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Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing to apply for the position available at your institution. Currently, I am a [Senior Researcher](#) at the University of Turku, Finland. I also serve as the Research Director of the [INVEST-Hub](#), an interdisciplinary center about experimental and quantitative social research.

I obtained my B.A. in Political Science at Catholic University of Chile. Then I received a full fellowship from Rutgers University to pursue my doctoral studies. After receiving my PhD in Political Science from Rutgers University-New Brunswick, NJ, U.S. in May 2017, I spent one year as a post-doctoral fellow at Tulane University-New Orleans, LA, U.S. **My research explores the political economy of institutional development and the role of inequality on democratic development. My methods include historical analyses, quantitative/statistical and experimental methods.** I pay particular attention to new ways of using digital information to construct natural experiments within the potential outcomes framework.

In this cover letter I will highlight some details about my research and teaching agendas.

Inequality and clientelism. I kindly invite the reader to read both “[Aiming Right at You: Group versus Individual Clientelistic Targeting in Brazil](#)” (Journal of Politics in Latin America, 2018) and “[Still for Sale: The Micro-Dynamics of Vote Selling in the United States, Evidence From a List Experiment](#)” (Acta Politica, 2022). In both pieces I challenge the traditional role attributed to **poverty** when explaining clientelism. Instead, I try to switch the focus to **income** inequality. Both papers used top-notch statistical and experimental methods—and when possible, a novel dataset representative at the country level (collected thanks to a generous grant I received). Finally, in “[Electoral Risk and Vote Buying, Introducing Prospect Theory to the Experimental Study of Clientelism](#)” (Electoral Studies, 2022) we developed an economic experiment to test the conditions under which parties engage in clientelism. Income inequality plays a big role in explaining vote buying.

Economic inequality and democracy. We have published a paper that explores the relationship between state capacity, democracy and inequality. Using time-series econometrics we find in “[Inclusive Institutions, Unequal Outcomes: Democracy, State Capacity, and Income Inequality](#)” (*European Journal of Political Economy*, forthcoming) that democratic rule combined with high state infrastructural power produce *higher* levels of income inequality over time. This relationship operates through the positive effect of high-capacity democratic context on investor confidence, FDIs and financial development. Within the same line of research, in “[Physical Appearance and Elections: An Inequality Perspective](#)” (Revise and resubmit, Political Psychology) we discover that female candidates that *look like* they have working-class occupations are electorally penalized when running for elections—male candidates are not affected by their working-class looks.

State building. Using a novel dataset on historical earthquakes to proxy state capacity, in “[Income Taxation and State Capacity in Chile: Measuring Institutional Development Using Historical Earthquake Data](#)” (work in progress) I explain that sectoral conflicts between the landed and industrial elites fostered inter-elite compromises that lead to higher levels of state capacity over time. The paper seeks to analyze how economic structural transformations in Latin America helped states to make institutional investments that lead to the formation of states with higher capacity. I leverage fine-grained historical case study comparisons, sectoral economic outputs from 1900 to the present, Bayesian time-series econometric techniques, hazard models, and

a novel earthquake dataset that covers sub-national death tolls from 1900 to the present to measure state capacity. This project builds on the fiscal sociology literature and the dual-sector economy model.

As a comparativist and political economist, I believe that advanced methods should be used to answer big questions. In this sense, my research also has a disciplinary agenda. My scholarly work seeks to examine classic problems in comparative political development (e.g. state capacity, inequality, clientelism, etc.), while at the same time incorporating cutting-edge econometric and experimental techniques. Similarly, my working papers and experiments, are concerned with fundamental questions regarding democratic theory.

As an **instructor**, I am interested in courses that are carefully designed to answer big questions in comparative politics, not only from a Latin American perspective, but also across the broader spectrum. As a political economist, I mostly focus on economic development, economic history, institutional development and democratic development/underdevelopment. I am also interested in political participation, competitive authoritarianisms, welfare politics, party politics and other relevant topics. I would also feel very comfortable teaching both basic and advanced **methods** courses. At Rutgers, Tulane and Turku, I always received excellent teaching evaluations. Please, send me an email to receive the most recent one, or let me know if you need teaching references. **Service** to the department and its extended programs is always a top priority. I firmly believe that being part of a teaching/research community requires active involvement. I am looking forward to do my part in this regard. **Collaborative research with my students** is another priority. For example, as an undergraduate student I worked very close with faculty members doing research. I learned so much outside of the classroom by doing research that it would *not* be natural for me to not replicate my experience with my own students.

More information is available on my website: www.HectorBahamonde.com. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Hector Bahamonde, PhD