

## Mauricio Fernández Duque

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

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Department of Economics  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, MA 02138 USA

*Voice:*  
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### EDUCATION

**Harvard University**, Cambridge, Massachusetts USA  
Ph.D., Political Economy and Government, May 2015  
Dissertation Title: "Essays on Social Influence In Political Economy"  
Advisor: Michael J. Hiscox

**Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México**, Mexico City, Mexico  
Licenciature, Economics, May, 2007  
Licenciature, Political Science, May, 2007

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Citizenship: Mexico, Spain

Date of Birth: August 30, 1982

### EMPLOYMENT

**CIDE**, Mexico City, Mexico  
Assistant Professor, (August 2018 - )

**Harvard University**, Cambridge, Massachusetts USA  
Post-Doctoral and Teaching Fellow, Harvard University, (July 2015 - present)  
Economics Department (July 2017 - present)  
Center for Public Leadership (July 2016 - June 2017)  
Behavioral Insights Group (July 2015 - June 2016)  
**Un Kilo de Ayuda**, Mexico City, Mexico  
Research consultant (2012-present)  
Mexican NGO focused on early childhood malnutrition serving 60,000 families

**Institute for Quantitative Social Science**, Cambridge, Massachusetts USA  
Affiliate (2015-present)  
Graduate Research Fellow (2009-2015)

### CONTACT INFORMATION

### TEACHING AND RESEARCH FIELDS

Behavioral Economics, Political Economy, Theory, Experimental Economics

TEACHING  
EXPERIENCE

**Harvard University**, Cambridge, Massachusetts USA

Teaching Fellow for Robert Neugeboren, ECON 1050: Strategy, Conflict and Cooperation, 2017  
Teaching Fellow for Benjamin Golub, ECON 9800: Measuring and Modeling Social Networks  
Junior Advisor, ECON 985b: Senior Thesis Seminar in Behavioral Economics, 2016-2017  
Lecturer, GOV 2010: Strategies of Political Inquiry, 2015  
Teaching Fellow for Muhammet Bas, GOV 1729: Models of Conflict in Intl Relations, 2015  
Teaching Fellow for Giacomo Ponzetto, ECON 1011a: Microeconomic Theory, 2014  
Junior Advisor, ECON 985d: Senior Thesis Seminar in Development Economics, 2009-2011  
Teaching Fellow for Attila Ambrus, ECON 1051: Introduction to Game Theory, 2011  
Teaching Fellow for Ryan Sheely, DPI 401 (HKS): Institutions and Development, 2010

**Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México**, Mexico City, Mexico

Lecturer, Eco 15492: Laboratory and Field Experiments, 2012, 2016

FELLOWSHIPS,  
HONORS AND  
AWARDS

Foundation for Human Behavior Research Grant, 2017-2019  
Center for Public Leadership Research Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School, 2016-2017  
Behavioral Insights Group Post-Doctoral Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School, 2015-2016  
Institute for Quantitative Social Science Research Grant, 2013 and 2014  
David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies Travel Grant, 2011  
ideas42 Seed Grant, 2011  
Justice Welfare and Economics Research Grant, 2011  
Graduate Study Council Summer Research Grant, 2009  
CONACYT/Fundación México en Harvard/Harvard Fellowship, 2007-2013

INVITED  
PRESENTATIONS

American Political Science Association, 2016. Presented: Hierarchies of Selves. Poster Session: A Theory of Uninformed Leaders.  
University of Guadalajara, 2015. Presented: Using Experimental Economics to Improve Child Development.  
Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, 2015. Presented: How To Run An Experiment.  
Harvard College Effective Altruism and Harvard University Effective Altruism, 2015. Presented: Increasing Charity With National Primes.

WORKING PAPERS

Pluralistic Ignorance and Social Change: A Model of Conformity to the Perceived Majority (*job market paper*)

*Abstract.* I develop a theory of group interaction in which individuals who act sequentially are concerned about signaling what they believe is the majority group preference. Equilibrium dynamics may result in a perverse situation where most individuals reluctantly act in a way they mistakenly believe is cooperative, a situation known as 'pluralistic ignorance'. Strong beliefs over others' views increases pluralistic ignorance in small groups, but decreases it in large groups. Behavior may be affected by leaders, laws or surveys that influence what is thought to be the majority preference, possibly creating pluralistic ignorance. Abrupt social change may come about through an everyman who reveals what everyone wishes they were doing. The model integrates insights from scholarship on collective action, public opinion, and social meaning regulation, and then applies these insights to political phenomena such as misperceived support for discriminatory policies, the rise of the Arab Spring, beliefs about climate change beliefs, and the impact of get out the vote campaigns.

Lead If Others Expect It: Laboratory Evidence on What Motivates Pro-Social Influence (*with*

*Michael J. Hiscox)*

**Abstract.** Individuals act more pro-socially when they are in a position to lead others, and their behavior is motivated by social expectations - they lead when they think others expect it. Social expectations have received little attention and often are a confound of altruistic motivations or reputational concerns. Our experiment is anonymous, so we abstract from reputational concerns. Our design measures (i) pro-social actions when an individual can and cannot influence others, (ii) revealed preferences over the decisions in (i), and (iii) beliefs and beliefs over beliefs over the averages of (i) and of (ii). We develop theory to show that teasing apart altruism and social expectations requires all these measures. We find little evidence for pure or impure altruistic leadership, while social expectations play a significant role. Social expectations therefore provide an underexplored but potentially fruitful avenue for increasing pro-social influence.

Regional Identity and Nationalist Appeals: Evidence From A Large Scale Field Experiment (*with Sam Asher*)

**Abstract.** In an experiment where we varied the content of donation petitions across 560 supermarkets in nine states in Mexico, we found no evidence of regional bias in donations nor of an impact of a nationalist prime. These results differ from those commonly cited in the experimental literature on in-group bias and the impact of a common-group prime. However, a subsequent analysis shows that regionally poor municipalities responded more positively to a nationalist prime, while regionally rich municipalities had a regional bias that diminished with a nationalist prime. One plausible explanation is that a municipality's relative wealth proxies for regionalism. An online experiment provides supportive evidence for this hypothesis. The results suggest that the problems in replication of priming experiments may be due to unobserved heterogeneity, and highlight the need for more evidence from the field.

#### WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Role of Social Expectations in Revisions of History

**Abstract.** I develop a model in which a principal may 'revise history' by changing how followers interpret a group's current intentions based on past events. Revisions of history have been a political tool of persuasion used by historians, political leaders and popular mobilizations. In the model, Milosevic has private information about Croatia's type-dependent preferences. Serbs form beliefs about Croatia's intentions based on their past interactions. Milosevic may change Serbs' interpretation of Croatia's past actions by convincing them that many types of Croats would have acted in the same way. By changing how Serbs interpret history, Milosevic is able to change Serbs' behavior towards Croats that would otherwise not be justified.

Endogenous Interaction and Spillovers in Peer Groups (*with Ben Golub and Evan Sadler*)

Poliéy is often concerned with the optimal composition of peer groups - e.g., for production or education - in the presence of peer effects. There is evidence, however, that endogenous link formation decisions determine which peer effects operate: sub-sets of individuals choose whether to interact productively, in addition to making other choices (e.g., effort in learning). Their decisions depend on all their attributes, their prior relationships, and on what is going on in the rest of the group - a set of endogenous decisions omitted from standard peer effects models. We propose a tractable model that incorporates endogenous link formation. To test the model, we have partnered with an NGO focused on early childhood development in rural Mexico. The experimental design varies the composition of playdate groups that meet during bi-weekly events organized by the NGO. The design proceeds in two stages. In the first stage, we estimate parameter values of our model based on group performance. The second stage features three arms: status quo, the standard model that ignores endogenous link formation, and our model. We hypothesize that explicitly incorporating endogenous linking decisions will significantly improve our outcomes of interest: caregiving practices and children's neurodevelopment.