

CROP newsletter

Comparative Research Programme On Poverty

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frontiers of poverty research

COMPARATIVE POVERTY DATA AND POVERTY MONITORING

The challenge for comparative analysis to understand how moneymetric poverty is created and maintained has now moved from the statistical to the research field, writes Bjørn K. Wold, Head of International Consulting Division, Statistics Norway.

Databanks

During the last decade a number of household surveys designed to provide information about moneymetric poverty and living conditions have been conducted. For poverty stricken Sub-Sahara Africa, micro level data are now easily available. The Africa Household Survey Databank is well established within the World Bank and easily accessible from outside at www4.worldbank.org/afr/poverty/databank/status_en.htm. Permission is needed to access some of the surveys from the national statistical office concerned while others are in the public domain.

For comparative analysis easily accessible poverty relevant data are aggregated at the national level. One of the most interesting data bases is located at the World Institute for Development Economics Research, UN University, at www.wider.unu.edu. This database includes information on income distribution in a majority of countries around the world.

A challenge for the triangle of data producers, researchers and policy makers

Different actors need different kinds of information. Finally the statistical community is facing this challenge. In 1999 the UN

Statistical Commission endorsed 21 main indicators for the Development Goals from the UN summits in the 1990s covering poverty, education, gender, infant and child mortality, maternal mortality, reproductive health, and environment. The Commission also realized a special effort was needed to establish regular monitoring of the policy achievements.

PARIS21

The Development Committee in OECD, DAC, the UN Development Program, UNDP and the World Bank called for a meeting of statisticians and policymakers in Paris in November 1999. A PARTnership In Statistics for the 21st century, PARIS 21 www.paris21.org, with a focus on developing and in-transition countries was established. The main activity involved e-mail based working groups of statisticians and policy-makers to co-ordinate policy relevant data collection activities and methods. Nine task forces were established to address advocacy products, information exchange, sequenced information strategies, indicators for poverty monitoring and statistical capacity, methodologies and technologies, and census. These groups are still active.

Poverty reduction strategy papers

A second initiative was launched to ensure the participation of the PARIS21 community in the planning of the so-called Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, PRSPs, under the co-ordination of the World Bank.¹ Their poverty toolbox is accessible and up-dated from time to time at www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/sourctoc.htm.

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Poverty Monitoring

The so-called Utstein-group or U-4 comprising four European donor countries has endorsed and contributed substantially to a World Bank Trust Fund that might allow for financial support and technical co-operation to design poverty monitoring programs under the PRSP umbrella and long term institutional capacity building programs. Other countries have declared their interest in supporting the poverty monitoring programs.

The first regional workshop was conducted in Uganda and the 14 SADC countries met in Zambia. In 2001 the PARIS21 Secretariat hosts a meeting to plan for the first Latin-American workshop and several more will follow. The regional workshops serve to motivate, share experience and provide examples for the participating countries. At country level support is needed both in the short run to utilize available information and/or to collect core information and in the long run to build institutional capacity. In the years to come technical co-operation is needed in order to jointly strengthen the statistical system and to build institutional capacity to analyze policy relevant poverty issues.

The current challenge

The PARIS21 initiative is an important push towards quite standardized, but still country adapted, data collection. The PARIS21 initiative is a rare opportunity for the three communities of statisticians, researchers and policy planners to develop institutional capacity across the triangle. The main challenge is to demonstrate a) the potential capacity of institutions and b) the potential use of existing limited data in order to get support for a system that allows for a useful system of data collection, analysis and policy planning in the future.

The World Bank, the statistical division of DFID, the Central Bureau of Statistics in the Netherlands and Statistics Norway have already expressed their interest in participating in this process, and it should also be a very interesting challenge for poverty researchers in the CROP community.

Readers are welcome to write to Bjørn K. Wold (E-mail: bkw@ssb.no) on how they have made use of these data in their research on poverty.

¹ All countries applying for debt reduction under the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) initiatives have to prepare a PRSP, and to present a poverty reduction strategy and a monitoring plan.

STATE AND SOCIETY: PARTNERSHIP IN POVERTY REDUCTION?

The Role of the State in Poverty Reduction IV

From October 12th to 14th 2000, the fourth CROP initiated workshop on the *Role of the State in Poverty Reduction* took place in Accra, Ghana. The workshop was a follow-up of three earlier workshops on the "Role of the State in Poverty Reduction," held in Gaborone, Botswana, October 1997, in Cape Town, South Africa, September 1998, and in Amman, Jordan, November 1999.

The Workshop was organised in co-operation with the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana (Legon). The main sponsors of the event were the Danish Agency for Development Co-operation (DANIDA), Ghana, the Swedish Agency for Development Co-operation (SIDA), the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD) and the UNESCO Participation Programme.

The Workshop was planned by a Programme Committee consisting of: Professor **Ellen Bortei-Doku Aryeetey**, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, Legon; Dr. **Nazneen Kanji**, International Institute for Environment and Development, UK; Professor **Francis Appiah**, School of Administration, University of Ghana, Legon; Researcher **Einar Braathen**, CROP, Norway

At the Opening Ceremony of the Workshop the participants were welcomed by the Director of ISSER, Professor **Kwadwo Asenso-Okyere**, and the Head of CROP, Professor **Else Øyen**. Speeches were given by Ms. **Charlotte Kanstrup**, DANIDA, Ghana, the Chief Director of the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, Ms. **Bridget Katsriku**, and the Director of ISSER, Professor **Kwadwo Asenso-Okyere**.

The following 14 papers were presented and discussed during the workshop: *Equitable distribution of resources in growth process for poverty reduction*, **Aloysius Ajab Amin**, UN African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), Senegal; "State and Society in Partnership for Poverty Reduction": *The new social corporatism*, **Einar Braathen**, CROP, Norway; *Mobilising societal action for the implementation of anti-poverty programmes of the state: A normative model based on the experience of India*, **P. G. Dhar Chakrabarti**, Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, India; *From welfare to empowerment: Women's anti-poverty programmes in*

Maharashtra, India, **Manisha Desai**, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, USA; *The poverty alleviation system, the role of NGOs and the issue of partnership (the case of Yemen)*, **Blandine Destremau**, CNRS/CFEY, Yemen; *Partnership between the state and civic associations in fighting urban poverty – The case of Mali*, **Assitan Diallo**, Cabinet d'Assistance pour le Développement Participatif (CADP), Mali; *Zakat, civil society and poverty alleviation in Sudan: An examination of Zakat local committees' role*, **Atta El-Battahani**, University of Khartoum, Sudan; *Decentralisation and poverty alleviation in rural Ghana: Perspectives from district elites and voices of the rural poor*, **Peter O. Kyei**, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana; *Civil society, poverty and governance in Africa*, **Maria Nzomo**, CODESRIA, Senegal; *Beyond ad-hoc collaboration: Institutionalizing NGO-State partnerships for poverty reduction*, **Paul Opoku-Mensah**, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway; *The politics of social networking*, **Sylvia Schmitt**, University of Marburg, Germany, and **Almuth Schaubert**, German Development Service (DED), Ghana; *State-Society partnership for poverty reduction in Mali: Overcoming constraints at the macro and micro level*, **Renata Serra**, Wolfson College, University of Cambridge, UK; *State interventions: Social processes in local challenges*, **Mangala Subramaniam**, University of Connecticut, USA.

The papers will be printed in Proceedings from the Workshop, and will be available from ISSER/CROP early 2001.

As a result of the presentations and discussions during the workshop some of the participants working with countries in West Africa decided to form an informal group for future collaboration to strengthen the comparative aspects of their research. Several suggestions were made for further involvement of CROP in extending the scope of research on the Role of the State in Poverty Reduction, especially with respect to relationships with NGOs and Civil Society.

In conjunction with the Workshop a meeting was held to discuss the academic contents of the CROP courses on poverty and the need to include perspectives and research material of relevance for the region.

editorial

It is well known that the choice of wording influences the perception of a certain phenomenon and the choice of strategies needed to influence that phenomenon. This has been particularly well documented in relation to different definitions of poverty and the attempts to monopolise certain definitions. Less observed has been the impact of using certain words in conjunction with poverty.

Although different groups may agree that something ought to be done about poverty, they may not agree on how much should be done and how far they want to go to change the living conditions of the poor. Such attitudes can be reflected in their choice of vocabulary when they promote respectively poverty reduction, poverty eradication or poverty alleviation. The three concepts indicate different sets of expectations, different goals, some of the same strategies as well as different strategies.

Poverty *eradication* can be seen as the most radical goal: it states bluntly that poverty is not to be accepted. While poverty *alleviation* is seen by many as the least committing. In a western context it is linked to the charity of former times. In poor countries it is seen as a necessary measure to keep poor people from the worst forms of destitution. Poverty *reduction* can be seen as making no specific promises except that something will be done, whether on a small scale or a larger scale.

Some will argue that the three concepts represent a logical development which starts with poverty alleviating measures, then move on to poverty reducing strategies before poverty eradication can be achieved.

One of the interesting research questions is which actors use which concept and for what purposes. What does the concept tell us about the sender of the message and the sender's intentions vis-à-vis poor people? International organisations are keen to use the concept of eradication, mainly as a political and moral message because the proposed strategies actually do not lead to eradication. NGOs working with local communities are more modest and seem to prefer poverty alleviation for their message. Researchers seem to chose the middle road and use reduction as a less loaded expression. Once an African colleague reproached me when I used the term poverty reduction in a presentation on anti-poverty policies where I tried to lay out what might be

CALL FOR PAPERS

CROP AND CLACSO CONVENE A WORKSHOP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS AND POVERTY: MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

CENTRAL AMERICA, NOVEMBER 2001

Indigenous populations are often found to live under extremely poor conditions. Within many states and territories around the world (in contexts as diverse as the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania) they are among vulnerable groups who have no alternative but to survive and maintain themselves at the margins of society. Their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are often violated or non-existent. They become excluded and stigmatized because of indigenous identities and characteristics, confounded by patterns of racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination. Without access to decision making processes and development paths that could improve their rights and resources, many indigenous persons are caught in a 'vicious circle of poverty'.

In November 2001 CROP and the Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) will organise a joint workshop on Indigenous Populations and Poverty. The workshop will have a multi-disciplinary character, in order to respond adequately to the manifold problems indigenous populations are confronted with.

The organisers are interested in papers related to the topic of the workshop which:

- discuss the concept of indigenous populations and its value as an analytical tool for poverty analysis;
- describe and analyse the extent and characteristics of poverty among indigenous populations in comparison to the other populations in their region;
- explore to what extent indigenous populations disproportionately suffer from negative side-effects of globalisation processes (e.g. the policies and practices of multilateral organizations such as the IMF, World Bank, WTO, UN and regional human rights systems);
- assess the extent to which national and international legal standards, instruments, procedures, and strategies have improved or have the potential to improve the situation, and identify obstacles to the efficacy of such policies;
- describe and analyse how indigenous populations, through their participation in civil society and popular organisations, are trying to overcome the situation of living in poverty.

The workshop will be limited to 35 participants. Preference will be given to scholars from Latin America, but scholars from other areas are also invited. All participants will be expected to take part in the proceedings (in English or Spanish), either presenting or discussing papers. Participants bear the responsibility for their own funding. However, a limited number of travel grants are available. The grants will be awarded according to geography (researchers from "the third world" will be prioritized), and the relevance, quality and originality of the abstract/paper. Details on how to apply for travel grants will be forwarded to those authors whose abstracts are accepted for the workshop. As a rule, accommodation will be covered for all participants during the workshop.

THE DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACTS ARE 1 JUNE 2001

Deadline for submission of papers will be September 1st, 2001. All enquiries about the workshop should be addressed to the CROP Secretariat, Fosswinkelsgate 7, N-5007 Bergen, Norway, Tel: +47-5558-9744, Fax: +47-5558-9745, e-mail: crop@uib.no, or to Alberto Cimadamore, CLACSO, Callao 875, piso 3, 1023 Buenos Aires, Argentina, ph: +54-11-4811-6588, fax: +54-11-4812-8459, E-mail: cimadamo@mail.retina.ar

politically and economically feasible in parts of the developing world in the next couple of decades. He argued that eradication was possible and used as an example my own country. Norway was one of the poorest countries in Europe right after the second world war. Through collective action, a

strong state which was not afraid to use redistributive measures and universal benefits, poverty was virtually eradicated within a generation or so. The way my African colleague saw it I gave out the wrong signals to a continent which needed to be told there (continues on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

was light ahead, and that good governance was possible also under limited resources. While some researchers and policymakers use these concepts consciously, others are more likely to use one or other of the three concepts conventionally and without any precise meaning or hidden motive. Once more we are reminded of the fact that everyday language is not an adequate tool in poverty research. An appealing alternative is to develop our own language tools. That may however be a losing battle. Poverty is now so high on the public agenda that new words in poverty research are readily transferred to the public arena where they take on their own meaning, independent of the precision with which the researchers first developed the new tool. Some may recall the intense exchanges between Peter Townsend and Amartya Sen in the early 80s on the meaning of absolute and relative poverty. The media of today have simplified the two concepts and only students of poverty go back in time to tease out the subtleties of the original concepts. They know that it is in those subtleties the future toolbox of poverty research lies.

Else Øyen, Chair of CROP

BOOK ON COMPARATIVE POVERTY RESEARCH

The Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO has recently published "*Rethinking Poverty - Comparative Perspectives from Below*". The book argues that a comparative and interdisciplinary analysis of poverty will generate greater insight into its causes and nature and consequently constitute a better basis for contextualized policy-making.

For ordering information contact: The Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO, Korenaerkade 11, P.O. Box 29777, 2502 LT The Hague, The Netherlands, ph: +31-(0)70-426-0263, fax: +31-0(70)-426-0359.

POVERTY WEBSITE

"http://Global.no" is the Norwegian Internet-portal for governmental and non-governmental organizations working with north-south, humanitarian questions and human rights. The portal includes news, library, ordering of material, available jobs and a calendar for seminars and conferences in this field.

LIST OF CROP EVENTS 2001

March 2001

15-17: CMI (The Chr. Michelsen Institute) and CROP co-organise a conference in Bergen, Norway, for UNDP on "Poverty Reduction Strategies: What have we learned?".

April 2001

23: "Ethics of Poverty Reduction: International Actors, Donors and Elites" Workshop organised with Norwegian philosophers, University of Bergen, Norway

May 2001

3-4: "Law and Poverty IV". Workshop organised with the International Institute for the Sociology of Law (IISL) in Oñati, Spain.

June 2001

The empirical case studies in the CROP/IDS Elite project will be presented and reviewed at a workshop in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Participation by invitation only.

August 2001

10-12: "Water, Poverty and Social Development". Session at the *International Water History Association* conference "The Role of Water in History and Development," University of Bergen, Norway.

November 2001

"Indigenous Populations and Poverty: Multi-Disciplinary Approaches", a joint CROP/CLACSO workshop, Central America. Venue to be decided.

BULLETIN ON POVERTY AND HEALTH

The International Poverty and Health Network (IPHN) has launched a new quarterly electronic bulletin on poverty and health. The bulletin seeks to give people, who are interested in the subject, easy access to what organisations are doing, what meetings have been held and what resources are available. Visit "http://www.iphn.org" on Internet for more information.

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. 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 to the CROP Secretariat and request a copy of the CROP Database Survey form. For further information please contact the CROP Secretariat

WEBPAGE FOR CROP

Those who have an Internet connection and a WWW browser programme installed on the computer, find the CROP web page at <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

Kirsti Thesen Sælen, Co-ordinator

Hans Egil Offerdal, Special Adviser, pt. Mexico

Einar Braathen, Programme Officer

Inge Erling Tesdal, Executive Officer

THE QUOTE

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted"

Albert Einstein