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Poverty and inequality in Latin America: A bibliometric study of academic production

Work in progress. Do not quote

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1. Introduction

Poverty and inequality have been at the center of the public discussion in Latin America in the last two decades. The importance of these topics is given, at least in part, by the evidence of the high prevalence of both phenomena in the region. In this paper, we argue that the relative relevance of each of these topics in the academic agenda has changed, shifting from poverty to inequality during the last decade and we propose potential explanations for this change.

We analyze the academic literature on poverty and inequality referred to Latin America, considering the period 1990-2014. We study the patterns of publication in both areas, reporting bibliometric indicators based on two bibliographic databases: ISI (Web of Science) and Scopus. For comparative purposes, we also consider Google Scholar data.

Our aim is to detect the relative importance of these two different metrics of human wellbeing in academic research in the region, providing a general overview of the evolution of related research during the last two decades. Up to our knowledge, there are no bibliometric studies on this issue, although we were able to identify bibliometric studies on other economic topics in Latin America. We consider patterns by country and by sub period of time. We also take into account the number of citations and the role of different journals, and we try to associate the importance of each topic with the

prevailing economic indicators, and discuss the links between the political agenda and the research agenda.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 we present the main features of the bibliometric approach and databases used for the analysis. In section 3 we present the basic facts on academic research on poverty and inequality in Latin America. Section 4 analyzes the shift from poverty to inequality, while section 5 discusses preliminary hypotheses on the main drivers behind this change.

2. Methods and data

Bibliometric and scientometric studies have gained importance in the field of the meta-analysis of academic research and scientific production (Narin, Olivastro, & Stevens, 1994; Schoepflin & Glanzel, 2001). A crucial aspect in a bibliometric study refers to the boundaries of the topic to consider. In this study, we consider poverty and inequality research for Latin America in relatively narrow terms. Our queries are based on the following criteria: we looked for articles which contain the following words in the title: 'inequality' and/or 'poverty', as well as 'Latin America' or the name of any of 18 Latin American countries.¹ The search was done in English, Spanish and Portuguese, and comprised published articles between 1990 and 2014. These criteria implies that many studies that are very close to our area of interest -such as those on equity, deprivation, and other related terms-were excluded from our analysis. Another important aspect that should be clarified is that not all studies about poverty and inequality selected in our study come from social science. Although this is true in most cases, it is also possible to find articles in these topics which belong to other areas, such as health, arts and humanities or mathematics (see table A.1).

The bibliometric indicators analyzed in this paper were obtained from the two most popular available bibliographical databases: Thomson Reuters' Web of Science (WoS) and Elsevier Scopus. We used the online versions of these databases. The bibliographic database from Thomas Reuters has existed for more than 40 years, whereas Scopus was

¹ The countries included were: Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.

launched in 2004.²WoS covers from 1900 on, and Scopus covers from 1966 on, although in the latter the index of citations is not available prior to 1996.

Previous research has found that the correlation of bibliometric indicators between both databases is very high, despite their differences in coverage and scope(López-Illescas, de Moya-Anegón, & Moed, 200;Gavel & Iselid, 2008;Archambault, Campbell, Gingras, & Larivière, 2009). Specifically, Scopus includes more journals and has a bias towards European journals Elsevier titles, whereas WoS as an American bias. Nevertheless, a total of 7434 journals (54% of Scopus and 84% of WoS) are indexed in both databases according to Gavel & Iselid(2008).

Some basic proofs using Google Scholar were undertaken and are reported through the paper. The Google Scholar database seeks to provide a simple way for searching within scholarly literature using an algorithm that matches for keywords in title, abstract, authors or full text of an article from multiple publishers. Google Scholar not only includes publications contained in databases such as WoS of Scopus, but also in academic, international organizations and governments sites, as well as other modes of scholarly communication (Bakkalbasi, Bauer, Glover, & Wang, 2006). Because it includes this 'grey literature', the number of publications registered tends to be considerable higher. In addition, because of these characteristics, additional problems such as publications' duplicity and lack of standardization are difficult to solve completely. We attempted to solve the problems of duplicity and constructed a cleaner dataset from Google Scholar, using it to derive some basic statistics just for comparative purposes. Nevertheless, we are aware that that due to poor quality control, this database is not the best option for rigorous bibliometric studies(Jacso, 2012).Therefore, we only use Google Scholar for comparative purposes in some cases. Table 1 reflects the basic characteristics of the data used in this research.

² Originally Thomson's databases included the Science Citation Index, the Social Sciences Citation Index and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index, all were regrouped under the Web of Science.

Table 1. Data bases used in this article

	Web of Science	Scopus	Google Scholar
Indexing and abstracting Citations	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	No Yes ³
Type of citation indicator	Total cites and average cites per year	# cites	# cites
# of articles with citation information	100% (50% > 1 citation)	100% (58% >1 citation)	67%
Document Type	Articles	Article, article in press, book, book chapter, conference paper, editorial, erratum, letter, note, review (limited to scholarly production)	Article, article in press, book, book chapter, conference paper, editorial, erratum, letter, note, review and other scholarly communications published in different types of websites (including governmental, international organizations, media)
Journal title	Yes	Yes	Yes, if registered
Name and last name of authors	Yes	Yes	Yes, if registered
Language	Article title in both languages	Article title in both languages	No

Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS, Scopus & Google Scholar database

3. Academic research on poverty and inequality in Latin America: basic facts

Academic production referring to specific regions or countries is relatively scarce in terms of total academic production. As an example, academic publications on Latin American countries represent only 0.57% of the total academic production gathered in WoS and 0.50% of the total publications contained in Scopus. That figure is not that different from the one that corresponds to Asian countries, and is quite similar to the production about USA in the period (table 2). On the other side, academic publications about European countries more than double that of Latin American ones, both when we consider total production, and when we restrict the analysis to social sciences, or even to poverty and inequality. During almost 25 years, there were between 880 and 1436 academic publications (depending on the database) about poverty and/or inequality in Latin America, despite these being topics which would probably be ranked among the

³ The Google Scholar Database includes information regarding citations for each publication. However, it doesn't provide a simple way to see the years covered by those citations. At the same time, and since this database is unable to uniquely identify a publication (this is, there is not a unique registry for each publication since the basic information of a publication –title, authors, journal- can vary through different web sites) there is also no unique citations record for each publication.

top problems of the region by academics worldwide. In the same period, academic publications about the same topics for European Union countries were approximately the double, between 1983 and 2356 depending on the database. This probably reflects the strong association between the origin or place of residence of researchers and the countries or regions which they study. If this is true, given the weakness of national research systems in most Latin American countries, it is not strange that academic publication about poverty and inequality in the region is not encompassed with the importance of these problems, at least when databases restricted to high quality journals are considered.

When we consider in the Google Scholar database, where grey literature tends to be more important, the number of publications about poverty and inequality in Latin America increases significantly, being multiplied by 7 or even 11 when compared to the number of articles published in Web of Science or Scopus (table 2). Articles about poverty and inequality in Latin America represent more than 5% of total publications about poverty and inequality in Google Scholar in the period.⁴

Table 2. Importance of Latin American production(1990-2014)

	Total academic production		Social Sciences		Poverty and inequality		Google Scholar (****)
	WoS	Scopus	WoS	Scopus	WoS	Scopus	
Number of publications referring to specific regions							
Latin America	265.908	205.888	79.258	58.874	1.436	880	9.846
ASEAN*, China and India	321.873	337.121	121.911	119.599	1.727	1.851	--
European Union**	605.550	510.079	289.248	199.794	2.356	1.983	--
USA	200.779	120.431	99.523	46.423	1.025	568	--
No specific region***	45.118.473	39.755.745	7.334.184	4.758.351	48.446	44.708	--
Total	46.512.583	40.929.264	7.924.124	5.183.041	54.990	49.990	179.248
Number of publications referring to specific regions/Total publications							
Latin America	0,57	0,50	1,00	1,14	2,61	1,76	5,49
ASEAN*, China and India	0,69	0,82	1,54	2,31	3,14	3,70	--
European Union**	1,30	1,25	3,65	3,85	4,28	3,97	--
USA	0,43	0,29	1,26	0,90	1,86	1,14	--
No specific region ***	97,00	97,13	92,56	91,81	88,10	89,43	--
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

⁴An aspect that should be clarified is that not all studies about poverty and inequality selected in our study come from social science. Although this is true in most cases, it is also possible to find articles in these topics which belong to other areas, such as health, arts and humanities or mathematics(see table A.1).

*ASEAN includes: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

**EU includes: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

***Includes articles not referring to any country or region in its title.

**** Google Scholar doesn't have a way of accounting for the same paper in different languages. This measure is influenced by the type of search that is carried one, therefore: (i) the number can become higher as more languages are included into the search, (ii) it can become smaller because of the similarity of words between languages

Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS& Scopus databases

The importance of research about poverty and inequality in Latin American stands out when comparing it with how much has been published about the region in other issues which are also crucial for Latin American countries. Publications on poverty and inequality in Latin America represent 2.61% of the total publications in this topic according to WoS, whereas those on labor markets in the region account for 1.77% of total publications on this issue, and those on inflation in Latin America represent 2.62% of the total publications about inflation (Table 3). The region has attracted the attraction of academic researchers when it comes to external debt, as 3.5% of all publications on this topic during the period refer to the experience of Latin American countries.

Table 3. Importance of Latin American academic production regarding different topics (1990-2014)

	Web of Science	Scopus
Poverty and/or inequality (Total)	54.990	49.990
Poverty and/or inequality in Latin America	1.436	880
Poverty and/or inequality Latin America/Total on poverty and/or inequality	2.61%	1.76%
External debt * (total)	7.949	7.054
External debt in Latin America	278	138
External debt in Latin America/Total on external debt	3.50%	1.96%
Labor markets ** (total)	90.841	74.608
Labor markets in Latin America	1,610	1,157
Labor market in Latin America/Total on labor	1.77%	1.55%
Inflation *** (total)	6,557	6,194
Inflation in Latin America	172	151
External debt in Latin America/Total on inflation	2.62%	2.44%

*Comprises: External debt, Public debt or Debt.

**Comprises: Employment, Unemployment, Wages, Labor Market or Labor Market.

***Comprises: Inflation, excluding Physics, Astronomy, Engineering and Mathematics studies.

Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS& Scopus databases

The relative importance of Latin American published production (compared to the total academic production on poverty and inequality) has increased slightly between the last

two decades: it went from 2.2 to 2.7% according to Web of Science, and from 1.2 to 1.9 according to Scopus. (Table 4).⁵Labor markets and inflation in Latin America also attracted the attention of researchers in these areas, whereas research about external debt was more focused on other regions other than Latin America during the 2000s when compared to the nineties.

Table 4. Importance of Latin American production in different topics. 1990-2014.

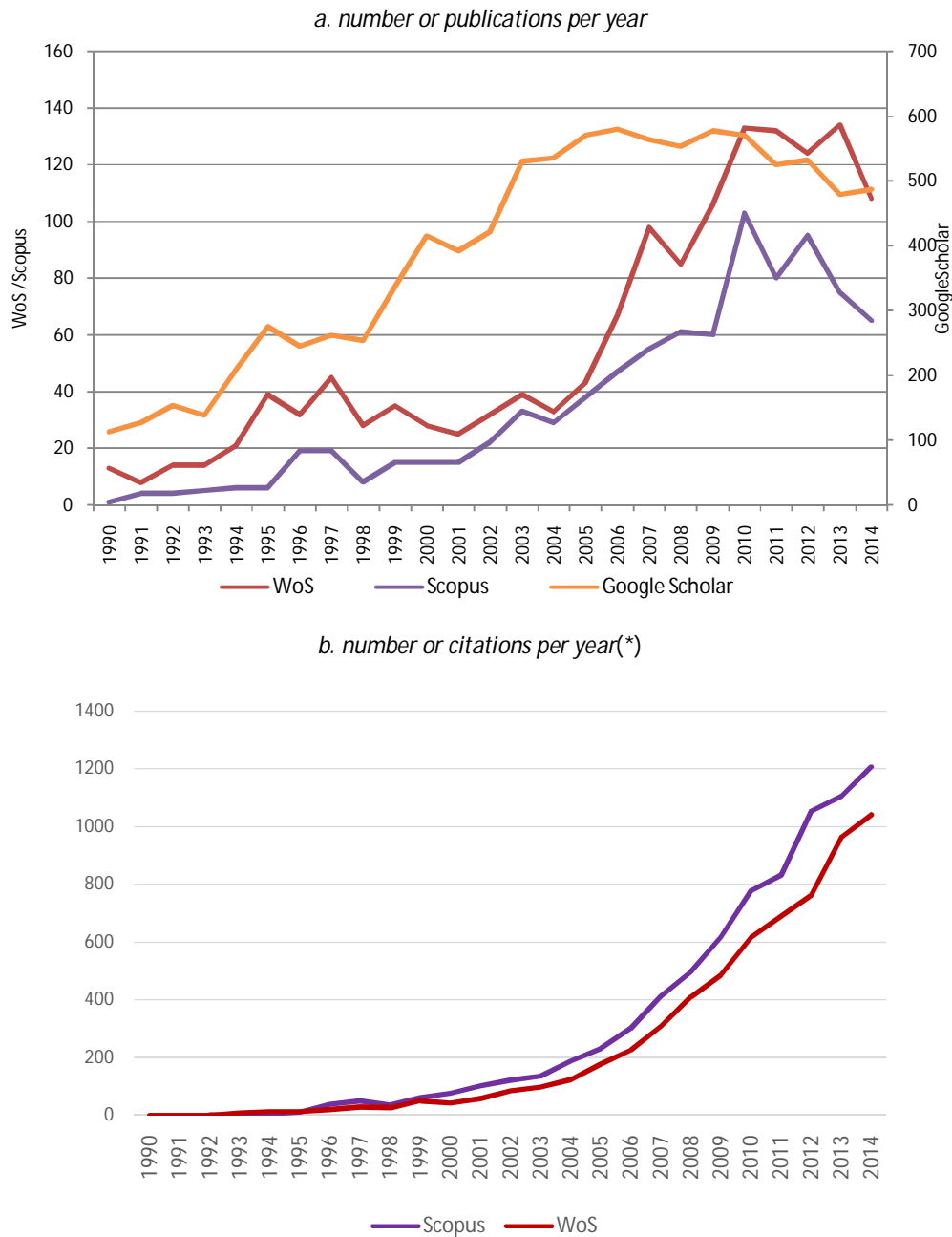
	90s		2000s	
	Web of Science	Scopus	Web of Science	Scopus
Poverty/Inequality (total)	11242	7561	43748	42429
Poverty/Inequality in LA	249	87	1187	793
Poverty/Inequality in LA/Total on Poverty/Inequality	2.21%	1.15%	2.71%	1.87%
External debt * (total)	2,586	1,544	5,311	5,510
External debt in Latin America	158	41	120	97
External debt in Latin America/Total on external debt	6.11%	2.66%	2.26%	1.76%
Labor markets ** (total)	30,254	20,941	60,616	53,667
Labor markets in Latin America	422	260	1,188	897
Labor market in Latin America/Total on labor	1.39%	1.24%	1.96%	1.67%
Inflation *** (total)	2,189	1,576	4,328	4,618
Inflation in Latin America	46	31	126	120
External debt in Latin America/Total on inflation	2.10%	1.97%	2.91%	2.60%

Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS & Scopus databases

Published research on inequality and poverty in the region has increased significantly in absolute terms (figure 1), moving from 14articles per year between 1990 and 1995 to 126 per year between 2000 and 2014, according to Web of Science and from 4 to 84 per year in the same period basing in Scopus. Data from Google Scholaralso shows the same trend (from 148 to 519 in the same period).

⁵The importance in Google Scholar has also increased (from 8.3% in the 90s to 9.4% in the 2000s).

Figure 1. Research on poverty and/or inequality in Latin America (1990-2014)



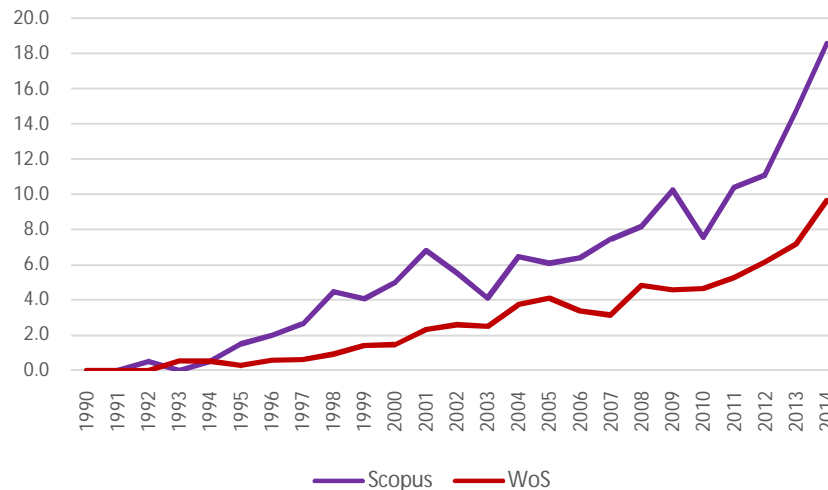
Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS, Scopus & Google Scholar database

(*) Citations referring exclusively to publications on poverty and inequality published between 1990 and 2014.

This trend in the number of publications does not necessarily mean that the published research in poverty and inequality is having impact. To measure this, bibliometry usually bases on citation analysis (the basic measure is the number of citations per publication) as a partial indicator impact and/or quality (Borgman & Furner, 2002). The evidence shows that in fact the impact of publications related to poverty and inequality

has also grown: considering the number of citations for the same publications within the period 1990-2014, reaching a total of 1208 (WoS) and 1042 (Scopus). The average number of citations per publications has grown as well, reaching its maximum up to 9.6 (WoS) and 18.6 (Scopus) in 2014.

Figure 2. Average number of citation per publication (*) (research on poverty and/or inequality in Latin America) (1990-2014)



(*) Reflects the total number of citations (referring exclusively to publications on poverty and inequality) per year/the number of publications referred to poverty and inequality each year

Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS and Scopus database

Latin American research on inequality and poverty in the region is primarily focused on two countries (Brazil and Mexico): half of peer-reviewed publications published between 1990 and 2014 in Web of Science and Scopus refer to these countries. Among them, Brazil accounts for 33% and 29% of the publications in Web of Science and Scopus respectively, while Mexico accounts for 24% of publications in Web of Science and 22% in Scopus. Following them stand Chile and Argentina, each accounting for around 10% in both bibliographic databases. After them, Peru and Colombia together represent another 10% of total publications. The remaining 20% corresponds to the other 12 countries of the region, being particularly scarce publications referring to Paraguay, Panama, Venezuela, Dominican Republic and El Salvador (table 5).

Table 3. Publications regarding Poverty and Inequality in Latin America, by country (1990-2014)

Country	Web of Science			Scopus			Google Scholar			Population ¹		
	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank	Millions	%	Rank
Brazil	383	32.8%	1	211	28.9%	1	2.139	24,1%	1	176,430	35,1%	1
Mexico	276	23.6%	2	162	22.2%	2	1.754	19,8%	2	103,524	20,6%	2
Chile	119	10.2%	3	84	11.5%	3	778	8,8%	3	15,623	3,1%	7
Argentina	78	6.7%	4	71	9.7%	4	751	8,5%	4	37,740	7,5%	4
Peru	61	5.2%	5	30	4.1%	6	521	5,9%	6	26,232	5,2%	5
Colombia	55	4.7%	6	33	4.5%	5	585	6,6%	5	41,195	8,2%	3
Ecuador	30	2.6%	7	19	2.6%	8	290	3,3%	8	13,139	2,6%	8
Bolivia	29	2.5%	8	17	2.3%	11	352	4,0%	7	8,802	1,8%	10
Costa Rica	28	2.4%	9	19	2.6%	8	244	2,8%	10	3,971	0,8%	16
Nicaragua	23	2.0%	10	21	2.9%	7	277	3,1%	9	5,415	1,1%	15
Guatemala	21	1.8%	11	18	2.5%	10	200	2,3%	12	12,020	2,4%	9
Honduras	21	1.8%	11	13	1.8%	12	178	2,0%	13	6,530	1,3%	12
Uruguay	13	1.1%	13	12	1.6%	13	174	2,0%	14	3,278	0,7%	17
El Salvador	8	0.7%	14	4	0.5%	15	144	1,6%	15	5,957	1,2%	13
Dominican Republic	7	0.6%	15	6	0.8%	14	102	1,2%	16	8,577	1,7%	11
Venezuela	6	0.5%	16	4	0.5%	15	210	2,4%	11	24,976	5,0%	6
Panama	6	0.5%	16	2	0.3%	18	67	0,8%	18	3,175	0,6%	18
Paraguay	5	0.4%	18	3	0.4%	17	101	1,1%	17	5,531	1,1%	14

* Focused on the region, not in a single country

¹ Average between 1990 and 2014.

Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS& Scopus databases

As expected, the number of peer-reviewed publications about a country is connected to the size of its population. Brazil and Mexico are the most populated countries in the region and the ones featured in a higher number of publications regarding poverty and inequality. Moreover, four-out-of-five of the following countries in terms of population (Argentina, Colombia, Peru and Chile), come after with the highest number of peer-reviewed publications. In turn, smaller countries stand at the bottom part of the ranked list according to the number of publications (in fact, none of the countries averagely populated by less than 10 million people throughout our study period stand out as an important focus of poverty and inequality studies within the region). Despite the existence of a clear correlation, cases such as Venezuela, which is the fifth most populated country in the region and has almost null peer-reviewed publications, and Costa Rica which stands eighth on overall publications with less than 1% of Latin American population, suggest that population cannot explain all the differences in poverty and inequality research among the countries of the region.

In order to shed more light on the relationship between publications referring to Latin American countries and some basic variables, we estimated the relationship between total number of publications by dataset and subject with each of the following indicators

separately: population, GDP, R&D as percentage of GDP, Poverty incidence and Gini index. Population data was taken from International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook. Gross Domestic Product is expressed in 2011 dollar at PPP and was taken from the World Bank⁶, as well as R&D, which is shown as percentage of GDP. Poverty incidence and the Gini index were taken from CEPALSTAT, the database from ECLAC. Poverty incidence is expressed in headcount of individuals earning less than US\$ 1.90 a day (2011 PPP).

We ran simple regressions under pooled OLS and country fixed effects between total number of publications by dataset and subject with the each of the previous indicators separately. The coefficients and standard errors of each of these 40 regressions are presented all together, aligned by the dependent variable, independent variable and method used in each regression, in table 6. Some interesting results arise. First of all, both the number of publications in terms of poverty and inequality are significantly and positively related to country size –population-, GDP, and the ratio of R&D over GDP. These results match the relationship derived from the correlation table. It is worth noting that when controlling by country fixed effects, the coefficients related to these relationships increase across-the-board, being particularly noteworthy the rise in the coefficients associated with R&D (as percentage of GDP). Meanwhile, the number of publications on poverty is negatively related to the incidence of poverty, a counterintuitive result from the point of view of the objectives of academic research. Research efforts on poverty do not seem to be concentrated in those countries where the problem is more acute. Again, this may be related to the origin of researchers and the weaknesses of national research systems in poor countries, a hypothesis that we need to check more rigorously in future versions of this paper. Finally, the number of studies on inequality is positively related to the levels of inequality under pooled OLS estimation, indicating that in this case, research interests seem to be aligned to country problems. Notwithstanding, when regressions are controlled by country fixed effects, inequality is negatively related to the number of publications on inequality, further signaling that the positive effect derived from correlations and pooled OLS could be reflecting different research interests between countries.

⁶Due to the lack of data we estimated Argentina's GDP using IMF's GDP at current international dollar on PPP estimation.

Table 6. Coefficients and standard errors for separate regressions on number of publications and different indicators regarding each country in Latin America

VARIABLES	Number of publications on poverty				Number of publications on inequality			
	WoS		Scopus		WoS		Scopus	
	Pooled OLS	Fixed effects	Pooled OLS	Fixed effects	Pooled OLS	Fixed effects	Pooled OLS	Fixed effects
Population (in millions)	0.038	0.254	0.0233	0.195	0.0618	0.418	0.0341	0.264
	0.002 ***	0.016 ***	0.002 ***	0.012 ***	0.003 ***	0.016 ***	0.002 ***	0.012 ***
GDP (at dollar 2011 PPP)	3.11E-06	9.09E-06	1.96E-06	6.92E-06	4.83E-06	1.53E-05	2.75E-06	9.88E-06
	1.62E-07 ***	5.26E-07 ***	1.20E-07 ***	3.97E-07 ***	1.82E-07 ***	4.61E-07 ***	1.25E-07 ***	3.46E-07 ***
Research and Development (as % of GDP)	546	1,510	400	1,223	1,232	1,587	632	790
	90.483* **	297.338 ***	70.243* **	252.506 ***	86.870* **	315.183 ***	54.600* **	210.663 ***
Poverty incidence	-0.0607	-0.151	-0.0533	-0.118	-0.0764	-0.194	-0.0537	-0.11
	0.019 ***	0.023 ***	0.015 ***	0.020 ***	0.031 **	0.035 ***	0.017 ***	0.022 ***
Gini index	3.778	-26.25	1.727	-19.74	16.66	-40.46	6.648	-21.14
	3.492	5.047 ***	2.776	4.451 ***	5.791 ***	7.789 ***	3.215 **	4.935 ***
Observations	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446
R2	0.353	0.368	0.276	0.377	0.523	0.618	0.415	0.54
Number of countries		18		18		18		18

Standard errors in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

When it comes to the journals where these publications appeared, there seems to be a high dispersion. The 880 selected articles from SCOPUS database were published in 463 journals, whereas the 1436 articles from WoS were published in 617 journals. In the Scopus database, World Development is the journal with the largest number of publications in poverty. Both in Scopus and WoS, the Journal of Development Economics and Revista De Saude Publica are the ones with more publications on inequality (Scopus and WoS respectively). These journals are among the ones with greatest impact, but are not the ones with the highest impact (see table 7). Also, the majority of the top 25 journals with the highest number of articles, in both areas, have relatively low impact factors. When comparing the two periods (1990-2000 and 2001-2014) the journals that are among the top 25 in number of articles are only 7 (according to WoS) and 8 (according to Scopus) (see tables A.3 and A.4 in appendix).

Table 7. Publications regarding Poverty and Inequality in Latin America, by country (1990-2014)

	Poverty			Inequality	
	Impact factor	Number of citations	Ranking 1 to 25	Number of citations	Ranking 1 to 25
Scopus (top 25)		2,065	-	1,767	-
World Development	2.71	1080	1	226	4
Journal of Development Studies	2.18	136	3	57	7
The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy	--	10	13	1	21
Social Science and Medicine	3.54	99	4	360	2
Trimestre Economico	0.11	23	11	15	14
European Journal of Development Research	0.94	38	10	0	23
Cepal Review	0.24	5	16	2	19
Journal of Development Economics	2.79	294	2	377	1
Papeles de Poblacion	1.13	3	17	3	17
Economic Development and Cultural Change	1.59	98	5	33	11
Journal of International Development	1.16	10	13	2	19
Journal of Latin American Studies	0.89	64	7	51	8
Pan American Journal of Public Health	1.05	3	17	238	3
Dados	0.13	0	22	45	10
Desarrollo Economico	0.17 (**)	10	13	18	13
Eure	0.58	0	22	20	12
Who Gains from Free Trade?: Export-Led Growth, Inequality and Poverty in Latin America (Routledge studies in Development Economics)	--	0	22	0	23
Economia Aplicada	0.22	3	17	1	21
Overcoming Inequality in Latin America: Issues and Challenges for the 21st Century (Routledge studies in Development Economics)	--	0	22	0	23
Review of Income and Wealth	1.24	49	8	151	5
Estudios de Economia	0.29	11	12	9	15
Journal of Income Distribution		2	20	9	15
Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs	--	40	9	50	9
Latin American Research Review	0.48	85	6	96	6
Research on Economic Inequality		2	20	3	17
WoS (top 25)		1,951	-	2,381	-
Journal Of Latin American Studies	0.89	54	8	56	10
World Development	2.71	894	1	206	6
Trimestre Economico	0.11	22	14	16	16
Cadernos De Saude Publica	1.24	32	13	133	7
Journal Of Development Studies	2.18	96	4	39	13
Latin American Research Review	0.48	80	6	80	9
Revista De Saude Publica	1.33	0	23	395	1
Revista Panamericana De Salud Publica-Pan American Journal Of Public Health	1.05	0	23	239	5
International Handbook Of Gender And Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy	--	6	20	0	25
Papeles De Poblacion	1.13	2	21	4	22
Ciencia & Saude Coletiva	0.90	9	17	278	4
Journal Of Interamerican Studies And World Affairs	--	47	11	45	11

Social Science & Medicine	3.54	93	5	299	3
Cepal Review	0.24	2	21	2	24
Economic Development And Cultural Change	1.59	106	3	39	13
Hispanic American Historical Review	0.50	0	23	5	21
Salud Publica De Mexico	1.17	54	8	9	20
Journal Of Development Economics	2.79	250	2	307	2
Journal Of Epidemiology And Community Health	3.54	20	15	12	17
Latin American Politics And Society	0.50	15	16	10	19
Bulletin Of Latin American Research	0.39	7	19	3	23
Desarrollo Economico-Revista De Ciencias Sociales	0.17 (**)	8	18	12	17
Development And Change	1.92	40	12	44	12
Environment And Urbanization	2.07	66	7	19	15
Review Of Income And Wealth	1.24	48	10	129	8

(*) Corresponds to the five- year impact factor, an indicator calculated by ISI based on the number of cites to articles published in the last five years

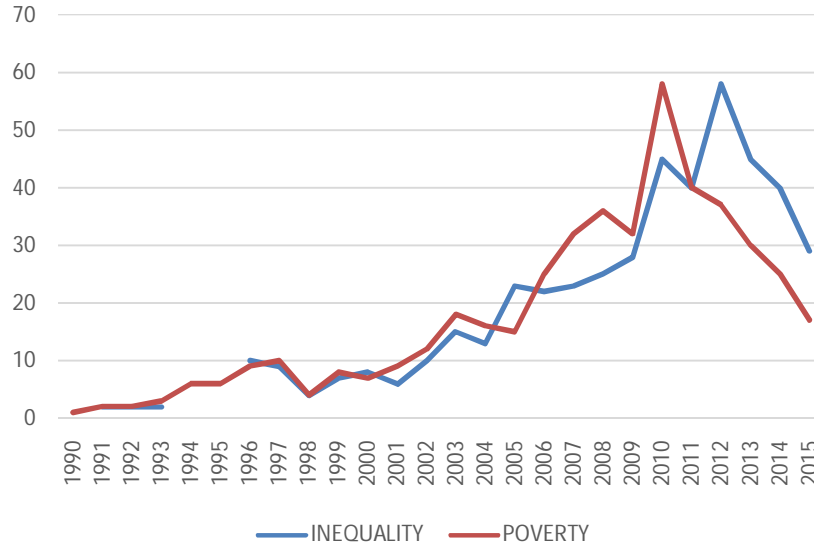
(**) Data from 2008

4. From poverty to inequality: a shift in the academic agenda?

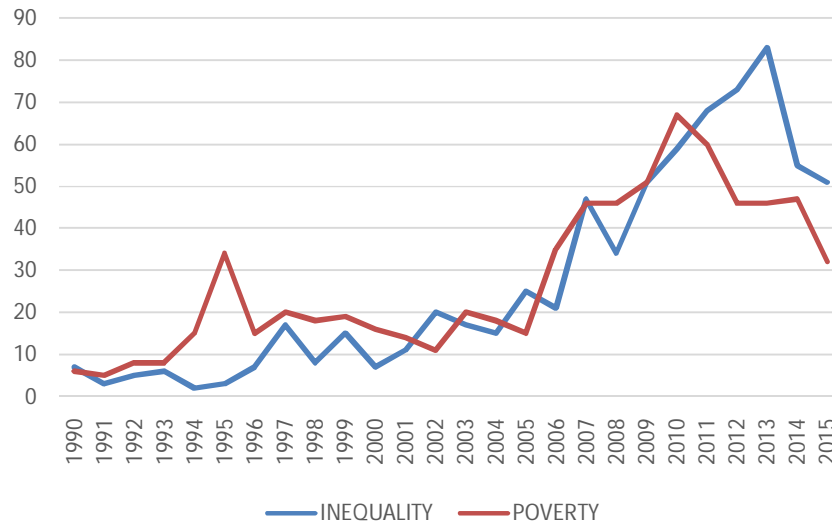
The increasing trend in the number of publications presented in figure 1 remains present when we consider poverty and inequality in separate ways (figure 2). By doing so, we can visualize the increasing importance in the research on inequality when compared to that on poverty; these results hold for both data bases (and also for Google Scholar). Up to 2010, the number of publications related to poverty was higher, or at least similar, to the number of publications related to inequality. This changed in the last four or five years, when inequality seemed to start capturing the attention of scholars. In the case of poverty, the maximum production is reached in 2010, whereas for inequality the maximum is reached in 2012.

Figure 3. Academic production regarding poverty and inequality in Latin America. 1990-2014

(a) Scopus



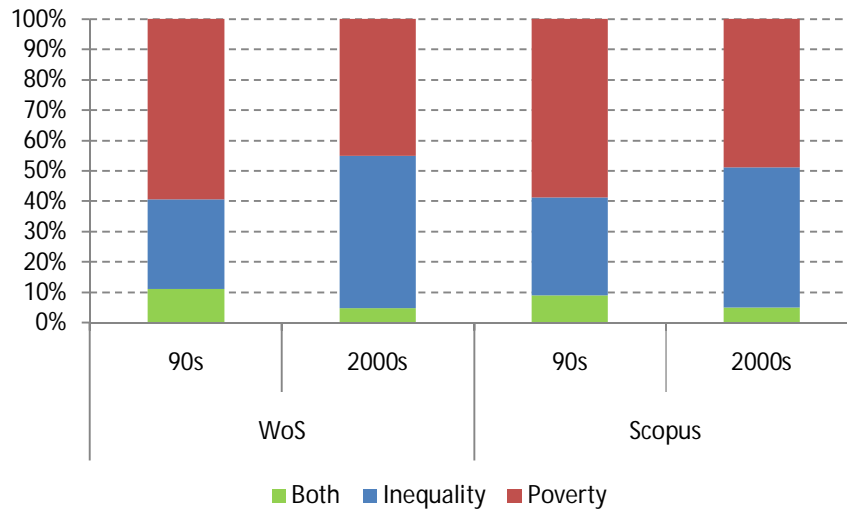
(b) Web of Science



Source: Authors' elaboration based in Wos & Scopus databases

The change in the focus from poverty to inequality is better illustrated in figure 3: considering all production in the 90s based on WoS, 29% corresponded to inequality, whereas in the 2000s the participation of inequality in total production is 50%. Considering Scopus, figures change from 32% in the 90s to 46% in the 2000s.

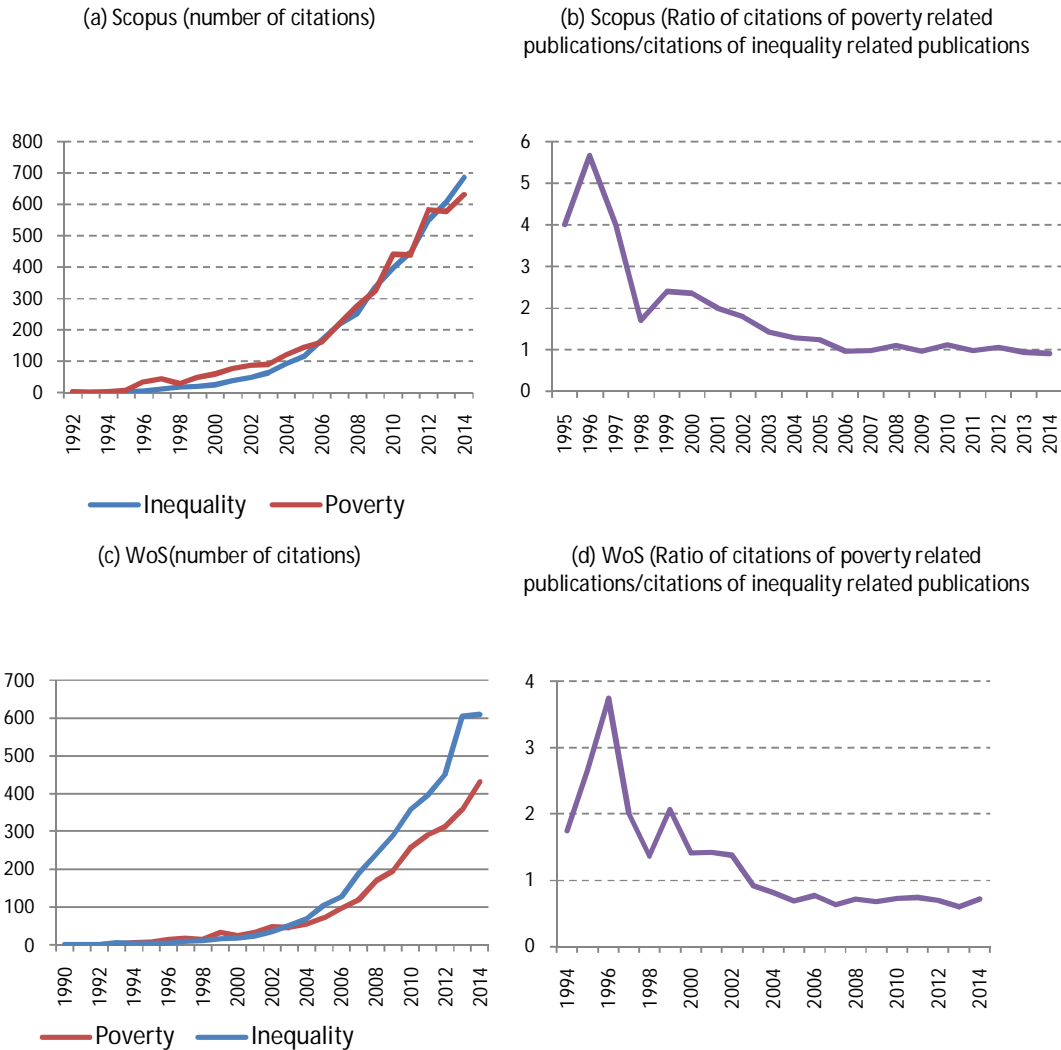
Figure 4. Poverty and inequality research in Latin America (1990-2014)
(in percentages of total academic production)



Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS& Scopus databases

This shift in the academic agenda is not only reflected by the number of publications, but also by the number of citations. When considering the number of citations that publications on poverty and inequality have for the 1990-2014, the rise of inequality over poverty is confirmed. When analyzing citations in Scopus, although through most of the period the number of citations of articles related to poverty is similar to the number of citations from articles related to inequality, in most years the former is higher than the latter. This trend changes in 2013, when the number of citations of papers on inequality overcomes the one from poverty related publications (see (a) and (b) in figure 4). When analyzing the WoS database the shift is also clear, but it starts much earlier: citations from inequality related publications overcome those from poverty related articles in 2003 and the difference between the two becomes higher each year (see (c) and (d) in figure 5).

Figure 5. Citations from academic production regarding poverty and inequality in Latin America (1990-2014)



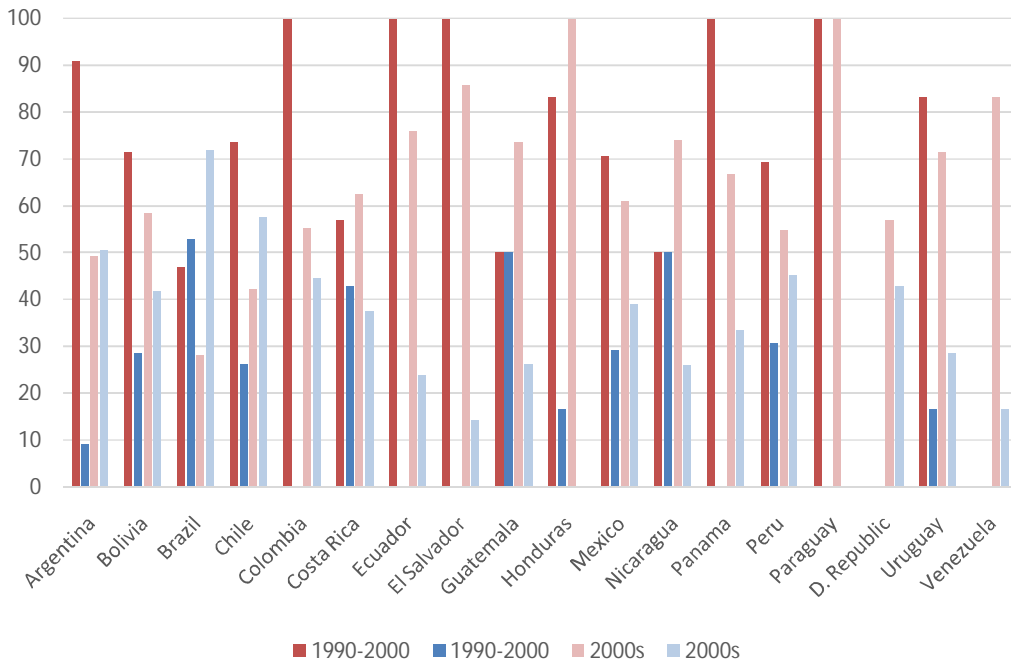
Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS& Scopus databases

This shift in the research agenda from poverty to inequality also seems to be taking place in most of the region's countries. When considering articles published in WoS, in fourteen of the eighteen countries analyzed the proportion of studies focused on inequality increased between the 90s and the 2000s. Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Panama and Dominican Republic are the countries with the biggest increase of the relative importance of inequality in the academic agenda. By contrast, in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua what grew was the focus on poverty. Despite this trend, only in Brazil and Chile inequality ends up ahead of poverty, while in the rest of the countries the proportion of studies devoted to poverty remains higher than the

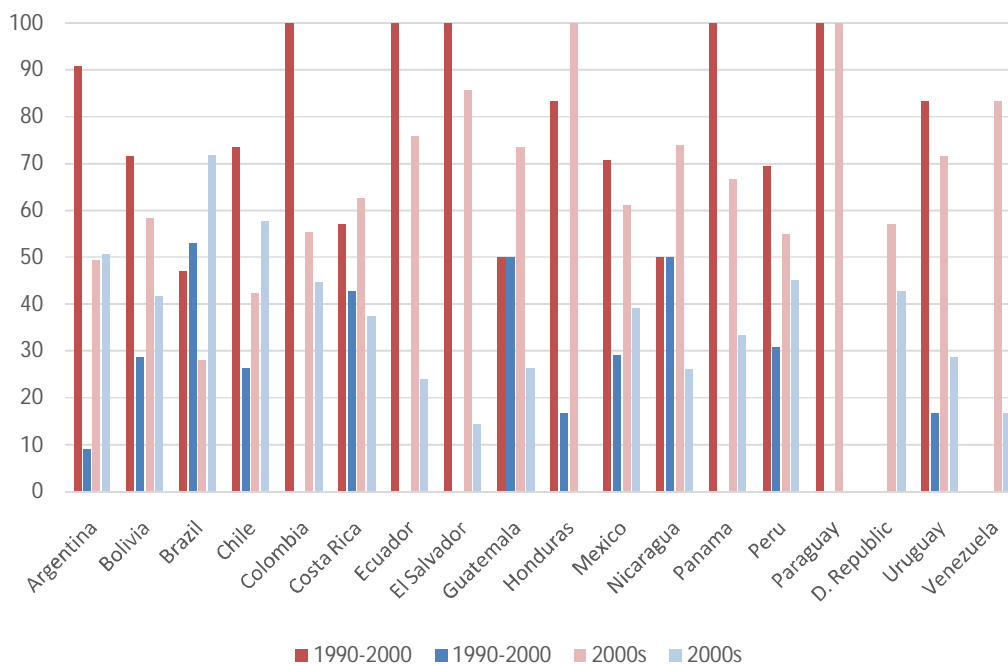
proportion of those devoted to inequality. The scenario changes slightly when analyzing Scopus. While the countries with the biggest increase in inequality studies remain almost the same (with the exception of Panama and Dominican Republic), in other countries (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Dominican Republic) there seems to be an increase in the relative importance of poverty publications. As a result, Brazil and Chile remain the only two countries where inequality receive more attention than poverty in academic publication in the 2000s (see figure 6 and table 8).

Figure 6. Publications devoted to poverty and inequality in WoS and Scopus database (*), by country
(average %, 1990-2000, 2000-2014)

(a) *Web of Science*



(b) Scopus



Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS& Scopus databases

(*) Solid and light red bars represent inequality while solid and light blue bars represent poverty data for the corresponding periods.

Table 8. Publications devoted to poverty and inequality in WoS and Scopus database, by country
(average %, 1990-2000, 2000-2014)

	Wos		Scopus					
	1990-2000		2000s		1990-2000		2000s	
	Poverty	Inequality	Poverty	Inequality	Poverty	Inequality	Poverty	Inequality
Argentina	91	9	49	51	75	25	56	44
Bolivia	71	29	58	42	0	0	94	6
Brazil	47	53	28	72	42	58	35	65
Chile	74	26	42	58	75	25	44	56
Colombia	100	0	55	45	100	0	52	48
Costa Rica	57	43	63	38	50	50	58	42
Ecuador	100	0	76	24	100	0	87	13
El Salvador	100	0	86	14	100	0	100	0
Guatemala	50	50	74	26	0	100	69	31
Honduras	83	17	100	0	50	50	100	0
Mexico	71	29	61	39	50	50	60	40
Nicaragua	50	50	74	26	0	100	76	24
Panama	100	0	67	33	100	0	100	0
Peru	69	31	55	45	0	100	62	38

Paraguay	100	0	100	0	0	0	100	0
D. Republic	0	0	57	43	0	0	50	50
Uruguay	83	17	71	29	67	33	78	22
Venezuela	0	0	83	17	0	0	50	50

Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS& Scopus databases

5. Explaining the shift: how is the academic agenda shaped?

In the previous pages we provided evidence showing that, whereas during the nineties the number of publications about poverty in Latin America outpaced that the number of publications about inequality in the region, the situation reversed during the 2000s. The evidence about this shift from poverty to inequality in the academic research agenda is quite robust: it arises when considering World of Science and Scopus (and also Google Scholar), and it is confirmed both in the number of publications and in the amount of citations. The question that arises is: why is this shift taking place? or what are the main drivers form this change?

In the following paragraphs, we discuss some factors that may have influenced on this shift. Of course, these are only informed guesses and we can neither rule out nor confirm any of them. Moreover, probably they did not act in an isolated way, but any combination of them may have taken place and they may have reinforced.

The most obvious hypothesis is that this change occurred basically following the trend of the main economic and social indicators. Poverty and indigence rates have dropped significantly in the last decade: while in 1990 the average poverty rate in Latin American countries was 48.4%, in 2002 had fallen down to 43.9% and kept decreasing in the following decade, reaching an historic 28.2% in 2014. In addition, the indigence rate went from 22.6% in 1990 to 19.3% in 2002 and to 11.8% in 2014⁷. It is reasonable to expect this fall to have contributed to a weakening of the importance of poverty as a key issue of study for scholars.

Also, although at a slower pace and more recently, inequality started to fall down. The Gini coefficient went from 0.51 in 1990 to 0.52 in 2002, but from that year on started to

⁷ Data from CEPALSTAT, 18 countries, weighted averages

decrease, reaching an also historic figure (0.46) in 2014⁸. This fall in inequality made the issue to gain attention among researchers, not only because it was the first time inequality fell in the region since there are records, but also because this fall took place at the same time that inequality was increasing in most advanced countries, and, most of all, because the reasons behind this fall were not clear at all. This drove to the expansion of the literature addressing this issue, posing different arguments to explain this decline, mainly focusing on factors driving supply and demand for workers at different qualification levels, but also focusing on institutional or political factors (see Lopez Calva & Lustig(2010); Gasparini et al, 2012;De la Torre et al, 2012; Cornia (2014) among others). This desire to better understand the changing regional reality in terms of inequality may explain, at least in part, the push in academic publications in this topic.

A second important factor refers to the change in Latin America's political landscape in the late 90s. This change has been characterized by an electoral turn to the left and a revival of social mobilization from below(Levitsky & Roberts, 2011a; Roberts, 2015). Indeed, between 1993 and 2010, the percentage of votes received by left parties passed from 23.5% to 43.4% (Queirolo, 2013).The implications of this electoral change to the left –comprising a quite wide spectrum, from social democratic and to left populist regimes- are varied. It has been argued that this change has re-politicized inequality and returned redistributive policies to a central place on the political agenda. Moreover, the maneuvering space for debating and implementing redistributive policies expanded, mainly because of the dramatic improvement in macroeconomic conditions and the commodity boom (Levitsky & Roberts, 2011b).Even if the comparative redistributive results of more leftist or centrist governments is a contested issue (seeMcLeod & Lustig (2011), Cornia (2014)), what is relevant for our argument is that inequality entered the political agenda and this may have shaped the research agenda given the new importance of inequality. In the light of the new politics of inequality, researchers may have decided to focus on this topic.

A third factor that should be considered is that the main orientations and concerns of international organizations seem to have also changed, shifting from poverty to inequality. While in the nineties poverty was the main focus of most publications from

⁸ Data from CEPALSTAT, 14 countries, urban areas, simple averages

the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and ECLAC, more recently inequality started to gain attention from these institutions. ECLAC's analysis on social development and challenges started addressing inequality as a problem in different areas, such as gender, labor markets, social protection systems or education . In 2010, ECLAC installed inequality as a key barrier for the region's development, and shaped this message in a sequence of documents (ECLAC, 2010, 2012; ECLAC, 2014) that tried to position inequality as the main concern for the region and to articulate the traditional structuralist vision with the importance of social development and equality.

The World Bank also started focus on inequality. In 2004, it published a comprehensive study of the nature of Latin American inequality and the possible ways to tackle it (de Ferranti, Perry, Ferreira, & Walton, 2004). Later on, the World Bank has been working intensively with the concept of equality of opportunity, building on the theoretical work of political philosophers and proposing different approaches to measure inequality of opportunities, as reflected by the Human Opportunity Index (HOI) for measuring how unequally basic services are distributed between different social sectors (Paes de Barros, Ferreira, Molinas Vega, & Saavedra Chanduv, 2008). More recently, more complex issues related to social mobility, redistribution and redistributive policies are being addressed (Ferreira et al., 2013; World Bank, 2014).

It is not possible to conclude if any of these potential factors was more important, or even to understand how they interacted or if any of them had a leading role. Were the international organizations leaders for the change in the focus of the research agenda or – more plausible- they were following the changes in the political landscape in the region? The interests of researchers are guided purely by their desires to understand the more relevant questions for the regions, or are also influenced by other factors? Unfortunately, we can only formulate hypothesis about this potential interacting factors.

6. Summing up

We provide evidence that total academic production focused on poverty and inequality in Latin America in the last 25 years is relatively small, considering these being topics

which would probably be ranked among the top problems of the region by academics worldwide. As expected, the importance of articles about poverty and inequality in Latin America in total publications on these topics increase when we consider Google Scholar database, which includes grey literature.

Despite being relatively scarce, the production related to poverty and inequality stands out when comparing it with that related to other crucial issues, such as labor markets or inflation. Latin American research on inequality and poverty in the region is primarily focused on two countries (Brazil and Mexico), and is highly dispersed in terms of journals. It has increased significantly both in number of publications, number of citations and average number citations per publication.

A relevant change during the last 25 years refers to a shift of focus from poverty to inequality in the academic agenda, which is confirmed not only through the number of publications but also through the number of citations. We argue that the interaction of multiple factors may help to understand this shift in the research agenda. On the one hand, the decline in inequality in the region, for the first time since reliable statistics are available, awakened the interests of researchers to understand the reasons behind this fall. At the same time, and probably in close connection with the evolution of inequality described before, the change in the political orientation of regional governments expanded the space for redistributive policies, and inequality was relocated as a central issue in the public debate. And finally, but also closely linked with the aforementioned factors, the main orientations and concerns of international organizations also changed and located inequality in a central place. All these factors seem to have helped to reshape the academic agenda towards inequality concerns.

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Appendix

Table A.1. Importance of social studies about Poverty and/or Inequality

	Web of Science	Scopus
Total articles on poverty and/or inequality	54,990	49,990
Social Sciences articles on poverty and/or inequality	23,155	23,641
Mathematics articles on poverty and/or inequality	16,945	17,975
Health articles on poverty and/or inequality	4,938	7,017
Arts and Humanities articles on poverty and/or inequality	3,321	1,858
<i>Social Sciences / Total (%)</i>	42.11%	47.29%

Source: Authors' elaboration based in WoS& Scopus databases

TableA.2. Top ten Journals/publications with higher number of articles regarding poverty and inequality, 1990-2014

	Impact factor (*)	Total
SCOPUS		
World Development	2.71	40
Journal of Development Studies	2.18	19
The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy	--	16
Social Science and Medicine	3.54	12
Trimestre Economico	0.11	12
European Journal of Development Research	0.94	11
Cepal Review	0.24	10
Journal of Development Economics	2.79	10
Papeles de Poblacion	1.13	10
Journal of Latin American Studies	0.89	9
WoS		
Journal of Latin American Studies	0.89	49
World Development	2.71	41
Trimestre Económico	0.11	25
Cadernos de Saude Publica	1.24	24
Journal of Development Studies	1.28	23
Latin American Research Review	0.48	23
Revista de Saude Publica	1.33	22
Pan American Journal of Public Health	1.05	20
International Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy	--	16
Papeles de Población	1.13	14

(*) Corresponds to the five- year impact factor, an indicator calculated by ISI based on the number of cites to articles published in the last five years.

TableA.3. Top 25 Journals/publications with higher number of articles regarding poverty and inequality, 1990-2000

	Impact factor (*)	Poverty	Inequality	Number of citations	Ranking 1 to 25
		Number of citations	Ranking 1 to 25		
WoS (top 25)		760	-	304	-
Journal of latin american studies	0.89	4	17	2	15
Latin american research review	0.48	74	3	69	1
Journal of interamerican studies and world affairs	--	47	6	45	2
Trimestre economico	0.11	15	13	10	10
Hispanic american historical review	0.50	0	19	5	13
Journal of developing areas		8	15	12	9
Environment and urbanization	2.07	18	12	19	5
Economic development and cultural change	1.59	104	2	16	8
Journal of development studies	2.18	38	8	0	17
Journal of economic literature	11.76	0	19	0	17
American journal of agricultural economics		0	19	0	17
Annual world bank conference on development in latin america and the caribbean 1996: poverty and inequality		2	18	0	17
Development and change	1.92	34	10	2	15
World development	2.71	60	4	5	13
Latin american perspectives		41	7	0	17
Political science quarterly		0	19	0	17
Poverty and inequality in latin america: issues and new challenges		21	11	18	6
Review of income and wealth	1.24	38	8	31	4
Salud publica de mexico	1.17	11	14	6	12
Desarrollo economico	0.17 (**)	8	15	10	10
Foreign affairs		0	19	0	17
Journal of development economics	2.79	186	1	17	7
American anthropologist		0	19	0	17
American historical review		0	19	0	17
American journal of public health		51	5	37	3
Scopus (top 25)		708	-	433	-
Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs		40	7	50	4
Economic Development and Cultural Change	1.59	91	2	3	14
World Development	2.71	67	4	6	13
Journal of Developing Areas		12	9	12	9
Journal of Development Economics	2.79	230	1	56	3
Latin American Perspectives		41	6	0	17
Trimestre Economico	0.11	11	10	3	14
World Bank Living Standards Measurement Study Working Paper		9	13	2	16
World Bank Technical Paper		2	17	0	17
Dados	0.13	0	18	23	8
Desarrollo Economico	0.17 (**)	10	11	10	11
Environment and Urbanization	2.07	0	18	27	6
IDS Bulletin		7	14	0	17
Journal fur Entwicklungspolitik		0	18	0	17
Journal of Development Studies	2.18	49	5	0	17
Journal of International Development	1.16	5	15	0	17
Latin American Research Review	0.48	85	3	85	1
Review of Income and Wealth	1.24	36	8	35	5
Social Science and Medicine	3.54	0	18	11	10

Alberta Journal of Educational Research	10	11	0	17
Ancient Mesoamerica	0	18	24	7
Antipode	3	16	0	17
Cahiers des Sciences Humaines	0	18	0	17
Comparative Education Review	0	18	8	12
Demography	0	18	78	2

(*) Corresponds to the five- year impact factor, an indicator calculated by ISI based on the number of cites to articles published in the last five years

(**) Data from 2008

TableA.4. Top 25 Journals/publications with higher number of articles regarding poverty and inequality, 2001-2014

	Poverty			Inequality	
	Impact factor (*)	Nro citations poverty	Ranking 1 a 25	Nro citations ineq	Ranking 1 a 25
WoS (top 25)		1,279	-	2,267	-
World development	2.71	834	1	201	6
Journal of latin american studies	0.89	50	5	54	10
Cadernos de saude publica	1.24	32	7	133	8
Revista de saude publica	1.33	0	20	384	1
Revista panamericana de salud publica-pan american journal of public health	1.05	0	20	239	5
Journal of development studies	2.18	58	4	39	11
International handbook of gender and poverty: concepts, research, policy		6	16	0	23
Papeles de poblacion	1.13	2	18	4	19
Ciencia & v colectiva		9	12	278	4
Trimestre economico	0.11	7	14	6	18
Cepal review	0.24	2	18	2	22
Latin american politics and society	0.50	15	9	10	16
Social science & medicine	3.54	93	2	293	2
Bulletin of latin american research	0.39	7	14	3	20
Journal of epidemiology and community health	3.54	0	20	12	13
Who gains from free trade: export-led growth, inequality and poverty in latin america		12	10	12	13
Cadernos de saúde pública	1.24	21	8	153	7
European journal of development research	0.94	8	13	0	23
Latin american research review	0.48	6	16	11	15
Estudios de economia	0.29	10	11	15	12
Eure	0.58	0	20	10	16
Journal of development economics	2.79	64	3	290	3
Salud publica de mexico	1.17	43	6	3	20
American journal of public health		0	20	115	9
Contemporary sociology-a journal of reviews		0	20	0	23
Scopus (top 25)		1,459	-	1,401	-
World Development		1013	1	220	4
Journal of Development Studies	2.18	87	3	57	6
The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy		10	11	1	19
Cepal Review	0.24	5	12	2	17
European Journal of Development Research	0.94	37	6	0	21
Papeles de Poblacion	1.13	3	14	3	14
Social Science and Medicine	3.54	99	2	349	1
Trimestre Economico	0.11	12	8	12	10
Eure	0.58	0	19	20	9
Journal of Latin American Studies	0.89	60	5	51	7
Revista Panamericana de Salud Publica/Pan American Journal of Public Health	1.05	3	14	231	3
Who Gains from Free Trade?:		0	19	0	21

Export-Led Growth, Inequality and Poverty in Latin America					
Economia Aplicada	0.22	3	14	1	19
Journal of Development Economics	2.79	64	4	321	2
Journal of International Development	1.16	5	12	2	17
Overcoming Inequality in Latin America: Issues and Challenges for the 21st Century		0	19	0	21
Dados	0.13	0	19	22	8
Desarrollo Economico	0.17 (**)	0	19	8	13
Estudios de Economia	0.29	11	10	9	11
Journal of Income Distribution		2	17	9	11
Research on Economic Inequality		2	17	3	14
Development in Practice		12	8	0	21
Journal of Economic Inequality		0	19	77	5
Oxford Development Studies		31	7	3	14
Problemas del Desarrollo		0	19	0	21

(*) Corresponds to the five- year impact factor, an indicator calculated by ISI based on the number of cites to articles published in the last five years

(**) Data from 2008