

Olomouc, March 30th 2018
To Endowment Fund of Palacký University

I am writing this letter at the request of Ms Monique Lima Leite to express my opinion on her research project 'Community initiatives based on Post-development theory in Brazilian cities'. I have been Monique's professor and thesis supervisor since September 2017 at the Department of Development and Environmental Studies, Palacký University. At this university I teach two disciplines: Development and Opportunities in Latin America, and Development Theories. One of the theories that we cover in depth is Post-development theory, which Monique intends to use as the theoretical basis for her research in Brazil.

Post-development theory is valuable to the field of Development as it offers both a response to and an alternative lens through which to construct our world, which is currently experiencing a humanitarian and environmental crisis. Globally, there are many great examples of other types of projects and initiatives that are, no doubt, offering alternative ideas for development, with varying degrees of success. I have had the chance to research some of these myself. However these are, more often than not, located in rural areas, and we still do not have a selection of work that seeks to explore whether the conceptual bases of these projects can also be applied to complex and more populous locales, such as cities.

There is a wealth of research demonstrating the significance of reviving indigenous knowledge and skills and resuscitating a sense of community participation for development. However, it seems that most, if not all, of these studies focus on methods of working with traditional communities, such as indigenous groups in Latin America. How this scholarship, and the philosophies that underpin it, can be applied in cities, with other groups of people, is a challenge that Monique's research aims to explore.

As her supervisor, I have been discussing this research with Monique for months. In my professional opinion, and considering my specific experience and theoretical knowledge within this field, I can safely guarantee that her proposed research is meaningful for the academic world. The conceptual literature on Post-development theory offers a solid basis for this research, demonstrated through its successful application globally. However, there is a real lack of understanding about how this can be scaled up to benefit cities and larger communities. Considering that more than half of the global population are now living in cities, it is extremely important that this gap in the literature be filled with quality research from around the world.

I believe that this research will provide the knowledge and tools necessary to evaluate the applicability of Post-development theory, which will benefit not only Brazilian society, but it will support future researchers and community initiatives which aim to expand their activities and involve more people and institutions. I believe that Monique is more than capable of carrying out this research successfully. Being from Brazil, Monique is perfectly suited to conducting fieldwork there, and she is unlikely to face any language or cultural barriers that a non-native researcher may be confronted with. As well as this, her prior experience provides her with useful contacts that will allow her to gain access to communities and projects of interest. This research is close to Monique's heart, and so I can confidently say that she is fully invested in carrying it out to the very best of her ability.

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