

ACTION PLAN FOR 2023

The Institute of Political Economy and Governance (IPEG) has become a Research Center in Political Economy at the highest international standard. We aim at being an institution of reference for our signature research lines, generating new solutions to achieve prosperity by analyzing the conditions for growth, good institutions and peaceful societies. We believe we fill an important gap in social science research by investigating these topics using innovative analytical tools, and new data sources. The interdisciplinary character of the center should promote creative approaches, and produce innovative solutions that can be transformed into policy recommendations.

This approach requires the collaboration of a complex and multidisciplinary team of researchers, including data engineers, economists, political scientist, etc. The application of this type of multidisciplinary methodology to the study of the central topics of research of IPEG is its greatest novelty. The application of this methodology also implies that it is a center of great frugality in relation to the beneficial effects that it can have for modern societies.

Our plan for 2023:

1. Keep our current structure with four research lines.
2. Keep our governance procedures.
3. Consolidate and create new specific laboratories associated with our signature projects to improve visibility.
4. Improve our research by collaborating with other top research center in our specialties.
5. Enlarge our research community to strengthen the multidisciplinary approach. We have two ICREA researchers.
6. Promote training in our methodological approach.
7. Continue with our visitors' program.
8. Continue with our program of research activities and conferences with high academic impact.
9. Improve sustainability by a campaign of fund raising and international sponsorship.

The following pages develop some of the previous points.

Keep our structure

In 2019 we made some changes in our internal structure. We organized the structure of IPEG into several Research Lines. In particular, we merge several initiatives to gain scope economies and interdisciplinarity. The final structure that we started in 2019 is based on 4 research lines:

- Political Economy of Media
- Political Economy of Poverty, Inequality, Redistribution and Social Mobility
- Political economy of Conflict and Globalization
- Political Economy of Urbanization and Climate Change.

Each Research Line has a Principal Investigator (PI) and several researcher associates.

The PI is responsible for leading the Research Line and Projects, providing strategic views on the research to be developed, and encouraging interdisciplinary research between Research Lines.

The center also encouraged the design of data projects that could be of interest for policy makers, and decision makers in general.

Keep the current governance

We created an Advisory Committee to help the Director in taking decisions related to hiring, rules for affiliation of new researchers, collaboration with other centers, etc.

Creation of Policy Laboratories

In 2023 we have two laboratories which are active. One (on Inequality) that started operations during 2019 and a second one (on conflict) that started in 2020.

We plan to enlarge the laboratory of inequality given the new projects developed during 2022.

We have advanced on the development of the Conflict one. Therefore, we plan to start consolidating the laboratory of conflict during 2023.

And we plan to define a strategy for the future development of the Climate change laboratory. (third one)

Laboratory of Inequality:

Project 1: Satellite day images:

During 2022, we have been in contact with Joshua Blumenstock from U.C. Berkeley School of Information and the Goldman School of Public Policy. He is the Director of the Data-Intensive Development Lab and the co-Director of the Center for Effective Global Action. Blumenstock does research at the intersection of machine learning and empirical economics, and focuses on using novel data and methods to understand the causes and consequences of global poverty. In 2022 they developed microestimates of the relative wealth and poverty of the populated surface of all 135 low and middle-income countries (LMICs) at 2.4km resolution. The estimates are built by applying machine-learning algorithms to vast and heterogeneous data from satellites, mobile phone networks, and topographic maps, as well as aggregated and deidentified connectivity data from facebook. The work is published in PNAS. They allow us to use this data to calculate new measures of inequality. We will develop this part during 2023.

Project 2: Real Time economics: using high frequency data to track inequality

The Inequality Tracker is a pioneering project that aims to track developments in inequality and the role played by the welfare state in Spain in real time using techniques based on big data. It is a novel initiative carried out by a team made up of researchers from the Institute of Political Economy and Governance (IPEG) and CaixaBank Research that shows the enormous potential of the collaboration of researchers of private companies and research centers. **For this Project and collaboration, “UPF-CaixaBank Economia en temps real”, we have received the Premi Nacional al Partenariat Publicoprivat en R+I.**

We will continue with the collaboration effort with CaixaBank Research (we started in 2020) in order to analyze wage inequality in the context of the impact of the COVID-19. We have also expanded research lines that are explained in the Memoir. In particular we will continue working in objectives 3 and 4.

In particular, we plan to continue using this type of data to analyze in real time the impact of new public policies. In particular, we plan to extend the line of research on the impact of the IMV to analyze the change in the conditions for receiving the IMV derived from the modification in the conditions of the program approved at the end of 2022 (people receiving the IMV could be working and receiving IMV if they did not make more than 60% of what they received as IMV). We also want to create a publicly available measure of inflation inequality for each decile of the distribution.

In 2023 we will also start a collaboration with IVALUA to Study the impact of ERTO. The aim of the study is to analyze the impact of aid to those affected by ERTO and fixed-discontinuous contract (First call - March 2021: Order TSF/63/2021 and BDNS 554145 (105M) and Second call - July 2021 : Order EMT/157/2021 and BDNS 577895 (60M)) which was launched by the Department of Economy and Finance of the Generalitat of Catalonia due to the pandemic. In particular, the impact of ERTes on the probability of employment and consumption will be assessed, although in this second case it will be necessary to assess whether there is enough information density to obtain robust results.

The work plan consists of three phases. In a first stage, the identification of the observations to be studied and the analysis of the coverage with respect to the beneficiaries of the aid will be carried out. In the second stage, the impact of the perception of ERTes on employment and consumption will be estimated. Finally, in the third phase, the final report will be produced.

Laboratory of Conflict:

Project 2: Using News to predict conflict: In collaboration with Ricardo Baeza

Sponsorship:

ERC-Advanced grant (Marta Reynal-Querol) from 2023 to 2027

Future: International Sponsorship: we are working with Ricardo Baeza on this.

Together with Ricardo Baeza, during the second half of 2022 we have defined a new methodology that we plan to start implementing during 2023. The plan is to design an application for analyzing how news change over time. This will be designed to discover how entities such as people and locations associated with a query changes over time. By searching on time expressions extracted automatically from text, the application allows the user to explore not only how topics evolved in the past but also how they will continue to revolve in the future. The new application will be developed based on the "Time Explorer", and application created by Yahoo Labs researchers with Ricardo Baeza in 2010.

Laboratory of Climate Change:

Project 2: Climate change, health and economic vulnerability

Sponsorship:

Submitted: AGAUR (joint with BSC)

This project is included in a proposal initiated by BSC:

The sub-project that they will develop with IPEG aims to address the interaction between the health impact of climate change and the socioeconomic variables.

NEW PROJECT: joint with BSC and Harvard's IQSS

Participate in the proposal for the creation of a large data lake for social science research in Spain

International visibility and Increasing collaboration with other research centers

We have contacted some institutes and research centers that have complementary objectives, in order to establish potential collaborations, with the idea of increasing our visibility among the academic and policy world:

1) Our website, gives much more visibility to the "IPEG message", especially internationally.

<https://barcelona-ipeg.eu/>

2) We have a joint project with CaixaBank. Inequality monitoring is a pioneering project that aims to monitor the evolution of inequality and the role played by the welfare state in Spain in real time using techniques based on big data. <https://inequality-tracker.caixabankresearch.com/en/>

3) Third, we are collaboration with World Justice Project in a new project on "Justice Inequality". We have access to their internal data.

4) We are collaborating with Gallup to have access to their internal data

5) We have this new project in collaboration with BSC and Harvard's IQSS.

Institutions for future collaboration:

Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts. (Directed by James Robinson) At University of Chicago) <https://thepearsoninstitute.org/>

UC Global Institute On Global Conflict and Cooperation (Eli Berman: IGCC Research Director for International Security Studies) <https://igcc.ucsd.edu/research-and-programs/research/development-conflict/deterrence-with-proxies/index.html>

IS Global (<https://www.isglobal.org/ca/>) with climate change Research Group.

Enlarging research community affiliated with IPEG.

Also, we would like to continue with the hiring with ICREA.

Communicating research

As any academically oriented institution we communicate and discuss our research in seminars and conferences.

Regular meetings and seminars:

Seminar series (mostly weekly or bi-weekly).

Reading group in Political Economy.

The Brainstorming Meeting in Political Economy

Supporting IPEG PhD students projects and initiative. Some example are:

- buying datasets they use for the PhD thesis, and the data will be owned by IPEG.
- Initiate the design of construction of datasets.

Workshops 2023:

The 8th Annual Workshop on Political Economy of Development and Conflict
Autumn, 2023

Barcelona GSE Summer Forum Workshop on Advances in Micro Development Economics
June 2023

There are other workshops which are still not confirmed.

Improving long run sustainability

IPEG resources come from research grants of its researchers and, most importantly, from funding directly from the Generalitat. Unfortunately the fund provided by la Caixa-Generalitat end after the actual “conveni” that finalize at the end of 2022. Given this uncertainty we should try to diversify the sources of finance. In that respect we have been very competitive with Competitive grants that will be spent during 2022 and 2023. I have won and ERC-Adv that will help in financing some of the projects in the future. We have already started working in looking for resources that substitute the finding from La Caixa.

It would be possible, although hard, to find an international sponsor. Some of the topics of the IPEG are of interest for large international organization and potentially some sponsors. An example of a similar initiative is the recent creation of the Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts in the Harris School of Public Policy of the University of Chicago. The Pearson Family Foundation donated 100 million Dollars for the creation of this institute.

At the moment we will try to obtain international sponsor with the help of Ricardo Baeza and the conflict project.