

# CROP newsletter

Comparative Research Programme On Poverty

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## frontiers of poverty research

### INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THEIR LEVELS OF IDENTITY: ISSUES TO REFLECT UPON

*Excerpts from the background paper for the CROP/CLACSO/FLACSO workshop on "Indigenous Populations and Poverty: Multi-Disciplinary Approaches", written by Hector Diaz-Polanco.*

The renaissance of ethnic identities in most regions of the world, particularly in Latin America, is one of the most important socio-political developments of the last decades. This revival manifests itself as an affirmation of local and regional socio-political structures; as new forms of organizations that are seeking to act and to be influential in the international and national arenas; as old demands that now appeal not only to issues related to the internal order of national states, but also to the global order; as actualization and reformulation of a variety of topics that include plurality, diversity, equality, justice and freedom as much as issues more specific such as poverty, the environment, sustainability, the use of natural resources, territoriality, gender, popular participation, legal pluralism, linguistic equality, and governance in multiethnic and multicultural societies.

This new development is more surprising given it contradicts the prediction, that the effects of globalization would imply the loss of local and regional interests and the tendency to move towards the homogenization of their demands. It has been commonplace to view globalization as the extinction of identity movements and the

generalization of socio-cultural patterns in a universalistic manner. Events of the past years have proven such a perspective wrong: we are witnessing not only the multiplication of ethnical and national movements, but also their intensification. In the last five years, the explosion of "the local" has forced a change of focus. Now we need to be able to explain a paradox: how the process of globalization is pushing forward particular identities while failing to promote socio-cultural universality and the homogenization of ethnicity. Furthermore, we must explain what will be the effects of identity movements and their claims in the path of globalization.

1. The problems are related to the criteria used to determine who are indigenous people. It is a common strategy in Latin America to use a linguistic criteria to determine indigenous populations: indigenous people are the ones who have, at least, one autochthonous language. But it is restrictive and inadequate to define a multidimensional phenomena such as indigenous peoples by using only one "indicator." It is for this reason that in many countries, particularly where they perform censuses, indigenous peoples are undervalued. (One can call this "statistical genocide.") The dominant view today is to include more dimensions besides language in the characterization of the indigenous quality. The problem is how to find formulations that make the collective rights of indigenous peoples (including the right to define their membership to a particular group) compatible with the individual guarantees and human rights of all those who want to define their own identity.

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2. The characteristic of an identity level is that it is not a mere accumulation of individuals, but rather that it forms various sets that can go from a town to a community. And each of them brings with it particular conceptual and practical difficulties. First of all, what is an indigenous community? What are its limits? All conceptualizations must include social, cultural, economic and political elements, as well as the strategic territorial criteria. A further complication follows from the demands of indigenous groups and their political organizations to be acknowledged as indigenous peoples. These demands have considerable consequences. Most important, the recognition of these levels of identity has

legal and political implications in international law as well as in the internal arena of the nation state. In many Latin American countries the indigenous and their organizations are claiming their recognition as peoples. Yet the rule is that this recognition is only made in the lower level: as communities.

3. The debate about levels of identity has many layers, particularly in relation to autonomy conceived as an expression and exercise of the right of the self-determination. A regime of autonomy (as a system that includes the rights of ethnic conglomerates, of collective entities) that admits as a subject each of the communities, has different political, economic, and territorial implications than if

its subject were the "indigenous peoples." The recognition of the indigenous as peoples implies a broader sense of autonomy in type and in grade. This autonomy could be exercised in bigger territorial arenas (such as municipal or regional). This way the autonomous territory would not be a set of disconnected communities and without special continuity but rather a continual and compacted territorial space (an autonomous region).

To read the entire paper visit <http://www.crop.org/workshops/> on Internet.

**Hector Diaz-Polanco** is based at Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS), Mexico.

## INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS AND POVERTY: MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

A workshop on "Indigenous Populations and Poverty: Multidisciplinary Approaches" took place in Antigua, Guatemala, 4-8 November.

The workshop was organised in co-operation between CROP, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) and Facultad Latino-Americana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). The main sponsor of the event was the Swedish Agency for Development Co-operation (SIDA).

The 5-day workshop was organised in 2 parts. The first part (4-6 November) was an academic workshop based on a set of papers prepared in advance and discussed at length by the 30 participants who took part in the workshop (see below for details). The second part (6-8 November) was an open meeting for bureaucrats, politicians and NGO's in Guatemala who listened to presentations of national plans for poverty reduction in Guatemala and discussed them with the researchers. The organisation of this part was done in collaboration with SEGEPLAN, Guatemala.

The academic part of the workshop was divided into five sessions, where the following papers were presented and discussed:

### Politics and mobilisation among indigenous populations

*-Cultural mobilisation and ethnicity in four indigenous populations in the northeast of Brazil* by **Wallace de Deus Barbosa**, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil.

*-The Pehuenche-people: politics and processes* by **Ingeborg Marie Nordbø**, Aalborg University, Denmark.

*-Indianism and its demands: a look at*

*Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia and Peru* by **Landislao Landa Vásquez**, Universidad de Brasília, Brazil.

### Constitutional and legal aspects of participation and poverty among indigenous populations

*-Legal protection of indigenous peoples: interaction between the national and the international level* by **Willem van Genugten**, Tilburg University, The Netherlands, and **Camilo Perez Bustillo**, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), Mexico.

*-Political participation and poverty in the indigenous communities of Colombia: its variations around the political constitution of 1991; the case of the town Zenú* by **Adriana Carolina Borda Niño** and **Darío José Mejía Montalvo**, Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

*-Civil participation of indigenous Amazonian Peruvians: "poverty that restricts the effective right to vote"* by **Javier Echevarría Mejía**, Peru.

### Human development and indigenous poverty

*-Ethnicity and human development indicators* by **Juan Pantano**, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Argentina, and **Ruthanne Deutsch**, Interamerican Development Bank.

*-Indigenous conditions and poverty in Latin America: an econometric investigation* by **Carlos A. Benito**, Sonoma State University, USA.

*-Cultural perception and indigenous indicators for poverty measurement, from their own point of view* by **Eligio Alvarado Paredes**, Panama.

### Indigenous health and poverty

*-Cross-national nutritional vulnerability in indigenous children- a human rights issue*

by **Siri Damman**, University of Oslo, Norway  
*-Conditions of life and health of women in zones of high socio-economic marginalisation in Chiapas, Mexico: Is it worse to be native?* by **Héctor Javier Sánchez-Pérez**, El Colegio de la Frontera Sur, Mexico, **Guadalupe Vargas Morales**, El Colegio de la Frontera Sur, Mexico, **Nieves Escudero Alberto**, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Spain, and **Josep María Jansá**, Instituto Municipal de la Salud de Barcelona, Spain.

### Human development and indigenous poverty -continued

*-Indigenous poverty in the Totonaca region and effects of the implementation of the Progresá in the Sierra Norte of the State of Puebla, Mexico: searching elements for its evaluation* by **Adrián González Romo, J. Alfonso Macías Laylle, Benito Ramírez Valverde** and **Néstor Estrella Chulim**, Mexico.

*-Social poverty versus biological wealth: the Central American contradiction* by **Pablo Alarcón-Cháires**, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

*-Indigenous knowledge: a booty to plunder?* by **Margarita Prieto-Acosta**, Rutherford College, UK.

On the programme committee were **Virgilio Álvarez**, FLACSO, Guatemala; **Atilio Boron**, CLACSO, Argentina; **Héctor Diaz-Polanco**, Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS), México; **Xavier Gorostiga**, Universidad Rafael Landívar, Guatemala; **Laura Tavares Soares**, Universidad Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and **Willem van Genugten**, Tilburg University, The Netherlands.

## editorial

### Poverty and Indigenous Populations: From an African perspective

The term "indigenous" is primarily a political concept and its use may well vary from place to place; from continent to continent; and from time to time. It is less of a suitcase word than either 'development' or 'globalisation' into both of which are packed many different meanings. Nevertheless it can be used to refer to a significant number of different categories of persons depending on the circumstances. In those parts of the world, including both North and South America as well as Southern Africa, that have been subject to conquest and permanent settlement by European colonial powers from the 17<sup>th</sup>. to the 20<sup>th</sup>. century the concept tends to refer to the descendants of all those who lived there before the Europeans arrived and who lost their lands (and their mineral rights) in the great invasions. By and large they are the dispossessed and have generally remained poor and in many countries, especially in the United States, Canada, in many parts of Latin America and in Southern Africa (particularly South Africa before 1994) without significant political power. But there are other definitions which would include all those living on the African continent, whether or not they had lost their land, save the descendants of those who arrived from outside the continent after 1500. Or, particularly in the South, exclude all those (including Bantu-speakers) not descended from the Khoi-San whose roots go back tens of thousands of years.

Despite the fuzziness of the definition the meaning of the term 'indigenous people' when used in a particular context is usually fairly clear. Almost invariably they are poor and without assets although their claims to land on which their ancestors dwelt are often a political reality in the country in which they have been declared citizens. All too frequently marginalized by political and economic structures in which they have little power their challenge is how to be part of an aggressively globalising world on their own terms without losing the skills, the languages and the cultural identities that they wish to retain. Paradoxically it may not be through a strategy of isolation but rather one of reaching out to network with other similarly marginalized communities that indigenous people may be able to respond most effectively.

For those who are not insiders of indigenous communities the challenge is how to listen. How to be sensitive, responsive to and supportive of those wrestling with the multiple pressures generated by poverty and marginalisation. It was in this spirit that the workshop in Guatemala was recently organized. We commend its findings to our readers.

**Francis Wilson**, Chair of CROP  
(E-mail: [fwilson@hiddingh.uct.ac.za](mailto:fwilson@hiddingh.uct.ac.za))

### GRADUATE COURSES ON POVERTY OFFERED BY CIP

The Centre for International Poverty Research (CIP) will in the Spring Semester 2002, in co-operation with the Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen, offer the following three graduate courses for registered students at the University of Bergen:

- *Politics of Poverty Reduction*  
Lecturer: Scientific Director of CROP, Professor **Else Øyen**

The aim of the course is to discuss different kinds of poverty reducing strategies and the political conditions under which they may actually reduce poverty. At present there are many actors on the poverty reducing scene, both on the international, national and local level. They favor different strategies and there is little co-ordination between the actors.

- *Ethics of Poverty Reduction*  
Lecturer: CROP Research Fellow **Asuncion St. Clair**

The main objective of this course is to explore ethical implications of poverty reduction policies and their different actors, emphasizing international

poverty reduction actors such as the World Bank, donor countries, and international NGOs. The course aims to analyse what type of moral claims underlies these actors' policies; what ethical implications have their actions; what type of ethical dilemmas arise in the relationship between these actors and the poor; and what is the role of a global ethic, if any, in materializing the goals of poverty reduction.

- *Poverty and the Role of the State*  
Lecturer: CROP Adviser **Einar Braathen**

The course will focus on the following subjects: Why is the state central in studies of poverty and poverty reduction?; Long term poverty eradication: Historical and cross-regional lessons of the role of the state; Poverty reduction in Africa: Early successes, succeeding failures; Changing discourses, changing policy prescriptions: Challenges to evaluation; and Towards new understandings of state and poverty in the age of 'globalisation'?

These courses will be accepted as graduate courses in Comparative Politics, each of them worth 15 ECTS-credits.

### NEW CROP WEBSITE

The CROP website has undergone a major design update.

New features include a discussion forum, with themes on "law and poverty" and "role of the state in poverty reduction". We invite all interested parties to log onto the CROP website and join the discussions.

The part of the website devoted to the Norwegian network of poverty researchers has also been restructured

to include poverty research information.

Find the CROP website at <http://www.crop.org> on Internet.

The Centre for International Poverty Research (CIP), where the CROP Secretariat resides, also has a new website. Access it at <http://www.svf.uib.no/helsos/> on Internet. The website contains detailed information about the graduate courses on poverty CIP will offer the coming spring at the University of Bergen.

### HEAD OF UN SPEAK OUT AGAINST POVERTY

Nobel Peace Prize winner United Nations Secretary General **Kofi Annan** spoke out against poverty in his Nobel Lecture in Oslo, Norway, December 10th.

In his speech he said that "we inherit from the 20th century the political, as well as the scientific and technological power, which – if only we have the will to use them – give us the chance to vanquish poverty, ignorance and disease." He added that one of the key priorities of the United Nations in the next century is to eradicate poverty.

The whole lecture can be read by visiting the UN webpage on Internet at <http://www0.un.org/apps/press/latestSG.asp>

## POVERTY CONFERENCE REPORT

The Report from the "Poverty Reduction Strategies: What have we learned?" conference that CROP co-organised with the Chr. Michelsen Institute for UNDP earlier this year is now available. Representatives of programme and donor governments, NGOs and academics met at the conference to examine the lessons learned from recent experience of national poverty reduction strategies. The report can be read by visiting UNDP's homepage at <http://www.undp.org/poverty/publications/> on Internet.

## NEW UNRISD PUBLICATIONS

*Land Reform and Peasant Livelihoods*, edited by Krishna B. Ghimire, contains eight chapters by seven prominent scholars who argue that comprehensive land redistribution is the key to rural livelihood improvements. The contributors examine the reasons for the success and failure of past reform efforts, and review the role of the actors in this process. A flexible approach towards redistributive reforms as the most appropriate strategy towards alleviating rural poverty is advocated.

The UNRISD paper *Toward Integrated and Sustainable Development?*, by Solon L. Barraclough, looks at some of the interpretations, ambiguities and contradictions associated with the term "sustainable development", and asks why it became so popular among development agencies during the 1990's. The author identifies the social forces that could be mobilised to bring out the policy and institutional reforms required for socially and ecologically sustainable development at international, national and local levels which, he maintains, remain the key issue for international development agencies.

To order these publications contact Nicolas M. L. Bovay, UNRISD, Room D-219, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Ph: +4122-917-1143, Fax: +4122-917-0650, E-mail: [bovay@unrisd.org](mailto:bovay@unrisd.org)

## SEASONS GREETINGS



*We wish all our contributors,  
supporters and friends  
a peaceful and happy  
New Year 2002*

## LIST OF CROP EVENTS 2002

April 2002

23-24: "Poverty and water, with particular reference to Africa South of the Equator". Academic session in co-operation with the University of Natal and in conjunction with the International Social Science Council Executive Committee meeting, Durban, South Africa.

July 2002

7-13: "Issues in pro-poor policies in non-OECD countries". Joint session with RC19 at the ISA XV World Congress of Sociology, Brisbane, Australia.

September 2002

"Role of the State in Poverty Reduction V" workshop, Recife, Brazil (more information forthcoming).

November 2002

"Poverty reducing strategies in the Caribbean with emphasis on external actors and their impact in poverty formation in the area". A joint CROP, CLACSO, Centro de Investigaciones Psicológicas y Sociales (CIPS), and Centro de Investigaciones de la Economía Internacional (CIEI) workshop, Havana, Cuba.

December 2002

11-13: CROP symposium at the ISSC 50th Anniversary, Vienna, Austria.

## EADI GENERAL CONFERENCE

European Association of Development Research (EADI) will hold its tenth general conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 19-21 September 2002 on the theme: "Eastern Enlargement of the EU: Implications for development strategies and development co-operation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The deadline for abstracts is February 28, 2002.

For more information contact EADI Secretariat, Kaiser Friedrich Strasse 11, 53113 Bonn, Germany, ph: +49-228-261-8101, fax: +49-228-261-8103, E-mail: [postmaster@eadi.org](mailto:postmaster@eadi.org), Internet: <http://www.eadi.org/generalconference.htm>

## NEW UNICEF REPORT

"The State of the World's Children" reports on the progress that has been made in improving the lives of children and families since the 1990 World Summit for Children. The report is available online, visit <http://www.unicef.org/sowc02/> 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.

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

## WEBPAGE FOR CROP

Those who have an Internet connection and a WWW browser programme installed on the computer, find the CROP webpage 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 cannot 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**, Scientific Director of CROP  
**Kirsti Thesen Sælen**, Co-ordinator  
**Inge Erling Tesdal**, Executive Officer  
**Einar Braathen**, Programme Officer  
**Asuncion St. Clair**, Research Fellow

## THE QUOTE

*'The Law' is an Anagram of  
'Wealth'*

**Anne Clark**  
(British musician)