



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI BERGAMO

Dipartimento
di Scienze Umane
e Sociali



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Spigi
DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE POLITICHE,
GIURIDICHE E STUDI INTERNAZIONALI

Call for papers

"The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Southern Europe: policy, diplomacy, economy, and institutional transformation, 1950s-1980s"

University of Padova (Italy), 23-24 May 2024

The Department of Political Science, Juridical and International Studies of the University of Padova (Italy) and the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Bergamo (Italy) invite scholars to contribute papers to an interdisciplinary conference exploring the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) in Southern European countries between the 1950s and 1980s.

The year 2024 marks the 80th anniversary of the Bretton Woods conference and the establishment of the IMF and the WB. The IMF was founded to oversight the fixed exchange rates and lend reserve currencies to nations with balance-of-payments deficits. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (now known as the World Bank Group) was responsible for providing financial assistance for the reconstruction after World War II and the economic development of less developed countries. After almost 80 years, few global institutions can claim to be quite as controversial as the IMF and the WB and to regularly provoke passionate reactions. On one side are those like Gavin and Rodrik (1995) and Krugman (1998) who argue that the IMF and the WB are indispensable institutions. On the other, critics object that the two institutions are unrepresentative, inefficient, an engine of moral hazard, unable to favour development and conclude that the world would be better off without them (International Financial Institutions Advisory Commission 2000; Global Exchange 2015).

Much of the existing literature on the IMF and the WB has been authored by economists and scholars in International Political Economy. These works focus on the impact of IMF/WB programs on economic growth and other socioeconomic indicators (Bird and Rowlands, 2017, Stubbs et al., 2018, Gavin and Rodrik, 1995, Forster et al. 2019), the determinants of lending practices (Kapur, 1997, Vreeland, 2007), the roles in significant global events such as the 1980s debt crisis and the East Asian financial crisis in 1997 (Sachs, 1998, Dreher and Gassebner, 2012), the evolution of the policy of conditionality Dreher et al (2013). As it is often the case, scholarly opinion is divided and range all over the spectrum of possible conclusions. Historical inquiries into these institutions remain relatively sparse. With few exceptions, notably the work of Alacevich (2007), historians have largely concentrated on the viewpoints of the borrowing governments, thereby overlooking the institutional development of the IMF and WB themselves. Furthermore, the role played by these organizations in Southern Europe is significantly underexplored, particularly when compared to their interventions in other geographic areas. Yet, these organizations have played significant roles in term of interventions in Southern European countries from post-WWII reconstruction to the economic crises and political transition of the 1970s.

Our conference aims to bring together scholars from different disciplines (economics, history, law and political science) with the aim to examine the IMF/World Bank by focusing on Southern Europe. We want to investigate both evolution of the IMF/WB as institutions and their impact on Southern European states during a critical period that encompassed the post-WWII economic boom, the Cold War, the crisis of the Bretton Woods system and the stagflation of the 1970s, the transition from dictatorship to democracy and the deepening of the integration of the international economy. We want to study how strategies for international loans intersected with questions of political governance, economic conditionality and democracy.

Our goals are to understand which political, economic and institutional factors influenced the trajectory of the IMF/WB and their policies, which events can be considered milestones and decisive turning points in this process, which personalities played a relevant role, which ideas drove the action of the two institutions. We want to identify the distinctive operational phases that have come to characterize concrete periods of the

IMF/WB's existence and offer a periodisation of the organizations' trajectory. We also want to ascertain how the changes in the international economic and political context influenced the IMF/WB, and how they responded and adapted to these changes. Lastly, we want to investigate the role government played in the formulation of IMF/WB programs and political and socioeconomic impact the IMF/WB programs had on the recipient countries.

We welcome papers that examine a range of issues including, but not limited to:

- IMF/WB policy: how programs were formulated and adopted and which were the driving ideas, priorities and determinants;
- The institutional design: the evolution of the business model, governance, management, ideas driving the two organizations;
- The evolution of the mandate, conditionality and instruments of operations;
- Financial diplomacy: the strategies and outcomes of IMF/WB diplomatic engagements with Southern European governments;
- The role of the Southern European governments in the formulation and then implementation of programs;
- Political Consequences: the role of the IMF/WB in shaping political landscapes in the countries under review;
- Socioeconomic impact: How IMF/WB policies affected socio-economic conditions, including economic growth and other macroeconomic indicators, labour markets, welfare, and inequality;
- Institutional Interactions: relationships between IMF/WB and other financial or political organizations, such as national central banks or the European Economic Community (EEC), regional banks, and nonstate actors (banks, trade unions, political parties)
- Specific individuals who might be singled out for their role and influence;

Both in-person and remote participation in the conference are possible. Working language: English and French.

Submission guidelines:

Submit an abstract of no more than 500 words and a short bio to IMFWB2024@gmail.com by 10 December 2023. Notification of acceptance: 20 December 2023.

If accepted, full papers (8000 words max including footnotes) must be submitted by 5 May 2024.

Publishing plans: selected papers will be published in a collective co-edited volume or in special issue in scientific journal.

Economy fare travel and hotel costs will be covered by the organizers.

For queries and clarifications, please contact: IMFWB2024@gmail.com

Organizing committee: Lucia Coppolaro (Università di Padova), Francesco Petrini (Università di Padova), Leonida Tedoldi (Università di Bergamo).

Scientific committee: Maria Elena Cavallaro (LUISS), Daniele Caviglia (Kore, Enna), Lucia Coppolaro (Università di Padova), Barbara Curli (Università di Torino), Daniela Felisini (Università Tor Vergata), Sandro Guerrieri (Università La Sapienza), Francesco Petrini (Università di Padova), Leonida Tedoldi (Università di Bergamo).