

Indigenous peoples and the right to adequate food

A dissertation discussing the content of an Indigenous Rights-Based Approach to indigenous food security and nutritional health and some methodological challenges surging from such an approach

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*Series of dissertations submitted to the
Faculty of Medicine, University of Oslo
No. 668*

ISBN 978-82-8072-269-0

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Cover: Inger Sandved Anfinsen.
Printed in Norway: AiT e-dit AS, Oslo, 2008.

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For my father Leif Damman

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Abbreviations

FAO: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

HRBA: Human Rights-Based Approach

ICESCR: The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

ICCPR: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ILO 169: The International Labour Organization's Convention on the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples

IMR: Infant Mortality Rate

IRBA: Indigenous Rights-Based Approach

HRBAD: Human Rights-Based Approach to Development

IRBAD: Indigenous Rights-Based Approach to Development

MDG: Millennium Development Goals

PAHO: Pan American Health Organization

UDHR: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN: United Nations

UNSD: United Nations Statistical Division

UNPFII: United Nation Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues

WHO: The World Health Organization

Acknowledgements

Writing the four annexed papers and finalizing this dissertation has been a challenging but also a personally rewarding task. It has been a time-consuming process to find my own way into the interdisciplinary area that the dissertation covers from my background in public nutrition. My supervisors have been Professor Arne Oshaug (public nutrition; Akershus University College); Professor Asbjørn Eide (human rights law; Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo and Faculty of Law, University of Lund, Sweden); and Professor Harriet V. Kuhnlein (nutrition; Center for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE) at McGill, Canada). As my main supervisors were all external to the Department of Nutrition, Professor Knut-Inge Klepp at this Department accepted to be the internal supervisor. Associate Professor Wenche Barth Eide (nutrition and human rights; Department of Nutrition, University of Oslo) has served as the Project Leader for my research project, which is funded by the Norwegian Research Council.

Arne's combined competence within both nutrition and the right to food was an inspiration and help to my understanding of this field. He also has a sharp eye for detail, which has benefited my work. Asbjørn's special competence within the field of indigenous peoples' rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to food, inspired my choice of topic for my dissertation. His insights, guidance and support have been absolutely invaluable to me. Harriet has shared her considerable insights on indigenous peoples' nutrition issues. Her contributions are greatly appreciated, as is the office space I was provided with during my stays at CINE. Knut-Inge has been a great support, especially with regard to the formal aspects of the thesis and in the process of preparing for the defense. Wenche's profound experience and engagement in linking public nutrition and human rights has equally benefited my work. She has read through numerous drafts of my dissertation and has provided invaluable editorial advice. Her willingness to set time aside whenever needed, often to the detriment of other commitments, and her incredible stamina and support has never stopped amazing me.

More broadly, I have for more than a decade drawn inspiration and support from the core group behind the current Oslo-based International Project on the Right to Food in Development (IPRFD). IPRFD has been central in the pioneering efforts to link food as a human right to the broader perspective of economic, social and cultural rights and has been my gateway into the wider international academic and political environment related to this field. The senior core researchers of this Oslo based research network include, besides Arne, Asbjørn and Wenche, Associate Professor Bård Anders Andreassen (political science; Norwegian Centre for Human Rights). During the last phase Bård Anders has provided useful input to my thesis. It was also under an IPRFD application to the Norwegian Research Council in 2002 that Hans Morten Haugen (law), Ida-Eline Engh (human geography) and myself (public nutrition) each received a doctoral fellowship to do research work on our specific themes related to the right to food. Both Ida and Hans Morten have now defended their doctoral theses.

My main source of funding during this period has been the Norwegian Research Council. I am grateful for the full doctoral fellowship granted to me, and also for the additional funding I received beyond this. Both Bård Anders and Knut-Inge have kindly

helped me access some extra funding which has helped me pay my bills through the later stages of the process.

The list of other good helpers is too long to mention them all by name. Dr. Ethel 'Wara' Alderete was my contact person in Jujuy and paved the way for my research there. Carlos Omonte and Asunción Ontiveros were of great assistance and inspiration to my work in Jujuy, as was my Master student and friend Sigrun Henjum. Ariel Horazio Diaz and Edgardo Aramayo were my research assistants, and also contributed valuable information to my work.

A special thanks to my partner Oswaldo Pari Quintanilla for never ending patience and support, including those long nights and weekends that I spent at the computer. Also thanks to Magnhild, Cathrine, Øyunn, Grete, Kristin, Ann Kristin, Elin, Marit, Marina Manuela, Stein, Anne Gro, Unni and Oswaldo for ensuring that I did not forget about the importance of great company, great conversations and great laughs during these years. Our dog Fonzy deserves special thanks for his quiet endurance yet persistent pressure to go for walks. His company cheered me up and the walks in the nearby forest helped me clear my mind and think things through, while also ensuring some sorely needed exercise. A special thanks to my mother Unni Damman for providing me with the financial security needed to finalize this thesis.

List of papers

- Paper 1:** Damman S., 2005a. Nutritional Vulnerability in Indigenous Children of the Americas- a Human Rights Issue. Chapter 5 in (eds.) Robyn Eversole, John-Andrew McNeish and Alberto Cimdamore. Indigenous Peoples and Poverty. An International Perspective. CROP International Studies in Poverty Research Series. Zed Books, London (Annex 1).
- Spanish version:* Damman S., 2006. Vulnerabilidad nutricional de los Niños Indígenas de América: Un cuestión de derechos humanos. Capítulo 5 en (eds.) Alberto Cimdamore, Robyn Eversole, John-Andrew McNeish. Pueblos Indígenas y Pobreza. Enfoques Multidisciplinarios. Colección CLACSO-CROP, Clacso Libros.
- Paper 2:** Damman S., 2005b. The Right to Food of Indigenous Peoples. Chapter 12 in (eds.) Wenche Barth Eide and Uwe Kracht. Food and Human Rights in Development Volume 1, Legal and institutional dimensions and selected topics. Intersentia, Antwerp / Oxford (Annex 1).
- Paper 3:** Damman S., Eide W.B., Kuhnlein H.V., in press. Indigenous peoples' nutrition transition in a right to food perspective. Accepted for publication by Food Policy. [doi:10.1016/j.foodpol.2007.08.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2007.08.002) (Annex 1).
- Paper 4:** Damman S., 2007. Indigenous vulnerability and the process towards the Millennium Development Goals. Will a Human Rights-Based Approach help? International Journal on Minority and Group Rights. 14: 489-539 (Annex 1).

1 Introduction: Towards a Human Rights-Based Approach to indigenous peoples' food and nutrition problems

1.1 Human rights provide a framework for action

Indigenous individuals tend neither to enjoy equal human rights nor their special rights within the states where they live¹. In Latin America indigenous peoples have been recognized as among the most vulnerable, and score very low on socioeconomic and development indicators. There is a link between their socio-economic vulnerability and the discrimination they suffer (Hall and Patrinos, 2005). During the last three decades the international human rights system has been increasingly receptive to acknowledge indigenous peoples' relative vulnerability and the special problems they face. Both their universal human rights and their special rights are now reflected in human rights instruments.

Human rights are universal legal guarantees (OHCHR, 2006). Since 1966, 157 of the world's 192 states have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)². In doing so they acknowledged that they have a legal obligation to ensure the right to food (article 11), the right to health (article 12) and other rights under the Covenant³.

In human rights instruments the rights are set out as valid for everyone. Evidently, this does not mean that the rights contained in them are necessarily realized. Human rights are standards that should be "continuously looked to, laboured for and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence"⁴ (Eide, 1996)⁴.

Human rights provide overarching frameworks for national laws, regulations, government planning and policies (OHCHR, 2006), including with regard to food security and nutritional health. The human rights system and its norms and standards are constantly developing, and in the process become more authoritative. This applies also to economic, social and cultural rights⁵, which are integral parts of human rights.

¹ The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) are universal human right instruments. Other instruments detail the special rights of certain groups who are prone to experience circumstances that make them particularly vulnerable. These include women, children, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, and indigenous peoples.

² As registered by 11 October 2007 (OHCHR, 2007).

³ Article 11.1 and 11.2 of the ICESCR establish state obligations with regard to the right to adequate food within the context of an adequate standard of living. The right to health is expressed in several human right instruments, and the right to nutritional health is evidently a part of this right. The most frequently cited references tend to be the ICESCR article 12 and article 24 of the CRC, which is central with regard to children. The CRC article 27 deals with the right of children to an adequate standard of living, and thus expands on and concretize article 11 of the ICESCR in the context of children.

⁴ Eide is here paraphrasing Abraham Lincoln's Springfield address on 26 June 1857, when he campaigned for presidency on a platform that included the abolishment of slavery. The citation is part of his answer to the claim that the American Declaration of Independence from 1776, stating the "self evident truth" that "all men are created equal" could not possibly be intended to include black people, as some of the Founding Fathers themselves were slave owners. Lincoln responded that the Founding Fathers did not mean to assert the obvious untruth that all were actually enjoying equality. They meant to declare the *right*, so that enforcement could follow as soon as possible.

⁵ Economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) have by some states been considered development aspirations only. All categories of human rights are now gradually understood as entailing obligations for states to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights. The ESCR should however be realized progressively, but "to the maximum of their [the

Still, the understanding of socio-economic rights, including the right to adequate food and nutrition and their obligations are often unclear. This makes it hard to monitor their realization. There is a need to further increase the understanding of what the right to food would mean in theory and in practice, also in regard to groups with special needs and rights like indigenous peoples.

The need for this is strengthened by the United Nations' Programme for Reform⁶ (UN 1997, A/51/959), which has led to the *UN Common Understanding on the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development*⁷ (HRBAD). According to this, development processes and goal setting should be guided by human right norms and standards and human right principles like human dignity, equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability and the rule of law (UN, 2003).

The emerging Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) is versatile and may be applied to all policy sectors and development planning, including national public health nutrition policies. A HRBA aims towards ensuring all human rights for everyone. This necessitates placing a special focus on inequalities and on the most vulnerable, here specifically on indigenous peoples.

1.2 Indigenous peoples' special rights are gaining support

Governments should respect both universal human rights and special rights in all situations where these apply. This implies that indigenous peoples' equal right to food and nutritional health should be ensured within the context of all human rights, also indigenous peoples' special rights, as "all human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated" (UN, 1993; Salomon and Sengupta, 2003).

The terms *collective rights* and *group rights* refer to the rights of peoples and groups, including indigenous peoples. The rationale behind these terms is that sometimes the equal worth and dignity of all can be assured only through the recognition and protection of the special rights of individuals as members of a group (OHCHR, 2006). Even if the right to culture is a universal human right, applicable to everyone, minorities' and indigenous peoples' right to culture is separate from, and adds an additional dimension to this individual right.⁷ This is because their cultures are shared among those belonging to the groups in question.

Governments especially in Latin America have become increasingly receptive to indigenous peoples' rights. This is mirrored in their constitutions, in the ratification record of the International Labour Organization's Convention on the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ILO 169, from 1989), and in their almost universal support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples when it was adopted by the General Assembly on September 13, 2007 (UNGA res. A/61/295).

1.3 Nutritional problems and their aetiologies

In the Americas (North America, Central America, and South America) indigenous peoples are generally understood to be vulnerable to poverty, malnutrition and disease (PAHO, 2002a; 2002b). Demographic and health data confirm the disparities in life span, nutritional status and disease suffered by indigenous peoples both in wealthy (Ring and Brown, 2003) and in poorer

States'] available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization' of these rights (Art. 2.1 under the ICESCR). The rights of other conventions and covenants are of a more immediate nature.

⁶ The UN Program for Reform was an internal reform program launched by the Secretary General in 1997.

⁷ See article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its General Comment 23.

countries (ECLAC, 2005; PAHO, 2002a; 2002b; WHO, 2007a).

The way health problems are understood are crucial to the way they are addressed (Krieger, 2001; Jonsson, 1993). As seen in Figure 1, malnutrition⁸ and nutrition-related chronic diseases may be explained through factors at several levels of causality. Analyses by health professionals and epidemiologists tend to focus on the immediate causes and to some extent the underlying causes, with little attention to the basic causes of malnutrition and nutrition related diseases.

Proponents of human rights tend to focus on causalities linked to governmental allocations and management of resources, thus on the basic causes of malnutrition.

By moving towards the basic causes, one is likely to address causal factors considered to be ‘political’, as they relate to political ideologies and the corresponding allocations of resources. This may stir political discussions and tensions. Measures taken on this level are however much more likely to lead to sustainable change by improving the ability of the poor and malnourished to escape their disadvantaged situation.

The ‘Matrix for

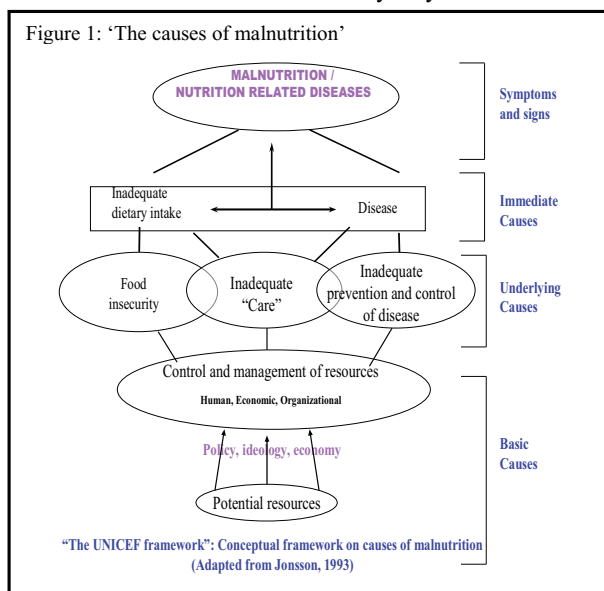


Figure 2: Matrix for the analysis of state obligations and conduct in regard to the human right to adequate food (Oshaug et al., 1994)

ATTRIBUTES OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY					
FOOD SECURITY	ADEQUACY OF THE FOOD (DIET)			AVAILABILITY OF AND ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD	
	Nutritional adequacy	Food safety	Cultural acceptability	Food availability and environmental sustainability	Physical, economic and social access
STATE OBLIGATIONS					
Respect					
Protect					
Fulfill facilitate provide					

⁸ Here understood as under-nutrition (low weight for age), chronic malnutrition (stunting, or low length/height for age), and wasting (low weight for height, or ‘thinness’).

the analysis of state obligations and conduct in regard to the human right to adequate food' (also called the 'Right to food framework') (Figure 2; Oshaug et al., 1994) provides a tool that can help in identifying areas where governments should act and where they may be held accountable for what they do, or fail to do. State obligations to 'respect', 'protect' and 'fulfil' ('facilitate' and 'provide') the right to food (Eide 1984; 1989; 1999; 2000; 2007) are merged with five key elements of food security ('access' and 'availability' of 'nutritionally adequate', 'safe', and 'culturally acceptable' food) to form a matrix for the analysis of state obligations and conduct in meeting these in regard to the human right to adequate food (Oshaug et al., 1994). These elements are also used in the General Comment no. 12 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR, 1999).

This 'matrix' or framework enables an in-depth and context-specific analysis of state obligations with regard to the various elements of the right to adequate food.

The levels of state obligations reflect that governments are not only expected to 'fulfil' rights through positive action, but may also be held accountable if they undermine or violate rights ('respect' level) and by failures to protect against the acts of 'third parties' like industries and other non-government entities and individuals (the 'protect' level). This framework thereby focuses both on the negative and positive role that governments may play.

1.4 Issues related to identifying indigenous individuals and peoples

1.4.1 *The international perspective*

It is generally assumed that about 6% of the world's population, or about 350-370 million persons are indigenous. These represent over 5000 ethnic groups living in some 70 countries in all parts of the world (Tomei, 2005; UNPFII, 2007a). This is however a rather crude estimate given the fluency of the concept as such and the fact that an official definition of the term 'indigenous' has not been adopted by any UN body (UNPFII, 2007b; Bartlett et al., 2007). The lack of a definition is in accordance with the wish of indigenous peoples themselves. A UN definition would have to be agreed upon among the member states, some of which are unlikely to accept a definition that would give groups within their borders status as indigenous.

According to the UN the most fruitful approach is to *identify* rather than define indigenous peoples (UNPFII, 2007b). This approach is based in the fundamental criterion of self-identification as underlined in a number of human right instruments, in particular article 1.2 of the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (from 1989):

"Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply."

While respecting the right to self-identification, there is a need to identify indigenous peoples if international action is to be taken that may affect their future existence in a positive way, as argued by Mr. Jose R. Martinez Cobo, the former UN Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in his landmark 'Study of the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations' (1986). He suggested that

'Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic

identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems'....

'On an individual basis, an indigenous person is one who belongs to these indigenous populations through self-identification as indigenous (group consciousness) and is recognized and accepted by these populations as one of its members (acceptance by the group). This preserves for these communities the sovereign right and power to decide who belongs to them, without external interference (Cobo, 1986, Para. 378-82).

The Chairperson of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Mme. Erica-Irene Dae also also provided a widely used and similar description (Dae, 1996).

The description given in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples ('the ILO 169') from 1989 is authoritative due to its adoption by ILO member states:

"Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present State boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions." (Art. 1(b) ILO 169, 1989).

Indigenous peoples are genetically and culturally diverse, and are found on all continents. In spite of their diversity they tend to have important problems in common. Some of these problems they share with other neglected segments of societies, i.e. discrimination, inadequate political representation and participation, economic marginalization and poverty, and inadequate access to social services. In addition, indigenous peoples share common problems related to the recognition of their identities, their ways of life and their right to traditional lands, territories and natural resources (UNPFII, 2007b; Stavenhagen, 2007). What unite these very diverse indigenous peoples is more than discrimination and marginalization, but also their unwillingness to give up their cultures, and the failure of the state to realize their equal rights and their special rights.

1.4.2 Indigenous identity in the countries in the Americas

In countries of the Americas the censuses questions that determine 'ethno-cultural characteristics' vary from country to country. All questions used in the 2000 round of censuses fit into six different categories: 'ethnic group', 'ancestry or ethnic origin', 'race', 'nationality', 'indigenous or aboriginal groups', and 'tribes' and/or 'castes'. In Northern America the most commonly used identifier questions are 'nationality', 'race' and 'ethnic group'. In Latin American countries the practices are diverse, but most use indigenous identity (67%), often in combination with language. In some countries language is the only identifier (UNSD, 2003) (see Appendix 2).

In the various countries of the Americas that have indigenous sub-populations the estimated size of the indigenous population varies from less than one percent to the majority of the population. The official estimates tend to be more restrictive than non-government estimates. Changing definitions will lead to changes in the numbers who are registered as indigenous. Where censuses registering the size of the indigenous population have not been carried out for some time, extrapolations are often used. It adds to the problem that the

delineation between categories are not always well defined⁹. Comparisons among countries are hampered by the different and changing definitions. Even when countries apparently use the same criterion, the definition of the concept and the amount of detail may differ significantly among countries (see Appendix 2), which in turn may further diminish the value of international comparison (UNSD, 2003). This may be part of the reason why such comparisons have so far not been carried out.

1.5 Indigenous peoples and discrepancies in nutritional health

Good quality disaggregated statistics based in indicators related to health status, mortality and access to services is a precondition for an analysis of whether or not indigenous peoples enjoy equal rights with regard to nutritional health.

With few exceptions, low socioeconomic status is associated with high disease load (Marmot, 2007). As already discussed, the data that are available suggest a pattern of indigenous disadvantage with regard to socioeconomic situation and nutritional status. This shows that we are dealing with a public health challenge of global dimensions (Ring and Brown, 2003; Horton, 2006).

The public health challenge is particularly daunting because the observed disparities are associated with discrimination and indigenous peoples' disadvantaged position in society at large (Nygren-Krug, 2002; Hall and Patrinos, 2005; Tomei, 2005). At the 2001 World Conference on Racism in Durban governments openly acknowledged the link between discrimination and ill-health (Nygren-Krug, 2002). So far this link has received little attention in public health research. On the other hand, organizations like the Minority Rights Group International (MRG) and International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) have for some time sought to document human right violations towards indigenous peoples and others, but have made few references to discrepancies in health and nutrition (IWGIA, 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; MRGI, 1997; 2007).

National public health analyses should go beyond discussions on national averages to consider inequalities in health among and between groups (Nygren-Krug, 2002; Tomei, 2005; UNPFII, 2004). There is a need to remove the "cloak of invisibility from the shoulders of indigenous peoples" (Horton, 2006) and to understand and address the broader social and environmental determinants of their food, nutrition and health problems. The effects of discrimination, cultural differences and government laws, policies and measures on indigenous peoples' health and socioeconomic situation should be analysed and understood. Such information is crucial for policies, strategies and project planning based in indigenous rights, and for the implementation, evaluation and follow-up of these.

A human right-based approach is a useful framework for identifying and addressing these underlying concerns (Nygren-Krug, 2002). Governments are the primary 'duty bearers' in a Human Rights-Based Approach. Their accountability for health should be enhanced. A HRBA is likely to spur such a development.

⁹ Some census questionnaires include combinations of two or more of these above groupings. For instance in Brazil, the 2000 census (translated to English, see Annex 2) reads: *Your colour or race: White - Black - Asian - Mulatto - Indigenous.*

1.6 UN approaches to mapping and understanding ethnic inequalities

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has since its first session in 2002 focused on indigenous disadvantage, and called for increased attention to indigenous peoples' situations and rights (UNPFII, 2007).

Both the UNPFII and several UN guidelines encourage the production of data disaggregated by ethnicity, and the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) guide countries on how to do this (UNSD, 2003). The UNSD recommends that census and survey questionnaires include questions on ethnic identity to allow for disaggregation, which will provide information on socioeconomic divides and help improve the knowledge-base regarding these groups (UNSD, 2001). It states that "when social and economic characteristics of large segments of the population vary greatly, such as among ethnic groups, insofar as possible, the identity of these population sub-groups should be maintained in the tabulations" (UNSD, 2001). Such a knowledge base is crucial for governments in elaborating policies to improve access to services, and, according to the UNSD "...for taking measures to preserve the identity and survival of distinct ethnic groups" (UNSD, 2003). The 'Plan of Action from the World Conference against Racism' from 2001 also encourages disaggregation by ethnicity and provides guidelines on how this should be done (para. 92-102) (World Conference against Racism, 2001).

Indigeneity (indigenous identity) is very likely to be a "difference that makes a difference" within public health, public health nutrition and poverty programs. This calls for a special focus on ethnicity/indigeneity in national statistics. Yet little information is found to exist (UNPFII, 2004; PAHO, 2002a; Tomei, 2005). Some data are however made available to UN agencies by countries. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) publication *Health in the Americas* has since 1998 provided overviews of the available but scattered information on indigenous peoples' health and nutrition situation (PAHO, 2007). An examination of the *WHO Global database on child growth and malnutrition* (WHO, 2007a) indicates that the prevalence of stunting¹⁰, undernutrition¹¹, and wasting¹² are usually higher in rural and remote administrative units, and even higher in indigenous populations in these areas. Furthermore, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2005), reporting on the MDG process, states that although it is clear that area of residence, ethnic origin and extreme poverty are closely interrelated, when data on the poor population are disaggregated by ethnic origin, it becomes clear that the high vulnerability to undernutrition among the poorest is even worse among members of those groups who are also indigenous. This inequality is exacerbated where indigenous children are concentrated in rural and geographically isolated areas (ECLAC, 2005). A World Bank publication also concludes that indigenous peoples in the Americas suffer pervasive poverty and disadvantage compared to other groups (Hall and Patrinos, 2005). The United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) uses its Human Development Index to rank and display disparities among countries, and has since 2004 onwards explored national disparities based in indigeneity with regard to various indicators in selected countries (UNDP, 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007).

With the exception of the UNPFII and the UN human rights treaty bodies¹³, which explicitly ask countries for disaggregated data on groups associated with vulnerability¹⁴, no UN

¹⁰ Stunting, *low length/height-for-age* and chronic malnutrition all imply growth faltering.

¹¹ Undernutrition implies *low weight-for-age*

¹² Wasting implies *low weight-for-length/height*

¹³ States parties to the various human rights treaties (covenants and conventions) have taken on to report on their progress to the respective treaty bodies (also called convention committees) that overlook treaty implementation.

agency has so far systematically sought to explore indigenous peoples' socioeconomic situation. This despite the fact that data are most likely to exist, as the United Nation's Statistical Division database 'Questions on ethno-cultural characteristics in censuses between 1995 and 2004' (UNSD, 2007a) reveals that the majority of the world's countries collect information on ethnicity (or similar terms) in their population censuses (UNSD, 2003; Morning, 2005).

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) and some authors claim that conventional and so called 'universal' development and poverty indicators may be less useful in the culturally different, traditional and land-based indigenous societies. Furthermore, some development indicators are claimed to reflect implicit discriminatory disregard for indigenous values and ways of life (Feiring et al, 2003; Tomei, 2005; UNPFII, 2004; 2005; 2006). A closer focus on indigenous poverty is likely to uncover such weaknesses if and where they exist, which again may lead to a new focus on cultural diversity and multiple approaches to poverty eradication.

1.7 Some scientific and ethical concerns linked to singling out indigenous individuals

When editors of the journal *The Lancet* announced their plans to focus on indigenous health in forthcoming volumes and invited suitable contributions, they were, through a correspondence to the journal, warned that it would be unwise for *The Lancet* to devote a series of papers to the "supposedly special health problems" of "groups that were impossibly hard to define" (Kuper, 2005). Furthermore, according to the same person, by identifying a people based on language, culture or social organization the drift towards racism may be inevitable. There is no doubt that a focus on indigenous peoples and ethnic disparities includes methodological challenges, and the arguments should be taken seriously. As there are obvious problems and even ethical issues linked to achieving accurate, valid and comparable information on indigenous peoples and their situation, the pro's and con's of singling out such a vulnerable group are worth discussing in more detail.

If efforts are to be made to single out these groups that are "impossibly hard to define", there has to be strong indications of their vulnerability. As discussed, available data leave little doubt about this.

Furthermore, the debate about the desirability of formal ethnic classification in national censuses and surveys is important. In the United States, some have called for the removal of racial categories from official state-level records, believing that government policies should not be informed by data on race. In some European countries, France in particular, the potential introduction of official ethnic classification has been hotly debated (Morning, 2005).

While supporters believe such categories are necessary to identify and combat discrimination, opponents fear that government adoption of such a classification scheme would divide the nation, stigmatize some groups, and generally bolster concepts of difference that have been closely associated with prejudice. Rallu et al. (2001), as cited in Morning (2005) have identified four types of governmental approaches to ethnic enumeration:

- 1) Enumeration for political control
- 2) Non-enumeration in the name of national integration
- 3) Enumeration or non-enumeration as part of a discourse of national "hybridity"

¹⁴ Under the right to food, the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights asks for detailed information on hunger and/or malnutrition, especially with regard to vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, including indigenous peoples (CESCR, 1991).

4) Enumeration for antidiscrimination (affirmative action)

Colonial census administration is associated with the first category, as well as related examples such as apartheid-era South Africa. In these cases, ethnic categories form the basis for exclusionary policies. In the second category, where ethnic categories are rejected in order to promote national unity, western European nations are prominent. The third category is largely associated with Latin American countries. The final category is illustrated with examples from Latin America (e.g. Brazil, Colombia), Canada, and the United States (Morning, 2005).

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and Stavenhagen (1990), among others, consider the lack of focus on ethnic differences in Latin America to be due to ideologies on national unity (PAHO, 2002b p. 100), and thus an unwillingness to show or accept that differences do exist within national populations. The political sensitivity of such data is confirmed by the UN Statistical Division and the UN Development Group (UNDG, 2003; UNSD, 2006)¹⁵.

Given concerns of data misuse, it is crucial that ethnic categories not be used in censuses without a clear objective. It is essential that those groups traditionally stigmatized by such classifications are not harmed (Morning, 2005). Furthermore, the disaggregation of data sets based on indigenous identity or similar characteristics should be done in full understanding, participation and collaboration with the representatives of the group in question (UNSD, 2003). The World Conference against Racism (2001), in its Program of Action

‘Urges States to collect, compile, analyse, disseminate and publish reliable statistical data at the national and local levels and undertake all other related measures which are necessary to assess regularly the situation of individuals and groups of individuals who are victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (para. 92).’

The Conference (2001), being keenly aware of the dangers involved, adds that:

Such statistical data should be disaggregated in accordance with national legislation. Any such information shall, as appropriate, be collected with the explicit consent of the victims, based on their self-identification and in accordance with provisions on human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as data protection regulations and privacy guarantees. This information must not be misused (para. 93);

The statistical data and information should be collected with the objective of monitoring the situation of marginalized groups, and the development and evaluation of legislation, policies, practices and other measures aimed at preventing and combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as for the purpose of determining whether any measures have an unintentional disparate impact on victims. To that end, it recommends the development of voluntary, consensual and participatory strategies in the process of collecting, designing and using information (para. 94).

Openness and transparency on what the data will be used for, participatory processes and clear ethical frameworks on privacy and data access will increase trust and reduce the chance of data misuse. Furthermore, when the information coming out of such investigations is perceived as

¹⁵ A recent scandal in Argentina highlights the political nature of statistics. President Nestor Kirchner experienced a popular uproar when in January 2007 he replaced the then director of the Consumer Prices Index of the National Statistics and Census Institute (INDEC), presumably because Kirchner was not happy with a reported inflation of 1.5%. The Consumer Prices Index is used to calculate the number of poor and extremely poor in Argentina, and changes in the Consumer Price Index will have repercussions for the national poverty statistics (Wikipedia, 2007).

useful, problems are more likely to be solved in collaboration between representatives of the relevant minority/ indigenous/ ethnic groups and technical staff.

Most would today argue that what may be gained through disaggregation is so important that the collection of such data should be encouraged. As stated by *The Lancet* editor when discussing Kuper's (2005) comment, *The Lancet* was not blind to that risk, but it considered that the overwhelming need for action on indigenous peoples' health easily outweighs any potential harm. Negative repercussions for indigenous peoples and individuals will however have to be avoided.

1.8 Public health nutrition and the HRBA

Public health is concerned with threats to the overall health of a community and is based in population health analysis. The term public health nutrition has been defined in various ways. The definitions tend to encompass the range of factors known to influence nutrition in populations, including diet and health, social, cultural and behavioural factors; and the economic and political context. The central emphasis of public health nutrition is the promotion of good health through improved nutrition, and the primary prevention of nutrition related illnesses in the population (Hughes, 2003).

In spite of the obvious differences between human rights law and medicine, there are certain important similarities between a HRBA and a public health nutrition approach to nutritional health. Both approaches understand nutritional health as related to larger societal circumstances and skewed access to resources. Both approaches aim to influence policies and provide positive change. As noted however, while public health professionals have obvious advantages over human rights professionals in the analysis and understanding of medical problems, medical statistics and health related causalities and associations, a HRBA brings the tools for holding governments accountable also with regard to disparities in nutritional health.

The human rights focus on 'rights-holders' and 'duty-bearers' commands attention both towards those whose rights are under threat and those who should act to ensure these rights. A human rights-based analysis will tend to seek a 'holistic' analysis of a phenomenon or an observation, involving the whole spectrum of rights and information both on positive and negative developments with regard to rights.

The Human Rights-Based Approach and the public health nutrition approach have similarities but are yet different enough to be complementary, and thus provide for a possible synergistic effect. Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948 there has been a limited, albeit increasing interaction between the two fields. UN declarations from international conferences have recognized and helped clarify the linkages between food, health and human rights (Gruskin and Tarantola, undated). These include the 1974 World Food Conference (WFC, 1974), the International Conference on Primary Health Care in Alma-Ata, USSR, in 1978 (WHO, 1978) and the many large global conferences in the 1990s. The World Food Summit (WFS, 1996) and the World Food Summit five years later (2002) have played a particularly important role with regard to the right to food¹⁶.

¹⁶ The World Food Summit Plan of Action, in Commitment 7, Objective 7.4, called for efforts to better define the content of the right to adequate food (WFS, 1996). This resulted i.e. in the development of the *General Comment (GC) no 12 on the Right to Adequate Food* by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) (CESCR, 1999) and the *Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security* ("Right to Food Guidelines"), adopted by the FAO member states in 2004 (FAO, 2004).

Important initiatives have also been taken by academics within health and nutrition. From the late 1980's onwards Jonathan Mann stood out as a pioneer in integrating human rights thinking into public health. Mann was the first director of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Special Program on AIDS. He managed to introduce core human right values into the global debate on HIV and AIDS, by focusing public attention on the fact that prejudice and discrimination help drive the HIV epidemic, and that discrimination against those at risk of infection fuels the epidemic further (Global Health Council, 2007).

The collaboration among nutrition and human rights professionals has led to the framework presented in section 1.3 (Eide, 1984; 1989; Oshaug et al., 1994; Eide, 1996; 1999; 2000; 2007). Other academics and some academic journals, as the international Harvard-based 'Journal on Health and Human Rights' have also helped build interest in the link between food and health and human rights.

There are signs that the interest in ethnic disparities is surging within health research. Influential medical journals, in particular *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal*, have actively invited contributions on indigenous peoples' health. It may be an important sign of commitment that the WHO in 2005 launched a Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) (Marmot, 2007). The Commission states as its goal "to create a global movement for health equity, rooted in shared beliefs in social justice and human rights" (WHO, 2007b). Exactly how far the initiative will go towards including a concern for the right to health of indigenous peoples remains to be seen. General socioeconomic disparities have so far received more attention than ethnic disparities.

The interest in the social causes of inequalities has increased also within social epidemiology (Krieger, 2002). This has led to an interest in establishing who and what drives current and changing patterns of social inequalities in health. Calls for stronger focus on agency and accountability in public health research (Krieger, 2001) may lead to more interaction between the fields of public health and human rights, and may also strengthen the focus on ethnic disparities.

2. Aim, objectives and rationale of the dissertation

The overarching aim of this dissertation is to explore the content of indigenous peoples' right to food and nutritional health and the related state obligations. The dissertation consists of the present introduction and overview and four annexed papers (published or in press). Part 1 above has established a frame for considering indigenous peoples' food and nutrition problems through a Human Rights-Based Approach. Part 3 describes geographical settings and methods. Summaries of the four papers of the dissertation are presented in Part 4. Part 5 discusses the wider importance of the findings and also discusses some methodological issues, including issues relevant for the papers as such and some of more general importance. Part 6 provides recommendations for future research as well as for policy. Supplementary information related to the four papers is provided in two appendices. The objectives of the four papers were:

- to systematically explore the degree to which indigenous peoples on the American continent are disadvantaged with regard to infant mortality (IMR) and stunting (low length/height-for-age¹⁷), and to discuss the findings in a human rights perspective (Paper 1);

¹⁷ Low length/height-for-age (chronic malnutrition, stunting) is defined as a length/height-for-age less than -2 SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median) among children aged less than 5 years (WHO, 2007a). Lately a growth standard was developed; the WHO Child Growth Standards, which were launched on April 2006. The new World Health Organization standard is developed on the basis of growth patterns in healthy breastfed

- to clarify the emerging theoretical content of the right to food of indigenous peoples against the actual situation of two indigenous peoples living under different governance systems; the Kolla of Jujuy, Argentina, and the Inuit of Nunavut, Canada, and to discuss practical options for how states may take measures that will help realize the right to food for indigenous peoples (Paper 2);
- to investigate ways in which government policies and factors uncontrolled by indigenous peoples may fuel the development of nutrition related chronic diseases, using as an organizing framework a matrix developed for the analysis of the human right to adequate food and implications for state obligations (Paper 3);
- to examine shortcomings in the present Millennium Development Goals (MDG) process with regard to vulnerable groups, exemplified by indigenous peoples, and to discuss whether a Human Rights-Based Approach would make a positive difference in poverty eradication policies for indigenous peoples (Paper 4).

The **rationale** behind the dissertation is to contribute to a better understanding of the food and nutritional health related challenges faced by indigenous peoples within the context of the right to food and related rights of indigenous individuals and peoples, and corresponding obligations of states.

Two of the papers (Papers 1 and 2) have been published as chapters in books (the second peer-reviewed), and two (Papers 3 and 4) appear in international peer-reviewed scientific journals. Papers 1 and 4 are based on secondary data on ethnic disparities. Papers 2 and 3 are based on the doctoral candidate's primary data concerning the right to food among the Kolla of the Province of Jujuy, Argentina, and the Inuit of the Territory of Nunavut, Canada.

3. Geographical setting and methods

3.1 The choice of geographical setting

All the four scientific papers discuss information, data and findings from 'the Americas'. The Americas is, as already noted, the geographical area encompassing all countries of Latin America, Central America and North America. Important reasons for focusing on the Americas are that the large majority of countries have indigenous sub-populations, and in general use and accept the term *indigenous peoples*. Furthermore, among the Latin American countries the majority have ratified the ILO Convention 169, and many countries have made indigenous peoples' rights part of their constitutions. This facilitates a meaningful analysis of indigenous peoples' right to food. The availability of data on ethnic disparities in nutritional health, infant mortality and poverty is also more complete than in Europe, Africa and Asia.

3.2 The identification of the indigenous subpopulation

When the term 'indigenous peoples' is used in this dissertation it applies to the descendants of the population groups who inhabited the Americas at the arrival of European settlers; basically the 'Indians' and the Inuit in the High North.

In Papers 1 and 4, as the data were from secondary sources, the author had no choice but

children. This replaced the NCHS/WHO international reference. The data used in this dissertation were collected before the standard was developed, and are therefore based in the previously used growth reference.

to accept the existing data and findings, which were based on the differing criteria used to identify indigenous identity in the various countries. In Papers 2 and 3 the socioeconomic data on the Inuit were based on secondary sources, while in Jujuy no disaggregated data existed on the Kolla. The author did however use some geographical data from indigenous areas to represent their situation.

In this dissertation and generally the term 'indigenous peoples' has been used as an overarching description of very different ethnic groups, with different degree of 'urbanization' and 'westernization' and with different lifestyle and values. While Papers 1 and 4 describe the situation in indigenous populations on which there are available data, in the discussions particular attention has been given to the indigenous population groups and communities that uphold some aspects of a land based and traditional economy, and whose food security may depend on the continuation of traditional livelihoods and food cultures. This is not to say that urban and landless indigenous peoples do not experience nutrition problems and threats to their food security and their universal and indigenous specific rights. An analysis of their situation and rights would however demand a rather different approach. A substantial part of those who self-identify as indigenous may therefore find that from their perspective the analysis here presented leaves something to be desired. By seeking to provide a comprehensive and reasonably clear picture of certain situations and problems one is however compelled to simplify, on the expense of variation and diversity.

3.3 Data gathering

Papers 1 and 4 investigate into data on ethnic disparities. They are desk studies/reviews based on secondary data. Papers 2 and 3 are based on primary information gathered through interviews in Jujuy, Argentina and Nunavut, Canada, for which research permits were needed.

3.3.1 *Research permits*

A written research permit application was approved by Nunavut Research Council in early 2002. In Argentina the project was approved by the Ministries of Health and of Education by the end of 2002 after having been reviewed and recommended by the University of Jujuy.

3.3.2 *Conceptual framework*

The 'Matrix for the analysis of state obligations and conduct in regard to the human right to adequate food' (Figure 2 part 1.3) was used as organizing framework for the analysis of the food security of the indigenous peoples in the two case areas; stringently in paper 3 and less so in paper 2 (see Papers 2 and 3).

3.3.3 *The collection of primary data through interviews*

Study populations

The research populations were the Inuit of the Territory of Nunavut (the 'Nunavummiut'), Canada and the Kolla of the Province of Jujuy, Argentina. According to official statistics, the Inuit population of Nunavut makes up about 83% of the population in Nunavut (NPC, 2007). The Kolla are the largest indigenous group in Jujuy. The large majority of the population in Jujuy is considered to be descendants of the original indigenous population, even if many are of mixed origin. Only about 10% did however self-identify as indigenous during the last census (INDEC, 2006). It is assumed that more might have done so under different political

circumstances¹⁸.

The interviews

The primary data in Papers 2 and 3 are gathered through **informal, open-ended interviews** (see Fetterman, 1989) with government officials and representatives from indigenous organizations in the Province of Jujuy, the Territory of Nunavut and Ottawa. Additional conversations with **key informants** on subjects of interest filled out information gaps. The interviews were discontinued when the point was reached where information gathering revealed little new. This indicated that the investigations had led to a good overview of the matter discussed (see Fetterman, 1989).

Most interviews took place in a **one-to-one** setting. In the community of Pangnirtung in Nunavut the planned one-to-one interview at the Hunters and Trappers Organization expanded into a **group interview**. This was because eight Inuit hunters were present in the office and agreed to participate.

A **voice recorder** was used during many of the interviews in Jujuy, to capture words and expressions that were new to me.

In Jujuy two master students from the social sciences, University of Jujuy served as **research assistants**. Usually one of them was present during the interviews. During informal conversations afterwards they explained and discussed the wider context for the responses and findings with the candidate. These conversations were important sources of information, and the research assistants thereby also became key informants.

Methodological challenges and triangulation of data sources and methods

Triangulation implies combining theories, data sources, or methods when studying a certain phenomenon. Methodological triangulation is used to strengthen the validity and the reliability of the investigation. Quantitative methods may be supplemented by qualitative methods to further explore a phenomenon, and qualitative interviews may be supplemented for instance by literature searches (Benestad and Laake, 2004). In Papers 2 and 3 the methods were triangulated through combining interviews and information from key informants with information from the internet, newspapers and scientific and other literature.

In Canada an abundance of relevant secondary information is available through scientific studies, NGO and government reports and information pamphlets both in paper versions and electronically. In Argentina such information is harder to find, and sometimes considered classified. This was the case for instance with regard to reports from nutrition surveys carried in the indigenous northern areas of Jujuy. In Jujuy the local newspaper archive was one of the best sources of written information. Information that arose during interviews was followed up through supplementary interviews with key informants, through the Jujuy newspaper archive, through the Internet and other available information sources.

Due to the lack of good data on the Kolla diet and the nutritional changes taking place in Jujuy a master student under the project carried out a dietary survey on Kolla preschool children. The study was carried out in a shantytown of the capital San Salvador de Jujuy, in the semi-rural community Maimara, and in the rural community of Susques in Jujuy. Her findings on food intake of Kolla children in communities with different degree of urbanization and her interviews with mothers on related subjects (Henjum, 2004) provided useful supplements to my

¹⁸ Discrimination and cultural alienation and the resistance towards the census identifier question may have led to underreporting. As mentioned in Paper 3 indigenous organizations formulate their protest on the process in the 'Denuncia de los Pueblos Indigenas, Contra la Discriminacion del INDEC' (Damman et al., in press).

own interviews.

The use of two case areas

The use of two case areas enabled some observations on similarities and differences in present and also historic food and nutrition challenges faced by the Kolla and the Inuit. The two cases were juxtaposed and contrasted where this was considered appropriate and useful to the discussion. The high degree of self-determination makes Nunavut a possible 'best case'. The intention was however not to rank the two based on government performance, but rather to understand the situation of indigenous peoples under different governance systems and to identify ways in which their situations differ and coincide.

3.3.4 The exploration of ethnic discrepancies in chronic malnutrition and infant mortality

Sources of data

Data on infant mortality and low length/height-for-age (chronic malnutrition or stunting) in children under 5 years of age (U5's) are well suited for disaggregation and thus for comparing national populations and population groups within countries. These data tend to be available for all countries.

In Paper 1 the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) publication *Health in the Americas* was the main source of information on infant mortality and health related information in national and indigenous populations (PAHO, 1997; PAHO, 2002a; PAHO, 2002b). Where possible the original data sources referred to in the PAHO publications were traced.

The most important source of information on indigenous stunting was the World Health Organization (WHO) Programme of Nutrition, Family and Reproductive Health *Global Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition* (WHO, 2003a; WHO, 2007a). The electronic version of the database is freely accessible on the Internet (WHO, 2007a). The database includes national anthropometric data on child growth and malnutrition (length/height-for-age; weight-for-age; weight-for-length/height) from countries worldwide. It displays statistical information from all relevant national and sub-national nutrition surveys, organized by country and chronologically. As the data collected for Paper 1 were collected before 2006, they are based on the NCHS¹⁹/WHO international reference. The data tend to be disaggregated by urban/rural areas, by gender, age group and often by national regions. Information on sample size is given. Some of the datasets include information on indigenous populations. The WHO database also contains lists of additional references to scientific publications on malnutrition in certain communities or geographical areas. Some of these are indigenous communities (WHO, 2007a).

Some additional national level data on stunting and infant mortality was found on the websites of national statistical offices or the national health ministries. *PubMed*, an electronic database for the medical sciences, was used to identify additional sub-national data on indigenous infant mortality and stunting in the Americas. The key search words were the names of countries in the Americas and 'infant mortality', 'IMR', 'stunting', 'height-for-age', 'length/height-for-age', 'chronic malnutrition', 'indigenous', 'tribe', 'tribal', 'ethnic', and the various names of the indigenous groups and subgroups living in the individual countries²⁰. Similar lists of search words were also used in Spanish and in Portuguese.

The data were collected in 2002/2003, and constitute the most recently available data at

¹⁹ National Center for Health Statistics

²⁰ Group: For instance Maya, with its subgroups Q'ach'ich'el; Quiche; Mam; and Tz'utujil etc.

the time. Data on indigenous infant mortality or stunting or both were found from 19 countries (See table 5.1a and 5.1b in Paper 1 (Damman, 2005a). The full list of references is found in Appendix 1 of this dissertation. These references were not included in Paper 1 due to space restrictions and because this information was not considered essential by editors of the book where the paper was published.

Processing of information and presentation of findings

For many countries data disaggregated by indigeneity were not found. In some of these countries the indigenous population tended to live in well-defined geographical regions. The *World Directory on Minorities* (MRGI, 1997) and *The Indigenous World* (IWGIA, 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003) were consulted to find the names used to describe indigenous peoples, groups and subgroups on the continent, where they live, and, where available, information on their proportion of the population in the relevant regions and areas.

When a region was described as 'indigenous', or when it became obvious from these authoritative sources that the majority of the population was indigenous, this information was matched with the data disaggregated by geographical region in the *Health in the Americas* (PAHO, 1997; PAHO, 2002a; 2002b) and in the WHO database. In this way regional data on stunting and infant mortality could be used as 'proxies' of the situation in the indigenous population. The various sources of information were divided into three categories;

- National level data (average in the total national population, the national level average in the indigenous population and, where available, the average in the non-indigenous population);
- Regional data used as proxy of the situation of the indigenous population in the region ('Proxy area');
- Smaller studies from indigenous communities.

In some countries the infant mortality and stunting rates were generally high, and in other countries much lower. As the objective of the investigation was to look into discrepancies suffered by indigenous peoples, a *ratio* was developed. The rate of infant mortality and the proportions of stunting in the indigenous populations (national level, regional proxy or local) were divided by the national average in the same or similar year (see Paper 1, table 5.1a and 5.1b). Some methodological issues related to this approach are discussed in part 5.2.

3.3.5 Ethnic discrepancies with regard to extreme poverty

Nineteen progress reports were submitted to the United Nations by countries in Latin America before the September 2005 *Millennium Development Goals (MDG) review* (UNDG, 2007). These reports provided information on poverty and extreme poverty (see Paper 4 in the Annex; Damman, 2007). Five of the countries provided information disaggregated by ethnicity/indigeneity. This information was used to construct ratios similar to those described in 3.3.4. Some of the countries compared the proportions of poverty and extreme poverty in the indigenous populations by the proportions in the national (total) population, others with the non-indigenous population. In ratios from Belize, Chile and that on extreme poverty from Ecuador the national average is used. While Belize, Chile, Ecuador and Guatemala provided national level information, the information from Panama included the rural areas only.

The reports and additional information of interest to the discussion were found on the United Nations MDG websites (see Paper 4 for references). As in tables 1.5a and 1.5b in Paper 1, the ratios were used to indicate the degree of discrepancy suffered by the indigenous

population. Additional data on indigenous poverty from different points in time were found in a recent World Bank publication (Hall and Patrinos, 2004). These data were used to produce an overview of time trends in indigenous poverty.

4. Results

The results of the research are provided in the four papers constituting the scientific core of this dissertation.

Paper 1: Damman S., 2005a. Nutritional Vulnerability in Indigenous Children of the Americas—a Human Rights Issue. Chapter 5 in (eds.) Robyn Eversole, John-Andrew McNeish and Alberto Cimadamore. *Indigenous Peoples and Poverty. An International Perspective*. CROP International Studies in Poverty Research Series. Zed Books, London.

Indigenous peoples are generally understood to be disadvantaged with regard to nutritional health and infant mortality, but no international overview has so far been provided to substantiate this claim. The author searched the internet and national and international databases to find reliable data on infant mortality (IMR) and chronic malnutrition in the indigenous population. The data on indigenous infants and children were of three categories: disaggregated national level data, regional data from areas considered to be ‘indigenous’ (‘proxy for area’), and findings from smaller scientific studies carried out in indigenous communities. The study sought to cover all countries of the Americas with an indigenous population. The proportion of infant mortality and chronic malnutrition in the indigenous populations were divided by the respective national average to create ‘ratios’. A comparison of ratios revealed a consistent pattern of indigenous disadvantage both with regard to stunting and infant mortality in the Americas. The findings lend themselves to a human rights-based analysis and lobbying, as the large majority of states in the Americas have taken on human rights obligations that effectively obligate them to ensure equal rights and non-discrimination. Governments should give due attention to trends in inequality with a view to eliminating these.

Paper 2: Damman S., 2005b. The Right to Food of Indigenous Peoples. Chapter 12 in (eds.) Wenche Barth Eide and Uwe Kracht. *Food and Human Rights in Development Volume 1, Legal and institutional dimensions and selected topics*. Intersentia, Antwerp / Oxford.

The paper explores the nutrition, food and livelihood situation of the Kolla in Argentina, who are immersed in a centralized development strategy with little attention to indigenous culture and rights and the Inuit in Nunavut, Canada, who have recently achieved a high degree of self-determination within the framework of a federal state, and it juxtaposes the findings. The findings indicate that indigenous peoples’ right to food cannot be understood out of context with their special rights, including their access to land and land based resources. Government failures to respect and protect indigenous peoples’ land, culture and livelihoods have in the past undermined the food security of the Kolla and the Inuit. Well intended measures to improve their situation may have the same effect. If indigenous peoples’ equal right to food is not understood in the context of their distinct cultures and special rights, policies to ensure their equal rights may induce involuntary assimilation, dependency and nutrition problems. The findings support the notion that indigenous peoples are likely to benefit most from governance models that allow them a high degree of self-determination, and that Nunavut may become a

possible ‘best case’ with regard to state – indigenous interaction.

Paper 3: Damman S., Eide W.B., Kuhnlein H.V., in press. Indigenous peoples’ nutrition transition in a right to food perspective. Accepted for publication by Food Policy. [doi:10.1016/j.foodpol.2007.08.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2007.08.002)

The analysis is based in examples from the indigenous Kolla in the North-Western region of Jujuy in Argentina and of the Inuit in the high North of Nunavut, Canada. In indigenous communities the nutrition transition characterized by a rapid westernization of diet and lifestyle is associated with rising prevalence of obesity and chronic disease. Fieldwork and literature reviews from two different policy environments, Argentina (Jujuy) and Canada (Nunavut), identified factors that add to indigenous peoples’ disease risk. The analytical framework was the emerging human right to adequate food approach to policies and programmes. Indigenous peoples’ chronic disease risk tends to increase as a result of government policies that infringe on indigenous peoples’ livelihoods and territories, undermining their economic systems, values and solidarity networks. Policies intended to increase food security, including food aid, may also fuel the nutrition transition. There is a need to explore further the connection between well-intended policies towards indigenous peoples and the development of chronic diseases, and to broaden the understanding of the role that different forms of discrimination play in the westernization of their lifestyles, values and food habits. Food policies that take due account of indigenous peoples’ human rights, including their right to enjoy their culture and their special rights may counteract the growth of chronic disease in these communities.

Paper 4: Damman S., 2007. Indigenous vulnerability and the process towards the Millennium Development Goals. Will a Human Rights-Based Approach help? *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 14: 489–539.

Nutritional health and poverty data indicate that indigenous peoples tend to be left behind in development processes. This may be due to lack of efforts by states and others to respect and protect indigenous peoples’ land and livelihoods, and also due to a failure to consider the whole spectrum of their rights, including their special rights when policies related to development are designed and enacted. A desk review of available literature on indigenous peoples and the MDG-1 indicates that development indicators and strategies tend not to capture and address indigenous peoples’ special rights, circumstances and concerns. Governments largely fail to inform themselves and act in accordance with the specific situation of the most marginalized, and also fail to relate to national multi-cultural realities. The newly adopted UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples does, in addition to other human right instruments, provide guidance on how development processes, and in particular the process towards achieving the MDGs, may better respond to indigenous peoples’ needs and development aspirations.

5. The findings in perspective

5.1 What may an Indigenous Rights-Based Approach (IRBA) add to research on food security and nutritional health in indigenous populations?

5.1.1 *The elimination of disparities*

As indicated in Paper 1, a Human Rights-Based Approach to food and nutrition would, as a first step, imply mapping the relative disadvantage suffered by assumed vulnerable groups like indigenous peoples. Malnutrition and infant mortality indicators are useful in this respect. The monitoring of children's longitudinal growth provides information about health and nutritional status while serving as a useful indirect measurement of a population's overall socioeconomic situation (WHO, 2007a). These indicators are well suited for identifying disparities among groups.

The first paper of this dissertation (Damman, 2005a) provides an overview of indigenous stunting (chronic malnutrition) and infant mortality ratios²¹ in the Americas. The overviews revealed a consistent pattern of indigenous disadvantage. Rather large disparities were found both in wealthy and in poorer countries, confirming indigenous peoples' disadvantaged situation in countries in the Americas. To the knowledge of the author such a systematic overview has still not been published by others, which makes this paper a useful contribution to the public health nutrition literature and also to the development and human rights literature.

The findings in Paper 1 leave little doubt that governments should routinely disaggregate nutrition, health and socioeconomic data by indigeneity and similar variables associated with vulnerability in order to supervise time trends.

5.1.2 *The right to food and indigenous specific rights in the aetiology of malnutrition*

The link between the right to food, the right to land and self-determination

Papers 2 and 3 juxtapose the situation of the Kolla in Jujuy with that of the Inuit of Nunavut ('Nunavummiut'). The Nunavummiut represent a possible 'best case' (Damman, 2005b; Damman et al., in press) by having achieved high degree of self-determination in the recently formed Territory of Nunavut (meaning 'our land') through a long process of negotiation with the Canadian Federal Government (Hicks and White, 2000).

Indigenous peoples' traditional food systems are largely determined by what the land provides. Rural indigenous communities tend to have a dual economy, partly monetary and partly 'land-based'. When the land or the land-based resources are threatened, their food security and nutritional health are also threatened as land-encroachments are associated with food insecurity and nutrition problems. Self-determination is a key principle within indigenous peoples' rights, and opens up for relative economic, political, spiritual and cultural independence from non-indigenous populations and Governments.

Land rights are important preconditions for self-determination. Due to the importance of land to indigenous food systems and food security the right to land is also central to an analysis of indigenous peoples' right to food (Damman, 2005b; Damman et al., in press). From the

²¹ In the paper the indigenous stunting rate is divided by the national stunting rate, and the indigenous infant mortality rate divided by the national infant mortality rate.

perspective of indigenous peoples' right to food and the high degree of self-determination enjoyed by the almost all-Inuit population of Nunavut provides an opportunity to have laws and policies designed that respond to their concerns and food security related needs within the framework of their own culture.

The experience of the Kolla in Jujuy indicate that when indigenous land issues and the realization of indigenous rights are left to governments, indigenous interests and rights may be sacrificed to the advantage of the interest of more influential groups or more pressing political issues. Even if collective land rights are ensured in the Argentinean constitution, most Kolla have still not achieved ownership over the land they depend on. This indicates that legal guarantees are not enough for those who do not have political influence and formal authority. Furthermore, the land that has been given to indigenous communities is in general of poor quality, which makes it hard to make a living from it (Damman et. al, 2005b). The powerlessness, marginalization, culture loss and dependency on the government experienced by the Kolla is similar to that of many other indigenous peoples in Latin America, as described in various sources (IWGIA, 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; MRGI, 1997; Stavenhagen, 2005; 2007).

When inspecting the last 50-60 years' interaction between the Canadian government and the Inuit one notices some interesting similarities between the two cases, particularly with regard to food insecurity. In the 1950's the Federal Government of Canada forced the then migrant Inuit to settle down in smaller communities by shooting their sledge dogs, according to the Inuit. This disrupted their food security strategies and undermined their ability to be self-sufficient. Their dependency on the monetary economy and the government increased. Today most Inuit have a fairly low income or are dependent on income support, while market food prices are much higher in Nunavut than in the Canadian south due to transport costs. The Inuit are vulnerable to food insecurity, resource scarcity and poverty (Damman, 2005b). The traditional food sharing ethos has survived, but the increasing opportunities for marketing 'land based' foods may change that, making the most vulnerable less able to cope.

The health and socioeconomic issues to be addressed and solved by the Nunavut Government were daunting in 1999 when Nunavut was formed, and this has not changed. The communities are plagued with the social problems that are so often found in indigenous communities in transition. These include high rates of suicide, especially among young men, substance abuse, violence, unemployment and dependence on government assistance. The Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (NLCA) does however provide an opportunity to turn the situation around, and to realize human rights norms and standards. It provides opportunities for education and economic growth within the context of Inuit culture, and gives the Inuit large influence over laws and policies. The NLCA allows the Inuit the opportunity to construct a governance system that not only is sensitive to Inuit culture and values, but that may also facilitate and further the notion of an Inuit way of life in accordance with the wish of the Nunavummiut. The agreement strengthens the Nunavummiut authority over their land and their land based resources, and allows their decisive influence over local institutions like health services and schools, within limitations laid down in the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement and the Federal Government.

Returning to the past is not an option to the Nunavut Government. With regard to nutritional health it will have to address present day problems of food insecurity and obesity in communities which are increasing their dependence on market food. Hunting, fishing and harvesting are still important for food security, but as the hunting technology has changed and there may be a need to travel long distances, the poorest cannot always afford to pay for gas and equipment (Damman, 2005b; Damman et al., in press).

Whether laws and policies based in a comprehension for the Inuit way of life and mentality will be enough to address and solve the present problems including food insecurity and the rise in chronic disease remains to be seen. As Nunavut is an integral part of the Canadian State structure, it is dependent on federal funding, which tends to be scarce. Furthermore, the Federal Government is not likely to accept that Nunavut deviate too much from the Canadian governance norms. The still sizable number of non-Inuit Government employees is likely to have a ‘normalizing’ and ‘Canadifying’ effect on governance for the time being. Inuit are however being trained for government positions and will gradually replace the Southerners. From the perspective of political opportunity and indigenous-government interaction therefore, Nunavut remains a likely ‘best case’ Success is however dependent both on adequate Federal Government funding and the ability of the Nunavut Government to govern in a way consistent with the rights and needs of the Nunavummiut.

The right to food in the context of the right to culture

As also discussed in Papers 2 and 3 (Damman, 2005b; Damman et al., in press) the colonization of indigenous resources in the Americas has been paralleled by a process of cultural colonization, in which the indigenous peoples have been coerced into renouncing their beliefs and cultural practices²². Within the Latin-American nation-states the ethos of ‘equality’ (or ‘sameness’) has been strong (Stavenhagen, 1990). This ethos has not led to efforts to end discrimination, but to promote a national culture closely resembling that of the European settlers, at the expense of the culture of the original inhabitants. The Church and the educational system have contributed considerably to the deterioration of traditional values and activities. The loss of land tends to accelerate the pressure towards assimilation and cultural homogenization, as dependence on mainstream society increases. While indigenous peoples’ economic impoverishment is widely recognized, their cultural impoverishment has received less attention.

The Kolla language, clothing and traditions barely exist today, and the basis for the Kolla traditional economy gradually dwindles. They find it hard to make a living through traditional livelihoods, at the same time as the unemployment benefit barely keeps indigenous households from starving. As a Kolla is unlikely to earn more than 200 pesos a month doing wage labour (50 pesos more than the unemployment benefit and about 1/4th of the national poverty line), this option is also a poor alternative. Positive elements of the Kolla food system, like food bartering and sharing and collective work arrangements are nearly gone. The government assists poor people through food aid (‘Bolsas de esperanza’). As showed in Papers 2 and 3, even if the food aid may be crucial to many, the nutritional quality is poor. The ‘Kolla diet’ is turning into a market based ‘poor man’s diet’ (Damman, 2005b; Damman et al., in press).

The ‘work for money’ unemployment schemes in Jujuy, also described in Papers 2 and 3 are characteristic of how government programs may undermine the non-monetary part of indigenous livelihoods. To receive unemployment support one is not supposed to work. Those involved in llama, sheep and goat herding and small scale agriculture still need to spend time taking care of their animals and crops. Beneficiaries under the program will have to accept to use the most productive hours of the day sweeping streets and other more or less useful activities. They thus have less opportunity to carry out traditional activities related to coping

²² The culture and interests that the state represents are furthered and reflected in national laws, policies and state institutions. These institutions enforce the mindset, behavioral patterns and values endorsed by the mainstream culture and thus threaten and undermine indigenous cultures.

with food insecurity. Heads of households receiving the 150 pesos a month in allowance need additional sources of income and food to manage, and in this case the government undermines these efforts rather than facilitating them (Damman, 2005b; Damman et al., in press).

During the 1950s there were concerns over the living standard and food situation of the Inuit, and the sentiments were that the Inuit needed to be included into the welfare state structure as Canadian citizens. In addition, the government was keenly aware that various countries aspired to claim ownership over the North. The nomadic lifestyle of the Inuit was an impediment to Canada's own aspirations, as there was a need to show that the area contained settlements inhabited by Canadian citizens (Damman, 2005b; Damman et al., in press). The Canadian Federal Government thus had a dual rationale for the enforced settlement of the Inuit, which may have influenced the rather abrupt way in which the settlement policy was effectuated.

To sum up, through processes of 'modernization' or westernization the Inuit and some Kolla have experienced an improved living standard from the perspective of western indicators of income and housing standard. They may however loose out in other ways not always recognized by the mainstream population. When change is enforced at a time when the peoples in question are not ready for it, and without consultation as in the case of the relocation and enforced settling of the Inuit, the government disrupts existing food security and coping strategies and sets the stage for dependence on government assistance. Governments may argue that they act in the best interest of the indigenous inhabitants, implicitly or explicitly assuming that the government is able to evaluate this question impartially.

Impoverished indigenous peoples will have no choice but to enter the work market as poorly paid labour or be dependent on government assistance. The undermining of indigenous livelihoods is not only an assault on their right to food. It also undermines their dignity by taking away their ability to cope and thus the relative independence that self sufficiency provides.

Do indigenous peoples have a right to a traditional food culture?

As shown in Papers 2 and 3, the traditional food culture seems to gradually loose importance among the Kolla and the Inuit. But do they have a right to have their food culture respected, protected and facilitated by the government?

As discussed, the loss of land will tend to undermine indigenous food systems and food cultures. Article 27²³ of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), on the right to culture of minorities is interpreted by the General Comment no 23 (GC 23) of the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC). It states that

“...the rights of individuals under that article...to enjoy a particular culture - may consist in a way of life which is closely associated with territory and use of its resources. This may particularly be true of members of indigenous communities constituting a minority” (Art 27/GC 23)

The Committee further observes that

“Culture manifests itself in many forms, including a particular way of life associated with the use of land resources, especially in the case of indigenous peoples. That right may include such

²³ Article 27: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language”.

traditional activities as fishing or hunting and the right to live in reserves protected by law. The enjoyment of those rights may require positive legal measures of protection and measures to ensure the effective participation of members of minority communities in decisions which affect them” (Art 27/GC 23)²⁴.

Hunting, fishing and other food acquisition strategies are the basis for indigenous peoples’ food cultures. The above paragraphs indicate that indigenous peoples’ food cultures are considered inseparable parts of the cultures which governments should respect and protect. As states in GC 23, the right to culture (and thus a food culture) may require legal measures of protection and measures to ensure their effective participation in decisions which affect them.

Both Kolla and Inuit parents worry that the youth renounce ‘Kolla food’ and ‘Inuit food’ and may prefer a western market-based diet. Advertising and other forms of marketing are powerful tools of cultural change. Commercial marketing implicitly and explicitly portray food products and drinks as associated with ‘the good life’, youth culture, social status and popularity. Marketing may thus play a part in forming youth culture in itself. Little is so far known about the effects of the marketing of unhealthy food products and drinks to indigenous youth and others who already struggle with issues over identity, acceptance, shaming and discrimination. If Kolla and Inuit youth eat heavily marketed ‘trash food’ and refuse to eat traditional food in order to distance themselves from stigma and discrimination (Damman, 2005b; Damman et al., in press), there is a need to explore marketing based in Western values, especially towards children, within the context of discrimination. Measures of anti-discrimination and positive measures encouraging inter-cultural respect may counteract the special problems suffered by indigenous peoples.

The marketing of unhealthy food items and beverages implicitly encourage the nutrition transition in traditional indigenous societies, and may spur the development of obesity and chronic disease. The WHO predicts that at the present rate non-communicable disease will account for 80% of the global disease burden by 2020. If this development is not curbed, the health expenses will become insurmountable in many countries (WHO, 2003b; WHO, 2004). Regulating of marketing of such products may protect and facilitate the right to health. Both from a human right and from a public health nutrition perspective, positive measures to facilitate positive attitudes to traditional food cultures are also advisable. The exploration in Papers 2 and 3 did not go into great detail on this subject. More in-depth studies are called for.

5.1.3 The right to be different, but still equal in rights and dignity

The principle of the ‘universality and inalienability, indivisibility, interdependency and interrelatedness of rights’ (UN, 1993) is an important premise for a human rights-based analysis (OHCHR, 2006) and for the discussion and findings of this dissertation.

While Paper 1 documents the discrepancies in infant mortality and stunting suffered by indigenous peoples of the Americas (Damman, 2005a), the last three papers explore some of the causes of their vulnerability.

Paper 2 illustrates the importance of understanding indigenous peoples’ food security in the context of their livelihoods and food systems, and consequently of understanding their right to food in the context of all rights, including indigenous specific rights. The paper illustrates

²⁴ States should not only passively tolerate indigenous peoples’ cultures and ways of life, but also protect and ensure their participation in decisions which affect them. This is a bridge over to the indigenous specific rights and also to collective rights. The ILO 169 and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples contains provisions that underpin the above paragraphs.

how disrespect for the Inuit and Kolla culture, including their livelihoods, land and resources, food systems and general way of life provides the conditions for food insecurity, poverty and dependency (Damman, 2005b). Paper 3 shows that government policies that do not take cultural diversity and indigenous rights into account may in fact undermine the elements in the indigenous culture that protect against the development of obesity and chronic disease. This translates into an increased prevalence of debilitating disease and increased future health costs (Damman et al., in press).

Paper 4 takes the analysis to the international level. The five of the nineteen country progress reports to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) containing data disaggregated by ethnicity/indigeneity show that indigenous populations are disproportionately poor. Time trends produced from available data indicate that their situation may in fact be worsening, not only relative to others in the same country, but compared to past measurements of poverty in these same groups (Damman, 2007). The Paper raises some main objections to the UN led process. These include that disaggregated data are not called for; that the MDG process have been initiated in a top-down manner, with few or no efforts to consult with indigenous peoples on their various concerns; and that indigenous peoples' needs and rights seem not to be considered. As discussed, not only are issues like inequalities and discrimination practically absent from the development discourse. The poverty line; the main poverty indicator under the MDG, is also poorly adapted to and may misrepresent traditional indigenous communities with dual economies. The 2000-2015 MDG process is already half-way to 2015, and it still does not seem to take due notice of this (Damman, 2007).

5.1.4 Issues related to universal poverty indicators in culturally diverse societies

As poverty is a concept describing a multifaceted reality of powerlessness and deprivation, one single poverty indicator cannot capture poverty as such. The poverty indicators that are used in the MDG process are therefore proxy indicators of the wider reality. The further a poverty indicator is from capturing the actual experience of poverty in a particular setting, the less useful, meaningful and valid it is. A main conclusion in paper 4 was that the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is right in claiming that the MDG monetary poverty indicators (like poverty lines and extreme poverty lines) may not properly describe, and may even misrepresent, the indigenous reality (UNPFII, 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007). This is particularly so in indigenous communities that are rural and with a dual and partly subsistence based economy (Damman, 2007).

Even if poverty lines are the most usual source of poverty data, countries also collect poverty data through censuses, in particular population and housing censuses. These indicators are also prone to have an urban bias²⁵.

²⁵ According to the Argentinean 'Population, household and housing census' questionnaire from 2001 socioeconomic status is based on indicators like housing materials, water source, whether the household owns a telephone and various electrical appliances. No questions are asked on land or herd ownership. A Kolla household that is situated in an area without electricity, in a house built from local materials, getting clean water from a well, growing their own food and owning 1000 llamas and 500 sheep will be categorized as poor. The ability of household censuses to capture the size of herds, land, informal sources or income and resources and sharing among households varies. An urban housing style with bricks and ceramic tiles is associated with wealth, while a traditional indigenous building style is associated with extreme poverty. The other indicators, like years of schooling, water and electricity are also indicators that are likely to work well in more urban and central areas, but that may lose some of their importance in the indigenous setting. In this setting however other indicators, that are not included in national censuses and surveys, may be crucial in describing their socioeconomic situation and human wellbeing.

According to the Permanent Forum a rights-based approach to development requires the development of a conceptual framework for rights-based indicators relevant to indigenous and tribal peoples. It should take into account not only a process of full, active and meaningful participation of indigenous and tribal communities at all stages of data collection, but also indicators that are of particular significance to indigenous peoples, such as access to territories (land and waters) and to resources, participation in decision-making, as well as issues of discrimination or exclusion in the areas of economic, social and cultural rights. The UNPFII calls for 'cultural indicators' and new approaches to development, both within the context of the MDG and elsewhere (UNPFII, 2007c; 2007d).

The MDG initiative focuses on national, regional and global trends towards 2015. While the initiative calls for a global effort to eradicate poverty, it has so far not opened up for a serious discussion of how poverty, as a local phenomenon, is caused and perpetuated. It prescribes solutions, but with little regard for or interest in the special needs, rights and challenges of the poorest, including indigenous peoples (Damman, 2007).

The UN MDG initiative is likely to provide the international framework within which poverty will be addressed towards 2015. As discussed in Paper 4, time is overdue for investigations into how current development strategies affect the most vulnerable, including indigenous peoples. This is needed to ensure that those who should benefit from development do not become its victims (ibid).

Paper 4 suggests that an IRBAD (Indigenous Rights-Based Approach to Development), based in all human rights including the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other relevant indigenous rights instruments may hold the key to more just development processes that allow indigenous peoples to be different, yet equal in dignity and rights (ibid). The terms IRBA and IRBAD are suggested as explicit 'subsets' of a Human Rights-Based Approach and a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development (HRBAD) in order to envisage the need for an explicit focus on indigenous peoples within policy and development thinking.

5.1.5 A commitment to address disparities and cultural diversity?

Disaggregated data

Even if scattered data exist, neither the UN agencies nor other authors have systematized data on indigenous vulnerability in order to present international overviews.

Paper 1 revealed that some disaggregated data is available (Damman, 2005a). This is in itself an intriguing finding. The infant mortality and chronic malnutrition data presented in Paper 1 were mainly available in databases and publications of UN, like the PAHO, the WHO, and the MDG initiative. The question then becomes *why* UN agencies charged with furthering health, nutrition or human development do not compile such data and address the serious public health problems reflected?

Various sources indicate that UN agencies have been discouraged from pursuing more focused investigations into national ethnic inequalities. The UN Handbook for country reporting to the MDG process does not call for data disaggregated by ethnicity, and describes such data as 'politically sensitive in some countries' (UNDG, 2003). Most countries do however disaggregate their census data by ethnicity (Morning, 2005), and as shown in Paper 4 about one fourth of the Latin American countries reporting in 2005 did in fact also report on

ethnic discrepancies in poverty (Damman, 2007). While some countries refuse having their data on national discrepancies revealed (UNDP, 2003; Alston, 2005)²⁶ others do produce and disseminate such data freely.

The gap between a HRBAD and the MDG approach to development becomes particularly evident when the MDG initiative is analysed from the perspective of marginalized and 'culturally different' indigenous peoples (Damman, 2007). Even if countries are becoming more and more open to discuss ethnic discrepancies, it seems as if development agencies of the UN hesitate to take a lead on this, at least openly.

Such an initiative would have to include both a focus in disparities and the quality and usefulness of the indicators themselves. Possibly the UN agencies are hindered by the countries that do not want any focus on ethnic disparities. They are however charged with taking on a HRBAD, and should openly encourage it. The timid approach of the major UN development agencies stands in stark contrast with the approach of the UN human rights treaty bodies that openly request that countries display and discuss ethnic disparities.

Positive developments are however on their way in certain countries and fora. Several countries have developed indigenous censuses and surveys (Tomei, 2005). Efforts are also made to develop poverty indicators that are relevant in an indigenous setting (UNPFII, 2007c), and, as will be discussed below (5.2.4). Also, the UNPFII has entered into collaboration with the UN Statistical Division (UNSD) to improve national data gathering with regard to indigenous identity (UNPFII, 2007c).

Culture bias leads to conceptual 'blind spots'

It is one of the concerns of paper 4 that the main MDG poverty and extreme poverty indicators used in Latin America are in fact unlikely to adequately capture poverty and extreme poverty in a traditional land based indigenous community (Damman, 2007). Even where rural consumer price indices are developed these are poorly adapted to non-monetary consumption.

An 'income poverty line approach' to poverty have also been criticised by Saith (2005). He discusses how this approach misrepresent the poor and lead to the subsequent adoption of targeting, monitoring, and evaluation criteria which are equally narrow - "thus carrying the many blind spots of the concept of deprivation into the operational phase of interventions" (Saith, 2005). This is in line with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues' critique. Paper 4 discusses the cultural and urban bias of poverty lines. From a methodological point of view this reduces the validity of this method among those who are the most marginalized.

Besides being monetary, the consumer price indices that are used to calculate poverty lines tend to take a typical 'western'/'modern'/'urban consumption pattern and diet as the norm. Some countries exclude the rural areas when collecting data for their consumer price index (amongst them Venezuela and Argentina). The Handbook on reporting to the MDG process indirectly support this, by stating that poverty lines are not well suited for disaggregation (UNDG, 2003). A 'culture bias' should obviously be avoided from a methodological point of view. When a method to determine poverty is not equally applicable in all national settings, and least applicable among the poorest, this should be a matter of concern to development planners and policy makers. This implies that new approaches are needed. A solution to culture bias and consequent 'blind spots' has been proposed for a while without being granted much attention. In 1983, the former UN Special Rapporteur Martínez Cobo stated that:

²⁶ This was also uttered informally to the author by health ministers from several countries, including in Latin America, during the WHO General Assembly in 2000.

In multi-ethnic societies, action must always be based on criteria which, at least in principle, assert the equality of the cultural rights of the various ethnic groups. The State has the obvious obligation to formulate and implement a cultural policy which will, among other things, create the necessary conditions for the coexistence and harmonious development of the various ethnic groups living in its territory (Martínez Cobo, 1986, para 134 part V)).

Latin American countries are still far from such multiethnic approaches to policy-making.

Could poverty indicators be universally applicable?

Designing universal poverty indicators that apply equally well in mainstream urban cultures as in traditional rural indigenous cultures is a challenging task. Chronic malnutrition²⁷ is in fact a better candidate than the poverty line, because children across all regions of the world will attain a similar standard of length/height and physical development if they grow up under optimal conditions - implying adequate feeding practices, good health care and a healthy environment²⁸ (WHO, 2006). Stunting data may be among the most available of all poverty indicators, as malnutrition data are routinely collected nationally and datasets of the “WHO Global database on child growth and malnutrition” (WHO, 2007a) display data on chronic malnutrition²⁹, from relevant nutrition surveys in the respective countries. Stunting is closely related to and reflects poverty (WHO, 2007a), and may easily be disaggregated.

If one finds discrepancies in length/height among children from different ethnic groups in the same country this indicates discrepancies in socioeconomic status among these groups. Nutrition and mortality statistics reflect the physical reaction to poverty related factors on many levels, as portrayed in Figure 1, part 1.3.

Table 1 below compares the ratios on indigenous stunting, infant mortality, poverty and extreme poverty from Papers 1 and 4 (Damman, 2005a; Damman, 2007). As observed, all indicators point in the same direction, supporting the notion of indigenous disadvantage. To understand the reasons for relative overlaps and discrepancies one would need much more detailed information on the situation of indigenous peoples in the various countries and places.

Stunting may be closer than the poverty lines to being a “gold standard” among indicators reflecting ‘poverty’ or an ‘adequate standard of living’, as it reflects actual scarcities in regard to food security or health care. The discussion on poverty indicators is however complex, as it implicitly includes assumptions of the content of human wellbeing, the content of ‘the good life’ and do not relate to the need to sometimes prioritize among needs and wants, as discussed in more detail below.

²⁷ Length/height-for-age (stunting) and height-for-weight (thinness) in populations of children are proxies for multifaceted deprivations. In particular length/height-for-age is a good proxy for poverty (WHO, 1995).

²⁸ The new WHO Child Growth Standards, released on April 27, 2006 differ from any existing growth charts by being prescriptive rather than just descriptive. A key characteristic of the new standard is that it establishes breastfeeding as the biological “norm” and the breastfed infant as the standard for measuring healthy growth.

²⁹ Chronic malnutrition may be caused by long term exposure to nutritionally inadequate diets or infectious diseases which hinder the intake and effective use of nutrients. Mostly chronic malnutrition is the result of a synergistic effect of these two factors.

Table 1: Indigenous disadvantage with regard to poverty, extreme poverty, chronic malnutrition in U5's and infant mortality in Latin-America

MDG REPORTS 2003-2005	DATA ON INDIGENOUS DISADVANTAGE IN LATIN AMERICA					
	Rates of indigenous poverty and extreme poverty (%); Ratios* of poverty and extreme poverty, Chronic Malnutrition (CM) and Infant Mortality (IM)					
	INDIG. POOR %	Poverty RATIO	IND. EXT. POOR %	Extreme poverty RATIO	CM RATIO	IM RATIO
Belize	77	2,3	54	4.1	2,6	1,2
Bolivia	74	1,4	52	1,9	1,8	1,9
Chile	30	1,5	8	1,8	1,4	Up to 4,1
Ecuador	87	1,4	56	2,0	1,7	1,8-2,1
Guatemala	77	1,8	26	3,3	1,4	1,2
Mexico	90	1,9	69	4,6	1,7	1,9
Panama	98	1,8	90	4,1	3,5	1,8
Peru	63	1,5	22	2,3	1,2-1,4	1,5

* As seen in Appendix 1 and Papers 1 and 4 the ratios of indigenous disadvantage are calculated in different ways depending on availability of data³⁰.

Poverty indicators in the context of an Indigenous Rights-Based Approach to Development

Poverty and development indicators tend to reflect what mainstream development experts consider to be desirable goals and benchmarks, according to their vision of what is good for society or for the economy, or what would be 'the good life' for the population.

It seems that some development and poverty indicators, when applied to indigenous peoples, in fact provide information on the degree to which indigenous peoples have let go of traditions, have moved away from geographically marginalized areas that lack tap water and electricity, and have in general been assimilated into a western lifestyle and consumption pattern.

Even if stunting and infant mortality may be considered free from cultural bias, it should be part of the consideration that these indicators are influenced by access to, quality of and use of health services. Low rates of infant mortality and stunting therefore tend to be associated with a certain proximity to health centers. Some indigenous peoples prefer to isolate themselves from the opportunities but also problems offered by the western society and by governments. This may be the best option available, considering the failure of mainstream society to respect and protect their universal human rights and their indigenous specific rights.

Whether truly cross-cultural and universally accepted poverty and development indicators may be developed remains to be seen. If this is ever to be achieved there is a need for inclusive and participatory discussions on the content, goals and processes of development. The

³⁰ As explained in Papers 1 and 4 the ratios should preferably be made from indigenous divided by non-indigenous data. Where data did exist on the situation in the indigenous population, but where no data existed on the non-indigenous population, the indigenous data were divided by the national average. In countries where data on the indigenous population did not exist data from areas with sizable indigenous populations ('proxy for area') were used to approximately describe the situation in the indigenous population, and divided by the national average (the situation in the whole population). Where data did exist on the situation in the indigenous population, but where no data existed on the non-indigenous population, the indigenous data were divided by the national average.

UNSD supports participatory approaches and stresses that indigenous peoples should be included into design of census questionnaires (UNSD, 2001; 2006).

National participatory processes towards defining good indicators are welcome opportunities to have a second look at approaches and concepts used in surveys and censuses that may be less universal than first assumed. These include for instance the household and its composition³¹ and the role of social networks. The more culturally distinct indigenous households are the less relevant census and survey questionnaires are likely to be to them. Not only may the questions posed be irrelevant, but issues of crucial importance to indigenous poverty and wellbeing may not be touched upon.

An IRBAD will most likely imply that at least some indicators are developed locally and have only local applicability. Other indicators, particularly those related to indigenous rights like land access, land ownership, participation and self-determination are likely to be of a more general application. Indicators of discrimination, marginalization and human rights abuses are also likely to be generally applicable.

In short, the IRBA is likely to diversify the use of indicators, and therefore complicate the picture for development planners. At the same time they will largely increase the quality of development thinking and monitoring.

5.2 Methodological considerations

The *validity* of a study is determined by whether, and to what degree, the researcher has managed to measure what he or she intends to measure (Benestad and Laake, 2004). For the conclusions to be trusted the indicators and measures should capture what they are intended to, measurement errors or misclassifications should be avoided, and the conclusions drawn should be sound. Biases, or systematic errors, in collecting or interpreting data may compromise the validity of the findings (Hennekens and Buring, 1987).

This section first discusses the use of the ‘Right to food framework’ (Figure 2) and goes on to discuss methodological issues linked to ethnicity or indigeneity as variables in health research, and methodological issues related to biases and validity of the findings of the Papers.

5.2.1 The ‘right to food framework’

In Papers 2 and 3 the framework, or ‘matrix’ for the analysis of state obligations and conduct in regard to the human right to adequate food (Oshaug et al., 1994) (Table 1, section 1.3 and in Paper 3 (Damman et al, in press)) was used to analysis of state obligations towards indigenous peoples. In Paper 3 it was used as the organizing framework, to systematize examples of ways in which the governments influence and have influenced the food security and nutritional health of the Kolla and the Inuit. The matrix clearly invites an analysis not only of what states do or should do, but also of the ways government decisions may threaten and undermine rights. This

³¹ It is often taken for granted that the household is a relatively constant unit of analysis consisting of the core family of parents, children and at times also grandparents living under one roof and sharing food and a common household economy. Indigenous peoples may however organize their households differently from the national norm. The household may be migrant or transhumant, and thus have several addresses. This may have important consequences for whether the questions in censuses and surveys are relevant to them, and for the ability of others to understand the answers given to the questions of the questionnaires in their proper context. Questions on household size, income, expenditure, available resources and standard of living of the household may for instance be hard to answer if household members live and eat with, and consider themselves members of, several social units (Damman 1997).

makes it useful to policy makers who wish to improve their performance with regard to indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups.

The framework invites collaboration among the human rights community, governments, and rights holders. Such a collaboration may help decision makers develop a more pronounced understanding of the ways that human rights are relevant to their work.

As discussed in Paper 4, according to the above principle of the ‘universality and inalienability, indivisibility, interdependency and interrelatedness of rights’ (UN, 1993), the right in question (here the right to food) should be informed by all other rights, including indigenous peoples’ special rights. The framework relates to one right at the time, but should be informed by all other rights. In Papers 2 and 3 the example of food aid in Jujuy made it particularly clear that the government initiative to assist the Kolla who experience food shortage and poverty may at the same time undermine their traditional food culture and fuel the development of nutrition related chronic diseases. Out of context this may seem like an unfortunate but inescapable effect of food aid. However, when indigenous peoples’ special rights are allowed to inform the analysis, it becomes apparent that governments in the past and today have failed to respect and protect the livelihoods and to protect the constitutionally guaranteed land rights of the Kolla. Thus, in Argentina the government has indirectly and directly taken part in impoverishing them, and the Kolla have ended up in a situation where they have no option but to accept their poverty and gradual culture loss. Whether planned or not, the overall policies have reflected disregard for indigenous peoples’ rights and have been policies towards culture loss and thus ethnocide.

The rising attention to the connection between the nutrition transition and the rise in non-communicable chronic disease (O’Dea, 1992; Kuhnlein et al., 2004; Rayner et al, 2007; Uauy et al., 2001; Raschke and Cheema, 2007) may work to draw attention to the importance of respecting and protecting indigenous food systems, livelihoods and indigenous specific rights. The effect that food aid has on present and future nutritional health may be an unintended side-effect. It does however accentuate the importance of analysing the wider picture in order to capture possible threats to other rights, here the right to health.

It is a strength but also a possible weakness that the framework is designed to analyse government obligations with regard to one right at the time. It becomes up to the users of the framework to ensure that the analysis is carried out within the wider context of all rights. The analysis should be preceded by a careful mapping of what groups will be affected, directly or indirectly, by the policies. The special circumstances, needs and rights of each group should be duly noted. Based on this information, the analyses should be carried out for each of the affected groups. This should be done bearing in mind that the measures to realize rights in one group may be different from those needed in other groups, and that improved food security for some may imply reduced food security for others³².

Especially if the framework is being used for policy development it takes a comprehensive knowledge about the circumstances of various groups covered or affected by the policy to ensure that the universal and special rights of all are ensured. Such insight is best provided by representatives from the relevant and affected groups themselves. It should therefore be a prerequisite for using the framework that the assessments and analyses are carried out in a transparent and participatory manner, with representatives from all affected groups and stakeholders. Furthermore, from the planning phase and all through processes of development, or other social, economic or political change, governments should allow and

³² Governments should for instance not allow companies or farmers to take over indigenous land, even if this might improve national food security, and provide jobs and incomes in industry or small-scale farming.

ensure mechanisms by which all rights holders may hold the government - the 'duty bearer' - accountable, so that meaningful participation and feedback is possible all through the process.

5.2.2 *The use of a ratio to determine discrepancies in stunting and infant mortality*

The ratio related to nationwide disaggregated data

The prevalence of stunting in indigenous children less than 5 years of age and the rates of infant mortality in the indigenous populations in the countries of the Americas vary substantially. By dividing available data on stunting and infant mortality in the indigenous population with the national averages in the same countries, the resulting ratio indicates the size of the discrepancy³³. Based in these ratios interethnic discrepancies in the various countries, rich and poor, may be examined to verify whether indigenous populations are disproportionately vulnerable, as shown in Paper 1, tables 5.1a and 5.1b (Damman, 2005a).

The ratio resembles the Relative Risk (RR) (Hennekens and Buring, 1987). The RR would however be calculated by dividing the values found in the indigenous population with that in the non-indigenous population. As information on the non-indigenous population tended not to be available the national average was used instead. By using the national average as denominator a source of error was knowingly introduced, as the indigenous population is also part of the national population. The approach was considered the best option available, given the limitations of the data materials.

The source of error introduced by doing so will be relatively small if the indigenous population is small. The error becomes more significant where the indigenous proportion is larger. As seen in figure 5.1a and 5.1b in Paper 1 (Damman, 2005a), the indigenous population is reported to constitute less than 10% of the national population in 14 out of 21 countries. In 4 countries however the proportion is reported to be more than 40%. This is the case in Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru and Ecuador.

When the indigenous population constitutes a large proportion of the total population the ratio will approach one (1, or 'unity'). This means that the error will partly erase actual disparities. The national data from Guatemala exemplifies this. Guatemala has the largest indigenous population among the countries (66%). In Guatemala the indigenous/national infant mortality ratio is 1.2, while the indigenous/non-indigenous ratio is 1.3. With regard to stunting the error is larger. The 'indigenous/national average' ratio is 1.4, while the indigenous/non-indigenous (or "ladino") ratio is at almost 2 (Damman, 2005a).

Efforts could have been made to calculate the proportion of stunting or infant mortality in the non-indigenous population. As the national estimates of the size of the indigenous population also tend to be rather inaccurate, it was decided that the best option was to present the ratios as described over and to take due notice of this source of bias in the discussion. As seen in tables 5.1a and 5.1b, the ratios are all higher than 1, which means that the pattern of indigenous vulnerability is coherent (Damman, 2005a).

'Proxy area' in Paper 1:

In the 'proxy area' column in tables 5.1a and 5.1b (Damman, 2005a) the nominators are proxy indicators representing the prevalence of stunting and infant mortality in geographical areas considered to be 'indigenous' by various authoritative sources (PAHO, 1997; PAHO, 2002a; 2002b; MRGI 1997; IWGIA 1999; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003). The 'proxy area' was used to

³³ The nominator (proportion of stunting in indigenous population and proportion of IMR in indigenous population) was divided by the denominator (national proportion of stunting / IMR).

make the most out of national data disaggregated by region, when data disaggregated by ethnicity/indigeneity was not available. This approach introduced a bias similar to the one above. If indigenous children are worse off than non-indigenous children in these areas the ratio will be smaller than if all children were indigenous. The error represents a systematic bias that falsely reduces the size of the gap. The additional error introduced by dividing the values of the 'proxy areas' by the national average will depend on the proportion of the national population that live in this area, and will, as discussed, under-estimate the gap between the indigenous and the non-indigenous populations. On the other hand, as these 'indigenous areas' tend to be among the most rural, marginal and poor in the countries, the 'proxy area' ratios may also falsely overestimate the problems encountered in the indigenous population if the 'proxy area' ratios are used to represent total indigenous population. This should therefore be done with caution.

In any case, the consistent pattern of disadvantage shown in tables 5.1a and 5.1b strongly suggests a need for countries to investigate further into the indicated discrepancies by disaggregating nutrition, health and mortality data by ethnicity/indigeneity.

Small studies

In the *small studies* columns in tables 5.1a and 5.1b (Damman, 2005a) the sample sizes of the studies are small. The error associated with dividing the values for indigenous stunting and infant mortality in these studies by the national average will therefore be negligible. As mentioned in Paper 1 (ibid) however, these studies tend to be carried out in remote indigenous areas and villages that are worse off than the average. As in the case of the 'proxy area' columns, the ratios in these columns may not be extrapolated to represent the total indigenous population. They are nevertheless examples of what the situation is like in some areas.

Other issues

The ratios presented in tables 1.5a and in 1.5b in Paper 1 (Damman, 2005a) emerge from surveys and studies from different countries. The comparability of the ratios depends on the nominator and denominator used, as described above, but also on the degree of standardization of methodologies used in the Americas. As described in PAHO's publication *Health in the Americas* some work still remains to be done before all national data are produced through the same standardized methodologies (PAHO, 1997). For instance, while most studies on stunting include only children up to 5 years of age, a few include children up to the age of 7. Furthermore, as discussed below, indigeneity is identified and defined differently in different countries. The methodological issues discussed inevitably affect the accuracy of the findings presented, and introduces some problems related to the validity of comparing the ratios directly, both within countries and across them. These methodological issues are recognized and addressed both by PAHO and the UN Statistical Division to find ways to increase harmonization and standardization of methodological approaches (PAHO 1997; Morning, 2005; UNSD, 2006; 2007b). In the case of Paper 1 (Damman, 2005a), the biases inherent in the methodological approach do not compromise the validity of the conclusion on a coherent pattern of indigenous vulnerability. The actual values of the ratio should however be regarded with some caution.

5.2.3 The use of a ratio to determine discrepancies in poverty

Five of the country reports for the 2005 *Millennium Development Goal (MDG) review* contained information on indigenous poverty. The poverty and extreme poverty in the

indigenous populations were partly contrasted with non-indigenous populations, partly with the national average. This means that the biases and validity problems related to tables 5.1a and 5.1b in Paper 1 also in part applies to Paper 4 (Damman, 2007). The findings do however indicate a need to investigate further into indigenous poverty, also with regard to the suitability of the indicators used.

5.2.4 Methodological issues related to introducing ethnicity and indigeneity into health and poverty research

The choice of identifier question may influence the findings

The nutrition, mortality and poverty data on indigenous peoples from countries in the Americas referred to in Papers 1-4 are based in various secondary data sources that use different inclusion criteria to identify indigenous households and individuals. This raises some methodological issues that should be discussed further.

As shown in Appendix 2, the most frequently used inclusion criteria in countries in Latin America are self-identification and language (UNSD, 2007a). Furthermore, the terms 'tribal' or 'ethnic group' are also applied. These terms all capture aspects of indigenous identity. The choice of identifier question in censuses and surveys will however influence who are included and excluded.

According to the ILO Convention 169 identity shall be determined through self-identification as tribal or indigenous. This has become the norm in the human rights system, and is recommended by the UNPFII and also the UN Statistical Division (UNPFII, 2007b; 2007c; UNSD, 2006).

Identifying indigenous identity through asking whether indigenous languages are used may be useful in some cases, but languages do not give a complete picture of the size of the indigenous population, especially as languages are lost following urbanization, discrimination and other factors (UNPFII, 2007c). Most countries have through policies and practices suppressed indigenous languages and cultures, and indigenous parents have at times chosen not to teach their children to speak their mother tongue to help them succeed in life. Languages are lost, even if indigenous communities still persevere. In general, when spoken language is the criteria, it is likely to exclude households from more central areas that have had extensive government contact³⁴.

Criteria different from self-identification may exclude people who see themselves as indigenous. As shown in Appendix 2 the Bolivian census asked for both language and self-declared ethnic identity during the 2001 census. While 50% of the population reported to speak an indigenous language, 62% self-identified as indigenous. The official definition of the National Institute of Statistics is still language however, as can be seen on the website (INE, 2007)³⁵.

³⁴ There are three types of language data that can be collected in censuses, namely: Mother tongue, defined as the language usually spoken in the individual's home in his or her early childhood; Usual language, defined as the language currently spoken, or most often spoken, by the individual in his or her present home; Ability to speak one or more designated languages. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/popchar/popcharmethods.htm>.

³⁵ In Bolivia language has been the indigenous identifier in censuses and surveys since 1976. In the integrated household surveys from 1989 and 2001 a question on self-identified ethnicity was added to the question on language (INE, 2007). The focus on indigenous rights by the new indigenous Bolivian president Evo Morales is most likely to influence the way data on the indigenous population is presented.

New focuses and approaches within the UN

The UNSD Social and Demographic Statistics Branch collaborates with the UNPFII to review national practices of collecting and disseminating data on national and/or ethnic group, language and religion with special focus on indigenous persons. UNSD also participated in the Fourth Session of the UNPFII (in May 2005) (UNPFII, 2007c). The United Nations Expert Group on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, through an international consultative process, has produced the draft Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2. Here indigenous peoples were included for the first time as a separate topic in these Principles and Recommendations that are intended to provide guidance to countries in the planning and conducting of their population and housing censuses in the 2010 round (UNSD, 2006; UNPFII, 2007c).

Participation

At the international level, the UNSD plays a key role in providing technical assistance to countries on the collection and dissemination of ethnicity data (UNSD, 2003). As a technical institution of the UN it approaches the issue of 'indigenous identity' from the perspective of data accuracy and comparability. Importantly, the UNSD suggests that "the definitions and criteria applied by each country investigating ethnic characteristics of the population *must therefore be determined by the groups that it desires to identify*." This is in line with the UNPFII recommendations (UNPFII, 2004) and also with the UN general principle of self-identification, as expressed in the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. Self-identification is also the norm proposed by the World Conference on Racism (2001) (The Durban Conference).

The term 'indigenous' is useful in socioeconomic statistical analysis as it may help display problems that indigenous peoples and subgroups have in common, like for instance low access to health services, discrimination in the work market, and, as illustrated here, high rates of infant mortality or chronic malnutrition. Consistent patterns indicate problems that should be investigated further. However, individuals who have not been involved in the political discourse may feel that the term does not apply to them. Others may feel stigmatized by it. To get as accurate information as possible from data gathering exercises indigenous representatives should be invited into the process of making the identifier questions used in surveys and censuses. An example of the importance of indigenous participation is from the 2001 census in Argentina, where indigenous identity was registered for the first time. The 'Censo Nacional de Poblacion, Hogares y Viviendas 2001' used as identifier question (see Appendix 2): 'Existe en este hogar alguna persona que se reconozca descendiente o perteneciente a un pueblo indígena?', 'A que pueblo?' (meaning: 'Is there anyone in this household that recognize him or herself as descending from or belonging to an indigenous people?' with the follow-up question 'What people?'). In Argentina the word 'indígena' (indigenous) has taken on a negative meaning, as it is tainted by racist notions in the general population. It is at times also confused with 'indigente', meaning extremely poor. Most Kolla in Northern Argentina find the term 'pueblos originarios' (first/original peoples) more acceptable. The identifier question was therefore heavily criticized by national indigenous organizations. They made a public protest, called for a boycott of the census question and reproached the government for not consulting with them. Due to the outcry and protests many are likely to have boycotted the question. The census result that about 10 % self-identify as indigenous may therefore not be valid, and is likely to be too low, even in the present situation with stigmatization and discrimination (Damman, 2005b; Damman et al., in press). The assumption of many key informants in Jujuy that the proportion of indigenous is around 80 % is however

based in their own undeclared assumptions and criteria, most likely linked to heritage or physical appearance. This may not give a correct picture of the proportion considering themselves as belonging to one of the 'original peoples' (including Kolla) in the Province. This illustrates the importance of participation, and also problems associated with non-participatory approaches. The problems and challenges facing indigenous people stem from deep-rooted historical processes and structural causes. They require a multidimensional approach, political will, and active participation on the part of the indigenous people themselves, based on respect for differences and intercultural sensitivity (Stavenhagen, 2007).

This is an example of the uncertainty surrounding the measurement of ethnicity and indigeneity. The ambiguity stems from the subjective nature inherent to all social constructs, as well as the heterogeneity of concepts and terminology used to capture these social features. More research is needed in order to meet the challenges involved in the collection of ethnic data (UNSD, 2003).

Conclusion

An 'ethnic identifier' question based on ethnicity / indigeneity may not have the degree of stringency that one would have liked to see. This may influence the comparability of data across countries. When self-identification is the norm, discrimination may reduce the number that identify as indigenous, while measures of affirmative action or other advantages may increase it. Persons of mixed descent may fluctuate from one category to the other, and political mobilization in the indigenous population may inspire an increasing number of individuals to self-identify as indigenous.

On the other hand, within the context of social justice, human rights and also public health nutrition disaggregated data draw attention to areas or groups that should receive priority attention. At the time being even imperfect data serves a purpose. Data on ethnic disparities may spur further attention to the causes of these inequalities, and will spur the development of better data and methods.

In any case, one should avoid that countries are ranked or in other ways compared in order to 'shame' those doing the worst. Even if the data sources had been better this should and would not be the intention of making such overview. The fact that national data exist in some countries should be applauded, and countries should be encouraged to follow up such findings through in depth studies and through policy.

5.2.5 Triangulation of methods; the four papers

Papers 1 and 4 (Damman, 2005a; Damman, 2007) were so called 'desk studies' assessing discrepancies with regard to infant mortality, stunting, and poverty in the Americas (Paper 1) and in Latin America (Paper 4) while Papers 2 and 3 (Damman, 2005b; Damman et al., in press) were based on primary data which allowed a more in-depth analysis of the human right situation in the two case areas. Examples of the interaction between governments and indigenous communities with regard to specific food security related issues provide a rich understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to human rights-based and Indigenous Rights-Based Approaches to governance. When complementing information gathered from the 'desk studies' on interethnic discrepancies with the qualitative information from the two case areas this allowed a more in-depth understanding of why the discrepancies exist. Triangulation thereby provided a richer body of knowledge than one method alone.

6 Recommendations related to an Indigenous Rights-Based Approach

This dissertation shows that indigenous peoples' vulnerability needs to be understood in the context of their special problems as peoples with distinct cultures within nation states, and the failure of the state and others to relate to their general human rights and their special rights. Development has often taken place at the expense of indigenous peoples' resources and livelihoods, and to many indigenous communities and peoples development and 'progress' has been synonymous with impoverishment and acculturation. It aggravates the problem further that indigenous individuals and peoples tend to experience discrimination and subordination when in contact with representatives of the mainstream society and the government.

When governments fail to respect, protect and facilitate indigenous peoples' cultures and livelihoods related to the use of traditional territories, and when they in addition leave indigenous areas under-funded and neglected, this has repercussions for nutritional health and other socioeconomic indicators. This dissertation has provided examples of how state policies, action and inaction may contribute to chronic malnutrition and chronic nutrition related disease. It adds to the problem that insight and attention to indigenous peoples' situation is hampered by their relative invisibility within data analyses, reports and policies. The failure to understand and relate to the indigenous reality is also mirrored in the widespread use of poverty indicators that do not sufficiently represent their realities. This will hamper good and insightful analyses on their poverty, which again is likely to lead to anti-poverty measures and development policies that are poorly adapted to their needs.

The dissertation introduces an 'Indigenous Rights-Based Approach' (IRBA). The IRBA is a subset of a general Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) that focuses explicitly on indigenous peoples and their situation, and the whole spectrum of their rights. The IRBA will contain the elements necessary for indigenous peoples and individuals to have their universal human rights and their indigenous specific rights respected, protected and fulfilled. It is most likely that such an approach will also benefit their food security and nutritional health.

6.1 Policy recommendations

6.1.1 National level

- Indigenous areas should receive the funding, services and opportunities necessary for them to enjoy equal rights, including services of equal quality. These should be adapted to their culture and their specific needs.
- Indigenous self-determination will tend to imply taking over certain financial responsibilities from the state. The indigenous self-governance institutions will also have to take over responsibilities to ensure the human rights of the inhabitants. As long as the indigenous individuals remain inhabitants of the state the state remains the main duty bearer with reward to human rights. The state thus cannot refrain from contributing economically or otherwise if indigenous governance institutions have inadequate resources and capacity.
- In countries that today fail to provide data disaggregated by ethnicity / indigeneity, like Argentina, routines should be established to disaggregate data sets by malnutrition, poverty and other indicators associated with vulnerability. This allows quantification of discrepancies and the monitoring of time trends and will facilitate policies to eliminate disparities.

- Governments should be accountable with regard to revealed interethnic discrepancies and human rights abuse suffered by indigenous peoples. Such information should be shared and discussed, including with human rights treaty bodies and relevant UN bodies.
- Methodological problems linked to disaggregating data by indigeneity should be identified, discussed and solved in collaboration with indigenous target groups.
- Indicators and methods used to capture nutritional health and socio-economic status should be thoroughly discussed with representatives from the various indigenous peoples and communities to ensure that they are free from cultural bias. Such consultations are warranted at the international, national, sub-national and local level.
- As part of the same process, ‘culture specific’ indigenous poverty, development and human wellbeing indicators should be identified in collaboration with the indigenous peoples and communities in question. These should supplement the above indicators, and be applied in the geographical areas and communities where they are relevant.
- Indigenous specific indicators should be applied in all relevant data collection, and should be part of the basis for culturally sensitive policies in multicultural countries.
- Indigenous identifier questions should be developed in collaboration with indigenous peoples themselves. These should be as standardized as feasible, but only to the extent that they are valid for all they are meant to describe. The main criterion should be self-identification.
- Nutritional discrepancies should inspire the analysis of causal factors, the identification of ‘duty bearers’ and the analysis of whether present government policies address these causal factors in a satisfying way. If not, necessary changes should be identified and more adequate policies developed. In cases of indigenous self-determination the self-government institution becomes a duty bearer and should be examined in the same way. Within an indigenous right-based approach to food and nutritional health the indigenous rights holders would by implication take part in an analysis of causes and solutions.
- Specific attention should be given to improving the food security and nutritional health of indigenous peoples. Where these groups have been neglected and have experienced discrimination, affirmative action may be the key to bringing them up to the same level as the non-indigenous population. Such measures should not threaten their cultural integrity.
- All policies and action plans that may affect indigenous peoples should be developed in collaboration with them, with due regard to their culture and with their best interest in mind.
- Indigenous autonomy and self-determination may be the key to improving the nutritional situation and general wellbeing within indigenous communities. Models for autonomy and self-determination should therefore be further developed and improved, and the experiences shared to benefit others.
- Human rights standards and principles need to guide all policy processes and goal setting, so that development may become a process towards implementing all human rights for all.
- Decision-makers should integrate indigenous peoples’ rights into their understanding of development. They should ensure that laws or policies do not negatively affect indigenous peoples’ rights, including their right to food, and benefit their rights when possible.

6.1.2 Policy recommendations, UN

- The UN organizations, funds and agencies charged with food, health, nutrition and development should jointly make efforts to call attention to national disparities based in indigeneity / ethnicity, and should encourage countries that still have not done so to provide information on disparities with regard to indigeneity / ethnicity.
- A specially assigned UN body should be charged with compiling and presenting yearly reports on the latest findings on indigenous/non-indigenous disparities. The UNPFII and the UN Statistical Division should take part in the endeavour.
- The UN agencies should take on a Human Rights-Based Approach, including an Indigenous Rights-Based Approach to their work, and contribute to spread the use and influence of these.
- The UN development agencies should collaborate closely with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the relevant UN human rights treaty bodies and the International Labour Organization to make use of potential synergy effects between the human rights and the development bodies of the UN.

6.2 Recommendations for future research

- The following issues need to be further explored:
 - Ways in which indigenous cultures are violated or undermined by government action or inaction, including also the ways that governments threaten the land, water and food resources needed for indigenous livelihoods and food security.
 - Ways in which indigenous cultures, including their food cultures, may risk to be undermined as a 'by-product' of efforts to provide indigenous peoples with access to mainstream government services, when these are designed without taking indigenous cultures and institutions sufficiently into account.
 - The effect of racist attitudes, discrimination, shaming and Western mainstream culture on indigenous traditions including social networks, food choice, health-related behavior, nutritional health and overall health and wellbeing.
- Some so-called universal indicators may not be that universal, as they are culturally biased and reflect mainstream values and interests. There is an urgent need to explore
 - the intercultural applicability of the various universally and nationally applied indicators;
 - the commitment within countries, the UN and IFIs to develop and use culturally acceptable and meaningful indicators that reflect the indigenous reality.
- Both states and authorities of indigenous self-governing institutions should be guided by the standards of an IRBA. There is a need for more studies of lessons learned from 'best practices' and not-so-good practices with regard to indigenous autonomy and self-government.
- Both a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and an Indigenous Rights-Based Approach (IRBA) need further operationalization.

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