

# Nicolas Restrepo Ochoa

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## Education

Duke University, Ph.D. Sociology 2022

**Dissertation:** *Three papers on beliefs: on their measurement, their transmission, and its implications for large-scale change*

Duke University, M.A. Sociology 2021

University of Cambridge, M.Phil. Sociology 2016

Durham University, B.A. Sociology 2015

## Research & Teaching Interests

Attitudinal change | Cultural change | Computational Social Science | Agent-based modeling | Morality | Cultural evolution | Social learning | Social Networks |

## Skills

R: Proficient | Qualtrics: Proficient | Agent-based modeling: Proficient | Python: Intermediate | Network analysis: Proficient | Stan: Proficient | Git: Proficient | Bash: Intermediate

## Research Experience

POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCHER 2022-PRESENT

*UC Davis, Anthropology Department*

Design longitudinal survey aiming to study the beliefs and habits of people in the region where a pilgrimage recently started. The survey encompasses different data, from field experiments to cognitive tasks.

Trained and managed large team of interviewers responsible to multi-year data collection.

Collect, collate, and manage an original panel dataset of more than 400 participants followed across three years.

Develop a new theoretical approach for understanding the emergence of a collective ritual, framing it as an assurance game.

Derive predictions from that theoretical model, and from the literature on the diffusion of innovations, and test them against the empirical data, aiming to provide one of the first empirical studies of how a new collective ritual gets off the ground.

*Duke University, Sociology Department*

Developed a new computational approach to assess the idea that template matching underpins moral judgement, resulting in individual and coauthored projects.

Combined classic paradigms of social influence with work on social learning in a novel agent-based simulation that shows how different learning biases give rise to varying patterns of diffusion.

Collaborated with large, multi-disciplinary team building simulations to examine how the removal of members via poaching affects the dynamics of social transmission across three different species.

Built a theoretical model that shows that current theories of belief change at the individual level imply that ageing populations should change at a slower pace, thus making a novel connection between cultural change at the personal and aggregate level.

### **Colombian Agency for Reincorporation**

Used spatial and demographic data to explore why certain ex-combatants were less likely to continue to participate in the state's reincorporation programs.

Worked with a large team of quantitative and qualitative researchers to identify the groups that were most at risk of not participating in the state's programs, with an aim towards developing policies to mitigate such risk.

### **University of Cambridge, Sociology Department**

Conducted in-depth, biographical interviews with Colombian human-rights activists to understand how they built their identities around political commitments.

Used grounded theory and content analysis to show how respondents used narrative frameworks to portray their political commitments as both an awakening, an inevitability, and the orienting principle of their biographies.

## **Publications**

### **PUBLISHED:**

- 1) "Hunter-Gatherer Foraging Networks Promote Information Transmission" (Co-author) [RSOS] [Link](#).
- 2) "The role of template matching in the attribution of immorality". [Poetics] [Link](#).
- 3) "Opinions on Hard-to-Discuss Topics Change More via Cohort Replacement" (Co-author). [Evolutionary Human Sciences] [Link](#)
- 4) "Identity Networks as a New Frontier: Conceptualizing, Mapping, and Analyzing Identity Structures and Their Impact on Well-Being" (Co-author). [Social Psychology Quarterly] [Link](#)
- 5) "Network indicators of anthropogenic removals in animal societies" (Co-author). [Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B] [Link](#)
- 6) "Measuring Movement in Cultural Landscapes" (Co-author). [Poetics] [Link](#)

## UNDER REVIEW:

- 1) "The Emergence of a New Pilgrimage as an Assurance Game" (Co-author). [*Proc. R. Soc. B*] [Link](#).
- 2) "Liberals and Conservatives Make Different Assumptions of Vulnerability, Explaining Moral Disagreement" (Co-author). [*Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*]
- 3) "Improving Functionalist Analysis" (Co-author). [*American Journal of Sociology*] [Link](#)

## IN PROGRESS:

- 1) "Cultural transmission and the global and local dynamics of social influence" (Co-author) [Link](#)
- 2) "The shape formative windows and the pace of cultural change". [Link](#)
- 3) "Has young adulthood extended? Variation in formative periods across cohorts" (Co-author).

## Presentations

- 1) "Theoretical Puzzles around the Emergence of a New Pilgrimage" - Cultural Evolution Society Conference, Durham, UK, 2024.
- 2) "Theoretical Puzzles around the Emergence of a New Pilgrimage" - UC Davis Speaker Series, Winter 2023.
- 3) "The Emergence of New Ritual as a Stag-Hunt Game" - Culture and Cognition Pre-conference, San Francisco, CA, 2023.
- 4) "Stubborn Agents: when does learning not pay off?" - Cultural Evolution Society Conference, Aarhus, Denmark, 2022.
- 5) "Varying formative windows and the pace of cultural change" - Formal Models of Culture panel at the ASA conference 2022.
- 6) "Bringing ecological rationality into models of cultural transmission" – Mind and Materiality panel at the ASA conference 2020.

## Teaching Experience

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS	2024
Designed and taught a one-day introduction to social network analysis given in UC Davis's DataLab.	
DOING REPRODUCIBLE RESEARCH WITH R	2024
Designed and taught a 3-day course for graduate students about tools for effective, reproducible research in R*	
INTRODUCTION TO R COURSE AT THE UNIVERSIDAD DEL ALTIPLANO	2023
Designed and taught a 2-day course geared to a mostly Spanish-speaking audience	
SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR AN INTRODUCTION TO DATA SCIENCE COURSE	2022
Helped design a syllabus for an introduction to data science course and to write a set of complementary exercises using engaging data sets.	
TA FOR THE SOCIAL STATISTICS SEQUENCE	2021-2022
Preparation of coding workshops for a 2-semester course focused on Bayesian statistics and causal identification.	

## Mentoring

HONORS THESIS ADVISING AT THE UNIVERSIDAD DEL ALTIPLANO 2023

Accompanying students, who are writing their thesis based on the novel panel dataset we collected, with all aspects of research.

ASSISTANT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S STATISTICIAN AT UC DAVIS 2023-PRESENT

Advising graduate students in all stages of the research process, from outlining the questions to finding the right statistical tools to answer them.

PROJECT MANAGER - DATA+ 2021

Led a team of undergraduates with limited coding experience to build a dashboard of Durham Public Schools, currently being used by local organizations.

## Funding and Awards

Summer Research Fellowship (\$5,500), Graduate School, *Duke University* 2022

Summer Research Fellowship (\$5,500), Graduate School, *Duke University* 2020

Summer Research Fellowship (\$5,500), Graduate School, *Duke University* 2019

Fuller's Prize for best departmental average in Sociology, *Durham University* 2015

Vice-Chancellor's Scholarship for Academic Excellence, *Durham University* 2014

## Languages

Spanish: native | English: fluent | German: C1

## Departmental Service

WORLDVIEW LAB MANAGER (DUKE) 2021-2023

Coordinated speaker series, and organized the academic year's schedule to build a productive and engaging research group.

ANTI-RACISM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE (DUKE) 2021-2023

Acted as a bridge between students and faculty to work on fostering an environment where all students felt they could reach their full potential.

GRADUATE STUDENT FORUM CO-CHAIR (DUKE) 2020-2021

Managed the budget allocated for graduate student events throughout the year.

STAFF APPRECIATION COORDINATOR (DUKE) 2019-2020

Collected cash gifts biannually to give to the staff in our department and building more broadly.

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE (DUKE) 2018-2019

Actively communicated with the Sociology graduate students to then represent them in voting about choices this broader student body was making.

## **Professional Memberships**

American Sociological Association

Cultural Evolution Society