

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY
FUND'S VIEW OF SOCIAL EQUITY
THROUGHOUT ITS 75 YEARS
OF EXISTENCE

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Abstract

Significant progress has been made in recent decades in the fight against poverty and the reduction of inequality on a global scale, which this century's two major crises have threatened to reverse. Given its responsibilities and global scope, the International Monetary Fund has been an influential actor in the policies to tackle inequality and poverty worldwide. The historical account of the transformation of the Fund's policies over its 75-year history reveals the extent to which each of its internal agents (management, members and staff) has influenced the shifts in its institutional stance with respect to these challenges. The text mining-based analysis of the documents articulating each of these agents' stances sheds light on the degree of alignment between the institution's discourse and the historical events.

Keywords: IMF, inequality, gender, poverty, environment.

JEL classification: F33, I3, N20.

Resumen

En las últimas décadas se han logrado notables avances en la lucha contra la pobreza y en la reducción de la desigualdad a escala global, que las dos grandes crisis de este siglo amenazan con revertir. Dadas sus responsabilidades y el ámbito global de actuación, el Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI) ha sido un actor con influencia sobre las políticas para hacer frente a la desigualdad y a la pobreza en el mundo. El relato histórico de la transformación de las políticas del Fondo en sus 75 años de vida desvela en qué medida cada uno de sus agentes internos (gerencia, miembros y plantilla) ha influido en la evolución de su posición institucional respecto a estos retos. El análisis basado en la metodología de «minería de textos» de los documentos que articulan la posición de cada uno de estos agentes permite arrojar luz sobre el grado de alineamiento entre los discursos de la institución y la descripción de los hechos históricos.

Palabras clave: FMI, desigualdad, género, pobreza, medioambiente.

Códigos JEL: F33, I3, N20.

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1 Introduction

Significant progress has been made in recent decades in reducing poverty and inequality on a global scale. However, the rise in inequality in a large number of countries, following the global financial crisis, and also in poverty, in the wake of the current pandemic,¹ have brought these challenges back to the forefront of the economic and political debate. In its 75-year history, the International Monetary Fund (hereafter the IMF or the Fund), on account of its mandate, functions and global scope, has been a prominent actor with the capacity to influence policies tackling poverty and inequality.

Shifts in IMF policies have been driven both by global transformations and by its internal agents. These agents, who articulate the Fund's institutional discourse on the basis of interests and positions that are sometimes divergent, belong either to the political sphere (member countries) or the technical sphere (staff), with management straddling the two.²

This paper takes a broad approach to the Fund's stance on equity. It addresses economic inequality between countries, poverty and inequality between individuals (in terms of income, opportunities and gender), and inclusion. From a historical standpoint and using a methodology based on text mining, it explores how the IMF's institutional stance has changed in relation to these aspects, but does not assess the effect on equity of the Fund's actions.

The paper is structured as follows. Drawing on the abundant documentation produced by the Fund itself and its historians, the next section provides an account of the events that reveal the extent to which the institution and its agents have been sensitive to equity issues. Sections 3 and 4 briefly describe the text-mining methodology used for the quantitative analysis of the Fund's discourse and presents the most significant findings of this analysis. Lastly, the key conclusions on the shifts in the Fund's stance on equity-related issues and their main advocates are presented.

¹ Since the turn of the century, over 1 billion people had moved out of extreme poverty. The World Bank estimates that, as result of the COVID-19 pandemic, inequality increased and there were between 119 and 124 million new poor in 2020. This figure could rise to 163 million in 2021 (Lakner et al., 2021).

² See Cottarelli (2005). Member countries (the political power) are represented in the Executive Board (or Board) and the Board of Governors, comprising one governor and one alternate from each member country. A varying number of governors form an advisory body that has changed its name and functions over time: Committee of Twenty, Interim Committee, and International Monetary and Financial Committee.

2 The history of the IMF's institutional stance on equity³

The Fund was created to promote monetary cooperation, financial stability and economic growth in all countries. Within this mandate, the needs of its members – an increasing proportion of which are emerging and developing countries –, the influence of its agents – mainly its managing directors (MDs or management) – and global schools of thought have contributed to sharpening the Fund's focus on the most vulnerable countries and individuals (see Chart 1).

In the 1960s, with the entry of a growing number of developing countries into the IMF, the Fund's activity underwent its first transformation, focused on meeting the needs of these new members, and the groundwork was laid for treating all countries on an equal footing. Thus, the first specific credit line for developing countries was created under the leadership of its MD, Pierre-Paul Schweitzer, who also pushed for the least developed countries not to be left out of Special Drawing Rights (SDR) allocations, despite opposition from the advanced countries.⁴ This laid the foundations for the principle of uniformity of treatment of the Fund's members.

In the 1970s, equitable governance took hold and support for development progressed qualitatively and quantitatively. It was agreed that all countries would participate on an equal footing and without discrimination in the first collegiate body of its members (the Committee of Twenty) and that the incipient bilateral surveillance would assess whether a country's policies took into account other members' interests. During those years, the increase in the number of developing IMF member countries also spurred a qualitative transformation in its areas of analysis (placing greater emphasis on the social dimension⁵) and in its activity to support development. The policy focus on development, initiated under the leadership of Johannes Witteveen, continued over the following decades under Jacques de Larosière and Michel Camdessus. New specific facilities were created for the poorest countries and concessional lending⁶ was launched for a selected list of countries under more favourable conditions,⁷ with interest rates subsidised by voluntary contributions from other members.

In the 1980s, the institutional stance of the Fund and its members was responsive to global demands for equality between individuals and more transfers of resources from rich to poor countries. Camdessus considered that the "silent revolution" (the adoption of market-oriented policies by developing countries) should be encouraged by suppressing protectionist barriers in industrialised countries. Concessional financing was strengthened

³ See De Vries (1969, 1976, 1985 and 1986) and Boughton (2000, 2001 and 2012).

⁴ He considered it fair that all countries should share in the benefits of the creation of this new currency and thought "it would seem particularly regrettable if the poorer countries were those excluded" (see De Vries (1976), p. 45).

⁵ See International Monetary Fund (1995).

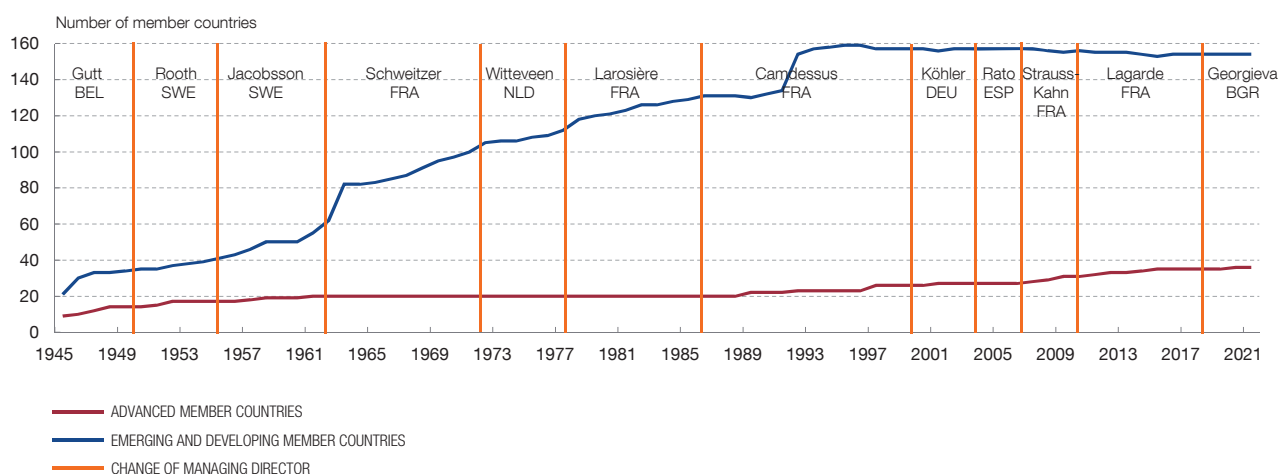
⁶ Financing under more favourable terms and conditions (interest rate, maturity and repayment grace periods) than regular financing for the Fund's full membership.

⁷ This required an agreement to circumvent the limitation in the Articles of Agreement on levying different charges on different categories of countries.

Chart 1

MANAGING DIRECTORS AND IMF MEMBER COUNTRIES

The IMF's managing directors, traditionally European, have greatly influenced changes in its policies, as has its membership, with a growing presence of emerging and developing countries.



SOURCE: Banco de España.

and the Fund's programmes addressed the issue of equal treatment among individuals by incorporating social policies, which did not always prevent protests against the adjustment programmes, jeopardising the much-needed support of the general public. Against this backdrop, the Board called for the impact of the programmes on income distribution and poverty to be analysed⁸ and pushed for greater specialisation of staff. While acknowledging that it was important for programmes to take equity into account to ensure their long-term success, the Board agreed that they should not include conditionality related to income distribution and should merely advise countries on their distributional effects. Meanwhile, the Development Committee⁹ pressed for the distributional effect of conditionality to be enhanced to benefit society as a whole. In the realm of bilateral surveillance, the impact on inequality was also addressed, along with the environmental impact of policies and their consequences for poverty alleviation.¹⁰ However, the Board urged that attention should not be diverted from exchange rate policy and from redressing balance of payments issues.

The entry of the former Soviet republics into the Fund after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the successive crises of the 1990s multiplied the lending activity of the Fund, which

⁸ International Monetary Fund (1986) analysed the distributional effects of the adjustment programmes, and concluded that it could not be asserted that the programmes had had a more adverse effect than other alternatives discussed. In addition, policies favouring a more equitable income distribution were identified.

⁹ This Committee, created in 1974 and comprising political representatives of IMF and World Bank members, facilitates consensus-building on development issues.

¹⁰ In the same vein, the World Bank reinforced environmental considerations in its programmes, in the belief that poverty reduction must go hand in hand with environmental protection and improved living standards.

incorporated equity and inclusion principles in its policies. To meet the growing demand for concessional financing, its resources were increased and they were made permanent.¹¹ In addition, the concessional financing framework and (more timidly) bilateral surveillance were geared towards “high-quality growth”,¹² as advocated by Camdessus, in keeping with the Fund members’ stance.¹³ The Fund’s cooperation with institutions concerned with equity and social factors and its receptiveness to actors critical of its work, such as civil society, religious groups or academia, also contributed to reorienting its policies.

The actual effects of the substantial shift in the Fund’s policies in the 1990s were limited. At the time, surveillance included poverty, social protection, corruption, inequality and, rather haphazardly, environmental¹⁴ considerations, and numerous recommendations were issued on social safety nets to counter the impact of globalisation on those most vulnerable (see International Monetary Fund, 2000). In addition, a major concessional financing reform led to programmes giving higher priority to poverty reduction objectives. To prevent the burden of the adjustment from falling disproportionately on the poorest and to reduce gender inequalities, considered both a cause and effect of poverty (see International Monetary Fund, 2000), the programmes fostered reforms aimed at achieving transparency, good governance and equality; required a social safety net; assessed their social impact; and incorporated mitigating measures.¹⁵ However, the implementation of these measures was left to the national authorities, who were not always inclined to protect the poorest (see Boughton, 2001). Moreover, the Fund lacked experience in designing the structural policies needed to achieve sustainable growth that would benefit all citizens without degrading the environment and natural resources.

Faced with a critical poverty situation, at the beginning of the new millennium global commitments for sustainable development were undertaken and considerable progress was made in reducing poverty, albeit less so in terms of income inequality in developing countries. Although in the early years of the century the Fund’s concessional lending contributed only marginally to poverty reduction,¹⁶ together with the incipient debt relief for poor countries, it allowed social spending to increase, thereby contributing to reducing inequality in those countries. The Fund also encouraged opening up advanced country markets to “make

11 In the 1990s, the available resources to assist the poorest countries increased by a factor of 2.3 and outstanding concessional lending by 2.6. The new instruments and goals of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) (i.e. to foster durable growth, leading to higher living standards and a reduction in poverty), the permanent trust created in 1999, transformed the Fund’s relationship with those countries.

12 “High-quality growth” seeks to benefit all individuals. It must be sustainable and compatible with internal and external equilibrium, appropriate investment and human capital for future growth, environmental protection, poverty reduction, more equal opportunities (including for women) and respect for human health and freedom (see International Monetary Fund, 1995).

13 See Interim Committee (1996).

14 At the request of the United States, Article IV reports temporarily included a section on environmental implications. Although “environmental conditionality” was not adopted, a “green agenda” was drawn up and some programmes included this concern. Subsequently, due to the Board’s opposition, environmental issues were sidelined from the Fund’s policies.

15 See International Monetary Fund (1995) and its update, International Monetary Fund (2000), for a review of the measures needed to mitigate the impact on the poorest groups and to reduce gender inequalities, considered both a cause and effect of poverty. These measures are: subsidies for basic goods, cash transfers, direct support for wages, price controls and social services and spending on education and health.

16 See Independent Evaluation Office (2007).

globalisation work for the benefit of all". Horst Köhler, its MD during those years, argued that leaving behind poor countries would deepen the inequalities between nations.

The Fund's loss of legitimacy¹⁷ in the first decade of the 21st century (indicative, among other factors, of the imperfect application of the inclusion principles championed in previous years) spurred the cultural transformation of the institution, laying the groundwork for inclusion to acquire a significance of its own in its policies. In this setting, Dominique Strauss-Kahn pushed for the IMF's landmark governance reform¹⁸ which increased the representation of emerging countries, promoted academic diversity among the workforce and opened the Fund to the influence of civil society, thereby favouring positions that were more sensitive to developing country concerns. The Board began to call for economic policy guidance to alleviate the impact of inequality on the most vulnerable and, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), equity and inclusion came to the forefront of concessional aid, which was to include specific objectives to protect social and priority spending. This was the beginning of the Fund's cultural transformation and a qualitative change in its policy approach that would be cemented in subsequent years.

In the second decade of this century, the growing inequality within the advanced economies in the wake of the global financial crisis and the leadership of Christine Lagarde (the first woman to lead the Fund and a driving force behind the institution's work in the areas of inequality, gender and the environment) marked a turning point in the institution's stance, allowing it to consolidate macro-critical issues¹⁹ on its agenda.²⁰ The approach to these issues changed from case-specific analysis to a systematic approach which also includes, albeit with limitations, policy recommendations or conditionality. Management's commitment to these issues has enabled staff to address inequality, gender and climate change-related considerations in bilateral surveillance – Article IV reports and Financial Sector Assessment Programmes (FSAPs) – and multilateral surveillance, in the programmes and in technical assistance, beyond the Fund's traditional areas of competence.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, the Fund has turned its attention to the poor countries hardest hit by the pandemic, temporarily easing its lending policy and extending debt relief.²¹ But this crisis is also giving new impetus to the Fund's role in the areas of inequality²² and climate change, with strong support from member countries, which has been reaffirmed in the recent review of surveillance, under macro-criticality considerations.

17 Largely owing to disaffection on the part of its members, which the Stiglitz Commission report (see United Nations, 2009) attributes to the lack of uniformity in the application of conditionality, biased surveillance and a lack of mechanisms to offset the serious consequences for developing countries suffering from debt crises.

18 Eminent Persons Committee (2009) called for transforming the Fund's governance and strengthening its transparency and commitment to coordinated action for promoting global public goods, such as poverty reduction or the environment. For a detailed description of these reforms, see Garrido, Moreno and Serra (2016).

19 Whether an issue is considered macro-critical depends on its "criticality" (whether it affects or can affect internal, external or global stability), country circumstances and the authorities' interest.

20 See International Monetary and Financial Committee (2014).

21 See Banco de España (2020) for a description of the first measures taken by the Fund in response to the pandemic to support its members.

22 Furceri et al. (2021) argues that, in the absence of policies to protect the most vulnerable, the current pandemic could lead to a greater increase in inequality than previous pandemics studied (five in the last twenty years).

3 Text mining to analyse the Fund's discourse in its documents

In addition to the events that marked the course of the Fund's history, it is also useful to look at how its discourse has changed over time, as it plays an important role in policy formulation and implementation.²³

To gain an understanding of the Fund's discourse on equity, this section analyses the presence of five concepts broadly associated with equity (poverty, inequality, social factors, gender and the environment²⁴) using text mining²⁵ on over 12,500 documents.

The documents come from four sources²⁶ (see Table 1), that can be attributed, respectively, to the Fund's three types of internal agents (management, member countries and staff). The contribution of each agent to the Fund's discourse and stance on equity can therefore be approximated (with nuances, because, as shown in Table 1, several of the documentary sources involve more than one agent). The annual reports can be interpreted as mainly reflecting the stance of management, which guides the institution's activity and sets the tone for the news that are published on the IMF's website. The communiqués issued by the IMF's governing bodies reflect the countries' positions, and the research papers set out the staff's approach.

Table 1

SOURCES, DOCUMENTS AND AGENTS

Documentary source	Period	Number of documents	Agents (and their role in the document) (a)	Purpose and content of the document
Annual reports	1947-2019	73	Members (orientation) <u>MD</u> (guidelines) Staff (preparation)	To provide comprehensive and systematic information to the public on the Fund's activities and policies, since its creation
Communiqués (b)	1975-2019	46	<u>Members</u>	To provide guidance on the Fund's policy agenda
Research (c)	1950-2020	375	MD (general lines) <u>Staff</u> (research)	To analyse global and specific aspects of national economies
News	1999-2020	11,979	<u>MD</u> (guidelines: message, tone and orientation) Staff (preparation)	To publicise the Fund's actions and decisions

SOURCE: Banco de España.

a The underlined agents are those who contribute the most to the orientation of each document.

b Communiqués of the Interim Committee (up to 1999) and its successor, the International Monetary and Financial Committee.

c The full list of papers is available for consultation.

²³ See Esser and Williams (2014) and Prior, Hughes and Peckham (2012).

²⁴ The environment is related to equity because of its higher impact on the poorest. In this regard, International Monetary Fund (2017) argues that climate change disproportionately affects poorer countries. In the 1980s, the IMF and the World Bank acknowledged the impact of environmental policies on poverty alleviation.

²⁵ See International Monetary Fund (2019), Esser and Williams (2014) and Moretti and Pestre (2015) for a text-mining analysis of the IMF's policies through its discourse, similar to that discussed in this paper.

²⁶ Sources do not include Article IV reports, FSAPs or multilateral reports (*World Economic Outlook*, *Fiscal Monitor* or *Global Financial Stability Report*). The criteria for selecting the documentary sources are set out in Annex 1.

Annex 1 describes the stages of the methodological text-mining process for the quantitative analysis of the Fund's discourse. The analysis shows the presence of terms broadly related to equity in the above-mentioned documentary sources, bearing in mind the Fund's actions in this regard. For example, from the Fund's standpoint, the environment is linked to poverty and inequality, both through the concept of "high-quality growth" and, more recently, owing to the more severe impact of climate change on the most vulnerable countries. The terms are grouped around five concepts (see Table A1.2): poverty, inequality, social factors, gender and environment.

4 The Fund's discourse on equity

Text-mining analysis enables the changes in the Fund's discourse on equity, through the above-mentioned concepts, to be presented graphically. Chart 2 represents, for each of the five concepts analysed, the term densities in the documents from each documentary source. These reflect the discourse of management (annual reports and news), of member countries (communiqués) and of staff (research). Term density means the number of times a term appears in a document compared to the total number of terms in the document. This indicator, which proxies the depth with which each concept is covered in the documents, provides information on the interest shown by the documentary sources in each of the concepts analysed, and therefore, on the interest shown by its agents.

The graphical analysis is then checked against the historical events, identifying the agents' stance at each point in time.

Poverty was increasingly central to the Fund's activity and discourse in the last century, according to annual report texts (see Chart 2.1). As described in the historical account, the fight against poverty was spearheaded by the reforms initiated by Witteveen and Larosière and completed by Camdessus. Conversely, and judging by their communiqués, members' support for the fight against poverty was more lukewarm. The research papers analysed also show that interest in poverty waned in the first decades of the Fund's existence.²⁷ In the current millennium, poverty is receiving less attention, overshadowed by inequality, gender and the environment.

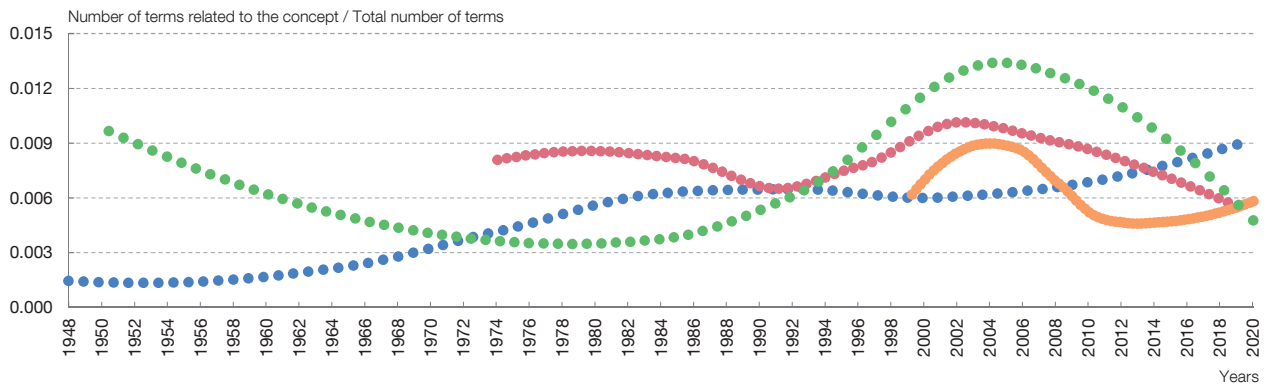
The staff, through their research papers, led the way in focusing on **inequality** and **social factors** in the 1970s (see Charts 2.2 and 2.3). In the final decades of the last century, research in these areas was stepped up, driven by the MDs and by the Board's call to be briefed about the impact of the programmes on income distribution and poverty. However, fearing that these factors would divert attention from exchange rate and balance of payments policies, the Fund members stymied their incorporation into the Fund's policies and activities, a situation which is reflected in the scant coverage of these concepts in communiqués and annual reports. It was not until this century that the members (through their communiqués) addressed inequality and, as described in the historical account, the MDs pushed for this macro-critical challenge to be included in the Fund's policies and activity. Since then, inequality has become increasingly prominent in the documents communicating the Fund's actions (first in annual reports and, subsequently, in news items) while the focus has shifted away from poverty and social factors (more notably in research papers and communiqués). The fact that inequality, traditionally linked to poor countries, has primarily increased in the advanced countries since the global financial crisis has two implications: (i) that the Fund's discourse has shifted from poverty and social factors towards inequality,

²⁷ The factors behind this include the small sample of research papers in this period (see Table A1.1) and the fact that the curves represent the smoothed term density trend, both of which amplify the effect of outliers in the graphical representation.

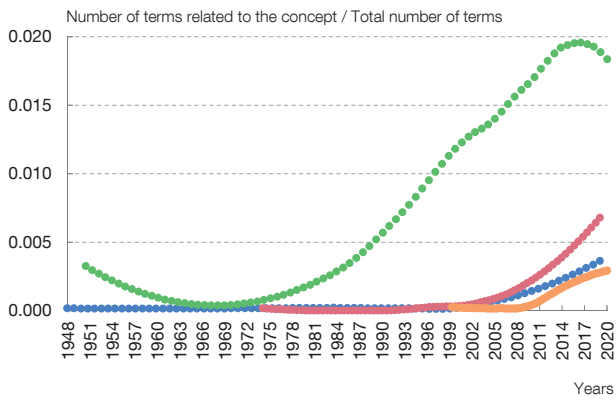
Chart 2

TERM DENSITY TRENDS (a). COMPARISON BETWEEN DIFFERENT DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

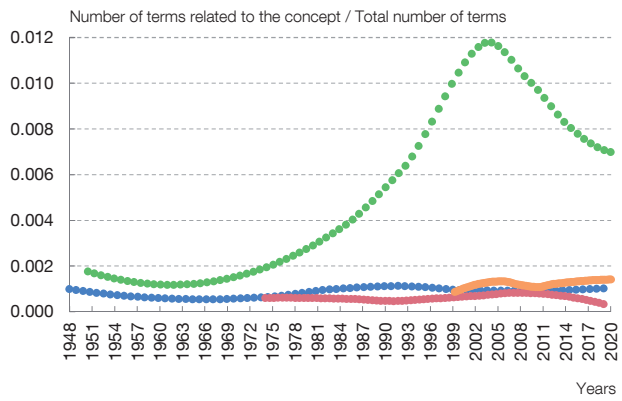
1 POVERTY



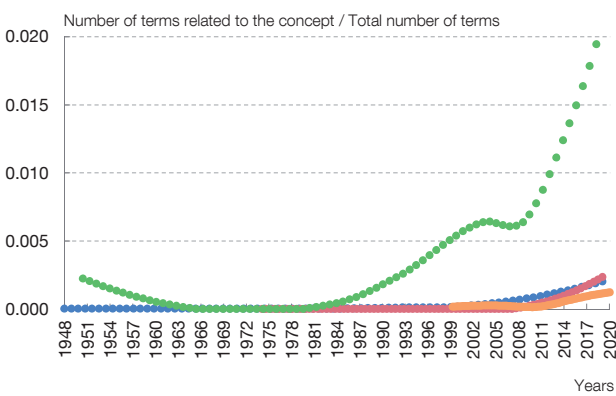
2 INEQUALITY



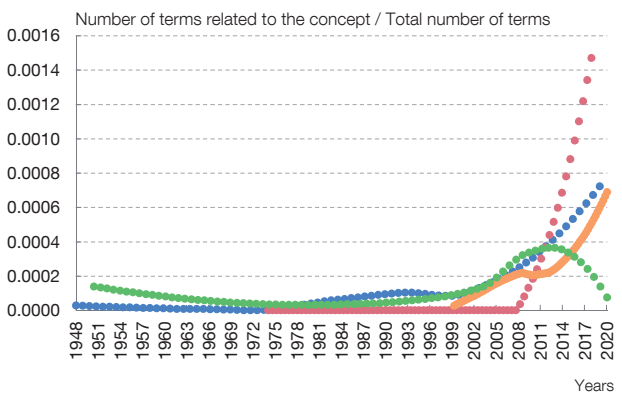
3 SOCIAL FACTORS



4 GENDER



5 ENVIRONMENT



● ANNUAL REPORTS ● COMMUNIQUÉS ● NEWS ● RESEARCH

SOURCE: Banco de España.

a The curves in each panel show the smoothed trend for each concept term density, measured as the ratio of the number of concept terms to the total number of terms in each document, for the documents in each year.

and (ii) that it is the members, through their communiqués, who are now leading the Fund's stance on these new challenges.

Since the 1990s, staff research has also driven the Fund's discourse on **gender** issues (see Chart 2.4), which subsided after members' wariness thwarted its incipient incorporation into bilateral surveillance in that decade. Only recently has this issue begun to be included again and more decisively into the Fund's activity, driven by its first female MDs, initially in the annual reports and research on gender (which reached its highest levels under their tenure) and, subsequently in the members' discourse (communiqués) and the dissemination of these actions (news).

Analysis of 1980s research papers, annual reports and news items reveals that **environmental** issues were relatively present (see Chart 2.5), linked to the fight against poverty under the notion of "high-quality growth" – which, among others, must be compatible with environmental protection (see footnote 12) – and its temporary inclusion in bilateral surveillance. This century, the environment is receiving significantly more attention and has become part of the "macro-structural" aspects, with very strong support from members, as the communiqués show. In this case, however, the role of staff research is not particularly noteworthy.

5 Conclusions

The Fund's stance on equity has changed in parallel with external circumstances and the demands of its members, driven, sometimes forcefully, by its MDs. Poverty featured prominently in the Fund's discourse in its early years, when the institution began to take into account the voice and needs of its most vulnerable members. The 1980s and 1990s saw the consolidation of concessional financing, which broadened its focus towards equity between individuals and the "high-quality growth" championed by management and, at first, also by member countries. In the research conducted by the institution's staff, inequality, social factors and gender issues gradually gained prominence. These factors were included only to a limited extent and temporarily in the Fund's activity, given the absence of strong support from the Board.

At the beginning of this century, there was growing disaffection with the Fund among developing countries, which demanded to be treated on a more equal footing. The far-reaching institutional and cultural reform of the IMF in the first decade of this millennium helped to put inequality and other macro-critical issues firmly on the Fund's agenda. It is possible that the fallout from this century's two major crises is contributing to consolidate inequality, gender and the environment in the Fund's activity and discourse. This may also have been assisted by the fact that the IMF has been led by two women in the recent past.²⁸

This paper has analysed how equity issues have been incorporated into the debate and design of the Fund's policies and, through its texts, what stance each agent (management, member countries and staff) has adopted at each point in time. As a possible follow-up to this analysis, it is worth exploring the extent to which the Fund has put this "declaration of intent" into effect in its surveillance and lending activity and whether its implementation has been consistent with the general guidelines on equity. A text-mining analysis of the content of Article IV reports and IMF programmes could help assess the effective implementation of these issues, for which the annual reports provide only an approximation, and to verify the consistency between discourse, policy design and implementation.²⁹

²⁸ In this regard, Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) and Clots-Figueras (2011) document that in India, women leaders favour gender, education and health policies. However, Ferreira and Gyourko (2014) and Bagues and Campa (2021) do not find such conclusive evidence for the United States and Spain, respectively, on the influence of leaders' gender on policy orientation. May, McGarvey and Whaples (2014) documents gender differences among economists in the relevance they attach to certain policies and their opinion on them, and that women are more inclined towards redistribution issues.

²⁹ See International Monetary Fund (2019) for a text-mining analysis of how social spending has been incorporated into Article IV reports and the Fund's programmes.

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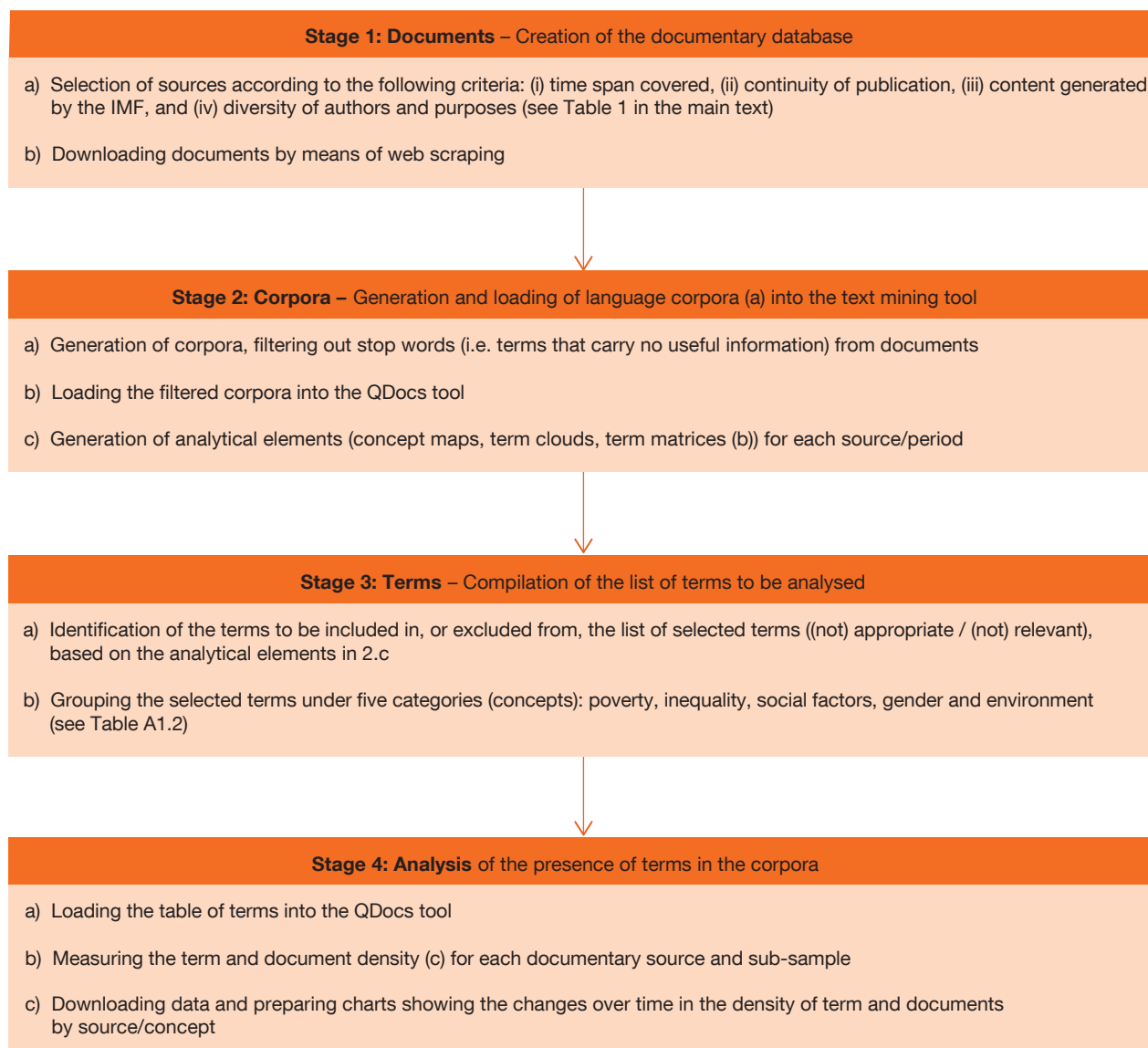
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Annex 1 Data sources and methodology of the text analysis used

The research was conducted in four stages, summarised in the figure below and then described in greater detail.

Figure A1.1

METHODOLOGY USED FOR THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FUND'S DISCOURSE



SOURCE: Banco de España.

- a In this case, the "language corpus" on which the analysis is based consists of all the relevant words in all the documents.
- b "Concept maps" show how the terms in a document or set of documents relate to a specific term, and the latter's relevance in the document or set of documents. "Term clouds" show the terms most commonly used in a document or set of documents. The "term matrix" indicates the frequency of each term in a document.
- c "Term density" means the number of times concept terms are mentioned in a document in relation to the total number of terms in the document. "Document density" measures the number of documents containing any of the concept terms in relation to the total number of documents. "Document density" represents the frequency with which a concept is addressed, whereas "term density" gives an idea of the depth with which the concept is explored.

Table A1.1

BREAKDOWN OF RESEARCH PAPERS BY YEAR AND TYPE OF DOCUMENT

Period	Staff Paper Working Paper Occasional Paper	Staff Discussion Note Staff Position Note	Policy Paper Departmental Paper	Total for period
1950-1969	17	—	—	17
1970-1979	21	—	—	21
1980-1989	38	—	—	38
1990-1999	40	—	—	40
2000-2020	229	20	10	259
Total	345	20	10	375

SOURCE: Banco de España.

The **first stage consisted of creating the corpus of documents to be examined**, from four documentary sources (annual reports, communiqués, news items and research papers). The sources were selected according to the following criteria: (i) broad time span covered, (ii) continuity of publication, (iii) content generated by the International Monetary Fund (hereafter, the IMF or the Fund), (iv) more geared towards describing the Fund's policy framework than the global or national context, and (v) diversity of authors and purposes. More than 12,500 documents from these sources were downloaded from the Fund's website.

- **Annual reports** (1947-2019). The **73 annual reports** published in the period, downloaded from the Fund's website, without the corresponding annexes.
- **Communiqués** (1975-2019). The **91 communiqués** relating to the spring and autumn meetings of the Interim Committee (1975-1999) and the International Monetary and Financial Committee (2000-2019). The communiqués are grouped by year in 46 documents.
- **News items** (1999-2020). Some **12,000 news items** published on the Fund's website from May 1999 (when their publication on the Fund's website began) to February 2020. News items were downloaded by means of web scraping, using the rvest package (see Wickham, 2016). They were selected from categories which, given their nature, reflect the Fund's institutional stance. Specifically: PR (*press releases*), NB (*news briefs*), SP (*speeches*), PIN¹ (*public information notices*) and VC (*views and commentaries*).
- **Research** (1950-2020). **375 research papers** prepared by Fund staff from 1950 to February 2020. Table A1.1 shows the types of papers included in the sample. These documents² are related to the concept of equity used in this paper and

¹ In 2013, it was decided to stop issuing public information notices and to maintain press releases.

² The full list of research papers used in this analysis is available for consultation.

Table A1.2

TERMS ANALYSED FOR EACH CONCEPT

Concepts	Terms
Poverty	<i>Poverty, poorer, vulnerable, poorest, development, MDGS, SDG, underdeveloped, developing, developmental poor country, poor countries, poorest segments</i>
Inequality	<i>Inequality, inequalities, gap, gaps, Gini, regressive, progressive, redistribution, distributional, income distribution, income polarization, inclusive, inclusion</i>
Social factors	[Social sphere] <i>Social safety net, protection, subsidy, subsidies, allowance, propoor, pro poor</i> [Employment sphere] <i>Skill bias, wage gap, minimum wage, lump sum, fringe benefit</i> [Educational sphere] <i>Education, enrollment, school, student</i> [Health sphere] <i>HIV, AIDS, mortality, nutrition, sanitation, birth, expectancy</i>
Gender	<i>Gender, women, female, men, wife, empowerment, girls, parental, woman, male, childcare, family, families, infant</i>
Environment	<i>Climatic, environmental, emission, emissions, greenhouse, warming, fossil, pollution, biodiversity, ecosystem, environmentally, polluter, polluters, climate change, greenhouse effect, global warming, emission tax, emission taxes, fuel tax, fuel taxes, carbon tax, carbon taxes, green economy, natural resources</i>

SOURCE: Banco de España.

do not, on the whole, refer to specific countries. One or more of the following terms are included in their key words or in the body of the text: *gender, gender equality, income distribution, income inequality, wealth distribution, agricultural income, discrimination, poverty and inequality, Government expenditures and welfare programs/health/education, cost of living, equity and social spending, social protection, Government expenditures and health.*

In the **second stage, the language corpora of all the documents are generated** (stop words are filtered out of the documents) using the “bag of words” technique. Analytical elements (concept maps, term clouds or term matrices) are extracted from the corpora using the QDocs tool, shedding light on the terms used over time.

In the **third stage, the terms to be analysed** that are relevant to the issue examined (broad equity considerations) are selected, taking into account the analysis conducted in the previous stage.³ The terms are grouped under five “broad” concepts (see Table A1.2).

The **fourth stage consists of analysing the corpora through concept usage patterns** observed over time, based on two measures (see Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001): (a) the term density (the number of concept terms to the total number of document terms) shows the relative frequency with which each concept is mentioned and proxies the depth with which the concept is explored in the corpus, and (b) the document density

³ For example, “poor” is not included under the concept of poverty (poor performance, etc.); “environment” and “climate” are not included under the concept of environment (economic/international/political/etc. environment/climate); and “health” and “life” are not included under the concept of social factors/health (economic health, loan life, etc.).

(the number of documents containing a concept term to the total number of documents) shows the presence of documents with one or more references to the concept and indicates the interest elicited by that issue (“concept”).

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