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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 served as the Research Director of the [INVEST-Hub](#) (2021-2022), 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. I also was an assistant professor in Chile between 2018 and 2021. **My research explores the political economy of institutional development and the role of inequality on democratic development. My methods include quantitative/statistical and experimental methods.**

In this cover letter I will highlight some details about my research and teaching agendas. As it should become clear, the job ad and my qualifications and experience are a great match. Also, while I am happy in my current position, I look forward to stepping up my career and take bigger responsibilities.

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 “[Hector Bahamonde and Outi Sarpila \(2024\). “Physical appearance and elections: An inequality perspective.” *Political Psychology* 45.3, pp. 623–642](#)” 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.

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.

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