

American ways of living. Many Indians simply wish to be left alone. Though willing to regard Washington programs as sources of funds to be used opportunistically—from long experience viewing such programs as temporary, regardless of plans and promises glowingly described—these Indian groups are most inclined toward maintaining the status quo of reservation life. If certain studies are indicative of general trends, these may be in the majority.¹

Other Indians, though wishing to maintain a separate existence, often at variance from the prevailing culture of American society, wish to develop their reservations economically.

Still others wish to learn the techniques and skills which can enable them to leave the reservation and become functioning members of the larger world.

The opportunities and risks confronting OEO in these circumstances are clear. Given a sound approach, an effective program, a favorable set of conditions, OEO stands to make unparalleled changes in the lives of American Indians in terms of their own felt needs and aspirations—and in terms of the hopes of society-at-large for a universally prosperous and forward-looking America. However, without sufficient vision and awareness of the intricacies of American Indian realities, vast funds and well-intentioned efforts may be invested with few results beyond minor shifts in reservation power structures and a broadened gap between the minority of Indians who are Federally employed and the many who are the intended beneficiaries of OEO endeavors.

Evaluation of on-going Community Action Programs on Indian reservations is therefore extremely prudent at this time to determine, now that such programs are substantially launched, how realistically they are geared both to the opportunities and to the pitfalls represented by Indian values and conditions. Beyond immediate problems of Indian health, education, and employment, such determination is critical to questions of communication, identity, alienation, factionalism, traditional distrust, cynicism and hopelessness. Are these understood and being met in a hopeful and enduring way? Is there sufficient variety of approach in CAP programs to accommodate both those who wish to compete in society-at-large, and those who wish to develop an economically viable but culturally separatist reservation—and to offer both the paths to realization? Is there effort to overcome, with antagonism, the indifference and opportunism certain to be encountered?

The balance of this report examines six selected American Indian reservations and their CAP programs in these regards. After considering the development of Indian poverty and research approaches employed in evaluation of CAP structure and operations on these reservations, each of the six is discussed in respect to relevant historical and cultural background, resources and people, and the arrival and impact of CAP. An analytical critique and a summation of significant findings follow, relating this material both to Indian poverty and OEO responses. Recommendations derived from this total range of investigations and analyses conclude the report. These focus on the principal problem areas identified in the course of project research and field work, and include suggestions, both for action and further research, bearing on improvement of existing programs. A brief note suggesting an innovative approach to development of economically self-sustaining reservations is added, together with a brief commentary on alternative roads for the Indian into the post-poverty world.

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

A. THE DEPTH OF INDIAN POVERTY: A BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIAN-WHITE RELATIONS

1. *Political and Social Trends to World War II*

Pre-revolutionary America was colonized by several European nations, simultaneously and seriatim. In the course of this colonization the Europeans encountered many Indian nations and linguistic groups; on both sides there was wide diversity of practices and beliefs. This, plus language variations and the hostilities within each side, worked chaos on Indian-white relations and, as the balance of power swung increasingly to the whites, worked increasingly to the detriment of the Indians.

The Indians were the losers both when the Europeans fought among themselves, paying the penalty for taking sides, and when the Europeans were at peace with one another and wanted lands to settle. Whatever the Indian did, he lost: lands, people, livelihood. Warfare, epidemics, and attrition during migra-

¹ An example of such studies: Ablon (1964: 296-304).