.e. multidisciplinary), on the basis of reference analysis.

Searching for a way to upgrade and restructure classification of journals, Leydesdorff (Leydesdorff 2002) developed a proposal to define shifts in the classification schemes of databases due to the inclusion of new journals or modifications (merges or title changes) affecting them. This proposal focused on transactions and relationships among journals involving citation. Its main goal was to define a posteriori the changes in categories represented by different sets of journals, giving rise to a dynamic and evolutionary update of the classification schemes used in databases.

More recently, in order to define and delimit the ISI categories of *Oncology* and *Cardiac & Cardiovascular System*, Lopez-Illescas (López-Illescas and others 2009) put forth an approach combining the use of WOS specialized journal categories together with reference analysis. Under this approach, it is assumed that scientific journal articles are well categorized within a given subfield of the source journal. Therefore, a subfield could be properly delimited by a group of papers from specialized journals in a particular subfield (*subfield's specialist journals*) and another group of papers belonging to non-specialist journals (*additional journals*) that cite journal papers from a previously established citation threshold.

Improving and updating the categorization of Scopus database journals included in the SCImago Journal and Country Rank (SJR) website calls for some reallocation and delimitation of subject areas and categories in order to restructure the scientific knowledge encompassed by SJR journals. It is thus intended to represent a consistent and congruent new disciplinary structure founded upon a set of well defined subject categories. Once the new classification scheme is defined, it is necessary to re-categorize journals, assigning the subject categories considered under the new scheme. This process largely entails reference analysis. In the case of journals with an insufficient number of bibliographic references, e.g. social science or arts & humanities journals, it will be necessary to tackle other methodological procedures in order to categorize them.

The final goal of our proposal is therefore to redefine the subject areas and categories of SJR journals through reference analysis. Narin (Narin 1976) established the importance of citations among papers to define the structure of scientific literature. At a macro level, he found citation analysis useful for representing and relating areas and subject categories by mapping journals. By further exploring this idea, we intend to more soundly define categories or disciplines representing the knowledge covered by the scientific literature of SJR journals.

Methodology

The SJR two-level hierarchical classification scheme, consisting of 27 areas and 308 subject categories, was used in this study. It had been previously defined by SCImago group members on an empirical basis, taking into account characteristic and discriminative journal features such as title or scope, and expert opinions. The starting point was the editors' journal categorization based on their scope statements. Many

authors hold a priori classification schemes developed by experts (relying on their scholarship, knowledge and experience in specific fields) to be useful not only for information retrieval, but also for bibliometric and scientometric purposes. Glänzel (Glänzel & Schubert 2003) judged this proposal as sensible and pragmatic. Earlier on, Schubert (Schubert & Braun 1996) affirmed that in reference standardization processes, essential for the development of scientometric indicators and their subsequent comparison, “comparative assessments based on prior classification schemes are usually easier to comprehend and accept”.

We then submitted a query to retrieve Scopus data from SJR in order to derive a neighbor list containing citing-journals, cited-journals and values representing the relationships established among them. The data set covered a 6-year period, from 2003 to 2008, with references going back as far as 1996 (to 2008), and including a total of 17158 journals. For this process, journal self-citation values were discarded. By using this list, an asymmetric journal-category citation matrix was constructed whose values display the amount of citing-journal references linking to SJR categories, reached via aggregation of the cited-journal categories. Therefore, improved final categorization of journals was achieved on the basis of SJR categorization (previously assigned) of cited-journals. The relationship values established among journals and categories were later transformed into percentages. Finally, categories labeled as Miscellaneous and Multidisciplinary were removed from the analysis.

Observation of journal-category vectors derived from the journal-category matrix, revealed the existence of a large amount of residual values in each one. These values reflect weaker relations established between the journals and certain categories (Figure 1). We assumed that, for each journal vector, the most representative categories were reflected by higher percentage values. So as to avoid the weakest links representing the categories with less influence on journal topic, a threshold was established. This allowed us to transform original vectors by keeping only values or aggregate values (cumulative sum) equal to or higher than the threshold defined, while values below it were isolated (Figure 2). Thus, the method works by stressing the generality of journals in order to define their definitive categories.

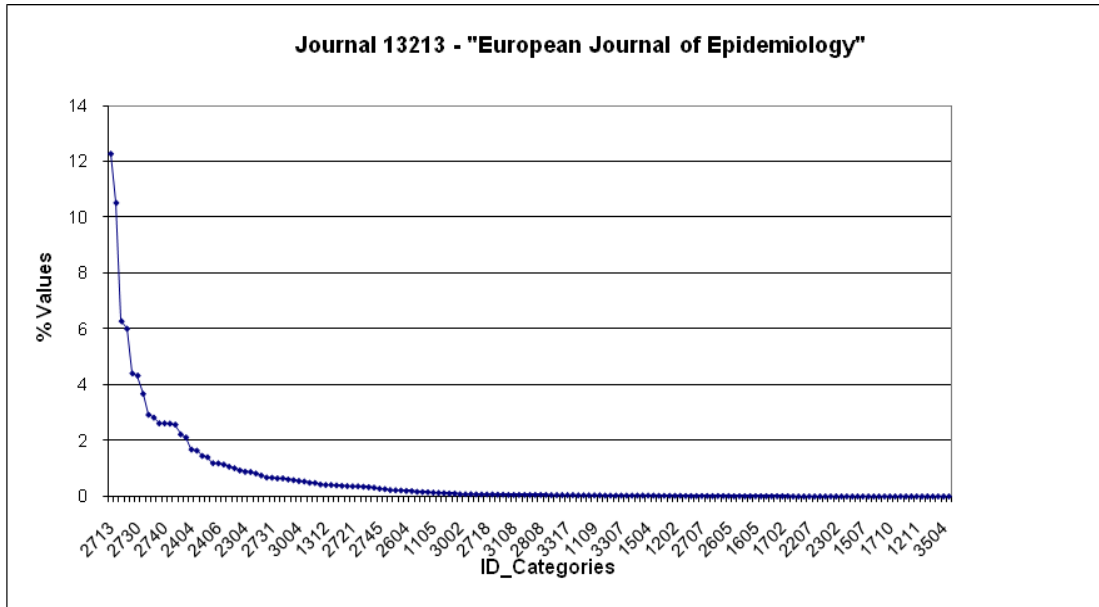


Figure 1: Distribution of Categories of Journal 13213 after Iteration 1

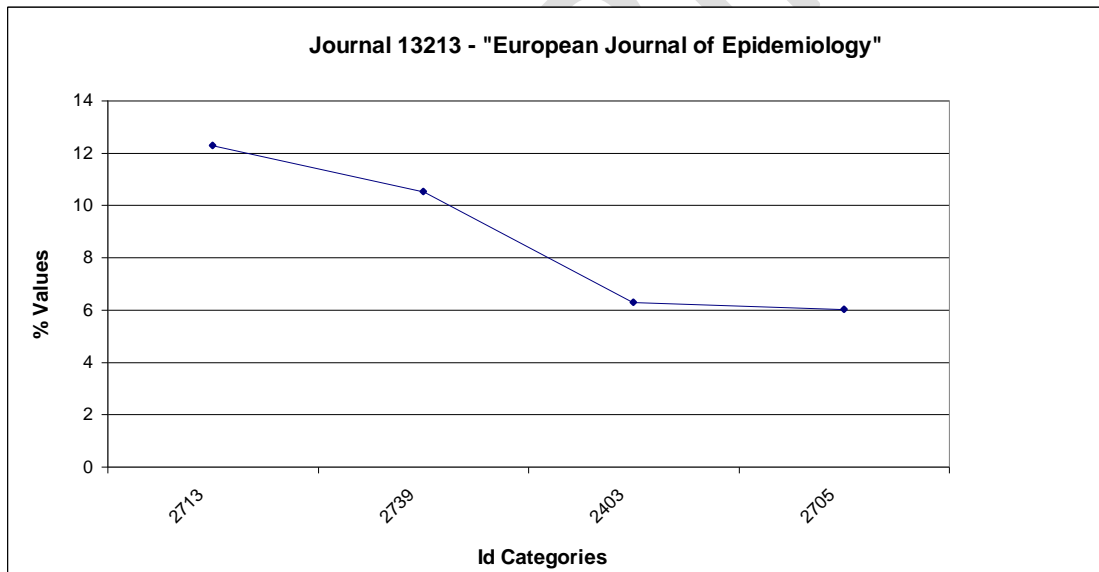


Figure 2: Distribution of Categories of Journal 13213 after Iteration 1 and Threshold 31%

As the next step, we ran an iterative categorization process during n times, so that classification of the journals constituting the citation network would be enhanced and gain in pertinence. That is, as the process advanced, relations among journals and categories would be seen to change; while journal-journal links remained identical, cited journal categories were altered through iterations by means of a feedback process. It was therefore necessary to clarify some important questions for the method's performance, such as: 1) *number of iterations* to execute; 2) *cutoff or stopping point* in order to reach a well-delimited and consistent subject categories scheme; and 3) *the threshold value* to apply to vectors.

On the one hand, through an heuristic approach based on observation of changes produced at distribution of categories per iteration —i.e., the number of categories keeping cited by journals after each replication (Figure 3)— we concluded that a total of 12 iterations was enough to obtain an overall view of process performance. On the other hand, it was noted that cutoff depends largely upon the threshold value established. To select the more appropriate threshold, we resorted to several empirical tests using values from 25% to 60%. These tests evidenced that best threshold was 31%. Thereby, once vectors were optimized, the matrix was reduced to approximately a 1/3 share of their values, retaining only the strongest relations between journals and categories. Then, by analyzing certain indicators achieved after adopting 31% threshold, iteration 2 was determined to be the best point to halt the process. At that point, changes resulting in journal categorization were the most balanced according to relevant indicators such as *Mean categories per journal* or *Number of cited categories per iteration*. Table 1, collecting these indicators, makes manifest that the steepest drop in the distribution of categories per iteration was between 1 and 3. Not only did this reinforced iteration 2 serve as an excellent cutoff, but also, journals with a high number of assigned categories could thereby be avoided. Distribution of journals with n categories can be seen in Figure 4.

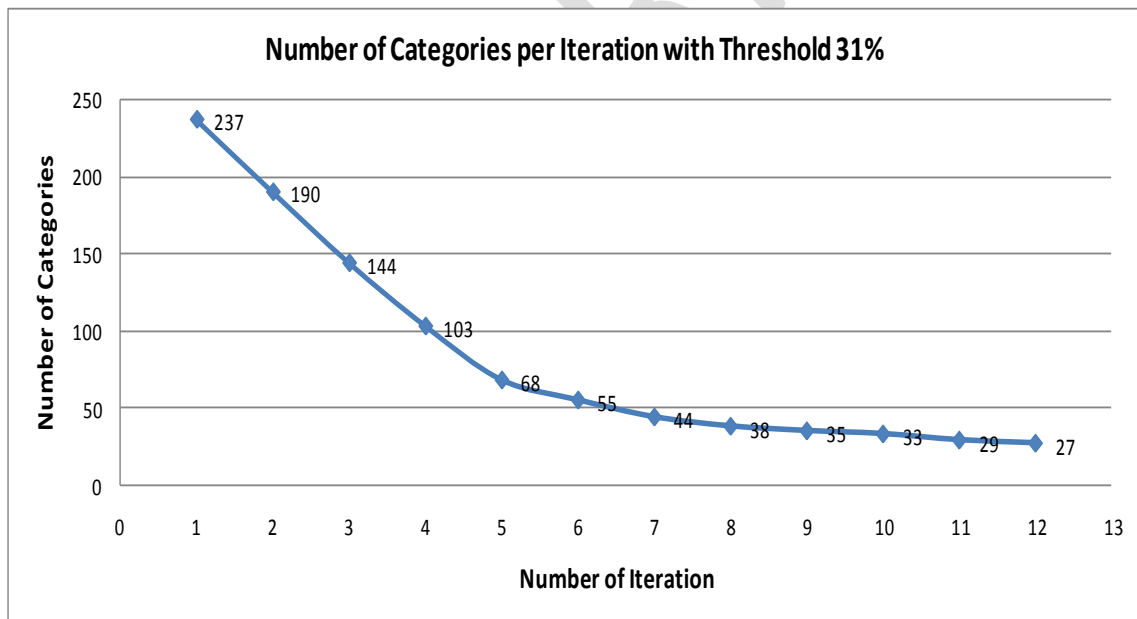


Figure 3: Distribution of Categories over Iterations using a Threshold of 31%

| | Journals Categorized | Journals Not Categorized | Number of Records per Table | Mean of Categories per Journal | Num. of Cited Categories | Slope | Slope Percentage | Num. of Non-cited Categories |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------------------|
| iteration 1 | 15584 | 1574 | 34046 | 2.19 | 237 | | | 66 |
| iteration 2 | 15595 | 1563 | 32317 | 2.07 | 190 | 47 | 22.4 | 113 |
| iteration 3 | 15595 | 1563 | 25606 | 1.64 | 144 | 46 | 21.9 | 159 |
| iteration 4 | 15595 | 1563 | 20277 | 1.30 | 103 | 41 | 19.5 | 200 |
| iteration 5 | 15595 | 1563 | 17514 | 1.12 | 68 | 35 | 16.7 | 235 |
| iteration 6 | 15595 | 1563 | 16560 | 1.06 | 55 | 13 | 6.2 | 248 |
| iteration 7 | 15595 | 1563 | 16209 | 1.04 | 44 | 11 | 5.2 | 259 |
| iteration 8 | 15595 | 1563 | 16089 | 1.03 | 38 | 6 | 2.9 | 265 |
| iteration 9 | 15595 | 1563 | 15982 | 1.03 | 35 | 3 | 1.4 | 268 |
| iteration 10 | 15595 | 1563 | 15872 | 1.02 | 33 | 2 | 1.0 | 270 |
| iteration 11 | 15595 | 1563 | 15815 | 1.01 | 29 | 4 | 1.9 | 274 |
| iteration 12 | 15595 | 1563 | 15769 | 1.01 | 27 | 2 | 1.0 | 276 |

Table 1: Indicators obtained for a Threshold of 31%

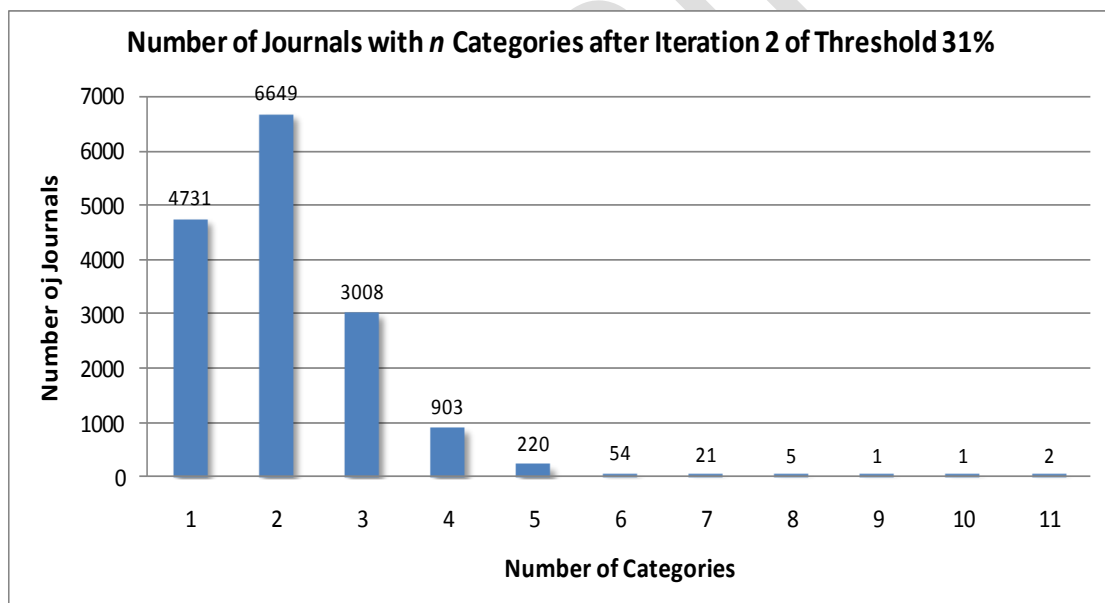


Figure 4: Distribution of Journals with n Categories after Iteration 2 and Threshold 31%

Having resolved the threshold, cutoff and number iterations to be applied, we considered that, in order to establish a stronger journal categorization and a more robust scheme, it was necessary that the categorized journals would satisfy the condition of having at least 30 items and 30 references pointing to database sources. Of course, some journals did not reach these values, and so the number of journals categorized decreased around 1500; but at the same time this ensured a good ratio of journals categorized and a well delimited set of subject categories.

The last stage of the method involved the application of a manual review process of journals with more than 4 assigned categories so as to obtain a finer categorization and to prevent an extensive number of multi-categorized journals. This was done following a set of well defined rules, making it possible to readjust the final categorization of around 300 journals and allowing us to discard categories with low rates, to determine a maximum of 5 categories per journal, and to aggregate categories into homogenous sets of the same subject area (*miscellaneous categories*), or into heterogeneous ones of different areas (*multidisciplinary category*). By doing so, 8 new categories (*7 miscellaneous and 1 multidisciplinary*) were obtained and added to the final set of categories forming part of the renewed classification scheme. Additionally, the multidisciplinary category was included in one new *multidisciplinary area*.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 collects some indicators related to different moments in the development and evolution of this categorization process, from SJR initial categorization to the final classification scheme obtained after applying thresholds, iterations and reviews. Comparison of the original SJR classification scheme and new one revealed various perceptible changes implying new aggregations of journals into different categories than before, and, most importantly, the disappearance of some categories that are not used by journals —in other words, categories that are not being linked by the current journal references. To a lesser degree, this affects areas as well, whose removal is fully tied to a total disuse of categories included into them. The total number of changes in journal categorization was over 12000, involving the addition, loss or new ranking (based on percentages) of categories assigned to journals.

| | SJR | Threshold 31% Iteration 1 | Threshold 31% Iteration 2 | Threshold 31% Iteration 2 Papers & Refs. to DB Sources ≥ 30 | Threshold 31% Iteration 2 Review of Journals >4 Categories Assigned |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|---|
| Categorized Journals | 17158 | 15584 | 15595 | 14166 | 14166 |
| Number of Areas | 27 | 25 | 23 | 23 | 24 |
| Number of Categories | 308 | 237 | 190 | 186 | 198 |
| Mean of Categories per Journal | 1.54 | 2.19 | 2.07 | 2.11 | 2.06 |

Table 2: Differences among SJR original categorization and new one

The final categorization scheme (giving rise to a total of 14166 categorized journals) including subject areas, subject categories covered by them, journals citing each category, and their corresponding percentages over total journals categorized, can be found in the *Appendix* section of this paper. To calculate percentages, the overlap due to multi-categorization of journals was studied. At a higher level, Table 3 captures the final distribution of journals per area under the new SJR categorization scheme, collecting the number of journals covered by areas, percentages of this ratio, and the

number of categories included in every given area together with their respective percentages.

| AREA | Journals Covered per Areas | Percentage of Journals | Categories per Area | Percentage of Categories |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Multidisciplinary | 28 | 0.10 | 1 | 0.51 |
| Agricultural and Biological Sciences | 1543 | 5.28 | 11 | 5.56 |
| Arts and Humanities | 586 | 2.01 | 8 | 4.04 |
| Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology | 5213 | 17.85 | 13 | 6.57 |
| Business, Management and Accounting | 792 | 2.71 | 9 | 4.55 |
| Chemical Engineering | 232 | 0.79 | 6 | 3.03 |
| Chemistry | 938 | 3.21 | 7 | 3.54 |
| Computer Science | 629 | 2.15 | 12 | 6.06 |
| Decision Sciences | 110 | 0.38 | 1 | 0.51 |
| Earth and Planetary Sciences | 1056 | 3.62 | 11 | 5.56 |
| Economics, Econometrics and Finance | 840 | 2.88 | 2 | 1.01 |
| Energy | 172 | 0.59 | 5 | 2.53 |
| Engineering | 1968 | 6.74 | 13 | 6.57 |
| Environmental Science | 1169 | 4.00 | 8 | 4.04 |
| Immunology and Microbiology | 2023 | 6.93 | 5 | 2.53 |
| Materials Science | 619 | 2.12 | 8 | 4.04 |
| Mathematics | 739 | 2.53 | 9 | 4.55 |
| Medicine | 6931 | 23.73 | 35 | 17.68 |
| Neuroscience | 107 | 0.37 | 2 | 1.01 |
| Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics | 278 | 0.95 | 3 | 1.52 |
| Physics and Astronomy | 847 | 2.90 | 8 | 4.04 |
| Psychology | 278 | 0.95 | 5 | 2.53 |
| Social Sciences | 2037 | 6.97 | 14 | 7.07 |
| Health Professions | 72 | 0.25 | 2 | 1.01 |
| Total | 29207 | 100 | 198 | 100 |

Table 3: Final Categorization Scheme at Area Level

A simple glance at Table 3 suffices to discover a group of dense areas covering a high number of journals. In more specific terms, this means that a set of 21,940 journals, that is, approximately 75% of the total taking into account the overlap, cite categories covered by just 8 of the 24 areas constituting the final scheme. *Medicine* (23.73%) and *Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology* (17.85%) stand out quite clearly. As a general rule, the denser the area appears, the more categories it includes, although there are some exceptions, for instance, in *Computer Science*; *Immunology and Microbiology*; or *Economics, Econometrics and Finance*.

At the level of categories (see Appendix), we encountered one small group of very populous categories covering thousands of journals, a medium-size group of categories including hundreds of journals, and a great one formed by categories embracing fewer

than 100 journals. To explore this finding, a ranking of categories based on the number of journals citing each category was constructed. These values were then transformed into percentages, and the cumulative percentages for this distribution were finally added as well. Similar to what happened with the areas, these findings (partially given in Table 4) evidenced a large aggregation of journals in several categories of the new classification scheme. It was moreover seen that only 15 of the 198 categories of the new classification scheme proved sufficient to categorize nearly 50% of the 14,416 journals conforming the final set (again, there was overlap in calculating percentages). Both the aggregations and the decreasing number of areas and categories most likely occurred because the method implies a flow of journals moving from certain categories to others as iterations proceed, as well as the final isolation of many categories.

| Rank | CATEGORIES | Journals Citing Category | Percentage | Cumulative Percentage |
|------|--|--------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Immunology | 1740 | 5.96 | 5.96 |
| 2 | Cell Biology | 1688 | 5.78 | 11.74 |
| 3 | Biochemistry | 1483 | 5.08 | 16.81 |
| 4 | Psychiatry and Mental Health | 1380 | 4.72 | 21.54 |
| 5 | Cardiology and Cardiovascular Medicine | 1221 | 4.18 | 25.72 |
| 6 | Public Health, Environmental and Occupational Health | 1106 | 3.79 | 29.51 |
| 7 | Sociology and Political Science | 944 | 3.23 | 32.74 |
| 8 | Economics and Econometrics | 838 | 2.87 | 35.61 |
| 9 | Electrical and Electronic Engineering | 820 | 2.81 | 38.42 |
| 10 | Oncology | 683 | 2.34 | 40.75 |
| 11 | Condensed Matter Physics | 631 | 2.16 | 42.91 |
| 12 | Ecology | 616 | 2.11 | 45.02 |
| 13 | Physical and Theoretical Chemistry | 552 | 1.89 | 46.91 |
| 14 | Cancer Research | 536 | 1.84 | 48.75 |
| 15 | Physiology | 505 | 1.73 | 50.48 |

Table 4: Top 15 Ranked Journals per Category with New Categorization

A number of factors play some role in this phenomenon. Firstly, an implicit feature of the approach is that it keeps the most outstanding categories and discards the less representative ones per each journal. Thus, the method focuses on generality rather than specificity in its attempt to delineate and define a journal subject. Figures 1 and 2 (above) serve to illustrate this aspect of performance.

A second reason is the drawing power of certain categories, particularly from the area of pure sciences. The data provided in Table 4 reveal that, on the whole, categories ranked in foremost positions (*Immunology; Cell Biology; Biochemistry; Psychiatry and Mental Health; Cardiology and Cardiovascular Medicine*, etc.) are encompassed in pure science areas such as *Immunology and Microbiology; Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology; or Medicine*. Only the categories of *Sociology and Political Science;*

and *Economics and Econometrics*, more connected to the area of the social sciences area, are an exception within the top 15 categories list. Therefore, since the method developed is based on journal reference analysis, we infer the existence of a substantial share of journals citing database pure science sources, despite the subject area or category where they are actually included. The disuse of different categories is a common issue for those categories with a low rate of journals citing them. Thus, categorized journals are finally attracted to more powerful categories as a consequence of the Matthew Effect. This phenomenon becomes more acute as more iterations are run.

Nevertheless, another possibility concerns the relatively new disciplines with a non-cohesive background. Normally these disciplines cite intellectual bases (Chen 2006) pertaining to other fields with very close boundaries, or which can find a “fertile ground in a neighboring field” (Small 1999) evoking inter-disciplinarily symptoms. Some examples of this are the categories *Gender Studies*; *Human Factors and Ergonomy*; *Nature and Landscape Conservation*, or a few from the area of *Nursing*.

Of course, all these explanations can be extrapolated to the application of the different thresholds used in the development and design of our method. One additional disadvantage is that, the higher the threshold, the higher the ratio of multi-categorized journals proved to be; and conversely, the lower the threshold, the lower the number of categories falling into the final categorization scheme.

Conclusions

The proposal featured permitted us to categorize 14,416 Scopus journals from an initial set of 17,158 as well as to restructure and redefine the SJR classification scheme at two levels of aggregation. Admittedly, while the method provided a consistent SJR classification scheme, we are mindful that it can not be considered as a definitive classification solution, since it does not provide a comprehensive and definitive placement of the journals assessed. For the time being, this approach should be supplemented with additional techniques, based either on citation or on text, in order to classify the whole set of covered journals.

A good performance of the method is closely linked to a good set-up of the main parameters, namely, total number of iterations to use, threshold to apply and cutoff fixed. Heuristic processes and empirical tests were determining factors for configuring it. The designation of 12 iterations was enough to make manifest that more iterations meant bigger aggregations of journals into a small set of categories. This fact may be useful in the case that one keeps running iterations until grouping journals into vast, basic areas of scientific knowledge. Regarding thresholds and cutoff, we noted they were very closely related. From the whole set of tests executed, the most balanced mix of these parameters, in terms of *number of categories cited by journals*, *mean of categories per journal*, and *number of multi-categorized journals*, took place at iteration 2 of the threshold 31%. Of course, the results of this combination were not the same in every test.

The method inevitably entails missed categories due to a large aggregation of journals into a reduced number of categories. Thus, an ever-increasing share of journals is seen to use an ever-decreasing share of categories. In other words, a small set of categories would suffice to categorize a vast set of journals, and we believe the method could offer better results by categorizing journals to a high level of aggregation, such as subject area. The category aggregation problem could be minimized by modifying the method, for instance using only the first iteration and discarding the remaining ones.

The citation flows between categories evidenced a clear attraction exerted by sources covering pure science. This happened among categories of different subject areas and also among categories of the same area. Some causes behind this might be related to database coverage, citation behavior, or the degree of consolidation of each particular discipline.

It is also interesting to highlight another positive aspect of the method, concerning the decreasing number of journals categorized under the Multidisciplinary category. Journals assigned to this category shifted to narrower categories later, mostly to Miscellaneous, which covers different categories inside the same subject area. In our study, the number of Multidisciplinary journals went from the 65 journals of the SJR original categorization to 28 journals under the new scheme.

Before closing, we underline that upcoming studies should provide a good framework to implement alternative techniques and to improve our method, so that a complete assignation of categories for each journal gathered and analyzed could be carried out. Forthcoming research efforts will thus be directed toward cluster analysis, examining the citation dimension through coupling and cross-citation. Later on, other possibilities may be explored, such as text dimension, using keywords or text parts extracted from journal articles.

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Appendix

| AREAS | CATEGORIES | Journal Citing Category | Percentage |
|---|--|-------------------------|------------|
| Multidisciplinary | Multidisciplinary | 28 | 0.096 |
| Agricultural and Biological Sciences | Agricultural and Biological Sciences (miscellaneous) | 2 | 0.007 |
| | Agronomy and Crop Science | 82 | 0.281 |
| | Animal Science and Zoology | 247 | 0.846 |
| | Aquatic Science | 272 | 0.931 |
| | Ecology, Evolution, Behavior and Systematics | 67 | 0.229 |
| | Food Science | 255 | 0.873 |
| | Forestry | 45 | 0.154 |
| | Horticulture | 1 | 0.003 |
| | Insect Science | 63 | 0.216 |
| | Plant Science | 427 | 1.462 |
| | Soil Science | 82 | 0.281 |
| Arts and Humanities | History | 250 | 0.856 |
| | Language and Linguistics | 159 | 0.544 |
| | Classics | 1 | 0.003 |
| | Literature and Literary Theory | 45 | 0.154 |
| | Music | 16 | 0.055 |
| | Philosophy | 87 | 0.298 |
| | Religious Studies | 19 | 0.065 |
| | Visual Arts and Performing Arts | 9 | 0.031 |
| Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology | Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology (miscellaneous) | 34 | 0.116 |
| | Aging | 15 | 0.051 |
| | Biochemistry | 1483 | 5.078 |
| | Biophysics | 3 | 0.010 |
| | Biotechnology | 69 | 0.236 |
| | Cancer Research | 536 | 1.835 |
| | Cell Biology | 1688 | 5.779 |
| | Developmental Biology | 13 | 0.045 |
| | Endocrinology | 292 | 1.000 |
| | Genetics | 431 | 1.476 |
| | Molecular Biology | 142 | 0.486 |
| | Physiology | 505 | 1.729 |
| | Structural Biology | 2 | 0.007 |
| Business, Management and | Business, Management and Accounting (miscellaneous) | 3 | 0.010 |
| | Accounting | 10 | 0.034 |

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|-------------------------------------|---|-------|-------|
| Accounting | Business and International Management | 82 | 0.281 |
| | Management Information Systems | 9 | 0.031 |
| | Management of Technology and Innovation | 383 | 1.311 |
| | Marketing | 65 | 0.223 |
| | Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management | 5 | 0.017 |
| | Strategy and Management | 227 | 0.777 |
| | Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Management | 8 | 0.027 |
| Chemical Engineering | Catalysis | 61 | 0.209 |
| | Chemical Health and Safety | 1 | 0.003 |
| | Colloid and Surface Chemistry | 14 | 0.048 |
| | Filtration and Separation | 4 | 0.014 |
| | Fluid Flow and Transfer Processes | 105 | 0.360 |
| | Process Chemistry and Technology | 47 | 0.161 |
| Chemistry | Chemistry (miscellaneous) | 3 | 0.010 |
| | Analytical Chemistry | 121 | 0.414 |
| | Electrochemistry | 34 | 0.116 |
| | Inorganic Chemistry | 21 | 0.072 |
| | Organic Chemistry | 195 | 0.668 |
| | Physical and Theoretical Chemistry | 552 | 1.890 |
| | Spectroscopy | 12 | 0.041 |
| Computer Science | Computer Science (miscellaneous) | 7 | 0.024 |
| | Artificial Intelligence | 114 | 0.390 |
| | Computational Theory and Mathematics | 77 | 0.264 |
| | Computer Graphics and Computer-Aided Design | 39 | 0.134 |
| | Computer Networks and Communications | 3 | 0.010 |
| | Computer Science Applications | 8 | 0.027 |
| | Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition | 22 | 0.075 |
| | Hardware and Architecture | 43 | 0.147 |
| | Human-Computer Interaction | 7 | 0.024 |
| | Information Systems | 88 | 0.301 |
| | Signal Processing | 5 | 0.017 |
| | Software | 216 | 0.740 |
| Decision Sciences | Management Science and Operations Research | 110 | 0.377 |
| Earth and Planetary Sciences | Earth and Planetary Sciences (miscellaneous) | 4 | 0.014 |
| | Atmospheric Science | 191 | 0.654 |
| | Computers in Earth Sciences | 26 | 0.089 |
| | Earth-Surface Processes | 77 | 0.264 |
| | Geochemistry and Petrology | 351 | 1.202 |
| | Geology | 75 | 0.257 |
| | Geophysics | 111 | 0.380 |
| | Geotechnical Engineering and Engineering Geology | 73 | 0.250 |
| | Oceanography | 44 | 0.151 |
| Paleontology | 54 | 0.185 | |

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|--|--|-------|-------|
| | Space and Planetary Science | 50 | 0.171 |
| Economics, Econometrics and Finance | Economics and Econometrics | 838 | 2.869 |
| | Finance | 2 | 0.007 |
| Energy | Energy (miscellaneous) | 1 | 0.003 |
| | Energy Engineering and Power Technology | 85 | 0.291 |
| | Fuel Technology | 17 | 0.058 |
| | Nuclear Energy and Engineering | 23 | 0.079 |
| | Renewable Energy, Sustainability and the Environment | 46 | 0.158 |
| Engineering | Engineering (miscellaneous) | 30 | 0.103 |
| | Aerospace Engineering | 15 | 0.051 |
| | Biomedical Engineering | 43 | 0.147 |
| | Civil and Structural Engineering | 136 | 0.466 |
| | Computational Mechanics | 140 | 0.479 |
| | Control and Systems Engineering | 232 | 0.794 |
| | Electrical and Electronic Engineering | 820 | 2.808 |
| | Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering | 57 | 0.195 |
| | Mechanical Engineering | 445 | 1.524 |
| | Mechanics of Materials | 1 | 0.003 |
| | Ocean Engineering | 17 | 0.058 |
| | Safety, Risk, Reliability and Quality | 13 | 0.045 |
| | Building and Construction | 19 | 0.065 |
| Environmental Science | Environmental Science (miscellaneous) | 6 | 0.021 |
| | Ecology | 616 | 2.109 |
| | Environmental Chemistry | 343 | 1.174 |
| | Environmental Engineering | 85 | 0.291 |
| | Health, Toxicology and Mutagenesis | 13 | 0.045 |
| | Management, Monitoring, Policy and Law | 8 | 0.027 |
| | Waste Management and Disposal | 1 | 0.003 |
| Water Science and Technology | 97 | 0.332 | |
| Immunology and Microbiology | Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology | 2 | 0.007 |
| | Immunology | 1740 | 5.957 |
| | Microbiology | 240 | 0.822 |
| | Parasitology | 40 | 0.137 |
| | Virology | 1 | 0.003 |
| Materials Science | Materials Science (miscellaneous) | 1 | 0.003 |
| | Biomaterials | 22 | 0.075 |
| | Ceramics and Composites | 48 | 0.164 |
| | Electronic, Optical and Magnetic Materials | 131 | 0.449 |
| | Materials Chemistry | 139 | 0.476 |
| | Metals and Alloys | 128 | 0.438 |
| | Polymers and Plastics | 130 | 0.445 |
| | Surfaces, Coatings and Films | 20 | 0.068 |
| Mathematics | Algebra and Number Theory | 134 | 0.459 |

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|-----------------|--|------|-------|
| | Analysis | 15 | 0.051 |
| | Applied Mathematics | 370 | 1.267 |
| | Computational Mathematics | 20 | 0.068 |
| | Discrete Mathematics and Combinatorics | 18 | 0.062 |
| | Logic | 11 | 0.038 |
| | Mathematical Physics | 21 | 0.072 |
| | Statistics and Probability | 101 | 0.346 |
| | Theoretical Computer Science | 49 | 0.168 |
| Medicine | Medicine (miscellaneous) | 35 | 0.120 |
| | Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine | 76 | 0.260 |
| | Cardiology and Cardiovascular Medicine | 1221 | 4.181 |
| | Critical Care and Intensive Care Medicine | 8 | 0.027 |
| | Complementary and Alternative Medicine | 2 | 0.007 |
| | Dermatology | 85 | 0.291 |
| | Emergency Medicine | 14 | 0.048 |
| | Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism | 67 | 0.229 |
| | Epidemiology | 30 | 0.103 |
| | Gastroenterology | 117 | 0.401 |
| | Genetics (clinical) | 3 | 0.010 |
| | Geriatrics and Gerontology | 48 | 0.164 |
| | Health Informatics | 4 | 0.014 |
| | Health Policy | 33 | 0.113 |
| | Hematology | 23 | 0.079 |
| | Microbiology (medical) | 1 | 0.003 |
| | Nephrology | 47 | 0.161 |
| | Neurology (clinical) | 406 | 1.390 |
| | Obstetrics and Gynecology | 137 | 0.469 |
| | Oncology | 683 | 2.338 |
| | Ophthalmology | 86 | 0.294 |
| | Orthopedics and Sports Medicine | 265 | 0.907 |
| | Otorhinolaryngology | 118 | 0.404 |
| | Pathology and Forensic Medicine | 102 | 0.349 |
| | Pediatrics, Perinatology and Child Health | 152 | 0.520 |
| | Pharmacology (medical) | 7 | 0.024 |
| | Psychiatry and Mental Health | 1380 | 4.725 |
| | Public Health, Environmental and Occupational Health | 1106 | 3.787 |
| | Pulmonary and Respiratory Medicine | 97 | 0.332 |
| | Radiology, Nuclear Medicine and Imaging | 164 | 0.562 |
| | Rehabilitation | 40 | 0.137 |
| | Rheumatology | 37 | 0.127 |
| | Surgery | 282 | 0.966 |
| | Transplantation | 1 | 0.003 |
| | Urology | 54 | 0.185 |

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|---|--|-----|-------|
| Neuroscience | Behavioral Neuroscience | 10 | 0.034 |
| | Cognitive Neuroscience | 97 | 0.332 |
| Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics | Pharmaceutical Science | 38 | 0.130 |
| | Pharmacology | 180 | 0.616 |
| | Toxicology | 60 | 0.205 |
| Physics and Astronomy | Acoustics and Ultrasonics | 35 | 0.120 |
| | Astronomy and Astrophysics | 1 | 0.003 |
| | Condensed Matter Physics | 631 | 2.160 |
| | Instrumentation | 2 | 0.007 |
| | Nuclear and High Energy Physics | 80 | 0.274 |
| | Atomic and Molecular Physics, and Optics | 76 | 0.260 |
| | Radiation | 7 | 0.024 |
| | Statistical and Nonlinear Physics | 15 | 0.051 |
| Psychology | Applied Psychology | 4 | 0.014 |
| | Clinical Psychology | 4 | 0.014 |
| | Developmental and Educational Psychology | 125 | 0.428 |
| | Experimental and Cognitive Psychology | 143 | 0.490 |
| | Social Psychology | 2 | 0.007 |
| Social Sciences | Archeology | 67 | 0.229 |
| | Development | 2 | 0.007 |
| | Education | 328 | 1.123 |
| | Geography, Planning and Development | 318 | 1.089 |
| | Health (social science) | 8 | 0.027 |
| | Law | 105 | 0.360 |
| | Library and Information Sciences | 105 | 0.360 |
| | Sociology and Political Science | 944 | 3.232 |
| | Transportation | 37 | 0.127 |
| | Anthropology | 64 | 0.219 |
| | Communication | 39 | 0.134 |
| | Cultural Studies | 5 | 0.017 |
| | Demography | 5 | 0.017 |
| | Urban Studies | 10 | 0.034 |
| Health Professions | Radiological and Ultrasound Technology | 70 | 0.240 |
| | Speech and Hearing | 2 | 0.007 |