

Presentation 1

Democracy and Land Redistribution:

Conservative parties, urban elites, and
challengers in the making of agrarian politics

24 August 2023 | 3-4.30pm

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Abstract

Which conditions make land redistribution more likely in democratic regimes? My argument is that redistributive land reforms in democratic settings are more likely when urban elites are dominant over landed elites and experience externalities of inequality that are associated with rural-urban migration. Contrary to conventional wisdom, I argue that conservative parties facing such externalities of inequality have stronger incentives to implement land reforms if compared to the Left under similar conditions. I propose a test of this theory in the cases of land reform in Brazil (1993–2022), with the analysis of shadow cases in Chile (1962–1973) and South Africa (1991–2023).

Presenter

Matias López is a postdoc at the Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy – Graduate Institute Geneva. He holds a PhD in Political Science from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2019) and has published on matters regarding elites and redistribution, as well as methodology in the social sciences.

Discussant

Mnqobi Ngubane is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology at Nelson Mandela University. He is currently researching counter-agrarian reform dynamics in the global South.