

CROPNewsletter

Comparative Research Programme On Poverty

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Indigenous Knowledge, Poverty and Gender*

Indigeneity has a very particular meaning to those of us from the former colonies. For us the term evokes the national policy of indigenisation which was part and parcel of the first realisation of political independence, expressed in the policies of nationalisation. Indigenisation meant replacing the colonials with Nigerians, taking out future into our own hands. It meant educating and training people en masse, investing in education at all levels, establishing schools, colleges and universities to train up the natives, to staff all the modern institutions of governance, industry with local personnel, taking command of the land, the businesses—indeed all aspects of our economies, in order to pursue national development and national interests, instead of Western ones.

With hindsight we can confirm that the bodies were put there, many of them highly trained, and in that sense ‘indigenisation’ was achieved to a large extent.

The intellectual, philosophical, social and cultural accompaniments of indigenisation proved to be more challenging. Perhaps the most important scholarship of the post-independence era is exemplified by the new histories of the world (Cheikh Anta Diop) and the Ibadan school of African history, the philosophical and ideological debates of the 1960's and 1970's that gave rise to African political economy – and to critical development studies - the dependency school evidenced in the work of Samir Amin and others. Such work that located Africa in world knowledge systems, world cultures

and world development.

The epistemological and philosophical agenda - the knowledge agenda of African liberation- somehow got shelved in the rush to modernise and catch up - if not overtake - the West. This was primarily taken to mean privileging science and technology, industrialisation, in concerted mimicry, that replicated the growing economic dependency – Hountoundji's externalisation of knowledge production, characterised by wholesale importation and uptake of Western knowledge systems.

Our modern academic institutions proliferated, but did not quite overcome their privileging of Western scientific knowledge over things African. Developmental states gave rise to developmental universities, but under the enormous pressures to expand even while the global economic climate grew increasingly unfavourable and international financial institutions placed greater constraints on expenditure, intellectual agendas became narrower and less visionary. Development became reduced to implementation of SAP, relevance became reduced to narrow understandings of policy servicing, as education became increasingly utilitarian. Instead of developing locally focused visions of development and carrying out exciting and new research in a vast region in which most things have never been studied by local intellectuals, and instead of generating knowledge resources that might inspire creative visions and

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strategies for national and regional development, academics saw their role reduced to servicing regimes that lacked the visionary leadership of the early post-independence era. Technocrats prevailed over intellectuals, delivering policy frameworks and carrying out brief consultancies for international agencies.

This parochialisation probably began even before the universities fell victim to the combination of political and economic constraints that were to so undermine their knowledge producing capacity in the 1980's-1990's.

What of indigenous knowledge? The term implies knowledges rooted in indigenous cultures and identities. In the early decades of political independence, indigenous knowledge was not seen as being central to modernisation and development, as these privileged a particular understanding of science as universal. Where the notion of indigenous knowledge in, it was therefore defined as the antithesis of this, as local, rural, oral, ritual, fetish, performance, myths and practices –traditions and customs.

Radical thinkers – often pan-African in their thoughts - were not necessarily advocates of indigenous knowledge per se. Rather they have consistently called for a critical engagement with multiple historical and political legacies, for knowledge rooted in contemporary African challenges, knowledge informed but not determined by indigenous cultural and scientific heritages and legacies. For example, the intellectual agenda of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana bore little resemblance to that of the many 'African' or 'Africana' Studies centres established in the Europe and U.S.A. to serve North American and European foreign policy agendas. Instead it was established by Kwame Nkrumah to pursue transnational, pan-continental African knowledge building. Its brief was highly contemporary, and a great deal broader and more far-reaching than the idea of 'indigenous knowledge'. At the University of Ife, no specific centre was set up – but something of a cultural movement arose, leading to the inclusion of traditional healers in the faculty of medicine, traditional mask makers and crafts people and masquerades in the Theatre Dept, and of course a local menu in the cafeterias.

In other places African studies has tended to be more localised, more ethnically specific, more particular, in short more *precious*. Perhaps the Centre for African Studies at the University of Ibadan has taken the notion

of indigenous knowledge more seriously – it has pursued a more localised brief, focusing on Yoruba cultural traditions, orature, poetry and other practices, and on connecting to local communities.

For most of the African continent, scholarly interest in the more precious and particular notion of indigenous knowledge as 'rooted in particular tribal cultures and traditions' has therefore remained largely the remit of anthropologists, museologists and archivists. It is largely pursued by visiting expatriates, diasporans, and more recently by older generations of South Africans, all of whom had their own various reasons for being enthusiasts of indigenousness, and questing for African roots.

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Note:

*) This article is a shortened version of the paper Mama presented at the annual conference of the Norwegian Association for Development Research (NFU), Education, Knowledge and Development, 30 September - 1 October 2004, Bergen, Norway. It is intended as a basis for further discussion on the subject.

NEW BOOK ON POVERTY

Dynamiques de la pauvreté en Afrique du Nord et au Moyen-Orient, edited by Blandine Destremau, Agnès Deboulet and François Ireton (eds.), has recently been published by Editions Karthala – URBAMA. Visit <http://www.karthala.com> on Internet for ordering information.

The main argument of the book is that poverty gains ground in the Middle East and North Africa. It affects formerly protected social groups, increases inequalities, threatens established legitimacies and lays the ground for despair and conflict.

The contributions to this book show to what extent discourses and representations reflect a reality that they largely contribute to shape, assigning the poor to a set place in the changing moral, social and economic order, justifying assistance policies, nurturing acceptance. As most papers are based on extensive fieldwork, they point to the complexity of situations, the weight of history and the relevance of local scales. "The poor", who mobilise resources and implement solidarity and resistance strategies, are thus restored to the full dimension of their role of social actors.

KNOWLEDGE AS FREEDOM - HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND POVERTY

Special workshop organized by CROP during the annual conference of the Norwegian Association for Development Research (NFU), Education, Knowledge and Development, 30 September - 1 October 2004, Bergen, Norway

The aim of the workshop was to study the connections between rights and poverty reduction. In a globalised world in which human rights have become central mechanisms for justice, and liberal democracy has become the hegemonic foundation for government, knowledge about rights and their application have become essential mechanism for guaranteeing both personal property and claims for security. As such, lack of knowledge about rights can be identified not only as a cause for social exclusion, but also for persisting poverty.

Dr. John Andrew McNeish, Dept. of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, chaired the workshop. **Atilio Boron**, General Secretary of CLACSO, Argentina, was discussant.

The following papers were presented:

- *Knowledge as Freedom - Human rights, democracy and poverty reduction* by **John-Andrew McNeish**.
- *Knowledge about poverty production as a key word to poverty reduction* by **Else Øyen**, Scientific Director of CROP.
- *Human development, culture and identities* by **Ramaswamy Sudarshan**, UNDP, Norway.
- *Rights-based approaches to development: the 1990s and now* by **Sian Lazar**, Centre for Latin American Studies, University of Cambridge, UK.
- *The experience of participatory budgeting in Brazil* by **Einar Braathen**, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR).
- *Social rights litigation as transformation: South African perspectives* by **Siri Gloppen**, Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI)/Dept. of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen, Norway.
- *"Human rights and poverty reduction in Southern Africa"* [preliminary title] by **Francis Wilson**, Chair of CROP, Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town, South Africa.
- *Know your rights: Exploring the connections between human rights and poverty reduction with specific reference to South Africa* by **John Cantius Mubangizi**, Faculty of Law, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa.

POVERTY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: A challenge to citizenship and democracy

Workshop organized by the CLACSO-CROP Programme on Poverty Studies in Latin America and the Caribbean, Universidad Centroamericana (UCA-Nicaragua) and FLACSO, Costa Rica in Managua, Nicaragua, 22-24 November. The CLACSO-CROP Programme with funding from NORAD, La Universidad Centroamericana, and IBIS (Denmark) sponsored the workshop.

The workshop was planned by an academic programme committee consisting of **Alberto Cimadomore** (CLACSO), **Luis Serra** (Universidad Centroamericana-Nicaragua), and **Carlos Sojo** (FLACSO-Costa Rica).

Donald Mendez, Dean of the Social Sciences Faculty, Universidad Centroamericana, **Luis Serra**, Director of the Department of Social Sciences and **Alberto Cimadomore**, CLACSO-CROP Programme Coordinator opened the workshop.

The following papers were presented:

Session 1: Poverty, citizenship, and democracy

- *Ciudadanía y Democracia: La investigación sobre pobreza en Guatemala (1980-2004)* by **Edgar Mendoza**, Escuela de Historia, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, Guatemala.
- *Democracia: ciudadanía o confrontación* by **Diego Giacomán**, Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social-CERES, Bolivia.
- *Emergencia de actores sociales étnicos y la reivindicación de la ciudadanía* by **Gabriela Canedo**, Instituto de Estudios Sociales y Económicos (IESE), Bolivia.

Session 2: The international relations of poverty

- *Tratados internacionales en materia de derechos humanos: Fortalezas y debilidades para superar la pobreza mediante el ejercicio de la ciudadanía* by **Gabriela Contreras**, FLACSO-Guatemala.
- *Pobreza y exclusión social como resultado de compromisos de TLC de países en vías de desarrollo con países desarrollados*, by **Luis Murillo Orozco**, Universidad Centroamericana, Nicaragua.

Session 3: Migration and poverty

- *Pobreza – Migración – Pobreza en Centroamérica y el Caribe* by **Elio F. López**, Instituto Superior de Relaciones Internacionales "Raúl Roa", Cuba.
- *Migración, remesas y políticas sociales en México* by **Cristina Gomes y Luciana Gandini**, FLACSO-México.
- *Migraciones y territorios pobres: las nuevas territorialidades de la pobreza* by **Abelardo Morales Gamboa**, FLACSO-Costa Rica.

UNESCO AND CROP SMALL GRANTS: State of the art reviews of the literature on poverty and human rights EXTENDED DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS

It has been decided to extend the deadline for submission of applications for the following CROP/UNESCO grants. Applicants who have already submitted their applications do not have to do so again. If these applicants wish to change or make any additions to their applications, such will be received within the extended deadline of March 1st, 2005.

As part of the UNESCO «Small Grants Programme on Poverty Eradication: Building national capacities for research and policy analysis», three grants will be earmarked for state of the art reviews of the literature on poverty and human rights (one in each of the three targeted regions or sub-regions of the world - sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean), to be allocated on a competitive basis to qualifying members of the CROP network. (For more information, see related article in this issue; refer also to the announcement on this initiative at the UNESCO Web site http://www.unesco.org/shs/poverty_grants), where pertinent details are provided on application, approval process, notification).

Each of the three grants earmarked to members of the CROP network for the state of the art reviews of the literature on poverty and human rights is in the amount of \$10,000 (upper ceiling). The UNESCO funding is intended to cover the direct costs of the research, including the local travel and subsistence of the principal researcher(s) and research assistants, acquisition of relevant literature and supplies, data collection, analysis, and report preparation. The grant will not cover the salaries of the principal researcher(s) or international travel.

A complete application will comprise a detailed curriculum vitae of the applicant (and of each team member when it is a joint effort), as well as a detailed research proposal (up to 20 standard pages) providing background and rationale and scientific and policy justification of the issues to be examined in the state of the art review of the literature on poverty and human rights, with a particular focus on the designated region. To be successful, a project proposal will need to demonstrate the contribution the activity will make, over and above previous efforts.

Eligible Members of the CROP network are invited to submit their applications to the designated UNESCO Field Office (see information in the announcement). To facilitate follow up, copies of applications should also be sent electronically to the CROP Secretariat at the University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway (at the e-mail address: crop@uib.no) and to UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (at the e-mail address: shs-povertysmallgrants@unesco.org).

The deadline for submission of applications is 1 March 2005.

John Nkinyangi (Team Leader) (UNESCO)

Prof. Else Øyen (CROP Secretariat)

- *Cambios de estrategias en los programas sociales. Proyectos de impacto rápido y microcréditos con migrantes* by **Sergio Bertini**, Migrantes y Refugiados en Argentina (MyRAR), Argentina.

Session 4: Public policies and alternative strategies against poverty

- *Entre lo social y lo público. Notas sobre el estatuto político de la pobreza* by **Gabriel de Santis Feltran & Humberto M. Meza**, Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP), Brasil/El Nuevo Diario de Nicaragua, Nicaragua.
- *Pobreza y políticas públicas en*

Nicaragua en la década de los '90s by **Daniel Barrios**, FLACSO-Guatemala.

- *Innovación en el tratamiento de la pobreza extrema* by **Juan Fernández Labbé & Claudia Serrano**, Asesorías para el Desarrollo, Chile.

Session 5: Society, development and poverty

- *La lucha contra la pobreza: un reto para el desarrollo y una garantía para la defensa de los derechos económicos, sociales y culturales en el marco de las políticas de libre comercio en Centroamérica* by **Yalina Molina**
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Blandon, Corinne Gendron; Alain Lapointe, Chaire de Responsabilité Sociale et de Développement Durable, École des Sciences de la Gestion, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada.

• *Responsabilidad y compromiso social frente a la pobreza* by Oscar López Rivera, FLACSO-Guatemala.

• *Desigualdad social, mercado laboral y pobreza* by Juan Pablo Pérez Saínz & Minor Mora Salas, FLACSO-Costa Rica.

Session 6: Exclusion and marginality

• *Mujeres del Caribe: entre la pobreza y la exclusión* by Yolanda Ricardo, Centro de Estudios de América (CEA), Cuba.

• *Reproducción precaria en las familias de la zona conurbana Zacatecas-Guadalupe, México (1990-2004)* by Guadalupe González, Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, México.

• *El riesgo de pauperización de las clases medias: el caso de Costa Rica* by Minor Mora Salas & Juan Pablo Pérez Sáinz, FLACSO-Costa Rica.

A public meeting was held in conjunction with the workshop about *Poverty and migration in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Alberto D. Cimadomore (CLACSO), Carlos Sojo (FLACSO), Luis Serra (UCA) and Abelardo Morales (FLACSO) took part in the panel.

DIPLOMA PROGRAMME IN POVERTY ANALYSIS

The Post-graduate Diploma Programme in Poverty Analysis is a part-time one year programme of international standard, jointly offered by Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) both Tanzanian-based policy research institutions, and the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Netherlands. The mode of course delivery is distance learning supplemented with short-term intensive workshops. The Programme has a specific emphasis of imparting investigative skills and capabilities for applied policy analysis, and targets policy analysts and researchers who are actively involved in research on poverty, vulnerability and socio-economic security, and/or in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes aimed at reducing poverty and enhancing socio-economic security for protection of the poor. The Course aims to make a contribution towards enhancing the quality and effectiveness of policies and programmes concerned with poverty reduction and protection of the poor. Contact: <http://www.esrf.or.tz/ma> and E-mail: pgprogramme@esrf.or.tz

LIST OF CROP EVENTS

2005

January

26-28: *Law and Poverty VI*. Workshop co-organized with Centre for International and Comparative Labour and Social Security Law (CICLASS), in Johannesburg, South Africa.

More activities are in the process of being confirmed and will be featured in the next CROP Newsletter.

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, on a non-profit basis. CROP has developed a database on poverty researchers, and documentation of ongoing research.

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

Please note: We cannot answer the 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.

WEBPAGE FOR CROP

Those who have an Internet connection and a WWW browser programme installed on the computer, can find the CROP webpage at www.crop.org. The site holds general information about CROP, news about past and ongoing activities, as well as the latest CROP newsletter.

AT THE CROP SECRE-

TARIAT YOU WILL MEET:

Else Øyen, Scientific Director of CROP
Kirsti Thesen Sælen, Co-ordinator
Inge Erling Tesdal, Executive Officer
Hege Aarethun, Executive Officer

SEASONS GREETINGS



We wish all our contributors,
supporters and friends
a peaceful and happy
New Year 2005

Latin and Central America:

• Global policies on water and security [in Ecuador]

Europe:

• IMPACT Network
• Mainstreaming human rights in poverty reduction strategies of international financial institutions: A critical evaluation
• Legal aspects of poverty

Contact the CROP secretariat if further information about the projects listed is wanted.