

involve the poor in selective change programs. The tendency is to either wholly reject a program, or to wholly accept the program and reject the entire current situation, often resulting in disillusionment. That selectivity of this sort may need to be encouraged is taken up in the recommendation section concluding this report. Here the intention is simply to give the reader a framework for evaluating the pervasive criticisms of CAP programs and operations which the data evince. The point is that such criticism is natural and expected, and must be understood on two levels: its content, and the particular process of criticism itself which is rooted in the subcultures of American Indian reservations.

B. FIELD RESEARCH IN AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES

1. General Considerations

In examining the roots of poverty in communities where, by almost any definition, poverty is widespread, the researcher must be well aware of the role of local attitudes and traditional modes of human interaction within such communities in maintaining isolation from the generally higher degree of prosperity in surrounding populations. There may be many objective and observable economic imbalances which initially created the condition, and which need to be modified in order to ameliorate or eliminate poverty in a given area, but the very observability of these imbalances leads one to ask why nothing has been done. The reasons are almost certain to lie somewhere in the outlook of the people concerned and in that of the people who have been unsuccessfully attempting to eradicate poverty in the past.

In general, the wider the difference between the values of those who are poor and of those who are attempting to reduce poverty, the more difficult the task. In urban areas, where the model of affluence and power presented by the dominant segments of the population may differ least from the aspirations of the disadvantaged, the task may be easiest. There, the major ingredients of satisfactory social change may be appropriate education, economic opportunity, and the reduction of barriers erected by the non-poor. In rural areas, such as Appalachia, complications begin to arise. Here, the ideals and aspirations of the people concerned appear to be variant in relation to those held in urban society. Older models of propriety and the good life have retained great vitality, so that a simple introduction of educational and economic roads to suburbia may find little support if not outright opposition. In tailoring Community Action Programs toward maximum response, it then becomes necessary to take into account the participants' view of life, to chart the roads out of poverty in directions the participants are willing to travel.

When the communities in question are American Indian communities, where models of the good life stem from cultures far more different from that of the "Great Society" than any Appalachian variant may be, and where, furthermore, there is frequent antagonism toward Americans ways, bred of a long and unfortunate historical connection, the alleviation of poverty becomes complex indeed. Under such circumstances, a very close scrutiny of the outlooks of population elements of each community concerned is imperative in reaching conclusions both as to problems and their remedies.

2. Community Elements

In many communities there are marked horizontal cleavages corresponding to social and economic differences, and vertical cleavages related to occupational groupings, political factions, and the like. In most American Indian communities, the horizontal cleavages are virtually non-existent, there being almost no affluence, and a great deal of poverty. Vertical cleavages, however, abound, and cross-cut each other. There may be "fullbloods" and "mixed bloods," usually not referring to genetic realities primarily, if at all, but indicating, by the former, those who look back with nostalgia to the old ways, and, by the latter, those who accept or desire some degree of acquaintance with the ways of the majority society. There is frequently a high degree of political factionalism, often representing lineages, kindreds, or other kin-groupings rather than differences in political principles. There are those who live in the "agency town" and who are employed by the BIA, PHS, or, recently, by the Community Action Agency—and those who live off the beaten track in small hamlets or individual homesteads, supported by subsistence agriculture, occasional odd jobs, or welfare. There is always, in addition, a group of externally oriented people in residence who have come in from the outside to serve with Federal, state, and local agencies on the reservation.