

Research project summary:
Does land inequality undermine democratization and development?
Project managed by:
Dr Victoria Paniagua
Project outline:
<p>Land inequality is at the center of political economy explanations on suffrage expansion and economic development. I propose an explanation on how land inequality affects landed elites calculations on both democracy and the provision of public goods that breaks with these assumptions.</p> <p>I argue that the creation of domestic financial markets during the transition from agrarian to modern economies unevenly transformed the asset portfolios of landed elites exposed to different levels of land inequality, reshaping their political and economic incentives. Given the emergence of new investment opportunities, landed elites that perceived a higher economic risk under democracy strategically diversified their holding portfolio into other (mobile) sectors of the economy to hedge such risk.</p> <p>As a consequence, on the one hand, landed elites that insured their capital through portfolio diversification became more supportive of suffrage expansion. On the other hand, diversification of economic interests also produced incentives for diversified elites to seek positions in government at the national level from which they could steer state intervention towards policies with a multiplier effect across the different sectors of the economy where they had investments. Ultimately, the interest of diversified elites in this type of policies resulted in higher investments in public goods in their districts.</p> <p>To test this argument, I have already collected and analyzed original individual-level data from previously untapped archives that allows me to identify landholdings and participation in joint-stock companies of 55,504 elite members between 1849 and 1907. Now, I seek to expand this analysis to the period 1830-1849 and 1907-1930.</p>
What you will be expected to do:
<p>To expand the analysis of diversification of assets of the Chilean elite throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, I have already taken photographs of archival historical materials. The research assistant would be responsible for reading these historical documents (censuses, association membership rosters, and documents on the creation and bankruptcy of firms) to identify the extent to which business elites were investing in new sectors of the economy. The research assistant will have to complete an Excel spreadsheet with the information requested by the principal investigator. The spreadsheet with the columns to be completed will be provided by the principal investigator. The research assistant can work remotely, the photographs and historical sources will be shared online.</p>
Desirable technical skills (e.g. language/tech skills)
Spanish reading comprehension.
How many hours you will work overall, and per week (subject to variation)
100 total, 20 per week.
Can the project be undertaken remotely or do you have to be physically present at a specific location to carry out the work?
The project can be undertaken remotely. The principal investigator will request the research assistant to have frequent meetings, which can either be on Zoom or in person, as the research assistant prefers.