

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Political Economy of Poverty and Social Transformations of the Global South

Cairo, Egypt, December 10-12, 2012

This workshop will approach social change toward poverty eradication and prevention in an interdisciplinary and critical way taking current politics as the point of reference.

The organizers are especially interested in empirical and theoretical research that focuses on progressive social change and real-world applications of such ideas in the “global South”.

The workshop will bring together a maximum of 22 participants from across all university disciplines.

This call for papers is open to all although preference will be given to researchers based in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.



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For more information and instructions on how to submit an abstract: www.crop.org

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: MONDAY JULY 9, 2012

The Political Economy of Poverty and Social Transformations of the Global South

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Poverty has been a persisting phenomenon in human history. Economic, social and political transformations aimed at eliminating poverty over the past century not only failed, but actually contributed to the exacerbation of this social problem. On the eve of the 21st century the world had more than one billion human beings suffering extreme poverty and hunger. Existing social systems have proved unable to eradicate this kind of misery. This is not merely a question of resources.

The world has never in its history had more available means to ensure decent living standards for all. At the start of its Decade for the Eradication of Poverty in 1997 the UN estimated that the cost of providing universal access to basic social services and transfers to alleviate income poverty would cost roughly \$80 billion -- less than the combined net worth of the seven richest people in the world.

However, poverty continues to take the life of millions and the dignity of billions. Explanations and analysis of this phenomenon have produced an abundant literature on poverty. But despite unrelenting interventions by scholars, governmental and non-governmental agencies it is evident that our social systems (both at national and international levels) are incapable, or unwilling, to produce a meaningful and sustainable change toward poverty eradication. Why is this?

Structures, institutions and agents operating within existing systems interact to produce and sustain poverty at unacceptable levels. Is it thus reasonable to expect changes within these systems? Although critical theoretical engagements and social justice projects have addressed this question in the past, current global trends and processes (like recurrent financial crises, protest movements involving many parts of the globe, the concentration of wealth and power, and the increasing inequality gap to an extent never registered in the history of the world) force the question yet again with urgency.

Social transformation seems to be the obvious response to the persistence of poverty. In this call for papers, social transformation refers to any significant alteration in structures, behavioural patterns, and rules aimed at producing a particular social result: poverty eradication. Poverty is a structural problem inseparable from power relations that have defined the making and re-making of political economy and society over the last four centuries -- and magnified during the past one. Our socio-economic systems are the results of the evolution of patterns forged -- among others -- by the industrial, democratic and information revolutions. They produced unprecedented quantity of resources and a high standard of living for just a portion of the world's population, while keeping the vast majority in poverty. Arguably, poverty functions to uphold the existing patterns of accumulation and distribution of wealth and power. Therefore, poverty eradication could be an objective quite difficult to attain without altering the ideological, material and institutional basis of the current social systems as well as the global patterns of production, circulation, and consumption.

The world is struggling to adjust to the forces of globalization. Social movements channel demands from different sectors which could be a driving force for social change in different parts of the world. Their relentless efforts to challenge structures of power have revealed cracks in the global order. Is this the beginning of a different "order of things" with the potential for new imaginings of poverty and means for its eradication?



This workshop aims to enhance our understanding of the nature of social change and transformations (at global, national or local levels) in which poverty alleviation, eradication, and prevention is either the axis of a social strategy or a tangible result. In this sense, the workshop will focus on, but is not limited to, questions like:

- What are the main sources of social change in the global South?
- Who are its actors, and how do they express their agenda and action?
- What were the ideological and material conditions for poverty eradication in exceptional cases like the Scandinavian countries?
- Is it possible to find ideological and material conditions for poverty eradication in the South?
- Which experiences in the South provide an alternative path toward poverty alleviation, eradication, and prevention?
- Does the current geo-political mapping of the world render a South-based project for poverty eradication possible?
- Has neoliberalism changed the meaning and manifestation of poverty and its eradication?
- How is resistance to changes dealt with within the current political systems?
- How is the position of vested interests expressed in contemporary societies? How do they maintain the *status quo* and how successful are they in the face of protest and resistance?
- What is the role of the media?

The workshop will approach social change toward poverty eradication and prevention in an interdisciplinary and critical way taking current politics as the point of reference. The organizers are especially interested in empirical and theoretical research that focuses on progressive social change and real-world applications of such ideas in the “global South”.

The workshop will bring together a maximum of 22 participants from across all university disciplines. This call for papers is open to all although preference will be given to researchers based in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Participants are expected to actively participate with presentations and in discussions of all the papers.

Participants are responsible for their own travel expenses and health insurance. Board and lodging will be covered. A limited number of travel grants will be assigned according to geographic origin and the relevance, quality, and originality of the submitted abstracts. In the case of co-authored papers, only one author may compete for a travel grant. The seminar will be conducted in English.

The abstract should not exceed 500 words (one page) and must include: the title of the proposed paper and a summary of its theme, including its central argument and research question. In addition, a brief resume (max. one page) clearly indicating your name, title, nationality, and contact information as well as a list of recent publications.

The abstract and resume should be sent by e-mail to both: **CROP Secretariat** (crop@uib.no) and the **American University of Cairo** (hsabea@aucegypt.edu). Submissions exceeding two pages will not be considered.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS: MONDAY JULY 9, 2012

Accepted participants will be notified by the Academic Committee regarding format/guidelines for the final paper, which must be submitted by Monday Oct. 22, 2012.