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## Doctoral Student Seminar 2021-22. PhD in Economic History

### *Deterministic and Contingent Factors in the Genesis of Agribusiness Clusters: The Pigmear Industry in Nineteenth-Century Catalonia*

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#### ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the location, origins, and early development of clusters and industrial districts in the agribusiness sector. It considers the case of the meat processing industry in the second half of the 19th century in Catalonia, a prosperous southern-European region in the period when this industry emerged. By constructing an index of potential locations at the municipal level, the paper discusses whether, and to what extent, deterministic factors explain the genesis of pigmeat processing clusters. The paper concludes that although these latter factors need primary consideration, contingency, particularly human agency, may also play a non-negligible role. As an illustration, this study pays particular attention to the cluster of Vic, which developed around this middle-sized town in central Catalonia. It became a leading meat cluster in early 20th-century Spain, even though it was not better suited to this industry than other Catalan localities where meat companies had also emerged