

Gustavo Albuquerque

PHD CANDIDATE · VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

6000 Iona Drive Vancouver, BC Canada, V6T 1L4

☎ +1 778-887-4726 | ✉ gtovaralbuquerque@gmail.com

Diversity Statement

As a person of diverse background I am familiar with the challenges and also the privileges that come from that. I am a Brazilian, son of a Colombian mother, whose life history brought the chance to interact with people from very different origins. My education started in schools where poverty was the norm. At university, I entered a different world where being rich (for Brazilian standards) was the norm. Finally, I moved to Vancouver, Canada for my PhD. In Canada, I was a foreigner, but at home. The multiplicity of cultures and national origins (Vancouver is more than 40% foreign born) was, and still is, a constant source of learning and enjoyment.

Being different from the norm helped to nurture my appreciation for diversity. Every interaction with the Colombian side of my family reminded me that there is a whole different world of beliefs, preferences, and practices. They saw life from a different angle, and this allowed them to see what others could not. The same was true for my interactions with colleagues of different social classes, race, and national origin.

Doing my PhD in Canada brought many opportunities to experience and foster diversity. Every class I taught at UBC or Corpus Christi had people from a wide variety of places and lived experiences. When explaining a particular concept, I could draw from my experiences in Brazil, Colombia and Canada. And the class contributed with more! Individuals of Chinese, Indian, Korean, Italian, South African, Congolese, Ecuadorian, Mexican, and many other nationalities were present in my classes. Each of them made it better, bringing their unique perspectives to the problems being discussed. Since I shared similar challenges as these international students, I can understand what they face and help them to navigate the experience of being a student in a different country, with a different language and a different setting of cultural expectations.

Research-wise, two of my three dissertation chapters deal with the impact of cultural norms on violence and how heavily indigenous areas in Guatemala and Mexico achieved very low murder rates. Even despite being poorer and regularly ignored (when not actively persecuted) by their national government. As with my teaching, my research is heavily reliant on understanding and learning with groups who are far from the North American norm, both in terms of culture and ways of life.

I believe diversity is not only strength, but also wisdom and creativity. Providing an environment where difference is accepted and even encouraged will allow for more viewpoints. More unique approaches to problems. And more important, more ways to be happy for those who have been underprivileged through history. I strive to provide this environment with my teaching, my research, and as a colleague.