

Editorial

The responses so far to the first and very modest CROP Newsletter, have been overwhelmingly positive. But the praise of the one-page simplicity (which invites you to read the newsletter right away, it was argued), came as a surprise to the CROP Secretariat. Visions of a comprehensive newsletter, stacked with information on poverty research, and printed on high lustre paper in many colours, loomed in the horizon when preparing our first issue. But neither the economy, nor the ideology, allowed such splendor. Now we have the legitimate backing to continue the newsletter in modesty. However, a solution will have to be found to distribute information on poverty research on a larger scale.

One of the questions often asked is which theoretical framework CROP has chosen to work within. The answer is that CROP has made no such choice. On the contrary, CROP is working under the ideology of letting the thousand flowers blossom. Many disciplines contribute to the understanding of poverty. Different theoretical schools within the disciplines compete to bring forward new research on poverty. It would be a loss to future poverty research, if CROP were to settle for one or two theoretical approaches, to the detriment of other approaches and to the exclusion of valuable knowledge.

The acceptance of a multi-paradigmatic approach is also a consequence of the complexity of the phenomenon we are studying. Poverty is a multi-faceted phenomenon with social, psychological, economic, demographic, medical, philosophical, religious, historical and political components which defy a uni-dimensional understanding. The complexity is such that there is no reason to plan for one encompassing theoretical framework, neither now, nor in the future.

However, we have to acknowledge that such a choice creates a major challenge for CROP. On the one

hand, it is necessary to organize in such a way that different theoretical approaches meet. Researchers from different disciplines need to be engaged in a dialogue where insights can be shared and challenged. On the other hand, professional interaction between scientists from different disciplines is difficult on a more advanced level. It is important not to downgrade interactions and lose the quality of the detailed expert assessments. Long term interactions in projects, as compared to short term meetings in a one time off meeting in a workshop, seem to be the best means for building bridges across disciplines.

This is not a new kind of problem. But it is particularly pertinent for CROP which has as one of its major aims to facilitate trans-disciplinary research.

Else Øyen, *Chair* of CROP

Progress report on forthcoming events

* CROP/IIED Workshop on:
"*Urban Poverty*"

7th- 9th October, 1994, in Bergen, Norway

The Workshop is a joint enterprise between CROP and the International Institute for Environment and Development, London, UK. Dr. David Satterthwaite, Human Settlement Programme is responsible.

The abstracts received are now being reviewed by the CROP Programme Committee. A few seats are available at the workshop for researchers not presenting papers. For more information please contact the CROP Secretariat.

* CROP/IUPERJ Workshop on:
"*Views from the Top: Elites and Poverty*"
7th-9th November, 1994, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The Workshop is a joint enterprise between CROP and Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas do Rio de

Janeiro, Brazil. Professor Elisa P. Reis, IUPERJ, is responsible.

The study of the poor is also a study of the non-poor. Little is known about the ways the elite perceives poverty in both cognitive and normative terms. Papers are invited which analyze how strategic actors such as the bureaucracy, entrepreneurs, politicians, intellectuals, religious leaders, and the military view poverty, inequality, distribution of resources and their own policy making.

Deadline for abstracts is extended to 15th May, 94 . They are to be sent to the CROP Secretariat.

* CROP/UNESCO Scientific Symposium on:
"*The Regional State-of-the-Art-Reviews on Poverty Research*"
1st-3rd December, 1994, Paris, France.

The purpose of the reviews is to develop a research instrument for researchers working on comparative poverty studies. The reviews will provide insight into regional differences in the study of poverty, give an overall view of the variety of concepts, hypotheses and methodologies in use, identify results of a more general nature, and present the authors' qualified evaluation of the present state of the art and future path of comparative research to follow.

More than twenty researchers and research groups are in train preparing regional reviews which will be presented during the symposium.

Areas not covered by the reviews so far are, the Middle East, the former USSR, except for Russia and the Baltic states, Japan and the Pacific, and Central America. Poverty researchers who are capable of doing the review for one of these areas, are asked to contact the CROP Secretariat.

* CROP-IISL Seminar on
"Law, Power and Poverty"
Oñati, Basque Province, Spain.
May, 1995.

In conjunction with the Oñati International Institute for the Sociology of Law-IISL, CROP is arranging a seminar for social scientists and legal scientists on the topic of "Law, Power and Poverty"

Further information on the Seminar and the background paper will be available from the CROP Secretariat.

*ISA World Congress
July 18-23, 1994, in Bielefeld, Germany

The International Sociological Association arranges two sessions on poverty: One on "The Sociology of Poverty", and one on "Dynamics of Poverty in Africa".

CROP and UNCTAD

CROP participated in the first UNCTAD Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Poverty Alleviation-IGEPA which took place in UNCTAD headquarter in Geneva during 24-28 January, 1994.

CROP has been invited to apply for consultative status to UNCTAD on matters related to poverty alleviation.

The UN World Summit for Social Development.

UNESCO has invited CROP to organize a Round Table on Poverty and Participation at the UN Summit which will take place in Copenhagen in March 1995.

CROP in brief

In 1991 The International Social Science Council (ISSC) launched its second major research programme, the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP). The CROP Secretariat was established in August 1993, in Bergen, Norway.

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 organizes regional workshops, symposia and international conferences, promotes joint research projects, links poverty researchers and disseminates information about poverty research.

CROP is developing an international database on poverty researchers, and documentation of ongoing research and of available data sources. 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 Database Questionnaire.

For further information please contact either:

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