Ending poverty in all its forms remains one of the greatest challenges for humankind. People who live in poverty are particularly affected by social, economic and political crises, natural disasters and violence, the loss of diversity and the associated services.

The history and sociology of poverty and social inequalities form one of the main lines of research conducted at the CNRS, linked to the study of access to basic services (water, food, health, energy, education), the social protection of the most vulnerable populations and migratory processes.

Firmly positioned at the crossroads between geography, urban planning, law and sociology, the themes of social justice and spatial justice have considerably gained ground over the last few years. Research into economics of sustainable development and globalization explores avenues such as land use and water, growth, food and population dynamics.

HISTORY OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

Assisting those most in need is a vital aspect of social life and an issue that encompasses the different forms of mutual support found in society. A historical study provides understanding of how its place in public policy has changed over the decades.

This assistance was initially the mainstay of charities until it was taken on-board by the municipalities. The State only became involved at the turn of the 20th century, when it passed several important social laws. This historical perspective highlights the importance of parallel approaches from the State and the NGOs, and reveals one basic fact: aid for the poor is primarily built around care for one of its symptoms—health—and less around its causes.

In 2017, Axelle Brodiez-Dolino from the LARHRA research unit was awarded the CNRS bronze medal for her research on the subject.

Find out more: larhra.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr

POVERTY AND GLOBALIZATION

Since the 1960s, the economic upturn of some countries, especially in Asia, has somewhat eclipsed the weak development of Latin America or the late development of other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example.

Policy-makers prefer to introduce population-level actions rather than relevant macro-economic and structural policies. We should therefore question the reasons for this choice, assess the knowledge gained, and identify the nature of political constraints against a background of globalization.

Recognized for his theoretical and empirical work, François Bourguignon has received a number of awards: bronze (1982) and silver (1997) medals from the CNRS and, more recently, the Dan David prize (2016) in recognition of his scientific commitment and his involvement in international forums in his role as Chief Economist of the World Bank or Director of the Paris School of Economics.
PAUVRETÉ ET INÉGALITÉS SOCIALES

The goal of inclusive growth is especially important in emerging countries with considerable GDP growth rates but where a significant part of the population continues to live below the poverty line. Ultimately, inequalities appear to be growing while pressure on the environment (soil, air, biodiversity) rises sharply. The Centre des Sciences Humaines (CSH) in New Delhi looks at these complex phenomena, which are particularly prevalent in India.

The Centre's research shows how important it is to analyse poverty and inequalities both jointly and distinctly, while addressing the changes in lifestyle which go hand-in-hand with economic growth and which reflect what development means for societies.

POVERTY AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

How do the upper classes shape their beliefs of the poor in terms of moral, security and health threats? What causes do they attribute poverty to? Based on a survey of the residents of the 'privileged' districts of Paris, Delhi and São Paulo, researchers from the Observatoire sociologique du changement (OSC) have attempted to answer these questions.

By analysing the belief systems and making international comparisons, we can better understand social separatism with the twin dynamics of stigmatization of the poor and neutralized compassion towards them.

POVERTY AND HOUSING

Input for the Observatoire national de la pauvreté et de l’exclusion sociale (ONPES)

Several researchers contributed to the 2017-18 annual report of the ONPES (French national observatory on poverty and social exclusion), ‘Poor housing, Poorly housed. What does being poorly housed mean in France today?’

Many households have problems making ends meet once they've paid their rent. Waiting lists for social housing in the most high-pressure – and thus most expensive – areas are long. In certain regions, informal and makeshift settlements are taking root. Home ownership has become out of reach for the lowest income groups, creating a split between social classes. It is now commonplace to meet people in the large urban areas who have no permanent home. Previously marked by a lack of housing and squalor, the housing crisis is now broader and more multifaceted.

The report analyses the housing and living conditions of the poor and low-income groups together with their perceptions of the situation and the ensuing health and social risks. It also explores the most serious situations of inadequate housing, where access to housing as a common right barely applies, and where critical knowledge of housing conditions is often fragmented.

The results show two thresholds that encase inadequate housing:
- a threshold below which the housing burden becomes too much, leading to deprivation as regards other needs, compromising participation in social life, and affecting a growing proportion of low-income households.
- a threshold combined with marginal, harsh and exposed situations with a complex and uncertain outcome. The sometimes striking contrasts in contemporary French society reveal the forms social insecurity takes today.

Find out more: [www.onpes.gouv.fr](http://www.onpes.gouv.fr)

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