Latin American and Caribbean Studies in The Netherlands

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In general, three periods can be distinguished in the Dutch research activities concerning Latin America and the Caribbean. In the first period before the 1970s, research interest in Latin America was a highly dispersive affair, often depending on the private interests of individual scholars. It is interesting to note that in the overview article written in 1988 by Bernard Slicher van Bath, the section on Latin American history was just one page long. In the social sciences more work was done on the Americas, but the research was often ‘hidden’ within the different disciplines. At that time, there were only a few scholars that were explicitly dedicating their professional career to the field of Latin American Studies. In particular may be mentioned the path-breaking works of Harry Hoetink on American race relations and Tom Zuidema on pre-Columbian Andean culture. Other scholars of that period who may be considered Latin Americanists were Rudolf van Zantwijk and Raymond Buve who worked on Mexico, Geert Banck on Brazil and Jan Kleinpenning on the Amazon (Brazil) and Paraguay. The historian Bernard Slicher van Bath shifted his research interests from Europe to Latin America in this period and was to play an important role in the consolidation of Latin American history in the Netherlands. Other scholars like Gerrit Huizer, Hans Tennekes, André Droogers and Benno Galjart wrote important studies on the region but remained firmly embedded in their disciplinary networks.

Because of the Dutch colonial tradition in the Caribbean and the consequent availability of sources, work on this region was more systematic and more embedded in an institutional context. Rudolf van Lier’s Frontier Society (originally published in 1949) on the social and ethnic development of Suriname may be considered a landmark in the field of Caribbean studies. It firmly established a modern Caribbean research tradition that gave rise to the work of Harry Hoetink, Peter Kloos, André Köbben, Bonno Thoden van Velzen and Ineke van Wetering.

In the second period, beginning in the 1970s, worldwide decolonization and increased attention for what came to be known as the Third World consolidated the new interest in Latin America and the Caribbean. This resulted in a much more institutionalized embedding of scientific research, now often called ‘area studies’, and the establishment of specific research centres. In 1971 CEDLA was founded as an Interuniversity Centre of Latin American Studies. The Royal Institute of Lin-

∗ It would have been impossible to write this article on my own. Essential commentary and suggestions have been provided by Geske Dijkstra, Rosemarijn Hoefte, Kees Koonings, Arij Ouweneel, Wil Pansters, Frans Schuurman, Patricio Silva, Pitou van Dijck, Paul van Lindert and Annelies Zoomers. These kinds of articles are prone to provoke controversy and criticism. I did my best to be as complete and fair as possible, but, in spite of the help from all these colleagues, I am the only one who can be held responsible for the inevitable omissions, biases and unbalances in this article.
guistics in Leiden established a specific Caribbean department (CARAF) in 1972. These institutions hosted respectively the Boletín de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe (which was renamed in 1989 as the European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos) and the New West Indian Guide, two academic journals that were regionally oriented. In the course of subsequent years, different universities established specialized area departments that brought together (disciplinary) research on the region. This period saw a much more concerted research interest in the Netherlands. Whereas Caribbean studies were fostered by the breakdown of colonial relations and by new political relations and large-scale Caribbean immigration, Latin American studies were strongly formed by dependency theory that was developed in the region. A reflection of this influence was the fact that André Gunder Frank taught at the University of Amsterdam from the late 1970s to the early 1980s. Interest in Latin America also increased through the influence of the ‘boom’ in Latin American literature.

A new generation of Latin Americanists came to maturity in this period. They were supervised by the scholars mentioned above, but new research themes were also being developed by foreigners who had found work in the Netherlands, such as Norman Long and David Slater. In the wake of the popularity of the region, many younger scholars acquired university posts and were able to write their PhD dissertations and turn themselves into full-fledged area specialists. In the process they developed new thematic interests, setting the research agenda for future generations.

In the third period in the 1990s, these new interests were further developed when some of the ‘young’ scholars of the former period replaced their supervisors in influential academic positions. This period was characterized by a growing number of qualified scholars on the one hand, and declining institutional interest in area studies and a diminishing numbers of students, on the other. As a result, the number of available posts at Dutch universities decreased, and many scholars who had successfully completed their PhDs in this period could not obtain academic positions. A considerable number of them found work in other sectors of Dutch society. At the same time, a number of smaller centres of Latin American studies were dismantled when vacancies remained open or posts were abolished. On the other hand, this period could be seen as a one in which a further professionalization of Latin American and Caribbean studies took place. Forced by government policies, Dutch institutes and faculties joined forces. Increasingly, Dutch scholars worked together in nation-wide research schools. This cooperation led to a more professional organization of research and scientific production. A nation-wide organization of academics working on Latin America and the Caribbean was established, which later changed its name to NALACS, the Netherlands Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies. At present it has some 200 members. The Dutch scholarly community became firmly entrenched in European and international networks. At the same time the need to maintain good links within Latin America and the Caribbean was widely recognized. Dutch scholars therefore published in internationally renowned journals, both inside and outside Latin America and the Caribbean.
Latin American Studies in the Netherlands: the Institutional Setting

Despite being a small country, the Netherlands hosts four important centres of Latin American studies at the universities of Amsterdam, Leiden, Utrecht and Wageningen. Until recently Nijmegen University could also be considered an important centre of Latin American studies. In addition, there are individual researchers at other Dutch universities such as Erasmus University Rotterdam, the universities of Tilburg and Groningen, and the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. CEDLA in Amsterdam was established as an interuniversity institute, and all the major Dutch universities participate in its General Board. Caribbean studies are concentrated at the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology (KITLV) in Leiden and at Utrecht University. At Groningen University, anthropologist Dick Papousek established a tradition of Mexican studies. In 1992 the Centro de Estudios Mexicanos (CEM) was established there, which organizes yearly interdisciplinary conferences on Mexico.

The larger centres have their own research tradition. At the other universities research often depends on the interests of individual researchers. Since the early 1980s the government has imposed a certain division of labour and disciplinary emphasis among the Dutch universities. Whereas Utrecht focuses on the social and geographical sciences, Leiden maintains its strong tradition in the humanities (history, literature and linguistics). Wageningen has traditionally been firmly based in rural sociology and is strongly linked to development-related research. Financial constraints and an explicit focus on Africa and Asia by the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation have in recent years weakened the emphasis on Latin America that was a traditional characteristic of research at Wageningen University.

Although not formally belonging to the University of Amsterdam, CEDLA has been the focal point for Latin American studies in Amsterdam with its emphasis on the social sciences including history, economics and geography, and stressing the comparative dimension of Latin American studies. CEDLA, together with the largely geographical- and development-oriented research school AGIDS (Amsterdam Research Institute for Global Issues and Development Studies), has given Latin American studies at the University of Amsterdam a strong social science character.

The Vrije Universiteit (Free University), also located in Amsterdam, has traditionally had a well-established position in the field of religious studies, producing research on Afro-American religiosity and flourishing Protestantism in several Latin American countries. Recently the anthropology department has been given a new impetus, also fostering a renewed interest in Latin America. Latin American literature, a field that has been left out of this article, is taught at Leiden (Luz Rodríguez), Utrecht (Francisco Lasarte) and Groningen (Huub Hermans). The University of Leiden also has a strong tradition in the Amerindian languages.

Many researchers nowadays participate in the so-called research schools. A few are organized on a national scale, such as CERES in Utrecht (Research School for Resource Studies for Development), and to a lesser extent CNWS in Leiden (Centre for Asian, African and Amerindian Studies). This has had the advantage of bringing together scholars who had previously worked in relative isolation. At the same time it has been somewhat difficult for these schools to foster an effective
academic network among researchers of different universities. Recently, they have been weakened by new inward-looking tendencies within university boards. Most universities also have local research schools that organize and administer research activities and the supervision of PhD candidates. The truth of the matter is that all these research schools are more than anything else administrative units; practical research cooperation takes place on the basis of personal relations and specific academic convergences among individual researchers. There is no doubt, however, that academic relations and convergences have been greatly facilitated and stimulated by the very existence of these schools.

Apart from these national research schools, the Dutch scholarly community has participated in European networks, such as CEISAL and AHILA. In 1983, the Association for European Research on Central America and the Caribbean (ASERCCA) was established at the ISS in The Hague.

As in most other European countries, research funds are scarce in the Netherlands. Research schools possess limited funds and their financial capacities are tending to diminish. Some of them are able to finance a small number of PhD candidates or research projects every year. Most of these schools, however, do not even have that possibility. For Latin American and Caribbean studies the most important provider of finances for scientific research is WOTRO, Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (Stichting voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek van de Tropen), which is a subsidiary of NWO, Netherlands Research Council for Scientific Research (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek) in The Hague. WOTRO finances research in what is still called ‘tropical’ countries, which is basically the Third World, including Latin America and the Caribbean. In recent years it has also initiated the so-called ‘sandwich’ fellowships for PhD candidates from the Third World. These students do research most of the time in their country of origin, but spend shorter periods of research in the Netherlands, where they also defend their thesis. This program has been a successful and dynamic source of Latin American and Caribbean PhD projects. Some universities, most notably Wageningen University, and the ISS have succeeded in attracting Latin American PhD students who have obtained their own research funds, often through international organizations. Other sources of financing are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken) and the Ministry of Development Cooperation (Ministerie van Ontwikkelingssamenwerking), which tends to make use of the expertise at Dutch universities to do applied research for them.

Latin American and Caribbean Studies in the 1990s

The dependency theories of the late 1970s and early ‘80s presented Latin American studies in the Netherlands with a coherent perspective. After the demise of the dependency theories in the course of the 1980s, there was no longer a coherent theoretical paradigm in the Netherlands that functioned as focal point for Latin American Studies. In the same vein, Caribbean studies moved away from the traditional themes of plantations, slavery and marronage, complementing them with key words such as gender, transnational migration and ethnicity.

The fragmentation in intellectual orientation makes a succinct overview quite
difficult. This overview does certainly not have the ambition of covering all grounds. However, a number of tendencies can be distinguished, sometimes strongly linked to a certain group of scholars in one university, but almost never exclusively so.

**Rural Issues**

It could well be argued that attention to rural history, and to rural issues in general, was a direct result of the dependency theories. Nowhere is this more clearly visible than in the work of the Chilean-born scholar Cristóbal Kay, who has been affiliated with the ISS for more than fifteen years. His *El sistema señorial europeo y la hacienda latinoamericana* published in 1980 – being in Spanish, it circulated widely in Latin America – was still firmly embedded in the theoretical concepts of dependency theory. In his *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment* (1989 and subsequent editions), his posture was more analytical, in hindsight possibly signalling a gradual departure from dependency thinking and a search for new parameters to explain rural poverty in Latin America. Kay may well be seen as the most outstanding example of an emphasis on rural society as a belated result of dependency theory. Inspired by Kay’s work, Patricio Silva continued this line of research in his PhD thesis on the agrarian policy of the Pinochet regime and in later contributions on the Chilean agrarian question.

At the same time, Norman Long underwent a similar theoretical transformation at Wageningen University. Together with Bryan Roberts he wrote an influential analysis of the political economy of the Peruvian Highlands. His work on the rural development in the Andes stood out because it linked empirical research with elaborate theoretical reflection. After he started to work at Wageningen in the field of development studies he drew attention to the importance of an ‘actor-oriented approach’ favouring an emphasis on the agency of the poor Latin American population. His article on the topic published in this journal in 1990 proved to be highly influential in Dutch Latin American studies. His long-standing collaborator Alberto Arce deepened the theoretical focus of this approach for Mexico and his native Chile.

Rural studies has always been a central focus of the traditionally ‘rural’ Wageningen University, and the impetus given by Long’s research was instrumental in the production of important new research on the Latin American countryside. It also formed the basis for the work of younger scholars, like Kees Jansen, Pieter de Vries and Monique Nuyten. While Kees Jansen in his research on Honduras has remained closer to the original Wageningen tradition by expanding it to emphasize ecological issues, De Vries and Nuyten have moved more toward cultural studies by demonstrating how practical and discursive actions allowed peasant activists to intervene actively in the development of their societies. The work of Jan Douwe van der Ploeg on Peru also deserves special mention here. His work of technological change in Latin American agriculture has been an important element of the Wageningen school. At Wageningen, Dutch and Latin American candidates have been encouraged to focus their PhD projects on rural issues. To give just two examples, Rutgerd Boelens did research on water rights in the Andes and edited a comparative volume on the basis of that work. And more recently, Gemma van der
Haar presented her thesis in which she analysed rural questions in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, stressing the importance of ethnic identities in the process.

In the field of geography, a clear emphasis on rural issues was also visible. The Nijmegen-based (and now retired) geographer Jan Kleinpenning, who published extensively about the historical geography of Uruguay and Paraguay, initiated a long-term research program focusing on problems related to regional inequality and the development of frontier areas, mainly in Amazon basin of Brazil and Paraguay. This program has resulted in a large number of development-oriented PhD dissertations that concentrate on the policy of agricultural colonization and its impact on rural poverty and regional development. In the 1990s, attention was also geared to include problems of environmental degradation and deforestation. This resulted in dissertations by Mirjam Ros-Tonen on the exploitation of ‘tropical hardwood’ in the Brazilian Amazon, by Gudule Boland on peasant organizations in the Brazilian Sertão, and by Mariecke van der Glas on peasant responses to soil degradation in Paraguay and Brazil.

Closely related to this field, but supported by various disciplines (geography, anthropology, biology etc.) are a number of studies related to sustainable forest management in the northern Bolivian Amazon. Examples include Willem Assies, who wrote a monograph about Brazil nuts in the Bolivian Amazon, Alan Bojanic on the sustainability of the forest-based economy, and Arriene Henkemans on the livelihoods and perceptions of the forest population in the region. Also connected to this theme of sustainable forest management are the dissertations by Ans Kolk on forest preservation and international politics in the Brazilian Amazon, and by Josefien Demmer and Han Overman on the Honduran Tawahka Indians and their use of natural resources.

In geography, attention is currently turning towards policy-oriented research in the field of sustainable livelihood (especially in the Andes region) and neoliberal land reform. CEDLA geographer Annelies Zoomers, who wrote her thesis on agricultural colonization in Paraguay, now focuses on rural poverty analysis in Andean peasant communities. She edited a volume on livelihood strategies in highland Bolivia. In addition, together with others at Wageningen University, she organized an international conference on Land Policy in Latin America, and (co)-edited two volumes on this topic.

In the 1970s and ‘80s the Vrije Universiteit hosted a group of active micro-economists who, inspired by Jan de Groot, worked on Latin America. Their social commitment led them to research themes such as agrarian reform and aspects of poverty alleviation in the region. In the early 1980s the Nicaraguan revolution drew their attention, and they focused on agrarian reform and rural development issues in Nicaragua. Later on they focussed upon other Central American countries. This was encouraged by a university cooperative project between the Vrije Universiteit and the UNAN in Managua. Interest in the development of war-torn Central America, and in Nicaragua in particular, united many economists, as well as non-economists. Jan de Groot and Ruerd Ruben, together with Wim Pelupessy of Tilburg University, edited books in English and Spanish on different aspects of rural development in Central America. Ruben, who defended his PhD thesis on agrarian cooperatives in Honduras in 1997, now works on bio-economic modelling.
and carries out empirical studies on social capital among peasants. The focus on Central America produced a number of PhD theses defended at various Dutch universities. These include Hans van Heijningen on agricultural policies in Nicaragua during the 1980s, Pelupessy on agrarian policies in El Salvador, Max Spoor on the Nicaraguan state and Geske Dijkstra on industrialization in Sandinist Nicaragua.

In history Ouweneel and Baud may be considered scholars who – though belonging to a younger generation – traversed the same path as Kay. Both were influenced by dependency theory but tried to break away from its rigidity to find new parameters to explain Latin American historical development. The revised version of Ouweneel’s dissertation on rural society in colonial New Spain was published in the US in 1996. At the same time he (co)edited a number of readers with contributions from numerous European and Latin American scholars. In the process he influenced a group of students including Hoekstra, Schenk, Bos and Nelen, who worked along the lines of his community-based, ecological approach and produced a number of dissertations on Mexican history. The work of these scholars is based on sound empirical research and shows a fine eye for historical detail. Baud combined historical and anthropological techniques to understand the specific social and political position of tobacco-producing peasant producers in the Dominican Republic. His work was a guide for the research of Jolien Harmsen on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, who used the same kind of techniques to understand the development of a poor fishing community on that island.

Although not focusing solely on rural issues, the research by Alex van Stipriaan and Gert Oostindie may also be mentioned here. Their analysis of the social history of the (former) Dutch colonies in the Caribbean focused on the organization of plantation agriculture by attempting to understand the dynamics of colonial slave-society within the context of international colonialism. In this way they tried to devise analytical schemes that allowed for the analysis of local specifics without ignoring the weight of the world market or international migration. Inspired by these tendencies, Erna Kerkhof recently published an analysis of Puerto Rican family relations in the context of a neo-colonial political structure and an increasingly transnational migrant society. Pieter Emmer has published a number of studies on the Dutch (slave) trade and plantation labour in the Dutch Caribbean. He recently published a collection of articles in which he attempted to unravel the logic of the European slave system and the specific Dutch role in reproducing it. There have also been a number of other worthy dissertations. Maria Lenders sketched the history of the Moravian missionaries in Suriname in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Wim Klooster discussed the (often illegal) Dutch transit trade in the Caribbean revolving around the entrepôts in Curaçao and St. Eustatius. Ellen Klinkers discussed the period of transition from slavery to free labour in Suriname.

If there were anything that could characterize these Dutch efforts to understand Latin American rural society, it would be the strong empirical grounding of this research. All authors mentioned here have spent long periods of time in Latin America or the Caribbean, often combining documentary research with fieldwork. This emphasis on empirical research may well be the most salient characteristic of Dutch Latin American studies.
Urban and Regional Studies

In the 1970s Dirk Kruijt and Menno Vellinga began a long-term research programme focusing on urban issues. Like their ‘rural’ brothers-in-arms, they were strongly inspired by dependency thinking and neo-Marxist approaches to the analysis of class and politics. While based in Gainesville, Florida, Vellinga investigated the labour movement of Monterrey, Mexico. Later, he and Dirk Kruijt studied the Peruvian Cerro de Pasco mining company within the context of the nationalisation and other reforms during the Velasco regime. Upon returning from Peru, both researchers started teaching at Utrecht University where they developed an interest in the dynamics of industrialization and regional development. They groomed a new generation of researchers who started their careers studying regional and urban issues.

One of Vellinga’s students, Wil Pansters, worked on the evolution of post-revolutionary regional power groups in Central Mexico. His study from 1990 was recently re-published in Spanish. His later work continues to concentrate on political processes, especially on debates about political culture. More recently, he has embarked on research on the politics of neoliberal reform in higher education. Jolle Demmers followed in the footsteps of Pansters in her work on the regional power elite of Yucatán, Mexico. Rita Haring focused on the regional elite of Iquitos in the Peruvian Amazon. Kees Koonings wrote a dissertation on the regional industrial bourgeoisie of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Gerdien Steenbeek combined an urban and gender focus in her dissertation on working women in Guanajuato, Mexico. At the same time, Henri Gooren studied the importance of religion for Guatemalan informal micro-entrepreneurs.

The focus on dependency ultimately led also to a second cluster of research activities that focused on the so-called new social movements. In an effort to break with the pessimism and simplicity of dependency theories, Dutch researchers started to work on the dynamics of social and political mobilisation in Latin American cities. Undoubtedly, CEDLA-based British geographer David Slater played a central role in this process. In 1983 he organized a conference on the topic that resulted in an influential collection of articles, published in 1985. This book attempted to theorize new forms of political action that were visible in Latin American cities. It was to play a key-role in the international debate on new social movements and was (and still is) widely cited. Whereas Slater’s work was mainly theoretical, his CEDLA colleague anthropologist Geert Banck fostered a more empirical approach along the same lines. This focus also showed itself in this journal, which published a number of articles on the topic of social movements and *ciudadania* in Latin America.

These developments stimulated a number of Dutch scholars to do their PhD research on the topic of neighbourhood organizations and political culture in poor urban communities. Willem Assies conducted his research in Recife, Ton Salman in Santiago de Chile and Gerrit Burgwal in Quito. All these scholars stressed the importance of political mobilization of the urban poor to understand the political process in Latin America and the dynamics of democratic transition. Their work combined anthropological fieldwork in urban neighbourhoods with more general insights from the political sciences. Some of these authors ended up in the field of...
development cooperation. Assies later widened his research interest and wrote on environmental degradation in the Amazon rainforest and indigenous rights.

The Vrije Universiteit consolidated its tradition in the anthropology of religious processes in Latin America. The group around André Droogers focused on the analysis of social and cultural networks underlying religion. Several readers on popular religion were published in which this field was explored. After having presented his PhD thesis on Pentecostalism in Chile in 1995, Frans Kamsteeg became a staff member of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The same happened to Marjo de Theije, who finished her thesis in 1999 on the realities of what she called ‘Liberationist Catholicism’ in northeast Brazil. Much of the work in this group corresponded well with the research on urban social movements and led to multiple academic contacts among the different scholars.

Utrecht-based geographers have a strong tradition in urban and regional research. In the last decade, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) tools have increasingly become used in the analysis of socio-spatial phenomena. Jan Turkstra, who defended his thesis at Utrecht University, did a GIS analysis of land- and demographic dynamics in Villavicencio, Colombia. In addition to specific case studies, a programme of comparative citywide urban studies was developed, which focused on the shelter strategies of the urban poor and the shelter policies of the state in Mexico, Costa Rica and Bolivia. The themes of rural-urban and intra-urban mobility also became important. Interestingly, these research projects were matched by similar studies in some of the large cities in Africa and Asia, thus allowing for a systematic comparison between the various continents.

At the same time, Otto Verkoren and Paul van Lindert directed a programme with a focus on the dynamics of smaller towns, rural-urban relationships and regional development in Latin America. This resulted in various publications and PhD dissertations, such as those of Arie Romein and Tine Béneker in Costa Rica. Utrecht geographers are also developing a new focus on issues of decentralization, local governance and participatory planning practices in a local and regional context. The recent PhD theses of Gery Nijenhuis, Dicky de Morrée and the Brazilian researcher Maria Teresa Correa de Oliveira fit into this vein. This is also true for the research by Robine van Dooren and Leendert de Bell on the local impact of globalization in Mexico.

The PhD dissertation by Annelou Ypeij on micro-entrepreneurs in Lima may also be seen as a result of the Utrecht school of urban studies. This dissertation also links up with the work of Gerdien Steenbeek and symbolizes the new importance of gender-studies. In this field, the dissertations of Ineke van Halsema on rural women in southern Brazil, Susana Menéndez on the position of women in the Buenos Aires labour movement and Donny Meertens on gender relations in the Colombian violencia may also be mentioned. For the Caribbean, Utrecht-based anthropologist Gloria Wekker specializes in gender and ethnicity studies. Her dissertation sketched a portrait of lower-class Afro-Surinamese women in Paramaribo, paying special attention to the sexual culture in this group.

Gradually, the two Amsterdam-based universities – the Vrije Universiteit and the University of Amsterdam – have also developed into centres of urban research. Contemporary urban research is strongly focused on issues such as decentralization, urban management and good governance. Anthropologist Isa Baud is in-
involved in comparative research on urban and housing issues and did research in Mexico. She now holds positions at both Amsterdam universities. She and Ad de Bruijne, also at the University of Amsterdam, have supervised a number of research projects on these issues. Michaela Hordijk’s research on the role of local initiatives for community-based environmental management in Lima was one of them. The research of De Bruijne on urban issues in the Caribbean, in particular Suriname, has led to several publications, some together with Aart Schalkwijk. In this context we may also mention Mayke Kromhout’s dissertation on the effects of the economic crisis of the 1990s on the role of women in households in Paramaribo. Amsterdam geographers also did research on transnational migration. This led to a dissertation by Janine Klaver on migration from Oaxaca to Los Angeles and studies on Surinamese migration to the Netherlands.

A relatively dispersed group of geographers in Nijmegen and Amsterdam has focused on industrial and labour market issues, including micro-enterprises. In a joint dissertation at Nijmegen University, Custers and Vreeman wrote on shelter strategies and inner-city slums in Arequipa, Peru. Roseval analysed entrepreneurial activity in Suriname and Stobbe recently published an analysis of job strategies in the Argentine auto components strategy.

**Ethnicity and National Identities**

The attention for ethnic issues has a strong tradition in the Netherlands. Here the work of Harry Hoetink has been central. His subtle and balanced analysis of the complex racial and ethnic relations in the Caribbean have set a standard that has influenced generations of Dutch and foreign scholars. His *Caribbean Race Relations: A Study of Two Variants* (1971) and *Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas* (1973) remain indispensable works on the socio-psychological complexities of race and ethnicity in the New World. The *liber amicorum* edited by Gert Oostindie, which was published at his retirement in 1996, testifies to the widespread and varied intellectual influence of Hoetink’s work.

In the 1990s Dutch research turned towards the analysis of political implications of racial and ethnic differences in Latin America and the Caribbean. In October 1992, five Dutch scholars organized an interdisciplinary conference for NALACS with the title ‘Ethnicity as strategy in Latin America and the Caribbean’. On the basis of the position paper that formed the basis of the conference and the twenty or so papers presented during the conference, they wrote a concise book that was published in Dutch under the same title in 1994 (and in Spanish in 1996). The book’s central theme was the analysis of the various ways in which ethnicity and ethnic identities have been used in Latin American and the Caribbean. The authors later refined and reformulated their ideas on the issue. This led, for instance, to a volume edited by Kees Koonings and Patricio Silva, and published in 1999.

The 1994 book was widely used in undergraduate teaching and resulted in a number of interesting PhD projects. The Caribbean dissertations by Kerkhof and Harmsen mentioned above were partly influenced by this book. Recently, Jeroen Windmeijer defended his dissertation on the indigenous Otavalo population, analysing the different strategic uses of the positive image of the Otavalo Indians in
the national and international arena. This project was a direct result of the ideas expressed in the 1994 book. The same is true for the project of Mieke Wouters, who focused on the new political movement of the Afro-Colombian population in the Chocó and the resulting ethnic conflicts in the region.

The publications by Rosemarijn Hoefte on the history of the Surinamese Hindustani and Javanese population may be considered a clear example of the importance of ethnicity as a concept in Caribbean studies. The research of anthropologist Wim Hoogbergen on the Surinamese Maroons also deserves mention. His publications focus on the cultural resilience of the descendants of the Surinamese maroons and combine a historical and anthropological perspective.

In Latin American studies the ethnic, linguistic and social position of the indigenous population had pride of place. By the 1980s Chilean anthropologists Fabiola Jara and Edmundo Magaña had fostered a new interest in indigenous cosmology. To a certain extent, they complemented the Dutch tradition of Zuidema on the Andes and Van Zantwijk on Central Mexico with the strongly engaged tradition of French ethnography. Magaña wrote his thesis on indigenous astronomical cosmology. Somewhat later Jara defended her thesis, which contained an ethnographic analysis of the Trio and Akuriyo in the Suriname rainforest. For a time they worked closely together with the independent British scholar Peter Mason, who wrote on the semiotic significance of the colonial encounter in Latin America. Here also the ethnographies written by Clara van der Hammen on land use and cosmology among rainforest Indians in Colombia and by Hans Siebers on the Q’eqchi’es in Guatemala can be mentioned.

At the University of Leiden, linguistics and archaeology has merged to foster a productive research group that focuses on Mexican ethnohistory. Under the leadership of archaeologist Maarten Jansen, a number of young students started to combine the detailed study of the so-called lienzos with ethnographic fieldwork. This led to a number of closely interconnected dissertations by the Dutch scholars Bart van Doesburg, Michel Oudijk and Hans Roskamp. Through this joint effort and in close cooperation with Mexican and US specialists, it has been possible to piece together both the pre-Hispanic history of Central Mexico and the reproduction of these cultures under Spanish colonialism. In the same department, Corinne Hofman and Menno Hoogland have done archaeological research on the pre-Columbian history of the Caribbean. Together they wrote a two-part dissertation on the indigenous history of the small Caribbean island of Saba.

A more dispersed type of research refers to the historical analysis of the colonial encounter in Latin America and the resulting subordinate position of the indigenous population in Central America and the Andean region. Ouweneel wrote a number of articles and books on this issue, principally focusing on southern Mexico. Buve approached the same issue but focused mainly on state projects to subdue and modernize the indigenous populations in the Mexican province of Tlaxcala. His work on regional politics played an important role in the rewriting of Mexican history, and was instrumental in the present-day interpretation of the Mexican Revolution. He also supervised a number of Mexican PhD dissertations at the University of Leiden. In a much more modest fashion, Baud has attempted to analyse the relations between the modernizing liberal state in Ecuador and the indigenous peasant population in southern Ecuador. In the same vein, Marten Brie-
nien is writing his PhD thesis on indigenous education and indigenista policies in twentieth-century Bolivia.

Dutch anthropologists have tackled the same kinds of issues in contemporary Latin America. Jeanette Kloosterman, for instance, wrote her PhD thesis on the continuing importance of the reguardos de indios in Colombia. In a PhD thesis defended at Utrecht in 2001, Carel Roessingh similarly analysed the ways in which the Garifuna in Belize ascribe meaning to their ethnic identity. Together with André Hoekema and Gemma van der Haar, Assies organized a conference on indigenous rights in 2000, which led to a book that was also translated in Spanish.

Politics, Violence and Democratisation

Dutch Latin American Studies have also been characterized by a strong emphasis on contemporary political processes in the Americas. The work of Vellinga and Kruijt has been very influential in this respect. Their joint early work on the political economy of Peru set a standard of politically committed academic work that many younger Latin Americanists have taken as point of inspiration. Kruijt’s analysis of the Peruvian military, which was partly based on interviews with key persons in the military, was translated in English and Spanish and proved to be highly influential both inside and outside Peru. He pursued the same themes in his later work on Central America. After Kruijt took on the chair of development studies at Utrecht University in 1993, he shifted to studying the long-term consequences of military regimes, violent conflict, reconstruction and democratic transition.

Dirk Kruijt and Kees Koonings intensified their close collaboration and published a number of edited volumes on these topics. They edited volumes on the legacy of so-called ‘societies of fear’ in Latin America, ‘armed actors’ in Latin America and post-conflict situations. Both scholars also worked on issues of development, poverty and informality, particularly through contracted policy-oriented research. Together with part-time Utrecht chairs held by Gert Oostindie and Arij Ouweneel, they supervised a number of related research projects on violence and reconstruction. This led to the dissertation by Chris van der Borgh on the role of development organisations in post-war Chalatenango, El Salvador. Ongoing research on the peasant and civil patrols and the legacy of violence in Peru and Guatemala led to a special issue of the Bulletin of Latin American Research in 2001.

Vellinga published, above all, on state-society relations. He edited two books published in English and Spanish on the role of social democracy in Latin America (1993) and on the changing role of the state (1997). After he took the chair of development geography in Utrecht, he returned in part to his previous interest in the dynamics of regional development, now set in the context of globalisation and the changing impact of national politics. His recent research on the political consequences of the drugs economy brings together a number of issues of his earlier Andean research.

Anthropologists Geert Banck and Ton Robben represent the cultural perspective on Latin American politics at the University of Utrecht. Following his earlier work on the political anthropology of Brazil, Banck recently published a number of articles on the social and discursive logic of Brazilian politics and the perceptions
of space in Brazilian cities. Robben started his career with an ethnographic analysis of a Brazilian fishing community. In recent years he has shifted his research interest towards Argentina. Inspired by ideas of psychoanalysis and theoretical anthropology, he has investigated the ways various groups of actors are looking back at the ‘Dirty War’ waged by the Argentine military. He published a number of articles that analyse the ways the traumas of this period of unprecedented violence continue to haunt both victims and perpetrators.

Amsterdam also produced a number of notable Latin American political scientists. Jean Carrière, who for many years worked as a political scientist at CEDLA and died at the beginning of 2002, was a gifted teacher. He taught various generations of Dutch Latin Americanists. He closely collaborated with the department of political science at the University of Amsterdam, most notably with Chilean political scientist Alex Fernández Jilberto. Together they helped many Latin American PhD candidates to reach intellectual maturity. Initially they focused on the analysis of the authoritarian regimes that dominated Latin America in the 1980s. Later they studied the processes of democratization and the incipient labour movement, trying to unravel the practical, day-to-day mechanisms of the democratic transition. Recently Fernández co-edited with two of his former students, Barbara Hogenboom and Jolle Demmers, a volume on new forms of populism in the neo-liberal era. Chile was the starting point of Carrière’s research, but intrigued by the successes of the revolutionary movements in Central America, he shifted his attention to that region. Later he became interested in the problems of environmental degradation and began to initiate research on that topic.

Political scientists in Amsterdam also stressed the relationship between political democratization and different forms of development co-operation. Barbara Hogenboom defended her thesis in 1998 in which she analyses the relationship between environment-oriented NGOs in post-NAFTA Mexico and the US. Kees Biekart investigated the role of European development co-operation in the processes of democratization in Central America of the late twentieth century. The PhD thesis on female prostitution in Lima by anthropologist Lorraine Nencel also deserves mentioning here. It has recently been translated into Spanish. She is now engaged in a research project that analyses the lives of female secretaries in Lima.

At the University of Leiden, Patricio Silva joined forces with Benno Galjart who held a position in development studies until 2000. Together they began work on the political mechanisms of neoliberal reform in the authoritarian regimes of the 1980s and the relationship between political and development issues. In 1991 Silva wrote an influential article on the technocrats who assisted the authoritarian government of Augusto Pinochet in the *Journal of Latin American Studies*. His continuing interest in this theme has led to various publications. The book he co-edited with US scholar Miguel Centeno played an important role in the debate on the political role of Latin American technocrats in the democratization process. He recently published a volume on civil-military relations in South America. In this section, we may finally mention the work of ISS-based Bert Helmsing, who has been working on the practices of local governance and the consequences of the policies of decentralization in Latin America.

Dutch political studies on the Caribbean tend to focus on the political relations between Caribbean countries and the outside world, not surprisingly favouring an
analysis of the consequences of Dutch colonialism and the ambiguous process of decolonization of the Dutch Caribbean. In her PhD thesis Inge Klinkers compared Dutch, French, and British decolonization policies in the Caribbean. Gert Oostindie and Inge Klinkers covered the post-war era of Dutch-Caribbean relations in a three-volume work. In this work they presented a detailed analysis of the complex and often contradictory ways in which the Dutch Caribbean was decolonized. Oostindie also published an influential collection of essays on the Dutch Caribbean and edited a number of books, the most recent of which compared the ways slavery has been commemorated in different parts of the world. Peter Meel focused more specifically on Dutch-Surinamese relations in the period between 1954 and 1961. Together with Rosemarijn Hoefte, he published a collection of articles discussing the main trends in Suriname’s development in the twentieth century. Two cultural studies on the Anglophone Caribbean are Peter van Koningsbruggen’s monograph of the Trinidad Carnival and Frank Jan van Dijk’s study of Rastafarianism and Jamaican society.

**Development Studies and Economics**

Research on Latin America in the Netherlands also takes places in development studies and economics, two disciplines that generally do not have an exclusive regional focus and are therefore somewhat difficult to integrate into this article. Here we will attempt to present some of the more salient characteristics of the two.

An important part of Latin American studies in the Netherlands has been geared toward and connected to development studies. Some Latin-Americanists such as Galjart and Schuurman have devoted their academic life to unravelling the development problems of Latin American societies in the last decades of the twentieth century. Benno Galjart has worked on the links existing between the elite and the masses in Latin American society. In the late 1970s he engaged in a debate on patronage and political incorporation in Latin American peasant societies. Recently he analysed Latin American politics in comparative perspective focusing on trust-relations within society. In Nijmegen, the Third World Centre (which was initially headed by the late Gerrit Huizer) was transformed into the Centre of International Development Issues Nijmegen (CIDIN) that focuses on the consequences of globalisation as a structuring principle for the study of development issues. Nijmegen-based geographer Frans Schuurman recently edited a volume expressing the theoretical concerns of this group. He now works on the importance of ‘social capital’ in local government in Chile. The Institute for Development Studies (IVO – Instituut voor ontwikkelingsvraagstukken) in Tilburg may also be mentioned as a base of studies on Latin America. Under its first director Ben Everts, it stimulated research on development issues, and academics such as Pelupessy and the recently appointed Maritt van den Berg continue to work on the region.

We have already seen that in the 1980s and 1990s, when university jobs were hard to come by, many academics found employment in the sector of development cooperation. Most of them have disappeared from the academic world in the process. Some have tried to use their practical knowledge in analysing the consequences of developmental aid on Latin American societies. The dissertation by Biekart has already been mentioned. Another example is the research project done
by Van Niekerk, who analysed the position of NGOs in processes of development in Bolivia and Peru. His book showed to what extent NGOs had taken over essential functions of the national government. Similarly, Marja Kusters analysed the relationships between Dutch funding agencies and NGOs in Peru, and the developmental roles of these NGOs in the varying contexts of highland and lowland regions in Peru. Aart Schalkwijk recently published on popular participation in urban Bolivia.

Most economists do not have an exclusive regional focus and work on more general topics such as structural adjustment. Many of them have combined an interest in Latin America with research in other regions. The ISS hosts several economists who may be taken as example of this tendency. Valpy FitzGerald, who moved back to the UK in 1994, and Rob Vos have done research on international capital flows, debt crises and structural adjustment. Both were actively engaged in policy-making, with FitzGerald in Mexico, Peru and Nicaragua, and Vos in Ecuador. The latter also worked temporarily as Senior Economist at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). In that position he wrote on poverty and income distribution in Latin America. Bolivian-born Jorge Alarcón worked on input-output analyses and Social Accounting Matrices (SAMs) for Latin American countries such as Ecuador. Geske Dijkstra, who recently moved from the ISS to the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, publishes on structural adjustment and reforms in Latin America. The ISS, with its own fellowship programme, has also produced several interesting economic dissertations on Latin America written by foreign students.

At CEDLA Pitou van Dijck has been doing research on structural adjustment and social policies in Bolivia and Suriname and has published edited volumes on the experiences of the two countries. His work on import liberalisation and export promotion in five small and medium-sized Latin American countries resulted in a volume co-edited with Ruud Buitelaar, a former member of the Vrije Universiteit group, but now affiliated with CEPAL. Van Dijck published an IDB report on the lessons from the East Asian miracle for Latin American countries. He also works on international trade, more specifically on regional integration and new international rule systems in the context of the GATT and WTO. Recently Leiden-based historian Wiesebron began work on the political consequences of regional integration in Latin America, with a special focus on MERCOSUR. Together with Buve she edited a collection of articles on this topic.

André Hofman, also affiliated with CEPAL, Santiago de Chile, defended his PhD thesis on productivity developments in Latin America at the University of Groningen. Another dissertation on Latin America from this same renowned Groningen Growth and Development Centre (founded by Angus Maddison) was written by Nanno Mulder. At the Maastricht School of Management, Peruvian-born Ludovico Alcorta works on similar topics, analyzing technological capacity in industrial firms in several Latin American countries. Menno Pradhan did research at Tilburg on the informal labour market in Bolivia. Subsequently, he worked at the World Bank and at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. He published on poverty in Bolivia and Suriname and wrote on analytical issues in the measurement of poverty. In the context of different joint projects, economists of the Rotterdam-based Erasmus University host a number PhD projects that focus on Latin America, especially the consequences of regional integration. Claudia Sánchez Bajo, for exam-
ple, recently defended her thesis on regional cooperation between Brazil and Argentina at the ISS in The Hague.

**Conclusion: Recent Developments**

In collecting the data for this article, I must confess to have been pleasantly surprised by the extent of Latin American and Caribbean Studies in the Netherlands. Academics tend to complain about budget cuts and decreasing attention for their specific field of expertise, but in the case of Latin American studies, we can see a gradual, but convincing increase in researchers, PhD projects and (some) government-financed development-oriented research. Though the community of scholars working on the region remains relatively small, it seems not too far-fetched to say that the study of Latin America has rooted itself firmly in the Dutch academic community.

With the help of foreign scholars, Latin American and Caribbean Studies in the Netherlands have become more professional and receptive to the outside world. The two academic journals, the *New West Indian Guide* and the *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos* have a well-established place in the international academic community. Dutch scholars now publish a considerable part of their work in English and Spanish. Their work continues to be characterized by a strong emphasis on empirical research and a theoretical orientation on Anglo-Saxon social sciences.

There are some problems, too. The most pronounced one is a tendency in the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation, which plays an important role in the financing of research, to shift its attention away from the American continent towards Asia and Africa. This may be useful with respect to poverty alleviation or structural development cooperation – although also in that case one could argue against the destruction of important institutional networks, especially in the world of NGOs, and the loss of well-deserved goodwill – but it would be disastrous for the dynamic academic networks that exist today. Paradoxically, these networks have been greatly fostered by the fellowships for Latin American scholars of this same Ministry mentioned at the beginning of this paper, as well as by the university cooperation projects.

Another problem that may be mentioned is the relatively limited cooperation among the universities and non-academic NGOs that work and do research on Latin America and the Caribbean. Although the objectives of these various research activities are clearly different, more cooperation would be useful. For example, the religious solidarity organization, Pax Cristi, recently published a very informative and well-researched report on the ‘kidnap-industry’ in Colombia. While this report was well received by the international community of ‘Colombianists’, it has gone largely unnoticed in the Netherlands in the academic or the political communities. It would be a good development for these different groups of researchers to have more regular contacts.

With respect to the new research topics in Dutch Latin American and Caribbean studies, it is doubtful that they will be any different from what is happening in the rest of the world. Regional integration, local reactions to global developments, identity, democracy, good governance, poverty and income inequality are themes
that will dominate the research agenda for years to come. New projects and topics will emerge, but these themes may well be so important and dominant that they will not be easily discarded. One change, nevertheless, that is already happening and producing its first results is an increasing attention to comparative research between area-specialists. The area-studies discussion had never been so intense in the Netherlands as it was in other countries. This may well have been the result of the fact that area studies centres in the Netherlands never isolated themselves from research in other regions of the world. Comparative research was always on the agenda, but usually difficult to put into practice. Nowadays, there appears to be a new interest both from academics and financing institutions to take advantage of the strong area-oriented expertise existing in the country to realize joint comparative research projects. This may well be the great challenge for the next decades.

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**Note**

1. The developments in this period are described in the special issue of the *Boletín de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe* (44, Junio 1988) published by CEDLA on the occasion of the 46th International Congress of Americanists in Amsterdam.

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