



SOGIP-Scales of governance and indigenous peoples

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Seminar 2011-2012

Comparative perspectives on the rights of indigenous peoples

- Irène Bellier, *research director at CNRS* ^(TH)
- Martin Préaud, *postdoctoral fellow*

The seminar presented by the IIAC-LAIOS / SOGIP team focused on the forms of autonomy in different parts of the world, reflecting on the current debate on the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Six sessions of 4 hours were attended by an average of 30 to 35 students and participants, an opportunity to identify cross-cutting issues, beyond national frameworks where struggles, mobilizations and changes to institutions and norms can be expressed.

The first session introduced the topic of international standards apprehended from an anthropological point- focusing on actors and discourses to consider their impact on populations self defined as "*peuples autochtones / indigenous peoples / pueblos indigenas.*" Through a presentation of negotiation processes in Geneva, **Irène Bellier** explained the epistemological, legal and political issues raised by UNDRIP and the momentum built from the UN stage between indigenous, governmental and international actors. **Martin Préaud** analyzed the shift in positioning of the Australian state towards UNDRIP by questioning the gap between legal developments and aboriginal claims, in light of the movement between international and national politics.

The second session on "The rights of peoples in the French space: dilemmas of recognition" put in perspective a republican framework, not known to include the UN repertoire into political tactics. While presenting the *Basque* case, **Pierre Thomas** (IIAC-EHESS) contributed to the debate surrounding issues of a distinction between *peuples autochtones versus* national minorities. **Benoît Trépiéd** (CNRS-CREDO, SOGIP) further explained the transformations of the Kanak political field since the Noumea Accord (1998); and finally **Stephanie Guyon** (University of Amiens-CURAPP, SOGIP) shed light on political changes regarding indigenous mobilization in French Guyana, in the last twenty years.

The third session focused on the "impact of the Declaration on the Latin American world: the question of indigenous autonomy". It allowed a fascinating dialogue around presentations by **Christian Gros** (IHEAL-Paris-Sorbonne Nouvelle) on *Kuna Yala* in Panama and the theme of *resguardos* in Colombia, **Veronica Gonzalez** (PhD, SOGIP-LAIOS) on the theme of indigenous space in multicultural state of Mexico, while **Laurent Lacroix** (SOGIP-LAIOS; CREDA-IHEAL) concluded with a presentation on territoriality in Bolivia. The debate centered on the political, legal and financial self-determined forms of government.

The fourth session was devoted to "Indigenous participation in the management of natural and cultural resources." **Stephane Heritier** (geographer, CNRS, UMR VTS) presented the case of National Parks and local communities in western Canada. The forms taken by the latter were compared to aspects of aboriginal governance program 'Caring for Country' in the Australian region of Kimberley, a presentation made by **Martin Préaud**.

The fifth session centred on the theme of "Indigenous peoples and the environmental challenge." **Leslie Cloud** (jurist-SOGIP LAIOS) relied on the examples of the Mapuche and Rapa Nui to illustrate the challenges of implementation of rights to participation and the management of natural and cultural resources in Chile. **Raphaël Rousseleau** (Professor, U. of Lausanne, SOGIP) retraced the historical background of Adivasi in India, through the case of an internationalized mining conflict in the region inhabited by Dongria Kond (Odisha).

The final session focused on "empires, decolonization, 'autochtonies' (indigeneities)" to question the universality of "indigenous peoples" as a category and understand how forms of colonization and decolonization impact on contemporary political trajectories. Opting for a regional, rather than national analytical viewpoint, this session was organised around short presentations on : the UN, a building stage for a global representation of indigenous peoples (**Bellier I.**), British settler colonialism (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, USA), from a perspective of legal recognition mechanisms and claims to sovereignty (**M. Préaud**); the reconfigurations of the Empire framework that opposed indigenous peoples to French citizens, since the abolition, in 1946, of the civil code which ruled French overseas territories (**B. Trépied**), the resurgence of the Indian figure in the political arena in Latin America (**L. Lacroix, V. Gonzalez**), and finally the Russian Empire, thus broadening the comparative scope (**Yves-Marie Davenel**). This approach demonstrates the heuristic value of thinking beyond the national scale to comprehend changes in political dynamics crystallized by the development of indigenous peoples' rights at international level today, bound to be overcome.