

**Framing the Future:
Trends that Will Impact
Indian Country's Social Welfare Systems**

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Introduction

“Preferred futuring” is the process of envisioning a desired future and developing strategies to get there. Rather than focusing narrowly on problems and how to fix them, the process involves broader understandings – of the history of a situation or organization, of disappointments and accomplishments along the path to the present, of core values held by the community engaged in change, and of current and on-the-horizon trends that will affect the situation’s or organization’s future. In other words, before change agents can identify and choose alternative futures, they need an historical understanding of the current situation and a backdrop against which to map and weigh options.

As practitioner-advocate-scholars of social welfare issues in Indian Country, we believe a preferred futuring process is critical to the reformation of the social welfare systems that serve Native America. While current debates surrounding (for example) reauthorization of the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996* (PRWORA) and the impact of a significantly slowed national economy on welfare-to-work programs are important, they have the disadvantage of diverting attention from longer-term planning for a better future. Unfortunately, without such planning and conscious efforts to make plans reality, an undesired future can emerge from incremental changes dictated by day-to-day concerns. The process of preferred futuring seeks to avoid that outcome.

This paper is offered in support of our recommended process. It presents six trends that we believe will underlie and affect the focus, funding, and nature of the social welfare systems serving tribal communities. In presenting these trends, we hope to frame and give context to a discussion about future policy options for the design, scope, and offerings of Indian Country’s social welfare systems. Our particular suggestion is that the discussion focus five years down the road – far enough in the future to move beyond the present focus on reauthorization yet close enough in time to set realistic goals for program development and change.

Social Welfare System Trends

Trend 1: Movement Away from Income Support Only Toward a Tension Between Work-Conditioned Supports and “Poverty Reduction”

Historical Background

In 1935, the federal government initiated its formal commitment to participate in the care of dependent children with the passage of the Social Security Act, which included federal funding for the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program (DiNitto 1995). In 1962, the Act was amended to place greater emphasis on the family unit; ADC was renamed Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and many states revised their programs to make a second adult eligible for assistance. The founding aim of these programs was to allow single mothers – many of whom had been widowed by World War II – to stay home and raise their children (Doblestein 1996). Social mores in this period made it preferable for mothers with no other means of support to receive assistance from the federal government rather than go to work. Social mores also reinforced the perception that children were more likely to thrive when their mothers stayed at home to nurture and care for them (DiNitto 1995).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the demographics of families receiving AFDC changed. As large numbers of divorced mothers joined the welfare rolls, widows became a minority among welfare recipients. The profile of “welfare mothers” shifted again in the 1980s and early 1990s as the number of women who had never been married and who had borne children out-of-wedlock rose on the rolls (Dobelstein 1996). Mainstream American society’s perception of these divorced or never-married single mothers was quite different from its perception of earlier AFDC recipients. Whereas mothers who were single through widowhood were single through no fault of their own, those who were separated, divorced, or never married were thought to be single mothers because of their own actions (DiNitto 1995). And, as the number of women entering the labor force grew, so did the sentiment that single mothers should not be paid to stay at home, raising children and having additional children dependent on federal assistance. Some critics even suggested that single mothers on welfare were taking advantage of the system: they were staying at home with their children and receiving assistance rather than working and supporting themselves; they were “getting a free ride” rather than “paying their own way” (DiNitto 1995; Dobelstein 1996).

Critically, the changing demographics and social perception of the AFDC caseload coincided with a growing number of AFDC cases and rapidly increasing federal expenditures on welfare. From the standpoint of the public purse, widowed mothers with children were viewed as “deserving” of assistance, but single mothers with children who were separated, divorced, or never married were seen to be “less deserving.” Decreasing public support for the current welfare program combined with concerns about fraud and abuse of the system and sparked a national debate about the appropriate means of supporting needy families with children – a debate which culminated with the passage of a “welfare reform” law in 1996.

Welfare reform, as defined by the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996*, represented a major change in federal policy concerning assistance to poor families and children. Responding to the widespread belief that people who could work should do so, PRWORA refocused on moving people away from cash assistance and into work. The law capped federal spending on cash assistance to poor families at 1994 levels, ended the primary cash assistance program serving poor families and children (AFDC), and established a new program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which requires able adults in poor families to work (or train for work) in exchange for cash assistance. Under rules established by the states and tribes, most families can receive federal cash assistance for no longer than 60 months.

PRWORA enumerated the purposes of TANF as providing states and tribes with funding to: (1) provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; (2) end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (3) prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and (4) encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. TANF evaluations have showed varying degrees of state and tribal success in meeting these purposes.

State of the Field

It is widely recognized that in the first wave of welfare reform implementation (1997-2001), states focused strongly on moving recipients to work. But especially as welfare rolls reached an all-time low in mid-2001,¹ advocates for low-income groups began to wonder how appropriate PRWORA's work first and family formation strategies were for improving the quality of life for poor Americans.

The question is particularly apt in American Indian and Alaska Native communities, where human capital is often underdeveloped, jobs are scarce, and as a result, poverty rates are high. Both the 1980 and 1990 Census reflect higher poverty rates for American Indian households than for the U.S. as a whole. For example, data from the latter show 31 percent of American Indian households, both on and off reservations, living in poverty in 1989 compared to 13 percent for the nation as a whole (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990). Poverty on Indian reservations is even more pervasive. In 1989 51 percent of reservation residents – and 55 percent of Native children residing on reservations – lived below the poverty level (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990). More recent findings from the Urban Institute's 1997 National Survey of American Families (NSAF) concur with Census Bureau data. According to the NSAF, 31 percent of American Indian families had a 1996 family income that was below the poverty level,² and 54 percent had a 1996 family income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (Staveteig and Wigton 2000). Neither of these numbers is exclusive to reservation communities where the percent in poverty is likely higher. In this environment, welfare reform's emphasis on work rather than on broader goals (such as improved quality of life or poverty alleviation) has posed serious challenges.

Among all ethnic groups, child poverty resulting from welfare reform has been a particular concern. While the work first strategy may improve the overall life skills of parents, improvements for children depend on increased household income (Zaslow et al. 2001). Unfortunately, even though their work participation rates were rising, the (inflation-adjusted) disposable income of the poorest 20 percent of single-mother families fell 4 percent between 1995 and 1999 (Primus 2001). This failure to translate increased earnings into disposable income arises, says Wendell Primus of the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, "because many of these families are losing ancillary benefits, such as food stamps, for which they remain eligible" (Primus 2001, p. 18).

There is also emerging evidence that poverty among working adults may be rising as a result of welfare reform. Some studies show the average wage of newly employed former TANF recipients to be \$7-\$8 per hour, which is above the minimum wage and translates to an annual

¹ The best evidence currently available from the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and from the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) suggests that welfare rolls nationwide experienced an all-time low in the second and third quarters of 2001, although this national low masked significant state-level variegation. ACF data shows caseloads falling through June 2001 (www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/states/families.htm). CLASP data shows that in most states (40 out of 50), caseloads increased between September and December 2001; for many of these states, the increase began with the onset of the recession in March 2001, for a few others, the increase began even earlier (www.clasp.org/pubs/TANF/Final_2001_Q4_caseload.xls).

² This poverty rate is approximate equal to that found for African Americans and Hispanics, but almost twice as high as the Asian rate and three times as high as the poverty rate for whites (Staveteig and Wigton 2000).

income of in near \$14,000.³ But these findings may be deceiving. The annual income estimate is based on full time employment, and in reality, only about one-third of welfare leavers work four quarters in a row (Moffitt 2002). Additionally, the majority of jobs that welfare leavers enter lack benefits such as health insurance, a deficiency that puts further strain on household income (Acs and Loprest 2001; Berlin 2001; Moffitt 2002). As Moffitt summarizes, about half of welfare leavers experience a modest increase in household income immediately after leaving welfare; the other half experience a decline. And, for leavers who experience an increase, the major change comes from increased income from *other* family members; in these households, other family members' income comprises a larger share of household income than either the earnings of TANF leavers or income from TANF and Food Stamps (Moffitt 2002). In other words, individual TANF leavers are worse off than it appears from their household income reports. Similarly, Gordon Berlin of the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation notes, "Most welfare recipients who take jobs remain poor, suggesting that we have far to go in making work pay enough to lift the working poor out of poverty. Of equal concern, even the best programs leave many behind—40 percent or more by some estimates" (Berlin 2001, p.37). In sum, the evidence on the first phase of PRWORA is that work first strategies have forced states and tribes to move welfare recipients into the ranks of the working poor without improving their quality of life. "Time limits and work requirements increased employment, reduced welfare receipt, and saved money, but they did not reduce poverty or help children" (Berlin, 2001 p.36).

In response to these findings, many advocates are proposing that, rather than focus on reducing welfare rolls through moving welfare recipients to work, TANF programs should ensure a minimum quality of life for families and children. Put simply, the reduction of poverty should be one of TANF's purposes. A related suggestion is that social welfare policies should more clearly combine to reward work, or "make work pay." The idea is that recipients who are doing what the law asks of them (i.e., working) should have a better opportunity to garner sufficient income to rise above the poverty line.

Implications for Policy

While reasonable, the ideas that comprise the current state of the field on this topic do not lead to clear policies for welfare reform reauthorization or, further down the road, for understanding how future social welfare programs ought to operate. Certainly, there will always be some people in need of help. But ensuring them a minimum level of economic support is contradictory (at least to some extent) to using incentives and rewards to draw people into the workforce.⁴ This trade-off raises the fundamental question of what responsibility the federal government has for the socio-economic well being of the nation's citizens.

³ \$7*40 hours/wk x 52 wks/year = \$14,560.

⁴ Of course, while the *incentives* that stem from particular poverty reduction and work emphasis programs may be contradictory, poverty reduction and an emphasis on work are not inherently contradictory goals. As Mark Greenberg from the Center for Law and Social Policy points out, a focus on poverty reduction is not synonymous with de-emphasizing work; rather, "employment should translate to improved economic well-being, ... working with the hardest to employ is preferable to cutting off their assistance, and ... TANF funds should be seen as part of an overall strategic effort to dramatically reduce child poverty" (Greenberg 2001, p.7).

That question has been answered in different ways across the span of American history. If in the early 21st century, it is resolved in favor of ongoing minimum economic support for the most vulnerable children and families, the policy implications are wide-ranging. Ultimately, agreeing at the level of national policy that children/families with children should not be poor argues for the creation of a program for children and families that accomplishes something similar to what Social Security accomplishes for the elderly and disabled. If this is the decision, is TANF really the vehicle for accomplishing the desired outcome? Are TANF agencies the appropriate ones to administer/oversee anti-poverty programs? If not, which state and tribal agencies ought to oversee such programs? What re-organization must occur?

Some of the initial TANF reauthorization bills introduced in the U.S. Congress focused on “poverty reduction.”⁵ As they stand, their purpose is to change the intent of TANF from a work-focused, family formation program to a poverty reduction program that ensures a minimum quality of life for all Americans (rather than use some other program to accomplish the poverty reduction goal). The bills propose to accomplish this change in a variety of ways. One is to include an additional purpose for TANF, explicitly allowing states and tribes to spend TANF dollars on activities that reduce poverty. Another is to establish a state performance bonus for reductions in poverty or child poverty, which could occur by changing state TANF caseload reduction credits to employment credits, through restored funding of the Social Services Block Grant, and/or through providing adequate work supports.

Certainly, these are not the only policy and program possibilities. For example, an important component states’ and tribes’ poverty reduction strategies might be to more fully embrace an idea included in the original legislation – giving low-income families more opportunities to accumulate assets. Indeed, some experts argue that “long-term improvement in well-being *requires* asset accumulation” (Schreiner et al. 2001, p. iii, emphasis added). Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are a specific application of the idea. These accounts provide incentives (through matching schemes) for low-income individuals and families to save money for specific “developmental” purposes, such as home ownership, higher education, or business start-up costs. Many IDA programs also provide financial counseling and training in financial competency, so that low-income individuals are better able to access the offerings and advantages of the formal financial sector. Currently, there are IDA programs in 49 states, 37 states have legislation regarding IDA programs, and a small number of tribal governments also have implemented IDA programs (primarily for the purpose of encouraging home ownership) (Center for Social Development 2002). States may use a variety of sources to match IDA accounts, but PRWORA also authorizes them to use TANF for this purpose; reauthorization provides an opportunity to expand the use of like programs in helping low-income families to leave poverty.

Of course, an important final comment on these issues is that discussions about changes to the TANF program and the federal government’s ultimate responsibilities to low-income families

⁵ H.R. 3113, “The TANF Reauthorization Act of 2001” was introduced by Rep. Patsy Mink (D-HI) on October 12, 2001; H.R. 3625, the “Next Step in Reforming Welfare Act” was introduced by Rep. Ben Cardin (D-MD) on January 24, 2002; and S. 2052, the “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act Amendments of 2002” (S. 2052) was introduced by Senator John Rockefeller (D-WV) on March 21, 2002.

stand aside from the unique commitments the U.S. government has made to citizens of Indian tribes. These higher order commitments, made through treaties and laws, acknowledge that in exchange for millions of acres of ceded lands, the United States government has an obligation to provide for the health, safety and welfare of tribal communities. These responsibilities are not made moot by national policy decisions about the best ways to implement welfare reform.

Trend 2: Movement Away from “Stovepipe Programs” toward Integrated, Comprehensive, Sustainable, Community-Based Delivery Systems

Historical Background

The Snyder Act of 1921 “institutionalized” the federal provision of social, health, and educational services to Indian Nations and mandated that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), as part of its trust responsibility, directly administer all social welfare services on federally recognized Indian reservations. Based on this mandate, few federal funds were given directly to tribal governments for the administration of tribal programs.

In 1924, American Indians were granted U.S. (and hence, state) citizenship and, under the rights of the 14th Amendment, became eligible for state services. However, few state-administered services were provided to reservation members (let alone to tribal governments, to administer on behalf of their members) due to confusion regarding the federally mandated responsibility of the BIA, the geographic isolation of reservations within the states, and racial discrimination.

Through the influence of the Civil Rights Movement and the “Great Society” programs of the sixties and early seventies, federal departments in addition to the BIA were provided with funds and the administrative authority to manage programs on reservations. During this period, national policies sought to abolish poverty through the provision of federal funds to all low-income groups (particularly racial minority groups). In order to attach themselves to this national initiative, American Indians organizations and tribal governments began to identify themselves as domestic minority groups. Tribes and Indian organizations that fell within the guidelines of poverty programs became eligible for a variety of federal and state funds, not as beneficiaries of the federal government’s trust responsibility but as racial minorities and poor communities (Deloria and Lytle 1984). Examples of increased federal funding included: Department of Health and Human Services funding for health and social service programs; Department of Commerce funding for economic development; Department of Housing and Urban Development funding for housing programs; and Department of Labor funding for job training and employment programs (O’Brien 1989).⁶ Increasingly, tribal governments were themselves provided the opportunity to manage such funds. Also during this period, the federal court issued a mandate requiring states to provide “equitable” services to Indian citizens.

In 1975, the passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act further increased direct funding to tribes and tribal responsibility for the administration of tribal services. The legislation authorized the BIA and Indian Health Service to contract with and make grants directly to tribal governments for the provision of federal services, much like they do with states

⁶ A 1991 report by the Congressional Research Service revealed that eleven federal departments funded approximately 198 different programs and services for which American Indian governments could apply (Walke 1991).

and local governments. The act also strengthened tribal autonomy by allowing tribes to better tailor their social welfare service programs to the specific needs and circumstances of their communities (Walke 1991).

In general, this expanded array of federal funding sources for tribal programs channeled money to tribal governments through two conduits: 1) direct funding to tribes (self-determination contracts, block grants, and special initiative grants) and, 2) indirect funding, in which funds are channeled to states and “passed through” to tribal governments via state/tribal agreements.

State of the Field

Today, countless governmental and private sources fund numerous federal, state, and local family and children programs for reservation-based American Indians. For instance, an average-size reservation of 5,000 members receives funding for family and children services from the Department of Interior (which provides categorical funding for General Assistance, emergency assistance, and child welfare program), the Department of Health and Human Services (which funds a wide variety of family welfare, child welfare, child care, child support, and health care services), and the Department of Agriculture (which funds commodity food distribution). Each of these funding entities has different rules regarding use of funds, client eligibility and the types of services provided, as well as different reporting requirements. As tribal governments have labored to accommodate these various funding structures, the common approach has been to treat the different streams of funds as support for individual programs, each with an independent administrative structure. Unfortunately, the creation of individual program units results in the duplication of services, program turf issues, costly administrative structures, and fragmented delivery systems. In sum, the multiplicity of funding sources and programs gives rise to multiple, independently funded programs with little to no interagency collaboration or service coordination, but which all serve the same tribal families.

Concerns about fragmentation and gaps in service, inefficient and expensive duplication of services, the need for improved effectiveness and greater accountability, and the devolution of federal responsibility to more “local” units of government have challenged states, tribes, and community agencies to re-examine the administrative structures and program relationships of their current human service delivery systems. In response to these concerns, there have been numerous discussions and debates about the desirability and feasibility of inter-organizational coordination, or what frequently has been referred to as “service integration.” There also have been many efforts to conceptualize, develop, and implement such integration. A typical implementation attempts to pull related service programs together into a unified administrative structure and to persuade administratively independent programs to collaborate on and coordinate the delivery of their services in order to provide a “seamless system of care” (Alter 1985).⁷

Achieving integration and coordination of social welfare services aimed at families and children within existing service delivery systems has proven to be a major challenge for administrators and practitioners everywhere, let alone in Indian Country, which is characterized by even greater

⁷A seamless system of care relies on funding and service partnerships between public and private entities to provide an appropriate set of preventive and treatment oriented services, without imposing any undue hardships on clients.

system complexity. The family and children services landscape "...continues to be dominated by fragmented, uncoordinated, and bureaucratically driven program strategies" (Orland, Danegger, and Foley 1997, p. 94).

The problem has led program developers and researchers at all governmental levels to seek alternative approaches to the coordination and integration of family and children services. Studies of existing efforts offer lessons – although they also emphasize that there is no one best way or model, as each successful implementation develops from an individual community's particular needs and resources. A general consensus, however, is that a core set of guiding principles/value orientations must be present (Knitzer 1997; Nations in Harmony 1999; Orland, Danegger, and Foley 1997). The following six guiding principles present a general philosophical framework for designing an integrated, comprehensive, community-based, family centered service delivery system:

- *Strong emphasis on family* – services are family-centered and service plans are built around family strengths, a practice that underscores the importance of the family in any decision-making process (as opposed to the view that parents are passive recipients of professional expertise).
- *Focus on prevention-oriented services and supports* – services are aimed at prevention and early intervention *as well as* treatment.
- *Coordination of services* – interagency collaboration, cooperation, and integration of services help eliminate service inefficiencies and family confusion of who is doing what and why.
- *Community-based* – families receive the most benefit when services are accessible, responsive, and take informal supports into account; when communities take responsibility for services, families' and children's needs are less likely to be ignored.
- *Cultural competence* – services are delivered in a way that is respectful of the cultural values and traditions of the families served because cultural sensitivity increases the likelihood that service delivery will be effective; a culturally competent system is one that not only addresses beliefs, attitudes, and tolerance, but also provides case workers and program managers with the skills to translate attitudes into action and behavior.
- *Focus on accountability of outcomes* – service integration efforts are linked to concrete outcomes and positive changes in the lives of families and children; the data focus moves away from the measurement of narrow outputs (e.g., number of families served, children placed, workshops held) to defining and tracking desirable family and children outcomes (e.g., reducing the rate of domestic violence, out of home placements, and families in poverty), so that service providers have a clear sense of whether the services provided are making a difference in the lives of families and children.

Challenges for the Development of Integrated, Community-Based, Family-Centered Services within Tribal Communities

Significant changes in current federal, tribal, and state institutional structures are needed if sustainable, comprehensive, community-based systems are to be developed within tribal communities. First, tribal leadership must be willing to re-examine and, if necessary, re-structure tribal human services administrative and management systems. Tribal governments must be prepared to plan for and implement new delivery systems (e.g., to combine related program services) and to build tribal capacity that effectively and efficiently meets tribal families' social welfare needs. Using Noblet and Cobb's terminology, tribal leaders and tribal human services program administrators and managers must be prepared to make "second-order change":

The political agendas, the intransigence of systems to change (homeostasis), protectionism among agencies, and the extensiveness of interlocking components within and across systems all portend almost insurmountable challenges to transforming the way business is done. Typically, interagency collaboration involves a slight adaptation of existing processes or adding on new procedures to link to other agencies – basically tweaking the existing systems. This strategy is often referred to as *first-order* change: the original beliefs, assumptions and structures are still in place. A true redesign of social service systems would be required for *second-order* change and institutionalization – going back to zero. (Noblet and Cobb 1997, p. 213).

Second, non-tribal governments and funding agencies must replace the system of fragmented, prescriptive, and detailed service mandates under which tribes currently operate with flexible, outcome-based funding policies. They must support new federal-tribal and state-tribal inter-governmental funding arrangements. They also must encourage and assist tribal governments to use existing resources more efficiently (e.g., encourage tribal government to increasingly blend or pool funds as provided in Public Law 102-477⁸ and advocate for the expansion of such programs), integrate data information across family and children services, and coordinate application protocols and eligibility criteria. In sum, non-tribal governments must help empower tribal governments to allocate resources in ways that are more consistent with their family and children needs.

Third, there must be dramatic changes in the training of tribal family and children service program administrators and providers. New management and structural reforms can be expected to have marginal impact on service arrangement as long as the attitudes and skills of administrators, managers, and front-line workers reflect past arrangements. Universities and other institutions that provide training to social workers and other human service professionals must revamp their curricula to include training areas such as collaborative management, interagency planning, and inter-professional team development.

⁸ The 1992 Indian Employment, Training, and Related Services Demonstration Act (P.L. 102-477) was intended to reduce paperwork and other administrative burdens placed upon tribal governments. Under this legislation, tribal governments may develop one plan to obtain funds from multiple federal agencies for the provision of a range of employment and job training services.

Fourth, community-based and academic researchers must focus on these issues and move the body of knowledge about the effectiveness of coordinated service delivery beyond its infancy. The belief that comprehensive, coordinated, community-based approaches have considerable potential to improve the lives of tribal families and children in need of assistance is implicit throughout the current literature. However, the viability and actual pay-offs of developing comprehensive Indian Country social welfare systems remains unproven. “What is not in dispute is the problem. What is in dispute is just how good a solution services integration is” (Knitzer 1997 p. 16). This is especially true for tribal communities. Early research findings and anecdotal evidence are promising, but the overall verdict is still out.⁹ There is a need to create a research base that, at the very least, focuses on key questions, which among others include: What difference does a comprehensive, coordinated, community-based services have on perceived satisfaction and concrete outcomes? Is the investment in service integration cost effective? How does involvement in service coordination and integration efforts affect the service delivery system, service providers, and other decision-makers?

Trend 3: Movement Away from Short-Term Problem Solving toward a Strength-Based, Long-Term Approach to Planning

Historical Background

Historically, planning for the development of American Indian social welfare initiatives and programs was something that was done *to* American Indians. Based on the federal trust relationship (where the United States government is the trustee and tribal communities are the beneficiary), federal Indian policy dictated that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the Department of Interior and the Indian Health Service (IHS) the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare¹⁰ were responsible for the development and implementation of all Indian programs and services. Federal staff within these agencies directly managed all administrative operations on Indian reservations. No efforts were made to develop tribal governments' capabilities to administer their own programs (i.e., no efforts to increase the capacities of tribal governmental institutions and service infrastructures), and there were no federal investments in long term planning.

Federal planning on behalf of tribal communities was constrained by the federal government's administrative approval process and Congress's annual budget appropriations. These cumbersome political processes, far-removed from the realities of reservation life, created a tendency for federal bureaucrats to limit their search to short-term, quick-fix “solutions” that reflected only the current administration's priorities and Congress's year-to-year willingness to spend money on Indian causes and concerns. The result was a planning that focused on

⁹ To our knowledge, there is no research that speaks specifically to the benefits of service integration in Indian Country, although the disaggregated structure of many tribal governments strongly suggests that they exist. Studies outside Indian Country indicate benefits (see, for example, Nilsen 2002), but at least one rigorous, well-controlled study found no payoffs (Provan and Milward 1995).

¹⁰ In 1954 Congress passed Public Law 83-568, transferring the responsibility for American Indian health care from the Department of the Interior's BIA to the Public Health Service within Department of Health, Education and Welfare (today, the Department of Health and Human Services).

problems and solutions of the day, recommended policies and programs that differed only slightly from existing efforts,¹¹ and produced more negative than positive results.

The post-WWII, BIA relocation program is one example. Responding to federal concerns that Indian veterans and wartime workers returning to reservations would strain the capacity of existing federally operated services, the Bureau of Indian Affairs created a “job placement program” that encouraged tribal families to move from the reservations to large urban cities by providing transportation, housing, and job-placement assistance. Because federal policymakers viewed Indian reservations not as nations, in which citizens might choose to actively participate as members, but rather, as temporary environments that provided tribal members with time to integrate into the surrounding non-Indian communities, relocation seemed the next logical step.

Unfortunately, relocation frequently involved nothing more than a trade of rural for urban poverty. Many relocated Indians soon made their way back to the reservations where poverty could be ameliorated to some extent by extended family relationships (Ballantine and Ballentine 1993, p. 427).

In this era, without an economic base, little alternative operating capital, and no authority to administer federal programs, tribal governments had few alternatives to depending totally on outside expertise for day-to-day program management *and* for the development of tribal program priorities. At best, tribal governments took control of their nations’ futures through crisis intervention – reacting as best they could to mitigate the effects of federal policies and initiatives designed to limit the exercise of tribal sovereignty, increase tribal citizens’ dependence on state or federally administered programs, and encourage migration to off-reservation communities.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s paved the way for tribal leaders and national Indian organizations to demand the rights guaranteed to Indians by their treaties and by their American citizenship. The demands included the need for greater participation in the planning and development of initiatives and programs aimed at tribal communities. In an attempt to quell the growing concerns expressed by tribal leaders and national Indian organizations, the federal government implemented a consultation process that required tribal review of all proposed federal policies and program initiatives prior to federal approval and administrative implementation. Although this process informed tribal governments of proposed actions and allowed for tribal review and comment, it did not require tribal participation in the initial planning of the proposals nor did it require federal administrators to amend their proposals based on tribal input.

Passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 dramatically increased tribes’ authority to plan for and administer tribal programs. The legislation authorized the BIA and IHS to fund tribal governments directly for the development and administration of federal programs on reservations (Deloria and Lytle 1983). Later amendments to the Act

¹¹ With such “incremental decision-making,” no attempt is made to survey alternatives in order to gain an understanding of which policies might achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Instead, policy initiatives reflect the impact of countless decisions that have been made over a period of years. Besides forgoing the possible benefits of policy innovation, there is a real danger in this approach: a long series of gradual and drawn out decisions can result in a major policy change without consideration of the associated consequences (Bedeian and Zummuto 1991).

allowed for greater creativity in restructuring and financing tribal social welfare services, so that tribes could serve their diverse populations more effectively and efficiently (Walke 1991).

State of the Field

Today, largely as a result of the expansion of tribal authority under self-determination and self-governance policies, tribal governments have greater control over the programs and initiatives developed for their citizens and implemented in their nations: contemporary tribal governments are working to strengthen their governmental institutions, establish meaningful social welfare systems, and obtain economic self-sufficiency. Additionally, these changes in federal policy, the ongoing advocacy of national Indian organizations, increased political savvy, and in some cases, improved resource bases, have improved tribal governments' ability to impact the political process regarding annual legislation and appropriations. However, most tribal governments' capacity and ability to plan remains limited.

There are numerous specific challenges. Although tribes participate more fully in the development and management of tribal-level programs, the means by which they gain this control – self-determination contracts, self-governance compacts, and other inter-governmental agreements – do not facilitate planning. There is little federal or tribal money available for planning for contracting, compacting, or other policy/program developments. The seriousness and breadth of issues that tribal planning must address complicates the process. Tribes must plan to counter the poverty, limited educational and employment opportunities, poor physical infrastructure, lack of human services, and geographic isolation faced by their nations and somehow determine which social and economic investments are most likely to ensure the development of sustainable tribal nations. And, good models are hard to find. Ideally, tribal government officials and program administrators would engage their communities in structured and thoughtful speculation about the future – that is, in long-range political, social, and economic strategic planning). In too many cases, however, tribes revert to the traditional short-term, problem-focused management and planning model employed in the past by the BIA, which is not (and never has been) effective in assisting tribal governments in purposeful, long-range planning.

With respect to social welfare programs in particular, the passage of PRWORA in 1996 triggered a major paradigm shift in the way American society views and thinks of welfare. PRWORA ended welfare as an “entitlement,” placed a strong focus on work, and included incentives aimed at changing recipients' behavior. And as noted in Trend 1, the paradigm may be shifting again, toward the even more complicated goal of poverty reduction. These policy changes present new challenges to state and tribal leaders and program administrators as they attempt to plan for and implement social welfare systems that can respond to their citizens' future welfare needs. In the more difficult planning environment of tribal governments, these challenges are especially acute.

Challenges for the Development of Long-Term, Future-Focused Planning

To plan effectively in today's rapidly changing world, tribal administrators must be equipped with methodologies and techniques for planning that meet their unique situations. The processes must support the development of sustainable nations through long term planning and avoid the tendency toward quick-fix solutions.

Questions have been raised about the adequacy and relevance of conventional planning and problem-solving processes for social welfare program development. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) and Chapin (1995) have suggested that the approach typically used in planning is too problem-focused (and pathology-oriented) for the development of effective community-based social welfare services. Instead, they recommend that planning should occur from a “strengths perspective.” Kretzmann and McKnight propose a capacity-focused approach based first upon an understanding a community’s assets, capacities, and abilities, and second on the attempt to connect these strengths in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness. Chapin suggests a planning process that begins with the identification of common community needs and barriers to meeting those needs, rather mere problem identification and analysis. Lippitt (1998) augments these proposals by introducing a whole-systems way of thinking¹² that replaces the focus on problems with a focus on an exciting future state. He distinguishes the differences between the conventional problem solving approach and the “preferred futuring” approach in the following way:

Problem Solving

- List problems
- Prioritize problems
- Determine strategic starting point
- Plan actions to solve problems

Preferred Futuring

- Review how we got here
- List what is and is not working
- Determine the future you want
- Plan actions to achieve preferred future

The difference between the deliverables or results is displayed as follows:

Problem Solving

- A list of problems
- Key problem identification
- A solution
- Action plans to achieve a solution

Preferred Futuring

- A sense of heritage
- A realistic assessment
- An exciting decision
- Actions plans to create future of choice

When following this approach, it is possible for program administrators and community members “to decide upon and create the future they feel most passionate about” (Lippitt 1998, p. 7), one that builds on the tribal community’s existing strengths and capabilities and includes notions of sustainability. In other words, it is appropriate in this model for the imagined future to be one where “natural and historic resources are preserved, jobs are available, sprawl is contained, neighborhoods are secure, education is lifelong, transportation and health are accessible, and all citizens have the opportunity to improve their lives” (President’s Council on Sustainable Developments 1999).

¹² “Whole-systems thinking” involves the realization that all community systems are interconnected. The focus is on getting all stakeholders together to participate in deciding upon the future state of their community or organization (Lippitt 1998).

Especially in the face of devolution, which is intended to make local governments more efficient and responsive to the needs of their citizens, it is critical that tribal governments and tribal social welfare administrators utilize a planning process that incorporates whole-systems thinking. The process should allow program administrators and community members to come together, agree on future outcomes, and choose a strength-based path toward the future.

Philosophically, there are even larger issues involved for American Indian nations. At its core, “tribal sovereignty” incorporates the concept of freedom – it is about American Indians’ ability to actively and consciously participate in creation of their own future. If others decide the future of American Indian communities – by planning for them and developing and implementing programs for them – American Indian tribes and individuals are not really free. Nor have they accepted the full challenges and opportunities of freedom if the future is something that “just happens.” There is a direct relationship between sovereignty, the capability of tribal governments to determine what their future will be, and their success in achieving those ends.¹³

Trend 4: Movement Away from Economic Development Projects Toward Community-Wide Economic Growth and Socio-Economic Advancement

Historical Background

American Indians’ contact with European settlers was not, in general, economically advantageous. While there were some new opportunities – to engage in the fur trade, to market farm products, and to create or add value to goods desired in the non-Indian market, for instance – the end result of contact was more often a diminishment of economic circumstances. Confinement of American Indians to reservations in the 19th and early 20th centuries was particularly detrimental to tribes’ participation in either traditional or adapted economic activities. The results were poverty and hardship. As the BIA Agency Superintendent wrote in 1925, “There is no question but that the Pine Ridge Sioux have suffered considerably during the winter and spring on account of insufficiency of food” (U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1925, roll 106). The residents’ lack of resources to obtain basic necessities “no doubt contributed to the high mortality rate ascertained by the Meriam Commission for South Dakota reservations in 1925. The rate was 23.5 deaths per 1000 population” (Biolsi 1992, p. 29), as compared to 8.6 per 1000 population among all races in the state.¹⁴

Federal and tribal policy responses to the poverty problem on reservations have been varied – and to a large extent, misconceived. Federal policies have suffered from, among other things, their promoters’ naïveté about Native America, assimilationist perspectives, tendency toward “one-size-fits-all-tribes” solutions, and assumptions that what works for poverty outside Indian Country works within as well. These perspectives and assumptions are reflected in policies such as allotment, termination, and relocation; in many “Great Society” and early Economic Development Administration-led programs; and in statements such as “Indian economic

¹³ Much more could be said on this point, as a growing number cross-country and cross-tribal studies show the importance of sovereignty and freedom to sustained socio-economic development. Thus, sovereignty and freedom are both an end and a means for American Indian nations. See, for example, Cornell and Kalt (1998) and Sen (1999).

¹⁴ The 1925 “all races” rate was calculated from South Dakota Department of Health mortality rate records for 1920 and 1930 and provided by M. Gildemaster in a personal communication, April 10, 1996.

development can proceed only as the process of acculturation allows” (U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs 1969).

Tribal policy was often no better. “Economic development” activities tended to have a very narrow focus, one that might best be described as a “programs and projects” orientation. Many tribal planners came to view the increased involvement of federal departments other than the Department of Interior (described above) as means of job creation (Cornell 2000). Similarly, tribes showed a propensity to accept or pursue Washington-designed economic projects merely because money was available for them, and because spending that money would create jobs in the short run. The mentality also has governed many tribes’ interactions with non-governmental investors, as tribal leaders chased “the project” that would be the magic bullet in terms of providing jobs and income for tribal citizens (see, for example, Jorgensen 1990).

At best, these approaches prevented tribal economies from failing altogether. At worst, they did not succeed at all, and tribal communities sank deeper into poverty and welfare dependence. In very simple terms, the problem with these approaches is that they did not represent a coherent, workable strategy for long-term economic growth on the reservation. Instead, they represented the hope that “if we have enough jobs programs, we’ll end up with an economy.” Yet it is only by chance that a tribal planner who has been asked to “get something going” and proceeds to scan all possible options for bringing more opportunities, jobs, and cash to the reservation ends up generating cross-cutting economic growth. Smith (2000) emphasizes this distinction when he says, “Understanding that development is a process governing the entire economy and that the entire economy must take part in the progress is vital” (p. 49).

State of the Field

Tribal leaders and citizens have long known that the historical approaches to economic development in Indian Country were inadequate. Only recently, however, has an alternative paradigm for growth emerged. Reflecting on what is working in Indian Country and what is not, scholars such as Anderson (1995), Smith (2000), and Cornell and Kalt (especially 1998 and 2002) stress the importance of sovereignty and accountability, good governance, stable institutions, cultural foundations, and – the piece that ties it all together – strategic thinking.

Strategic thinking encourages American Indian nations’ leaders, government administrators, business managers, and even citizens to identify their common goals for economic progress, the assets within the community for reaching those goals, and the institutional and resource gaps that must be filled, and helps decision makers distinguish between useful and unuseful development efforts. In other words, coherent strategy shifts thinking away from the development of specific programs and projects toward a concentration on overall economic growth. This re-orientation understands that the measure of success is not merely, “Did our efforts create jobs?” but rather, “Did our efforts increase the tribal economy’s gross domestic product, do they encourage the return of funds to the tribal economy, and do they contribute to the *long-term* growth of jobs and economic opportunity on our reservation?”

Today, more and more tribes are undertaking the process of thinking strategically about development. The evidence is anecdotal only, yet the following indicators support the point:

- A number of tribes have sought funding for, or self-funded, fairly comprehensive community visioning processes to support economic and social progress (two examples are the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians);
- Many of the training programs currently offered to tribal leaders, program managers, and enterprise executives stress the importance of full-bore strategic planning, which includes a visioning process, review and assessment of local resources, and action planning (this contrasts sharply with a typical training model of a decade ago, which simply taught participants how to access federal funds);
- There are more and more reports of tribes turning down federal dollars and more and more examples of tribes successfully influencing federal policy so that funding can be used more effectively at the tribal level (the *Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996* is a prime example);
- A small but growing number of Native nations appear to have achieved a degree of economic diversification that is likely to generate and sustain economic growth over the long run (the Gila River Indian Community and the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, for example).

Challenges and Considerations for Moving Forward

While a number of tribes have shifted their economic orientation from programs and projects development to strategic, economy-wide growth, two particular challenges affect the spread and fecundity of change. The first is that change is a long-term proposition. The second is that even those tribes focused on economic growth may have trouble working with all the parts of the big picture.

“To move from a current state with high unemployment, and all the concomitant social problems, to the growth and prosperity of true self-determination and self-sufficiency, a time horizon of at least 15-20 years is necessary,” argues Smith (2000, p. 68). Even this estimate may be ambitious if an Indian nation lacks a stable source of governmental income to fund the strategic planning, institution building, and human capital enhancement functions that are necessary for economic growth. Despite the seventh generation worldview of many Indian cultures, it is very difficult to stare poverty and joblessness in the face and bet that bearing short-term costs will result in the realization of long-term goals. The challenge is to convince more tribal leaders – and perhaps even more important, *more tribal citizens* – that giving up seemingly guaranteed jobs or income streams today will result in a better future for the community as a whole and for its individual citizens.

Even among those nations pursuing a consciously strategic economic growth strategy, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that many components of society, tribal government, and the economy must be nurtured to achieve balanced and sustainable growth. Businesses and the institutions necessary to support businesses are not the only girders of socio-economic advance. The non-profit and social services sectors have roles, too, which cannot be ignored. It is useful, for example, to think as an economist would, but to expand the economist's equation: economic growth depends on inputs, and these include not only financial capital, labor, natural resources, physical capital and infrastructure, but also human capital (skills and knowledge), social capital

(community connections), and political capital (institutions and leadership). When tribal leaders, government administrators, business managers, entrepreneurs, and community members pay attention to this entire list of inputs, the nation is more likely to achieve economic progress that contributes to the overall prosperity and health of the nation's people.

This difficult goal raises some specific considerations for social welfare policy. They stem from the fact that economic growth must be viewed as a welfare policy. If jobs that pay a living wage are the route out of poverty and dependence, then tribal leaders and social services administrators alike must espouse this viewpoint and contribute to the economic growth agenda. Politicians must promote the employment of welfare recipients, even in an environment where many other citizens do not have jobs. Politicians must envision agencies that provide social services as partners in the promotion of economic growth rather than as programs whose development provides a few more jobs. And, program managers must never again think about client service in isolation of the tribe's economic needs and growth possibilities; they must view their efforts to treat substance abuse as a means of increasing the labor force, for example, and their efforts to better train and educate clients as a means of improving the tribe's human capital.

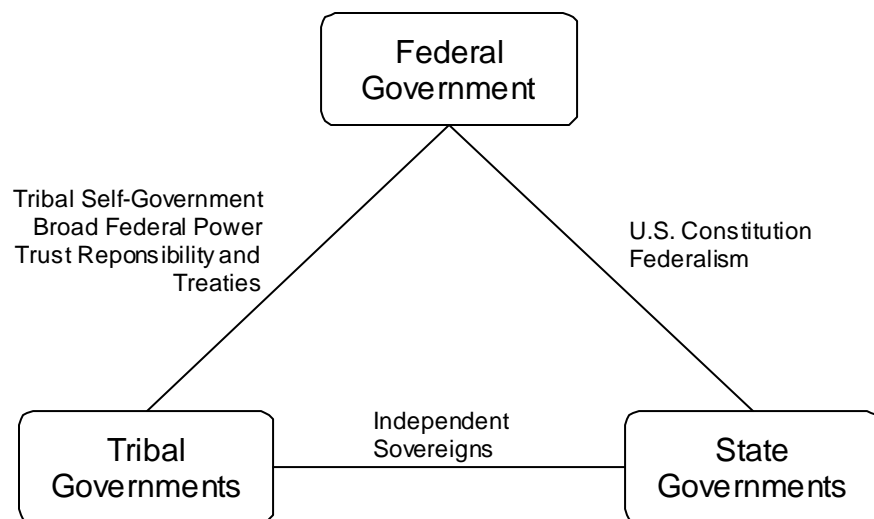
Finally, a focus on economic growth means avoiding pitfalls that could constrain growth. Anecdotal reports from Indian Country suggest that there are growing concerns about the effect of income disparity on social cohesion within some advancing tribal economies. Evidence from the developing world suggests that this concern is valid (World Bank 1987), although perhaps not yet biting in Indian Country: if tribal leaders depend on "trickle down" to help the most needy members of their society, economic growth may promote the interests of the elite rather than the poor, and eventually lead to income disparities that place a drag on growth. Paying close attention to the distributional consequences of growth, and providing necessary and creative social services and benefits to the poorest, is both a growth *and* welfare strategy.

Trend 5: Movement Away from Strict Tribal-Federal Relationships toward More Complex Federal-State-Tribal Relationships

Historical Background

A common but inaccurate understanding of the structure and powers of U.S. governments is that the U.S. Constitution lays out a system of enumerated powers to the federal government, and all other powers are retained by state governments. Unfortunately, this understanding omits the existence of tribal governments, which serve as the primary governments of hundreds of American Indian nations geographically located within the boundaries of the United States. Tribal governments are acknowledged in the U.S. Constitution and in hundreds of treaties, federal laws, and court cases as distinct political entities having the inherent power to govern their citizens. Thus, a more accurate view of the Constitutionally outlined and treaty-based government structure in the United States is:¹⁵

¹⁵ Figure by John Dossett, National Congress of American Indians.



Historically, tribes have concentrated on the tribal-federal link in this structure; that is, their working relationships with the federal government have been more developed than their relationships with state or local governments (Johnson et al. 2000). There are several reasons for this concentration. One is the federal trust responsibility – a seminal doctrine in federal Indian law – which is defined as the federal government’s obligation to protect tribal self-governance, lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights and to carry out the directions of federal statutes and court cases.

Another reason is the sheer power of the U.S. federal government vis-à-vis American Indian nations. While tribes’ ability to make and enforce their own laws and to develop and manage programs that promote the health, safety, and welfare of tribal citizens within tribal territory is the essence of tribal sovereignty, the federal government nonetheless may (at any time) pass legislation that limits tribal authority. In other words, tribes have focused attention on the tribal-federal relationship because of the importance of maintaining their status within the American federal system. They have been relatively successful; although federal policy toward the tribes has changed throughout history, since 1970 federal policy has been premised on federal support for tribal self-determination, and today the relationship between the federal government and tribes is most often described as a “government-to-government” relationship (Pevar 1992).

A final reason tribes have concentrated on this relationship to the exclusion of others is that federal law circumscribes the role of state government on tribal lands and in tribal affairs. Tribal governments are separate and independent from state governments and, in many jurisdictional arenas, retain the right to create laws that differ from state laws (a fact that is the essence of the “independent sovereigns” arrow above). In this context, relationships with states have been viewed not only as unnecessary but as a means of undermining the federal-tribal relationship: tribes have been concerned that tribal-state relationships and agreements would give the federal government opportunities to abandon its trust responsibility (Johnson et al. forthcoming). More often than not, where American Indian tribal governments and state governments do have a history of interaction, the interactions have been fraught with antagonism over jurisdictional issues and, in many cases, litigation.

State of the Field

New policy and political developments are leading tribes to abandon their concentration on tribal-federal relationships alone. In particular, “devolution,” a movement that emphasizes decentralization and local control, is shifting responsibilities and resources from the federal government to state, tribal, and other local governments (Johnson et al. 2000). This shift has increased the opportunities for positive state-tribal relations and “upped the ante” of benefits. More than ever, states and tribes find themselves with parallel or overlapping responsibilities and many incentives for cooperation (Cornell and Taylor 2000).¹⁶ At the same time, of course, tribal-state relations are made more *necessary*, so that even where there are not obvious benefits to the interaction, tribes must pursue it.

PRWORA is a product of federal devolution and an example of both the opportunities implicit in and the necessity of tribal-state or tribal-local cooperation. On the one hand, tribes have the opportunity to manage welfare and job training programs (or some set of programs) themselves or to work in newly defined contract relationships with states and localities for the delivery of more fine-tuned services to their citizens. On the other hand, if tribes do not pursue such relationships, states may ignore tribal needs and concentrate on the segments of their service populations that are easiest to serve or about which they are most knowledgeable. PRWORA serves as an example in another dimension, as well: tribes were explicitly (although imperfectly) included in the legislation. Too often, tribal governments are overlooked or are included only as an afterthought in devolutionary plans. In general, tribes desire that both the federal and state governments give greater consideration to tribal self-government and to unique tribal needs as programs are developed and implemented.

Overall – and not only because of devolution but also because tribal governments are increasingly sophisticated polities in their own right – tribal officials are realizing that good relationships with their neighboring governments are useful, and that there are payoffs from pursuing relationships with all different levels of government (federal, state, and local). They see opportunities for increased tribal government capacity through improved local relationships, for new flexibility in addressing problems in locally appropriate ways, and for addressing long-standing, difficult policy concerns. Tribes and states/localities have been creating entirely new structures for communication and collaboration, solutions and agreements have been created for a broad and evolving range of issues, and older tribal-state institutions have been strengthened and revived.

At the same time, the development of positive intergovernmental cooperation between states and tribes has been uneven (Cornell and Taylor 2000; Johnson et al. forthcoming). In one state, tribal and state officials may be working together productively to improve communication and build trust, while in a neighboring state, the parties will rarely speak to each other. Even within a single state, there may be a great deal of cooperation on one issue, but very little on another.

¹⁶ Cornell and Taylor (2000) provide an example of such incentives: “[T]ribes and states are in relationships that are much more complex and uncertain than ever before. . . . The evidence is compelling that where tribes have taken advantage of the federal self-determination policy to gain control of their own resources and of economic and other activity within their borders, and have backed up that control with good governance, they have invigorated their economies and produced positive economic spillovers to states” (pp. 2-4).

Finally, it is common to find a creative and mutually beneficial solution for a particular policy issue in one state, while many other states and tribes continue to struggle without resolution with essentially the same issue.

Implications for Policy

The increase in tribal-state (and other tribal-nonfederal) relationships has an array of policy implications. For the federal government, the most important has already been stated: new and revisited devolutionary policies must include tribal governments from the outset, and in ways consistent with tribal governments' powers and rights. For their part, tribal governments and Indian organizations must be diligent in educating national policymakers about appropriate inclusions in and exclusions from law and rulemaking.

At the state and local level, policy makers must ensure that increased responsibilities and resources do not result in *greater* disagreements with tribes over the use of resources and rights to access. There is the chance for devolution to be interpreted narrowly as a win for "states rights" and other exclusionary viewpoints when, alternatively, it should be interpreted as a win for local solutions to local problems – which might be shared among diverse local populations and find their best solutions through local collaborations.

For all governing entities, the broadened set of relationships creates new complexities and new demands. Federal bureaucracies and state, local, and tribal governments will navigate best in these waters if they learn from the example of others. Of course, some models will be non-replicable because of the tight fit between circumstances and solution, but many other models – both failed and working – provide guidance on the ways governments might work together to design programs and policies that meet their citizens' needs.

Finally, tribal governments must concentrate on using their relationships with other governments to expand tribal sovereignty and power. Contrary to tribes' historical argument that state and local relations threaten their special relationship with the federal government, Cornell and Taylor (2000) suggest that exercising tribal self-determination by interacting with state governments on the basis of tribal governmental status reinforces tribal sovereignty. Johnson et al. (forthcoming) suggest that building state-tribal relationships increases tribal governments' opportunities to contract with states for the administration of state programs on Indian lands (as proven by the example of PRWORA). These arguments emphasize that there is a strong parallel between tribal-non-federal relationships and the longstanding tribal-federal relationship: the interaction should be strategic and practiced in a way that promotes tribal government rights and opportunities. In this era of increasingly threatened tribal sovereignty at the national level (in the courts and within the executive branch), these alternative means of protecting sovereignty may be especially important.

Trend 6: Movement Away from a Reservation-Centered or USA-Centered Perspective toward a Global World View

Historical Background

Historically, given the choice, many American Indian communities would prefer to be insular, internally focused, and have only limited contact with external, non-Native society. The assimilationist policies of successive waves of colonizers have been powerful counter forces to

this choice. In the last century alone, American Indian nations and their citizens have been thrust into a different (and often “larger”) world through Indian citizens’ forced attendance at off-reservation boarding schools (alongside students from many other tribal nations), through the United States’ involvement in world wars and other international conflicts, and through the U.S. government’s express policies of Indian nation termination and citizen relocation. Tribes have survived these forces, but in many cases, their experiences have served to reinforce the choice to limit engagement with the outside world. In some cases, this has limited their participation in U.S. and world systems in favor of preserving tribal culture. One poignant example of this viewpoint was expressed by the Chiefs of the “Hopi Indian Empire” to the President of the United States dated March 28, 1949; in the letter, the Chiefs object to, among other things, the formation of the North Atlantic treaty organization on the ground that “we want to come to our own destiny in our own way” (quoted in Spicer 1969, p. 295).

State of the Field

The choice of insularity is becoming even harder to maintain as a result of the convergent and far-reaching forces of economics and technology. As markets have become more and more interconnected, tribal economies gave way to regional and national economies, and now most are part of the international economy. The flow of goods and services around the world via these economic connections both reinforces the connections and causes them to proliferate. Technology supports the reach of the market and, additionally, supplies a wealth of non-market information about the larger world. Especially through the influence of “personal” technologies such as television and the internet, individuals can quickly become knowledgeable about and even steeped in non-Native cultures and ideas. This trend toward greater interconnectedness of economies, communities, cultures is known as globalization, and it changes the nature of the forces that come into play in community decision making.

On the one hand, globalization has great benefits. To the extent that increased trade possibilities contribute to reservation-based economic expansion and growth, globalization may promote Native nations’ economic sovereignty.¹⁷ Where it can help bridge the barriers of distance from physical markets, technology may be a critical element in generating and sustaining local economic opportunities. Technology may also promote social and physical health through, for example, the introduction of different educational paradigms or effective new medicines and treatment modalities.

On the other hand, September 11 is dramatic evidence that globalization can bring great harm. Problems in distant nations can suddenly strike close to home. Even if Indian nations had no desire to support or engage in the political, military, and religious debates that resulted in September 11, the events of the day threatened their territory and affected their citizens’ lives. In other words, globalization increases the propensity for a few nations’ conflicts to spill over onto others. This may be particularly true economically, where the connections between nearly all nations’ economies cause recessions and booms in one country to reverberate around the world.

¹⁷ Here we distinguish between “economic sovereignty,” which implies that the citizens and government of a tribal nation are financially well-off enough that they do not depend on transfer payments from other governments for their livelihood, and “autarky,” in which there is not trade with external economies and all production and consumption occurs within the physical boundaries of the reservation.

Policy Implications and Challenges for Moving Forward

The challenge is for Indian nations to find an appropriate way to respond to the forces of globalization. Tribal governments, communities, and citizens must realize that they have discretion over the degree to which they choose to interact in the global community. Tribes have the opportunity to weigh their options and make a conscious choice about their role in an increasingly globalized world, the trade-offs they are willing to make based on their role, and the steps they might take right now to be best positioned for positive interactions with other cultures, societies, and economies.

One of the specific concerns tribes face is how to prevent unwanted erosions of traditional culture as they interact with new partners and become more externally focused. To survive in an “expanding world” (that is, in a world where, every day, the people of one nation learn more about the culture, economy, entertainment, policies of the others), it appears that Indian nations must be themselves very clear about who they are and what they want, so that they can include ideas from the outside on their own terms. This means tribal nations have a subsidiary challenge: to generate adequate self-knowledge¹⁸ and community consensus to make these determinations.

Tribal decision making must also address the reverse flow of information. Unlike the imperial movements of the past (especially colonization and proselytization), globalization is not limited to increasing Indian nations’ exposure to “the outside world.” Globalization also increases outsiders’ desire to gain knowledge and information from Native people. In some very traditional worldviews (some Pueblos including the Hopi, for example), it is absolutely inappropriate to allow any sharing of cultural ideas; by contrast, some Native worldviews welcome exploration by outsiders. Neither of these “end of the spectrum” positions raises a problem – but points in between certainly do. Again, Native communities must address internal tensions between “traditionalists” and “progressives” in order to protect themselves from undesired impacts from globalization.

A related economic point is that tribes must increase their capacity to sort out bad economic opportunities from good ones. Some of the outsiders seeking increased interactions with tribes will be globalized versions of the snake oil salesmen. Because their stories are foreign and the opportunities distant, the usual mechanisms tribal governments and entrepreneurs use to separate gold from dross may be inadequate. In order to ward off the harms of globalization these strategies must be improved.¹⁹

¹⁸ Tribes are already engaged, for a variety of reasons, in conscious efforts to examine, catalog, develop, and preserve their unique strengths. These efforts include language programs, museum development, NAGPRA (*Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act*) activity, place names projects, ethnobotanical inventories, and so on. It may seem almost contradictory that globalization provides additional motivation for otherwise inwardly focused activities, but the notion of balance between inward and outward focus lends support for the instrumentality in these “cultural” efforts.

¹⁹ An example is the situation that is at least rumored to have plagued both American Indian nations and First Nations in Canada: an Asian entrepreneur proposes to partner with the tribal government on a chopstick factory; the tribe builds a small factory, employs laborers, and makes its first shipment, only to learn that the market is saturated

Globalization also raises explicit social welfare concerns. As noted above, economic globalization and increased trade may generate economic improvements that succeed in pulling many of a society's poor out of poverty. Yet market forces are not uniformly benevolent. When it opts (or is forced) to compete on a global scale, an Indian nation may find that other nations' comparative advantages (or worse, lack of respect for intellectual or cultural property rights) render its production uncompetitive. Or, rapidly escalating external demands for local products might strip a community of resources that are critical to its long-term socio-economic success. In these senses, market globalization alone can be impoverishing, and tribes must find ways to guard against and mitigate its harms.

A final note is that despite these concerns, Indian nations may be better prepared than the U.S. as a whole to deal with globalization. As noted above, not only negative policies targeted at Indians (such as boarding school attendance, termination, and relocation), but also more general political and social events (such as World War II and the civil rights movement) obliged Indians to deal with the larger world. The tools American Indians and Alaska Natives developed to cope, adapt, engage, repel, and survive will serve them well in addressing the present challenges as well.

Closing Question: What is the Future of Indian Country's Social Welfare Systems?

This paper has presented six trends that are likely to impact the future design and focus of Indian Country's social welfare system:

Trend 1: Movement Away from Income Support Only Toward a Tension Between Work-Conditioned Supports and "Poverty Reduction"

Trend 2: Movement Away from "Stovepipe Programs" toward Integrated, Comprehensive, Sustainable, Community-Based Delivery Systems

Trend 3: Movement Away from Short-Term Problem Solving toward a Strength-Based, Long-Term Approach to Planning

Trend 4: Movement Away from Economic Development Projects toward Community-Wide Economic Growth and Socio-Economic Advancement

Trend 5: Movement Away from Strict Tribal-Federal Relationships toward More Complex Federal-State-Tribal Relationships

Trend 6: Movement Away from a Reservation-Centered or USA-Centered Perspective toward a Global World View

These trends are offered as a framework from which to conceptualize the current status of Indian Country's social welfare systems and to generate options and alternative futures for the delivery of social welfare services in tribal communities. Pointing to the implications of the focus, funding, scope and nature of social welfare services, these

or that the friendly entrepreneur has vanished. To avoid such pitfalls, Indian nations must have the capacity to analyze market opportunities abroad and to scrutinize a broader array of prospective partners.

trends lay the groundwork for discussions about the future direction of Indian Country's social welfare systems. In applying these trends, tribes can choose to harness the momentum they are creating or consciously choose to take a different path, attempting to modify the trend or at least to curb or alter its impact on tribal communities. The first step is to identify preferred futures. We invite you to think about your goals for the next five years, dream big, and consider the following questions:

- What kind of social welfare systems do tribal governments and citizens want for their communities?
- What role will social welfare systems play in the larger design of various tribally-administered services? How do social welfare systems interact with other tribal political, economic, social and cultural systems?
- What will social welfare systems on reservations look like in five years? What characteristics will they possess?
- How can social welfare systems be used as a vehicle for economic growth?
- What other community goals can social welfare systems support?
- How can we take steps toward these preferred futures?
- What is a reasonable measure of progress?

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