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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 an assistant professor at O′Higgins University in Chile (a public research university). Since my wife is German, my main goal is to **begin an academic career in Europe**. I am looking forward to start from the bottom of the academic hierarchy.

After receiving my PhD in Political Science from Rutgers University-New Brunswick, NJ, U.S. in May 2017—where I studied under the direction of Robert Kaufman and Daniel Kelemen—I spent one year as a post-doctoral fellow at Tulane University-New Orleans, LA, U.S. My research explores the economic and political origins of state capacity as well as the political economy of institutional development and the role of inequality on democratic development (clientelism). My methods include historical analyses, quantitative and experimental methods. I pay particularly 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 check both "Aiming Right at You: Group versus Individual Clientelistic Targeting in Brazil" (Journal of Politics in Latin America) and "Still for Sale: The Micro-Dynamics of Vote Selling in the United States, Evidence From a List Experiment" (Acta Politica). In both pieces I challenge the traditional role attributed to inequality when predicting clientelism. 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). Within the same research line, I have a number of papers in the pipeline. First, we are designing an economic experiment about vote selling and vote buying. By implementing in the lab a bargaining game (in an extensive form), the experiment recreates market conditions that exist between vote buyers and vote sellers. Finally, we are working on a paper where we introduce machine learning methods to analyzing conjoint experimental data in the context of clientelism (under review, Political Behavior)—the technical paper is under review, Political Analysis.

Economic inequality and democracy. We are currently working on a paper that explores the relationship between state capacity and inequality. Using time-series econometrics we find in "Inclusive Institutions, Unequal Outcomes: Democracy, State Capacity and Income Inequality" (revise and resubmit, European Journal of Political Economy) 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. In addition to that, in "Skyrocketed Inequality and (Un)lockdown Political Elites in Chile: Aerodrome Usage during Pandemic Times" (*in preparation*) we exploit a novel aerodrome usage dataset which looks at how Chilean elites were able to flight to their vacation houses, skipping lockdown policies. The paper shows how local authorities faced high political pressures to systematically ignore overseeing traffic control policies during the pandemic. We use regression discontinuity designs and in-depth interviews. Finally, in "The Bus of Inequality: Public Transportation and COVID in Santiago" (*in preparation*) we show that (1) contagion thresholds to restrict mobility in low-income municipalities were higher and that (2) lockdown policies during daytime were systematically ignored by local authorities but heavily enforced during nighttime—which is curfew time, often
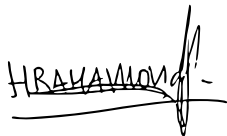
used to protest against the government. These findings are relevant as they go in line with the recent "politics of weakness" literature. I use hazard models, synthetic control and regression discontinuity design methods.

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" (under review, State and Local Government Review) 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, for example tries to examine classic problems in comparative political development (e.g. state capacity, 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 and Tulane, 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, syllabi, my research, teaching and diversity statements, as well as other papers are available on my website: www.HectorBahamonde.com. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Hector Bahamonde, PhD