

Pieter de Vries



I have conducted most of my academic investigations in Latin America. My doctoral research was in Costa Rica on state-peasant relations in a colonization area. Thereafter I did some research on the performance of political mediation (caciquismo) in Mexico. At the beginning of the millennium I was part of a project in the Andes on the cultural construction of community. After a short spell in Colombia where I did research on the introduction of 'development' in the Colombian Chocó area I started investigations on slum upgrading processes in the North-East of Brazil. Outside of Latin America I was involved in the design and implementation of a study on the socio-medical consequences of nuclear testing in French Polynesia. Theoretically, my main interest concerns the imagination of power in relation to development, in anthropological terms 'the cultural representation of power and development'. At a more concrete level I am interested in local organizations, social movements, the functioning of development bureaucracies, political intermediation, etc.

BSc: THEMES FOR THESES

I would like to supervise BSc theses on topics related to slums, community, social movements, brokerage (patron-client relations), cultural politics, alter-globalist activism.

Concrete examples:

- Another World is Possible (the slogan of the World Social Forum)
- The organization of a global slum movement (Slum International)
- The struggle of the Chilean student movement against neo-liberal privatization
- Corporate social responsibility as the new development paradigm
- The modernization of patron-client relations in local bureaucracies
- Popular participation and slum governance

MSc: THEMES FOR RESEARCH AND THESES

I would like to supervise MSc theses on topics related to local organization, livelihoods and power struggles in urban and rural areas. Although my area of expertise is Latin America I do

have much experience in supervising students working in Africa and Asia. I enjoy working with politically engaged students with a keen interest in critical development studies.

Concrete examples:

- Watching the World Cup football matches in a slum in Recife
- Slum eviction and political brokerage in slums
- The use and abuse of conservation on a Mexican coastal zone.
- The tyranny of participation in development projects
- The rise and fall of participatory budgeting
- Development as a 'desiring machine'

DEMAND FOR MSc RESEARCH

Presently I am conducting research on slum politics and governance in North-Eastern Brazil. I'm also starting new comparative research on mega-projects with Brazilian colleagues.

- Student interested in local power and brokerage in urban areas
- Students interested in the socio-political and cultural consequences of large infrastructural projects (such as dams and ports)