

University of San Diego

Violence, Inequality, and Power Lab Fellowship Program



Who Are We?

The University of San Diego (USD) sets the standard for an engaged, contemporary Catholic university where innovative Changemakers confront humanity's urgent challenges. Founded in 1949, the university continues to provide a rigorous and rewarding liberal arts education to more than 9,000 students (undergraduate, graduate and law). We are committed to our core values: academic excellence, knowledge, community, ethical conduct, and compassionate service.

Need

Inequality is rising around the world, both within countries and between countries, a trend made even worse by COVID-19. It has long been understood by those who study violence and conflict that both vertical and horizontal inequalities play a significant role in facilitating violence. While this knowledge has existed in the abstract, in practice the dominant conversation regarding inequality tends to focus on economic inequality alone, rather than the socio-political consequences of unequal communities. The lack of focused attention to the relationship between multiple forms of inequality and violence impedes our collective capacity to analyze violence, resulting in ineffective and potentially harmful solutions. To respond to the dual imperatives of rising inequality and a dearth of knowledge on its relationship to violence, the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego launched the Violence, Inequality and Power Lab (VIP Lab) in January 2022.

The VIP Lab is a space for cutting-edge research and ideas on how to shift inequalities to end cycles of violence. We do this through a range of partnerships, with a focus on advancing critical analysis partnered with practical guidance that bring improved diagnostic tools to bear on addressing multiple forms of violence.

Impact

To address the gap of the need for thought leadership and expand our footprint, we are focused on launching a VIP Lab Fellowship Program, intended to support experimental research and influence the broader field of study. The design of the fellowship will evidence how inequalities impact violence across a range of types of violence, both in driving violence dynamics and influencing responses to violence. In this vein, we will select a range of fellows from each of the following categories:

- Violence Against Women
- Violence in the Community
- Political Violence

As a core aspect of this fellowship, we will host an annual conference where research will be presented to an esteemed group of policy makers and thinkers in relevant areas of practice. Facilitating connections between fellows will also be imperative, so we will build in time for regular monthly virtual meetings in addition to a midpoint in-person workshop (public health restrictions permitting). Finally, an annual report will capture findings from the fellows, providing a written record key to influencing the field of study of conflict, violence and peacebuilding for years to come.

The inaugural fellowship class would consist of eight fellows from around the world and represent a range of different backgrounds:

- Two (2) Fellows from California
- Two (2) Fellows who are international
- Four (4) Fellows will not have a location requirement

At least one fellowship will be reserved for a veteran, which will reinforce a deep need for greater connection between those who have served in the military and those studying violence. In addition, at least one fellowship will be reserved for an individual with law enforcement or criminal justice background, for very similar reasons. Finally, we will reserve one fellowship spot for an individual who has been directly impacted by violence or the criminal justice system. Including those with direct experience will help to ensure our thinking is grounded and practical.

In addition to our fellows, we will integrate two graduate students from the University of San Diego to work with the fellows. Serving as research assistants, this will leverage existing capacities here at USD while reinforcing the commitment to excellence in academia and changemaking that exists at the university.

The VIP Lab fellows will not only expand the field of knowledge and practice, they will create an intellectual community through their interactions with one another and the convening of an annual conference and report. Harnessing the increased interest in the relationships between power, inequality and violence, USD's VIP Lab and this fellowship will be at the vanguard of an emerging field of study, reinforcing the contribution of San Diego and California to one of the most urgent challenges of our time.

Budget

USD requests \$580,000 for the VIP Lab Fellowship Program at the University of San Diego. These funds will be used in the following ways:

- Personnel:
 - 6 Fellows: \$90K
 - 2 Resident Fellows: \$230K
 - 2 Grad Students: \$10K
 - VIP Lab Fellows Coordinator: \$110K
 - VIP Lab Director: \$20K
 - VIP Manager: \$10K
- Programming:
 - Mid-point Fellows Workshop: \$25K
 - Final Conference: \$75K
- Annual Report: \$10K

For More Information

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