

CROP newsletter

Comparative Research Programme On Poverty

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INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND POVERTY IN LATIN AMERICA: PROBLEMS OF CLASSIFICATION, SELF-DEFINITION, AND SELF-DETERMINATION

It is widely acknowledged by international organizations working on poverty issues such as the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank that Latin America's indigenous peoples are the poorest, most marginalized group in the region according to multiple indicators, writes Camilo Perez-Bustillo from The Monterrey Institute of Technology, Mexico.

It is less generally noted, however, that there is no standard definition employed by these organizations and others at both the international and national level, as to who exactly is indigenous, and according to which criteria. These can be either racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious, or all or some of these in varying combinations. The results of applying each of these variants can lead to widely varying results. For example Mexico, which is generally considered to have the largest total indigenous population in the Americas, has only 8.7 million indigenous people according to the last national census in 1990, which only counted speakers of indigenous languages as such. Many Mexican anthropologists criticize these figures as grossly under-inclusive and for their failure to incorporate cultural criteria of other kinds (identification with

pre-Hispanic customs and traditions, modes of self-governance, collective systems of labor, etc.). On the other hand if the kinds of racial categorization prevalent in the United States were applied to Mexico, primarily based on a combination of skin color and ancestry, over 90% of the population would be classified indigenous (e.g. brown-skinned). As Claude Lévi-Strauss noted in his famed lectures to UNESCO about the difficulties of striking the proper balance between universalism and particularism in the study of cultural diversity, the issue of how to define the identity of indigenous peoples is both complex and potentially explosive in its implications if unchecked by an ethical, and ultimately political, center of gravity.

The dangers of both under- and over-inclusion are manifold. Interestingly it is apparently more acceptable to explore implications of this kind in the context of «ethnic» identities than of «racial» ones, despite the equally dubious scientificity of either set of concepts. Latin American indigenous identity can span both racial and ethnic axes, depending on how it is constructed. What is clear however is that despite the evident extent to which both kinds of identity are socially and culturally constructed, and not in fact biologically or genetically predetermined, it matters a great deal to the racist, the chauvinist or the xenophobe who falls into which category. At the same time it is more clear that this determination has great resonance as well for those classified. But one

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most important point is that increasingly it is the objects of such categorization who are reclaiming their status as subjects capable of, and entitled to reclaim and determine their own identity. In this sense the most important single act of self-determination is that of naming and affirming one's own identity.

For the indigenous poor of Latin America the balance struck can begin with an affirmation of the right to self-identification, as well as with an insistence on determining who falls into this category for purposes of disaggregation. Equally fundamental is a recognition that indigenous poverty has specificities in terms of both its causes and its solutions. Failure to consider these can doom much poverty research to misrepresent the standpoint of the needs and rights of these populations, and reproduce - rather than combat - the powerlessness that poverty itself foments.

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CROP PUBLICATIONS

"Law, Power and Poverty", edited by Asbjørn Kjønstad and John H. Veit-Wilson, CROP Publications: Bergen, 1997. The book demonstrates both the beneficial and the detrimental powers of legislation in creating and sustaining poverty. It is written by a group of social scientists and experts in legal theory who met for the first time in 1995 at a workshop arranged by CROP and the International Institute for the Sociology of Law, Oñati, Spain. Price: Norway: NOK 150 +p&p, Europe, USA and Japan: USD 18 (p&p incl.), all other countries: USD 15 (p&p incl.).

"Poverty and Participation in Civil Society", edited by Yogesh Atal and Else Øyen, UNESCO and Abhinav Publications: Paris and New Delhi, 1997. This book is based on the papers from the Round Table organised by CROP and UNESCO which took place during the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, 1995. Price: Norway: NOK 90 (p&p incl.), all other countries: USD 12 (p&p incl.).

SPECIAL OFFER: Buy both books: "Law, Power and Poverty", edited by Asbjørn Kjønstad and John H. Veit-Wilson, CROP Publications: Bergen, 1997 and "Poverty and Participation in Civil Society", edited by Yogesh Atal and Else Øyen, UNESCO and Abhinav Publications: Paris and New Delhi, 1997, Price: Norway: NOK 200 +p&p, Europe, USA and Japan: USD 25 (p&p incl.), all other countries: USD 20 (p&p incl.).

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HUMAN RIGHTS AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR THE ERADICATION OF EXTREME POVERTY

In September 1997 CROP organised a workshop on "Human Rights as an Instrument for the Eradication of Extreme Poverty" in Santiago, Chile, in collaboration with Centro de Estudios Sociales y Educación, SUR and Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción (ALOP). Participants from 13 Latin American countries attended the workshop. A publication, based on the papers presented at the workshop will be published early 1999. Editors are professor Willem van Genugten, Netherlands and professor Camilio Perez-Bustillo, Mexico.

The following papers were presented:

"The right to development: a homogenous and integral approach to human rights", by **Patrick van Weerelt**, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Switzerland, *"Constructing a new paradigm for a fair society"*, by **Patricia Helena Massa Arzabe**, Brasil, *"Globalización, distribución de los ingresos y los derechos económicos, sociales y culturales"*, by **José Bengoa**, Chile, *"Unleashing human rights to address glo-*

bal poverty", by **Chris Jochnick**, USA/ Ecuador, *"Derechos Humanos y Pobreza"*, by **Arlindo Soares**, Brasil, *"La extrema pobreza como forma de violación de los derechos humanos"*, by **Leandro Despouy**, Argentina, *"La política de erradicación de la pobreza en Chile"*, by **Reinaldo Ruiz**, Chile, *"Estrategias de exigibilidad de los DESC: el caso de CEDAL-Perú"*, by **Javier Mujica**, Peru, *"Historia natural e historia social: límites y urgencias de los Derechos Humanos"*, by **Juan Antonio Blanco**, Cuba, *"Desplazamiento y violación de derechos humanos en Colombia"*, by **María Helena Rodríguez**, Colombia, *"La promoción de los derechos económicos, sociales, como fórmula de enfrentar la pobreza desde la iniciativa de las ONG"*, by **Maribel Gordon**, Panamá, *"Evasive social Policy"*, by **Eduardo Bustello**, Argentina, *"As lutas populares pela reforma urbana no Brasil como forma de exigibilidade da implantação dos direitos económicos, sociais e culturais"*, by **Nelson Saule Junior**, Brasil, *"La defensa de los derechos económicos en Colombia"*, by **Rafael Barrios**, Colombia, *"La Mesa de Concertación de Políticas Sociales de la Ciudad de Córdoba"*, by **José Scavuzzo**, Argentina, *"Human rights, poverty, and indigenous peoples struggles in the Americas: New directions and case studies from Colombia, Guatemala, México and Nica-*

ragua", by **Camilo Pérez Bustillo**, México, *"Los derechos humanos como base de todo desarrollo. El ejemplo de los Pehuenches y los megaproyectos en el Alto Bio Bio. Dilemas y Contradicciones"*, by **Claudio Parra**, Chile, *"The use of Human Rights Instruments in the struggle against (extreme) poverty"*, by **Willem van Genugten**, Netherlands, *"La experiencia de la organización ATD Cuarto Mundo en la defensa de los derechos económicos"*, by **Eugenio Brand**, Bolivia, *"La experiencia de Terres de Hommes en la defensa de los Derechos Económicos"*, by **Maribel Wolf**, France, and *"La experiencia de ALOP en la defensa de los derechos económicos, sociales y culturales"*, by **Pablo Guarino**, Uruguay.

The workshop was conducted in Spanish and English.

Professor Else Øyen presented the paper *"Knowledge production about poverty in an international perspective"* on the official inauguration of the workshop. On the last evening of the workshop Maribel Wolf presented the book *"El derecho a la equidad"* edited by Terres des Hommes, France and ALOP.

editorial

At the recent CROP workshop on human rights as an instrument for the eradication of extreme poverty a group of participants hammered out a set of recommendations for action based on the knowledge produced during the workshop. As Chair of CROP I refrained from signing. When invited to sign as an individual I likewise refrained, although sympathetic with the recommendations. While the distinction between two such signatures was evident in the audience present, it might not have been so in a wider audience.

It is not unusual that CROP is requested to use our network for a worthy purpose. We are asked to sign petitions in support of deprived groups, important political initiatives, and new definitions of poverty which will renew the agenda for poverty research, just to mention some. Colleagues ask us to circulate questionnaires to members of CROPnet, either to know their opinion of certain issues or to use them as subjects for research purposes. We are requested to provide a copy of the CROPnet mailinglist so others can approach our members and invite them to support good causes or to join different kinds of charitable organisations.

So far the policy has been to decline the signing of petitions and refuse all external uses of electronic and postal addresses of CROPnet. There are several reasons for such a seemingly harsh policy. CROP has no mandate to act on behalf of its members outside the realm of research. CROP has no mandate to act on behalf of a certain interest group among its members. The many members in CROP are as heterogenous as any other population, except they share an expertise and interest in poverty research. On a more practical note it can be argued that members in CROPnet should not be inundated with advertising and other material, which appear to have a quality stamp from CROP.

You may have a different opinion on this issue, and if so, we would like to hear from you.

Else Øyen, Chair of CROP

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THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION

From the 8th to 11th of October, 1997, the first of a series of CROP workshops on the Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation took place in Gaborone, Botswana. The workshop was organised in cooperation with the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA) and the University of Botswana. The main sponsor of the event was the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), with additional funding from the Bank of Botswana, the United Nations Development Programme and CROP.

All together, 45 persons were registered as participants in the workshop. Four of the participants were visitors from Europe and one was from Asia. Twelve papers were presented and discussed. The workshop had been planned by a Programme Committee consisting of Dr. **Jan Isaksen** (BIDPA), Dr. **Henning Melber**, The Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU), Dr. **Thandike Mkandawire**, CODESRIA, Senegal Dr. **Patrick P. Molutsi**, Department of Sociology, University of Botswana (UB) Professor **Francis Wilson**, University of Cape Town, South Africa, Professor **Else Øyen**, Chair of CROP.

The following papers were presented and discussed: "*Poverty in Botswana. Some key points from a Study by BIDPA for the Government of Botswana*" by **Jan Isaksen**, BIDPA; "*The Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation: Conceptual and Philosophical Predispositions*" by **Archie B. Mafeje**, Department of Social Anthropology and Psychology, The American University in Cairo, Egypt; "*State Action, Social Capital and Poverty Alleviation. An outline of a decentralization study of Mozambique*" by **Einar Braathen**, University of Bergen and CROP Secretariat, Norway; "*The Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation in South Africa*" by **Tielman J. C. Slabbert**, Department of Economics, Vista University, South Africa; "*The State and Sustainable Rural-Poverty Alleviation in Africa: Lessons from the Nigerian Experience since 1975*" by **Dayo Akeredolu-Ale**, Centre for Social Policy, Ibadan, Nigeria; "*All but the Very Poor: Social Exclusion in State Welfare Programmes in Ghana*" by **Ellen Bortei-Doku Aryeetey**, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana; "*The State-NGO Relationship in Uganda: The Link between the State and its Citizens in Alleviating Poverty*" by **Frederick**

Mwesigye, Makerere Institute of Social Research, Kampala, Uganda; "*Governance and Poverty Reduction in Tanzania*" by **Servacius Beda Likwelile**, REPOA and the Department of Economics, University of Dar es Salaam; "*The State and Poverty in Botswana*". **Kenneth Good & Patrick Molutsi**, Department of Sociology, University of Botswana; "*The Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation. The Case of Zimbabwe*", by **Richard Kamidza**, SAPES Trust/SARIPS, Harare, Zimbabwe; "*Poverty and Policy in Namibia*" by **Dirk Hansohm**, The Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU), Windhoek, Namibia; "*The Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation: Politics, Policies and Strategies: A Comparative Study from the Third World*" by **Karunatissa Atukorala**, Institute of Sociology, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka; "*The Location of Poverty and the Role of the State with an Empirical Application to Pakistan*" by **Hans de Kruijk**, Centre for Development Planning, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherland.

On the 10th of October the organisers invited to a Public Meeting to create a dialogue between researchers, politicians, bureaucrats, media and the general public. The topic was: "The Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation - A Briefing". It was chaired by Dr. Patrick Molutsi. Nearly 60 persons attended the meeting, bringing forward many questions and a lively discussion. The Public Meeting was definitely a positive experience which will be developed further in future CROP workshops.

The participants in the workshop expressed a strong interest in developing a joint research project. It was decided that the present Programme Committee should function as an ad hoc Programme Committee for the project, and promote a comparative research project on the Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation. The Programme Committee was supplemented with Prof. Archie Mafeje. It will organise a follow-up workshop next year, which will likely take place in Cape Town in September 1998. Mr. Einar Braathen at the CROP Secretariat will function as Programme Officer for the research project, and he was commissioned to draft a comprehensive background paper for the next workshop.

CROP VICE-CHAIRS

At the recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Social Science Council two Vice-Chairs for CROP were appointed. Professor Julio Boltvinik, El Colegio de Mexico, has his degree in economics and has worked on poverty issues for many years. He has served on a number of public commissions and been a consultant to UN organisations and regional development banks. Professor Francis Wilson, University of Cape Town, has likewise worked on poverty issues for many years, and was director of the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa. The two new Vice-Chairs met with the CROP Chair and other members of the CROPnet in Turin in November when they all presented lectures at the Course on Poverty which CROP co-organised with the UN Staff College.

AWARDS FROM THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF OVERSEAS SCIENCE

The "Academie Royale Des Sciences d' Outre-Mer (Royal Academy of Overseas Science) in Brussels, has announced its 1998 and 1999 competitions.

For the 1998 competition they, among several proposals, want studies about the possibilities and advantages of a modular construction (traditional, rationalized, partly or totally prefabricated) applied to the building of cheap houses for the most underprivileged populations of the third world, taking chiefly into account the implementation of suited techniques and local building material. The works must be received at the Secretary of the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences before May 1st, 1998.

As for the 1999 competition the Academy ask for a study on the social implications of new urbanization projects in South Asia, a study on the contribution of a steady individual follow-up of young children's growth and health development in developing countries, and a study on the evolution going from traditional precolonial communication to the emergence of a private press during the democratic transition in the Subsaharan African states. Works must be received at the secretariat of the Academy for Overseas Science before May 1st, 1999. Each award-winning work in the annual competition is given a prize of 30000 B.F. For additional information please contact:

Academie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, rue Defacqz 1, boîte 3, 1000 Brussels, BELGIUM, tel: +32 2 538 0211, fax: +32 2 539 2353

LIST OF CROP EVENTS

1997 - 1998

November 97:

17-28: UNSCP/CROP "Course on Poverty", Turin, Italy

February 98:

27-28: "Poverty Alleviation as a Strategy for Social Development in the Mediterranean Area", CROP/INSEA Workshop in Rabat, Morocco.

July/August 98:

26-1: "Poverty Research Through a non-Western Lens". Symposium organised by the International Social Science Council at the International Sociological Association XIV World Congress, Montréal. Chair: Professor Else Øyen.

September 98:

18-22: "The Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation II", Cape Town, South Africa.

WORKSHOPS UNDER PREPARATION

"Poverty and development" (working title), Mexico, Spring 1999

"Law and Poverty III", May 1999

WHITE PAPER ON INTERNATIONAL AID

The UK government, represented by the Department for International Development, launched a "White Paper" on international aid in the beginning of November. Aid will not be closely tied to trade anymore, but will be focused directly on poverty reduction. A summary and the full text of the report can be found on Internet (<http://www.oneworld.org/dfid/>) or you can write to Department for International Development, 94 Victoria St., London SW1E 5JL, UNITED KINGDOM, tel: 00 44 171 917 0503, fax: 00 44 171917 0523

WORLD BANK STUDY

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has commissioned CROP, in collaboration with the Christian Michelsen Institute, to do a study on the poverty reducing strategies of the World Bank in East Africa. A team of experts from Africa, Asia and Europe will conduct interviews in the region and at the World Bank headquarters in Washington D.C., review the current literature, and analyse available statistical material.

CROP IN BRIEF

CROP is a world-wide network of researchers and experts on poverty. The aim of CROP is to establish an arena for interdisciplinary and comparative research on poverty in developed and developing countries. CROP organises regional workshops, symposia and international conferences, promotes joint research projects and publications, links poverty researchers and disseminates information about poverty research. CROP is developing an international database on poverty researchers, and documentation of ongoing research. CROP is chaired by professor Else Øyen, University of Bergen, Norway.

If you wish to have your name listed in CROPnet, you are welcome to write the CROP Secretariat and request a copy of the CROP Questionnaire. For further information please contact the CROP Secretariat

WEB PAGE FOR CROP

Those who have an Internet connection and a WWW browser programme installed, find the CROP web page at <http://www.svf.uib.no/helsos/crop/> or <http://www.crop.org> The pages hold general information about CROP, news about past and ongoing activities, as well as the latest CROP newsletter.

Please note: We can no longer answer the increased demand for copies of single papers presented at CROP conferences and workshops. However, if you have the patience, most of the papers become available through the publications that follow the conferences and will be duly announced. We still supply the authors addresses, phone & fax numbers.

AT THE CROP SECRETARIAT

you will meet:

Else Øyen, Chair of CROP

Hans Egil Offerdal, CROP Co-ordinator

Einar Braathen, CROP Programme Officer

Inge Erling Tesdal, CROP Assistant

THE QUOTE

When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.

Dom Helder Camara
Brazilian archbishop