Training for Development: Native American Communities and Transnational “Laboratories”
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Note for readers:
The following is a chapter draft from my current book project -- Native America, Foreign Encounters, and the Makings of Global Development. In brief, the book attempts to trace important connections between two scholarly fields that have all too often been treated as unrelated – Native American history and the history of international development. My particular focus is how the U.S. government’s attempts to “develop” Native American populations became intertwined with America’s growing engagement in development around the globe in the mid-20th century. From the mid-1930s to the formative years of the U.S. Agency for International Development in the 1960s, as the U.S. pursued shifting foreign policy interests in various international spheres, its past and present interventions in Native American economies and cultures inflected transnational development conservations among a wide range of practitioners in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. One of my broader goals here is to complicate and reconfigure our understanding of the making of international development and the temporal, geographical, and social markers we use to define this history by incorporating America’s enduring domestic colonial situation into more familiar narratives of transnational knowledge production, global decolonization, and Cold War foreign relations.

The chapter offered below follows one that examines the flow of official development “expertise” and knowledge from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs into America’s foreign assistance bureaucracy in the late 1940s and early 1950s, as President Truman’s administration launched what became known as “Point Four” development programs in many parts of the globe, as part of its larger Cold War strategies.

In the spring of 1950, as Assistant Commissioner John Provinse of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) delivered commencement speeches at a number of Native American schools in the Southwest, his primary focus was how the nation’s rich experience in Indian development could profoundly guide America in its increasing Point Four forays across the globe. In a speech retooled for multiple graduating classes in Oklahoma and New Mexico, Provinse boldly exclaimed:

The United States experience with its American Indians is one of the probably most critical experiments in human and inter-group relations that has ever been carried out in the world. . . . America, unfortunately, does not realize that in searching for acceptable approaches to other non-industrialized peoples in other parts of the world it has within its own national history and its present Indian population the answers to many questions it is now seeking to solve. America needs to know what is likely to happen in these many far-away places in the world into which our technological knowledge will be exported. We need to know what it means to groups of people unlike ourselves to change their ways of living, adapt new practices, accept different values, and
unless we do know and understand these things our offers of help, no matter how well intended, will make us more enemies than friends. America needs to profit, in this critical time of need, from its experience with the American Indian.¹

Echoing Provinse, a number of American government officials, academics, and analysts at this time trumpeted the valuable global development lessons to be gleaned from the BIA’s “experimental” interventions in native societies – similarly conceptualized as “underdeveloped” and “unlike ourselves” – and stressed the urgent need for development administrators to understand social and cultural dimensions of technological change among their target populations. This chapter examines how these agendas were directly brought together in a suite of training experiments in the late 1940s and early 1950s – sponsored by actors in an array of American institutions (government agencies, universities, foundations, and religious organizations) and geared toward civil servants, professionals, and graduate students from the United States and around the world – that involved direct immersion in efforts to “develop” various Native American populations and economies.

To date, the only detailed analysis related to this topic is a sole 2001 journal article by Wade Davies on a summer seminar series run by Cornell University’s Sociology-Anthropology Department from 1949 to 1952, a training program that applied social science methods to the problems of technical assistance and that used cooperating Native American and neighboring Hispano communities² in the southwest as field sites. Davies gives an insightful overview of the origins, content, and organization of the seminar and highlights the limited impact of the program on government agents’ practices, particularly within the BIA.³ Left unexamined, however, are some of the wider and transnational ripple effects of the Cornell seminar among both its key advocates in different U.S. foreign service agencies and the diverse groups of American and foreign graduate students and development practitioners who participated in this training. Moreover, as this chapter reveals, the Cornell seminar and using Native American populations as development “laboratories” were models that were promoted and replicated in multiple other initiatives in the early to mid-1950s, including different Point Four-related training programs that brought government officers from South Asia and the Middle East on study tours to the American southwest, an American Friends Service Committee international seminar focused on Indian

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¹ The quote here appears in Provinse’s draft for the May 19 ceremony at Fort Sill Indian School (Lawton, Oklahoma), entitled “The Indians and the Years Ahead,” the text of which was adapted for ceremonies at the Chilocco Indian Agricultural School (Chilocco, Oklahoma) on May 22 and the Santa Fe Indian School on May 24. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter NARA1), RG 75, Entry 192, Office File of Assistant Commissioner John H. Provinse, Box 1, folder “Misc. (2 of 2).”

² Hispanos, or Nuevomexicanos, refers here to descendants of colonial Spanish and Mexican settlers in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. For a recent volume that critically interprets the cultural histories and representations of these populations, see Phillip B. Gonzales, ed., Expressing New Mexico: Nuevomexicano Creativity, Ritual, and Memory (University of Arizona Press, 2007).

issues held in Arizona, and a graduate program in international technical assistance launched by Haverford College (Pennsylvania) that involved fieldwork in Cherokee communities in North Carolina.

Viewed together, these different training “experiments” reflect an unrecognized dimension of the Point Four era: the wide transnational circulation and currency of Native American development “lessons” among a host of actors engaged in the making of global development knowledge. These “laboratories” were initiated by a network of like-minded development “experts,” positioned in influential American governmental and non-governmental circles, with a common conviction that the problems of Native American “underdevelopment” were comparable to those of “backward” societies across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They also shared a deep confidence that America’s experiences with its indigenous populations could provide influential global insights into universal modes of more “culturally sensitive” development practice. And for the vast diversity of American and foreign trainees involved, these educational initiatives were seen as important opportunities to interact with and converse about Native American “underdevelopment” in ways that could provide valuable strategies for approaching the development predicaments they faced around the world.

Cornell and international development, via the Southwest

As discussed in chapter 3, the post-war era saw a major expansion of American social scientists, among other “experts,” into the emerging Cold War battle to “win the hearts and minds” of poor, rural populations worldwide through development assistance. At the forefront of this movement was Cornell’s Sociology-Anthropology Department. In 1946, the department chair Lauriston Sharp and the newly recruited Alexander Leighton began erecting a program that “addressed the question of facilitating the introduction of modern agriculture, industry, and medicine to areas that are deficient in those technologies.”

This initiative involved hiring a number of applied anthropologists interested in analyzing cultural dynamics in “underdeveloped” societies receiving technological assistance, at sites both in the U.S. and abroad, with the goals of assisting and improving the processes of planned development. With funding from the Carnegie Foundation and the Russell Sage Foundation, the department eventually expanded its profile to field stations in India, Peru, Thailand, and the American Southwest and organized various culture-oriented training initiatives in these and other locales to help facilitate technical specialists’ introduction of development changes among target populations.

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As part of this broader global ambition, Leighton and colleagues at Cornell and the University of Arizona initiated in 1949 what they saw as a more extensive training program in cross-cultural development dynamics – the Field Seminar in Applied Anthropology, based in New Mexico and Arizona. As Davies has noted, the genesis of this program was heavily inflected by Leighton’s war era background in U.S. government projects involving the interpretation and administration of “foreign” cultures – such as his psychological study of Navajo culture for the Office of Indian Affairs in the early 1940s, his stint as community analyst at the Japanese American internment camp at Poston, Arizona, and his strategic policy work on Japanese cultural dynamics for the Office of War Information. These experiences helped solidify his profound confidence in the capacity of social scientific expertise to help guide the reordering of the post-war world and the spread of technological advances to “less developed” areas in culturally sensitive and effective ways.\(^6\) Sharing this outlook in the late 1940s was an applied anthropologist at the University of Arizona, Edward Spicer, who had similarly trained in southwestern Indian cultures and worked extensively as a Japanese internment analyst for the federal War Relocation Authority (WRA) and whom Leighton convinced to help organize and lead the new Field Seminar.\(^7\) Together with the rest of the assembled seminar team – anthropology professor John Adair and graduate student Tom Sasaki from Cornell and University of Arizona graduate student Henry Dobyns – Leighton and Spicer hoped that this novel cross-cultural training in the American southwest, through its social scientific methods and field-based insights, would have wide application in diverse international development contexts, particularly at a moment when the U.S. was rapidly expanding its overseas assistance programs.

The choice to locate the seminar in the southwest in part grew out of the organizers’ collective research experiences, familiarity, and connections with a wide variety of Native American communities in the region (particularly Navajo, various Pueblo groups, Tohono O’Odham, and Pascua Yaqui) and some of the Hispano populations of northern New Mexico. The acceleration of particular BIA agricultural programs in the area following the war, particularly in response to dire economic conditions on the Navajo and Hopi reservations, further attracted the attention of the seminar team.\(^8\) Also underlying the project was these anthropologists’ shared conviction that such southwestern communities were

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\(^7\) Davies, “Cornell’s Field Seminar,” 322; Edward H. Spicer, *Pascua, A Yaqui Village in Arizona* (University of Chicago Press, 1940); Edward H. Spicer, “The Use of Social Scientists by the War Relocation Authority,” *Applied Anthropology 5,* 2 (Spring 1946), 16-36, in which he reflects on his experiences as head of the WRA’s Community Analysis Section; Alice Joseph.

particularly suited to illuminating pressing challenges of technological change and adaptation to modern life occurring among “underdeveloped” societies the world over. Reflecting broader shifts in post-war American social scientific thinking, this abstraction rested on a particular way of approaching “underdevelopment” primarily through the lens of cultural dynamics rather than deeply locating local communities’ impoverishment in structural histories of capitalist and colonial relations. The Cornell team thus identified Native Americans and Hispanics in the southwest as rather typical of other “backward” “peasant ‘folk’” across the globe, all commonly struggling to adapt their pre-existing “ways of life” to novel forces of modernization. Trainees could therefore study these communities as working microcosmic “laboratories” mirroring global processes of developmental change.9 As John Adair and other seminar organizers repeatedly emphasized when explaining the program’s focus: “These areas in the Southwest are used as a laboratory to demonstrate to these students what they may find in other parts of the world where native peoples are just emerging from tribal life, and where rapid economic change has brought about a radical shift from the old to the new life.”10

During its four-year run (1949-52), the seminar staff created this global “laboratory” by directly immersing participating students in a variety of cross-cultural development settings in New Mexico and Arizona. Based at first at university and government facilities in Santa Fe and Flagstaff, students were given background introductions to the cultures and histories of the different communities they would visit and relevant applied anthropological research methods. They next ventured off on successive week-long excursions, where they met with local BIA officials, community leaders, and selected families on the Navajo reservation, the Tohono O’Odham reservation, and the Hispano community in Truchas, New Mexico, with occasional side trips to additional Indian reservations and pueblos. Each field session was then followed up by group discussions for a few days, and the entire program culminated with students recording their impressions in more focused reports.11


10 Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, Santa Fe, New Mexico, John Adair Papers (hereafter Adair Papers), Box 36, file 30, n.d., untitled, Adair’s seminar notes; Adair Papers, Box 37, file 32, Cornell Southwestern Program, n.d. “Field Seminar in Applied Anthropology”; Adair Papers, Box 1, file 1, 5/14/1951, Adair to Dow Carnal, Superintendent, Hopi Reservation, Keams Canyon, AZ; Robert Bunker and John Adair, The First Look at Strangers (Rutgers University, 1959); Henry Dobyns, “Therapeutic Experience of Responsible Democracy,” Midcontinent American Studies Journal 6, 2 (Fall 1965), 171-86.

11 Ibid., pp. 329-32; Bunker and Adair, First Look at Strangers, pp. 127-40. Over the seminar’s multiple summers, students made side trips to the Hopi, San Carlos Apache, and Colorado River reservations and the San Juan (Ohkay Owingeh), Santa Clara, Santo Domingo, and Tesuque pueblos.
Undergirding this entire program were deep assumptions about the overall necessity and benefits of development planning and confidence that solving “underdevelopment” problems was principally a question of improving methods of implementation. Through case studies of how BIA and other government administrators had handled, often problematically, the “cross-cultural” challenges of introducing technological innovations (such as irrigation projects or land conservation measures) among different native southwestern populations, it was believed students would learn to identify universally applicable and more effective development techniques. Instead of misguided and uninformed approaches that at times in the past had generated “hostility towards the innovator,” students would learn methods of technological assistance that were more responsive to local social structures, cultural dynamics, and “felt needs.” They would thereby develop methodological toolkits that could help facilitate the politically smoother, more culturally sensitive, and more efficient transfer of technical assistance in other comparable situations of “underdevelopment.” As Leighton and others asserted, students would thus “discover for themselves that some of the principles they are assimilating have wide application, and that much of what they learn among the Navaho can help them with the Spanish-Americans and, hence, the Arabs or the people of Thailand.”

Global lessons and perspectives from the southwest field

Further fueling the global, inter-cultural environment of the seminar were the widely varying nationalities, backgrounds, and perspectives of the few dozen students who participated over its four years. Beyond the United States, participants hailed from such diverse places as Belgium, Canada, Egypt, England, India, Iran, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, El Salvador, Turkey, and Thailand. While a small minority of American and foreign trainees were students specializing in various social sciences, most instead pursued graduate studies or particular training programs in diverse fields, from agriculture to medicine to social work. Some of these foreign students were technical specialists employed by their home governments and temporarily in the U.S. on special Point Four-connected training grants. In addition, every summer a number of spots in the seminar were reserved for a variety of American agricultural extension workers and other specialists primarily from the USDA, particularly the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations (OFAR), and Point Four programs.

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So how did these diverse seminar participants themselves reflect on this training “laboratory” and the value of learning about Native American development dynamics for understanding global questions of technical assistance? While individuals’ experiences and responses of course varied, collectively they reveal some common feelings that what was observed in the southwestern field had direct and important applications for cross-cultural development work among other similarly “underdeveloped” populations around the world.

One especially fascinating starting point for exploring these impressions is the story of foreign service officer John Hall Paxton and his wife Vincoe Paxton, who participated in the Cornell program in 1950. Hall Paxton had spent a long career as an attaché in China until just a year before this, when he rose to international fame during the country’s tumultuous revolution. Fleeing advancing Communist armies from his post in the western Xinjiang province, he dramatically led an escape party across the Himalayas to safety in India.\(^{15}\) Once resettled in the U.S., and prior to being reposted to a consulate in Iran in 1951, Paxton was given a short-term training assignment in the U.S.\(^{16}\) After having spent some 25 years in China, with only brief visits to the U.S., his job was to re-acquaint himself with some aspects of everyday life at the American “grass roots.” Given his own recent experiences “among Muslim tribesmen of Inner Asia,” he and Vincoe, who had also worked in the region as a community nurse, decided to use this interim assignment to immerse themselves in what they saw as comparable societies in the U.S. – Native Americans.\(^{17}\) The State Department complied, and from May to September 1950 the Paxtons were “loaned” to the area BIA office at Albuquerque, from where they were able to explore a wide range of civic institutions, social services, and economic and cultural activities in the state, with a principal focus on numerous Pueblo communities in the Rio Grande valley and some additional visits to particular Navajo and Mescalero Apache enterprises.\(^{18}\)

One of the Paxtons’ primary interests in this assignment – “our work with the Indians” -- was to gain comparative lessons of broader international application from “the almost untapped lode of


\(^{16}\) In between this training assignment and just before his assignment to Isfahan, Iran in 1951, Paxton also worked for several months in New York for the State Department’s Voice of America, in the South and Southeast Asia division. Edward H. and Rosamund B. Spicer Papers, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ (hereafter Spicer Papers) Box 25, 7/15/51, Hall and Vincoe Paxton, letter to “Our dear friends.”


\(^{18}\) Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO, M 236: United Pueblos Agency records inventory (hereafter UPA records), Series 3, Box 8, folder 5, reports from J. Hall Paxton to Frank S. Hopkins, Foreign Service Institute, 7/10/1950 and 10/12/1950; Spicer Papers, Box 25, 8/31/50, Hall and Vincoe Paxton, letter to “Our dear friends”; ibid., 12/20/50, “Season’s greetings”, “Our dear friends.”
American experience in cultural relations right here on our own soil.”19 The Cornell seminar that coincided with their southwest residency was thus a natural draw, and shortly after their arrival in Albuquerque Hall Paxton contacted John Adair directly about enrolling the couple for the upcoming summer program. Suggesting to Adair that participating in the seminar just “might meet our particular needs,” he elaborated on what type of exploration he and Vincoe had in mind, following up on their past few years in western China: “We found many problems in that area [Xinjiang] of interest and importance and have developed the theory that, perhaps, solutions that we might work out in Indian studies here might be significant for the operation of the President’s Point Four Program for Backward Areas in many parts of the world.”20 With the seminar already fully enrolled, Adair instead arranged for the Paxtons to participate as special guests in particular sessions over the course of the summer. This was an opportunity to share with the eclectic group of Cornell seminar instructors, American and foreign students and development specialists, as well as visiting BIA field agents and University of New Mexico faculty, the Paxtons’ reflections on their own cross-cultural experiences in China and in turn take away what they felt were “practical and constructive” lessons from group discussions of local Pueblo administrative issues.21

Like the Paxtons, many of the other participants in the program saw the seminar as an opportunity to gain skills in dealing with “backward” societies and cultures of the southwest that they could then apply in their future careers in similarly “underdeveloped” parts of the world. Take, for instance, the case of Farrokh Saidi, a 21-year-old Iranian who had recently studied anthropology at Cornell as an undergraduate and was enrolled in medical school at Harvard when he attended the southwest seminar in 1951. As he wrote in his application to the program, he hoped that the seminar would supplement his training in technical and medical fields, enabling him to effectively adapt and apply such knowledge “into the backward areas of Iran.”22 Following the seminar, Saidi indeed eventually returned to Iran and launched a lifelong career in medicine. And as he recently reminisced, the seminar’s cultural immersion in “underdeveloped” communities in the southwest was an important training ground for his professional work there: “I have fond memories of the six weeks spent among the Navahos and Hopi Indians of the Southwest. It was an eye opener for me as a foreign student, and I am sure it helped in my becoming integrated into Iranian society when I returned home. . . .”23

19 Spicer Papers, Box 25, 12/20/50, “Season’s greetings”, “Our dear friends.”
20 Adair Papers, Box 11, file 429, 5/2/1950, J. Hall Paxton to Adair.
21 Adair Papers, Box 11, file 429, 5/17/50, Adair to Paxton; Spicer Papers, Box 25, 8/31/50, Hall and Vincoe Paxton, letter to “Our dear friends”; UPA records, Series 3, Box 8, folder 5, 9/20/1950, Paxton to Robert Bunker, Social Economist, Albuquerque Area Office, Office of Indian Affairs.
22 Adair Papers, Box 37, file 32, Cornell Southwestern Program, 3/27/1951, Farrokh Saidi, Boston, to Holmberg; Adair Papers, Box 37, file 39, Cornell University: Seminar Papers, 1949-1952, Saidi Farrak [sic].
23 Email communication to author, Farrokh Saidi, Tehran, Iran, March 8, 2010. Saidi would go on to a distinguished career as a surgeon and professor at hospitals and university medical schools in Iran.
For Bai Matabay Plang, a 38-year-old educator and social worker visiting from the southern Philippines, the 1950 seminar experience was immensely valuable and something that she hoped to replicate in her own country, for “the people of the backward country who is [sic] seeking enlightenment.” In the months following the seminar, as Plang returned home, she wrote a few times to Edward Spicer about her deep appreciation for all that she learned in the program, and “[h]ow I love to relate our experiences in New Mexico and Arizona to my people.” She was also busy at this time spearheading an eventually successful initiative to launch a technology institute in Mindanao, and she repeatedly expressed her strong interests to Spicer about how a similar Cornell “laboratory” program, based at this new university and likewise studying local rural communities, “could be instrumental in our general progress.”

In a few illuminating cases, some students much more fully elaborated on how their involvement in the program, particularly their exposure to Native American social dynamics, more substantively influenced their thinking about conducting development work overseas. Shripad Keshav Bedekar, for example, a 39-year-old government official in the Agriculture and Forestry Department in Bombay State, India, was especially impassioned about his seminar experiences. Bedekar participated in the Cornell seminar in 1952 as part of a larger Point Four-related training grant he had received to study agricultural extension in the U.S. for several months. As someone trained in the technical field of agricultural economics, the social scientific principles and cultural dynamics the seminar brought to life through immersion in Native American case studies were eye-opening and transformative. In a lengthy letter to a departmental colleague from India who had just been assigned as an extension officer in the British colonial territory of Zanzibar in East Africa, Bedekar stressed that the seminar’s training “should be of very considerable help to you in your work” and enclosed copies of his various seminar papers on topics “I feel so strongly about,” including those analyzing technological change among Navajo and Tohono O’Odham (Papago) societies. Throughout the letter, Bedekar shared some of the broader anthropological insights he gleaned from the Cornell program -- “A technological change must be in harmony with the cultural climate as much as in harmony with the physical climate” – with specific references to

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24 Spicer Papers, Box 3, Folder 13, 6/17/1951, Manila, Bai Plang to Spicer and family.
25 Quotes are from ibid., 6/17/1951, Manila, Bai Plang to Spicer and family, but see also ibid., 7/31/1950, Bai Plang to Spicer; 8/2/50, Bai Plang to Spicer; 10/10/50, Bai to Spicer and family; n.d., Bai Plang to Spicer and family, Xmas card from Philippines. Even as late as 1964, Plang would still write to Spicer that “I often think of New Mexico and Arizona and the Group in 1950.” Ibid., 12/25/64, Bai Plang to Spicer and family. For an overview of Plang’s career, see the University of Southern Mindanao’s website, http://www.usm.edu.ph/about-usm/profile/the-founder.
comparative lessons the Navajo and Tohono O’Odham cases could offer for development work in Zanzibar. For instance, his colleague should look beyond accepted stereotypes about local Zanzibaris to understand their real perspectives on technological assistance, much as Bedekar himself learned “that the supposed apathy of change on the part of Papagos is not real but is a manifestation of the distrust in the Government and the psychological conflict arising out of attempts to acculturisation [sic].” Displaying a “superiority complex” or teaching extension like a “master” would only result in local people’s “tenacious adherence to [the] existing state of things,” as, Bedekar asserted, one could observe among the Navajo and Tohono O’Odham. Instead, developmental progress could only be achieved through local acceptance and participation, such as when the Papago Tribal Council cooperated effectively with the government extension service.27

Somewhat similar reflections on the seminar’s global lessons came from Darwin Solomon, a 31-year-old American graduate student in the seminar in the summer of 1950. Solomon participated in the program as part of his graduate work in rural sociology and agricultural economics at Cornell, arriving with a prior background in agronomy (at the University of Wyoming) and a few years’ experience serving in China as an agricultural extension worker and instructor with the UNRRA.28 Following his seminar experience, Solomon wrote an article for the academic journal *Kiva* that explicitly focused on the broader significance of the southwestern cross-cultural “laboratory” for international development work. At a time when the United States increasingly questioned the effectiveness and expense of its technical assistance programs around the world, he explained: “Many an American extension worker may find object lessons in how change is facilitated or blocked by studying the diverse cultural groups in our own Southwest,” their “transition from an unscientific subsistence agriculture,” and the “often well intentioned, but frequently misinformed efforts [that] have been made to accelerate and guide that transition.”29 Solomon then proceeded with an overview of Navajo, Pueblo, and Hispano developmental changes and problems, accompanied by some anecdotal comparisons of his own field experiences in China. The piece concluded with larger comparative insights, seemingly drawn from the Cornell seminar playbook, presuming administrators’ prerogative to facilitate “desirable changes and attitudes” in target communities and identifying best strategies for doing so, such as involving local people in the planning


and executing of the changes affecting them (for example, when introducing the use of insecticides in Chinese villages or at Santo Domingo Pueblo) and educating the development “educator” with a deeper, self-reflective understanding of the intercultural relations surrounding technical assistance. For Solomon, the cross-cultural training experience in the southwest had thus clearly left an indelible mark on his professional outlook and administrative philosophy, and at a crucial time in his expanding career in international development.

An additional example of the global significance participants drew from the seminar can be found in the experiences of Baron Goto, director of the Hawaii territory’s Agricultural Service, who also attended the Cornell program in 1950. Goto was part of the influential Japanese American immigrant minority in Hawaii, and by the time of the seminar was a rising star in the American government’s early Cold War efforts to help transform the islands into an important site for technical training and development programs there and beyond, as part of its larger ambitions in the Asia-Pacific region. His enrollment in the 1950 seminar was part of a longer study tour of extension projects across the mainland U.S., and, as Mire Koikari has recently noted, the seminar had a uniquely “profound impact” on Goto’s future thinking and administrative trajectory. At the end of his seminar experience, Goto composed a “handbook” that articulated broader principles administrators across the globe should use in implementing technical assistance programs, one that directly restated the main anthropological methods and approaches conveyed in the course, perpetuated presumptions regarding the necessity and primary role of development specialists, and also particularly emphasized the cross-cultural lessons learned from his first-hand observation of Navajo case studies and their utility to understanding world-wide problems.

The seminar’s impact was further reflected in the following months, as Goto promoted and deployed such comparative lessons for different government audiences. In November 1950, while attending a USDA conference in Washington on land-grant colleges’ extension work, Goto was invited to present an overview of his handbook and the Cornell seminar’s significance at a special seminar meeting of Point Four program administrators. As the event was retold to John Adair, everyone in attendance felt

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31 After receiving his master’s degree from Cornell in 1951, Solomon worked for the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) in Thailand in agricultural extension work for two years. He then returned to the States, finished his doctoral degree in rural sociology at Cornell, worked briefly at the University of Maryland’s Extension Service, and then assumed the head of the training division of the University of Saskatchewan’s new Center for Community Studies in 1958. In 1962, he moved to Rome to begin a long career as senior rural sociologist with the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization, engaging in development projects around the globe. Darwin D. Solomon obituary, The Sundance Times (Wyoming), Oct. 5, 1995, p. 10.
33 Koikari underscores how Goto, following Alexander Leighton’s example, problematically depicted Native Americans’ and other “foreigners’” development predicaments in “depoliticizing” ways that served broader Cold War agendas, in ibid., pp. 119-22.
it was the best such seminar yet, due to Goto’s convincing articulation of the Cornell program’s broader importance for international development training and the unique value derived from immersing trainees in the cultural “differences” of the southwest.34 Back in Hawaii in early 1951, Goto also began applying some of the Cornell seminar ideas and lessons in the various training courses he organized for U.S. Point Four technicians preparing for assignments across the Asia-Pacific region.35 In subsequent years, as Goto attained leading positions in international technical assistance and training institutions in Hawaii, his formative exposure to the Cornell program and Native American development dynamics would continue to inflect his approach to the problems of providing technical assistance to “foreign” and “underdeveloped” cultures in various Pacific island territories, the Philippines, Okinawa, and beyond.36

**Bringing the seminar and Native American development to the world**

As the example of Goto most clearly suggests, a number of individuals involved in the Cornell seminar and Point Four programs abroad saw great potential in the seminar’s capacity to influence the direction of American development assistance overseas. The regular participation of American technical specialists in the program, for instance, was directly facilitated by the interest and cooperation of key allies in the USDA offices connected to foreign work. The department’s Director of Extension, M.L. Wilson, was extremely sympathetic to the Cornell seminar’s mission, having regularly incorporated the latest in rural sociology and applied anthropology in his various career positions as head of the USDA’s Bureau of Agricultural Economics (BAE), the extension service, and other community development programs.37 Once the seminar began, Wilson visited the program, regularly discussed its development with Leighton, Adair, and Spicer, and enthusiastically sent USDA technicians and extension officers to participate every year.38 In fact, after the seminar’s final summer session, Adair confided to a colleague

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34 Adair Papers, Box 15, file 606, Wilson, ML, 12/5/1950, Wilson to Adair.
35 Spicer Papers, Box 3, Folder 19, 2/5/1951, Adair to Spicer, relating a recent letter from Goto to Alexander Leighton.
36 Koikari, *Cold War Encounters*, pp. 116, 121-4, 128-29, describing the continued influence of the Cornell seminar as Goto directed training and assistance programs at the Institute of Technical Interchange at the University of Hawai’i’s East-West Center and its predecessor in the 1950s and 1960s.
38 Spicer Papers, Box 3, Folder 19, Box 3, Folder 19, 8/24/50, Spicer to Margaret Mead, American Museum of Natural History, NY; *ibid.*, 2/5/1951, Adair, Cornell, to Spicer; Adair Papers, Box 15, file 606, Wilson, ML, 12/5/1950, Wilson to Adair; *ibid.*, Box 9, file 307, 7/19/1951, Adair to Leighton; *ibid.*, Box 9, file 308, 1/7/52,
that Wilson “had been the single individual who had been the most helpful to him and in his work with the Cornell Seminar.”

Another important USDA ally was Douglas Ensminger in the OFAR, who had long-running intellectual connections with Cornell and the infusion of social scientific thinking into agricultural extension work. After earning his doctorate in rural sociology at Cornell in 1939, he assumed various roles in the USDA, such as directing both the BAE’s community organization research program and the Extension Service’s program in rural sociology extension. By the time the Cornell seminar began in 1949, Ensminger was in charge of coordinating the OFAR’s agricultural training of foreign nationals, and he showed his commitment to the seminar by personally selecting and sending OFAR personnel to attend the program during its first three summers. His interest in the seminar’s philosophy and methodology was underscored again in the fall of 1951 when he joined Wilson, other U.S. officials, and representatives from various countries in attending the Cornell Institute in Anthropology, which aimed to prepare technicians for development assistance work overseas by training them “to understand different cultures of the world.”

With such support from like-minded and well-placed government colleagues in the initial years of the seminar, some of the Cornell faculty attempted to dramatically expand its influence on Point Four-related programs. In early 1951, following months of conversations with other members of Cornell’s...
Sociology and Anthropology Department and the university administration, as well as Point Four staff in the Interior Department’s Division of International Activities and the State Department, John Adair submitted “A Proposed Training Program for Point Four Workers in the American Southwest” to the State Department’s Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA) director. The idea was for Cornell to set up a contract with the TCA for a pilot year (July 1951-July 1952), creating a special seminar program in “native communities” of New Mexico and Arizona exclusively devoted to training as many as eighty American TCA employees engaged in Point Four projects around the world.42 Adair justified such an expansion by recapping the past achievements of the Cornell seminar and emphasizing the prime training conditions of the American Southwest – a region “where for many years the United States Government has been confronted with problems similar to those which now confront T.C.A.,” particularly the cultivation of educational, health, and environmental development, in culturally sensitive ways, “in areas where the inadequate conditions of life of the native peoples demand immediate action.” Not only could the seminar program “provide T.C.A. personnel with invaluable insight” into such comparable challenges overseas, but it could also lead to targeted follow-up training projects, led by Cornell and other social scientists, in the Point Four recipient countries themselves.43 Both Adair and his colleague Leighton continued to work on such ideas over the next couple of years, discussing possibilities and mobilizing financial support with officials in the State Department and the Social Science Research Council, hosting two State observers at the summer seminar to consider potential methods to institute in the department’s training courses, and promoting the seminar model in meetings with other government agencies’ officials and congressional leaders.44 Though nothing more expansive formally emerged from these efforts, they do reflect the wide circulation of the southwest seminar’s activities and the deep confidence the seminar organizers and at least a few well-positioned allies in government and foundation circles held in the training program’s transferability to development administration worldwide.

In addition, the seminar faculty made concerted efforts to publicize the findings and workings of the Cornell program to broader audiences in the U.S. and abroad. In exchange for the Russell Sage Foundation supporting the seminar for three years, Spicer and Dobyns put together the influential edited volume *Human Problems in Technological Change*, a series of case studies on cross-cultural dynamics of

42 This proposal outlined a comprehensive plan for training 8 different smaller groups of 10 students each over the course of the year. NARA2, RG48, Entry 879, Box 4, folder “Training: General December 1949-April 1951 (Pt-IV)”, telegram, 2/21/1951, John Adair, Sandoval, NM, to John Evans, Dept Interior; *ibid.*, n.d., Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Cornell, to Administrator, TCA, “A Proposed Training Program for Point Four Workers in the American Southwest.”
44 Spicer Papers, 5/11/51, Adair, SW Field Stn, Sandoval, NM, to Spicer; Adair Papers, Box 9, file 307, 7/19/1951, Adair to Leighton; *ibid.*, 7/28/51, Leighton to Adair; Adair Papers, MS18, Box 1, file 1, 10/17/51, Adair to Donald Stone, ECA; Adair Papers, Box 37, file 32, n.d., “Cornell Southwestern Program: A Summary Report on Five Years, 1948-53.”
technical assistance that included examples from Cornell’s Native American research in the southwest and sites overseas, as well as an overview of the field seminar’s general approach. As Davies has discussed, this book was adopted for social science training in many university courses in the U.S. and was circulated widely among a number of U.S. and foreign government agencies. Adair and BIA employee Robert Bunker also co-wrote a more readable popular account of the seminar, its format, and the types of impressions the field visits made on its various participants, which was eventually published in 1959.45

Beyond these recognized publications, Adair also particularly labored behind the scenes to extend the lessons learned from the Cornell seminar and southwestern Native American development scenarios to even wider public audiences. In the months following the final summer of the seminar, Adair began scheming for an ambitious documentary film series on “Technological Change in Underdeveloped Areas,” emphasizing Cornell’s successful use of “experimental” social scientific approaches to better interpret development transformations across the globe. Intended for the broader American public, these films would help contend with the “ignorance” and “stereotypes” that shaped many American perspectives on “underdeveloped areas of the world” and then translated into technical assistance programs which “frequently do more harm than good, despite all their good will. . . . No program of assistance can be considered effective if it is not accompanied by images of how non-western communities see themselves, and how they come to act on their understanding of change.” Using the powerful medium of film, Adair hoped to arouse Americans’ “sympathy . . . for these native peoples who find themselves puzzled and confused by the changes in the contemporary world.”46 Significantly, the pilot film for the series would focus on the Navajo reservation, his own research base for many years, with future films covering Cornell’s additional research sites in Peru, India, and Thailand.

As Adair elaborated in his funding proposal for the project in mid-1953:

There are several reasons for beginning with an underdeveloped area within the United States. Here, in our own country, we may select out for the camera a people who are undergoing many of the same kinds of change that are typical of many world areas. Here we find overpopulation, wastage of soil resources, emergence from tribal ways of life, the breakdown of the extended family and the changeover from subsistence to cash economy.

The life of a primitive people in our midst will make an excellent starting point for film documentation. The larger society which surrounds them and towards which they are drifting, is our own. The background of our national scene will make for more immediate understanding, and will serve to introduce the themes to be presented in the films to follow.47

46 Adair Papers, Box 36, file 30, n.d. 1953, “Proposal for Production and Research on a Documentary Film on Technological Change in Underdeveloped Areas.”
47 Ibid.
More specifically, Adair planned to draw from his personal research experience by shooting the film in Pine Springs, Arizona, where he had initially conducted fieldwork on Navajo artisans in the late 1930s, and by focusing on changes affecting a local family with whom he had long-standing connections. He had also already identified a cinematographer for the project, one with experience in the region and in shooting documentary material for somewhat related State Department propaganda purposes. The bigger hurdle was securing funding, something Adair worked hard at for much of 1953 in conversations with the Ford Foundation, the Social Science Research Center at Cornell, and the newly established Robert Flaherty Foundation, an organization devoted to encouraging the production of films “that will increase international understanding among the different cultures and peoples of the world” and to which Adair had close personal ties. Despite strong encouragement from these latter two institutions and fleeting interest from the Ford Foundation, Adair ultimately could not find financial support for the film and reluctantly moved on to other, more viable projects.

The seminar’s first after-life: the 1952 extension tour from India

While Adair and other organizers worked to promote and build from the Cornell seminar’s achievements following its final summer, familiar allies in U.S. government circles also continued to generate enthusiasm for the seminar model as they ventured into new overseas development programs in the early 1950s. This momentum resulted in a couple of revealing training experiments set up for groups of foreign government officers on extended tours of American technical assistance

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48 Ibid. In the late 1930s, Adair researched and documented in film the work of Navajo silversmith Tom Burnside, his wife Mabel Burnside, a rug weaver, and others in Pine Springs. This material would figure prominently in Adair’s 1944 monograph Navajo and Pueblo Silversmiths (University of Oklahoma Press), as well as in Susan Fanshel’s retrospective 1986 documentary film A Weave of Time: The Story of a Navajo Family, 1938-1986, for which Adair was a co-producer. Iverson book, p. 169 (check also footnote 90).
49 Adair Papers, Box 36, file 30, n.d. 1953, “Proposal for Production and Research”; Adair Papers, Box 1, file 1, 3/20/1952, Adair to Melbourne Spector. The cinematographer was Kenneth Marthey, who had just worked on a United States Information Agency film entitled And Now, Miguel (Joseph Krumgold producer, 1953) that depicted the story of “a young boy who grows up in the shepherding tradition of his New Mexican ancestors.” See A. Gabriel Meléndez, “Who Are the ‘Salt of the Earth’?: Competing Images of Mexican Americans in Salt of the Earth and And Now, Miguel,” pp. 115-38 (quote is from p. 125), in Gonzales, Expressing New Mexico.
programs, similarly based in the southwest and involving immersion in Native American development realities. The first prominent example was the running in late 1952 of a condensed version of the seminar for a large group of state agricultural officers from across India, as part of their two-month tour of American extension practices.

This special seminar developed out of a confluence of interests among a variety of governmental and non-governmental players in newly independent India and the U.S., at a moment of accelerated ambitions for planned rural development under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In the few years following India’s independence in 1947, particularly in response to shifting Cold War dynamics in the wake of the Chinese revolution and the outbreak of conflict in Korea, the U.S. more seriously viewed development assistance to India as a crucial strategy in its global struggle against communist expansion. In 1951, a new agreement between the U.S. and India brought direct support to the Nehru government’s First Five Year Plan for economic development and launched an acceleration of American aid over the next few years.52

At the same time, a number of American planners, academics, and foundations also became increasingly involved in the country’s new development programs, particularly around rural community-oriented initiatives. Cornell social scientists again played an especially prominent role in these activities, both directly through the Sociology-Anthropology Department’s pilot development project in the northern province of Uttar Pradesh and through the department’s close relationship with the Ford Foundation, which became a major supporter, along with the State Department, of Nehru’s new nationwide community development program in 1952. In fact, the first Ford representative hired to head the foundation’s new office in Delhi that year was Douglas Ensminger, who, as noted earlier, had long-running intellectual connections with Cornell and had helped support the southwest seminar from his prior position in the OFAR.53


Soon after settling into this new role at Ford, Ensminger began scheming about creative ways to infuse the foundation’s assistance to Indian community programs with the latest in American rural development knowledge. In mid-1952, in consultation with his former colleague at USDA, M.L. Wilson, he thus helped develop a two-month training program in the United States for some twenty-one extension officers from across India and two additional representatives of the Indian government’s Ministry of Food and Agriculture. The idea was to specifically respond to the essential role of agricultural extension in reaching the stated objectives of India’s First Five Year Plan -- “the integrated development of rural life at the village level,” in order “to lift the rural community to higher levels of organization and to arouse enthusiasm for new knowledge and new ‘ways of life.’” The overall purpose of the overseas training was thus “visualizing what in the United States Extension experience might have application to India in its present program on increasing food production and raising the general level of family and village living.” With these goals in mind, Wilson and Ensminger further strove to incorporate what they saw as some of the cutting edge cross-cultural training methods of the Cornell seminar, a program they each had so enthusiastically supported throughout its run. As planning for the Indian extension tour began taking shape in early 1952, both men committed themselves to ensuring that some similar program would be a highlight of the overall itinerary.

Given Wilson’s personal investment in this part of the tour, the Ford Foundation delegated him to make all of the southwest seminar’s necessary arrangements. Wilson in turn successfully enlisted one of the main organizers of the Cornell summer seminar, Edward Spicer, to lead a condensed one-week version of the course, similarly based in Native American and Hispano communities in New Mexico and Arizona. As he explained to Spicer, while some officials involved in American assistance to India might question the relevance of such a program, arguing that the visitors “might easily develop an attitude that they can see underdeveloped people living in mud houses in India and don’t have to come to the United States to see them,” Wilson instead held high hopes “that growing out of this would be some knowledge on their part of the native culture and cultural change and that they would begin to see their native India in terms of the pattern of culture.” As in the Cornell summer program, Spicer’s program for the Indian

Philanthropy, the IIE, and the Geographies of Educational Exchange,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 48 (2015), 36-46.

54 Wilson Papers, Box 33, file 7, August 22, 1952, “Program for Special Study in the United States of Principles, Organization and Methods of Extension Work in the United States by Extension Service Directors from India,” pp. 2-3 (hereafter “Program for Special Study”). For a general overview of the tour and its relation to broader international exchanges at the time, see Brooks, “‘The Ignorance of the Uneducated,’” 44-5.

55 Spicer Papers, Box 3, folder 12, 6/19/1952, Wilson to Spicer and 9/2/52, Wilson to Spicer.

entourage would thus present particular southwestern communities as living “laboratories” of more universal challenges in cross-cultural development administration. “We believe,” Wilson noted in his request for cooperation from the BIA commissioner, “that there are some principles about educational work with people’s living cultures decidedly different from our own that can be demonstrated in the field, using the experience of a Mexican, Pueblo, and Navajo community as case studies.”

Beyond its immediate value for the Indian visitors in their ongoing extension work back home, Wilson and some of his colleagues in Ford Foundation and Point Four programs in Asia also saw even greater possibilities for the seminar. In planning the southwestern course, Wilson discussed its merits with his old colleague and friend Chester Davis -- second in command at the Ford Foundation with responsibility for its work in India and some additional overseas programs – who responded enthusiastically and envisioned its potential as a model for future training of overseas technicians. As Wilson confided to Spicer: “I have been told that the Ford Foundation wants to do something in the training field to assist in social change in undeveloped countries, but don’t quite know how to do it. They are going to be looking very critically at what we do the week of October 5 [Spicer’s seminar] and if we sell them and enthuse them on the idea, I think they will work decidedly in that direction.”

Another ally in this direction was John Provinse, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. As noted in chapter 3, Provinse had moved earlier in 1952 from serving as assistant BIA commissioner to the State Department, in charge of Point Four programs in South and Southeast Asia. With his long-running and eclectic career in Native American affairs, applied anthropology, and community development work at home and abroad, he was a strong advocate of the Cornell seminar’s “immersion” approach in the southwest and the broader need to infuse development programs with cross-cultural methods. He also deeply admired the particular skills and work of Spicer, whom Provinse had first drawn into the field of anthropology back in the early 1930s and with whom he had regularly communicated ever since. In conversations with Wilson and Spicer regarding the upcoming tour of officials from India, Provinse emphasized Spicer’s “fund of knowledge about the kind of things Extension workers anywhere in the world need to know” and the absolute necessity of this form of experiential “human relations” training for overseas development assistance work. In Wilson’s estimation, Provinse saw Spicer’s seminar as a testing ground of wider international application: “I think that John feels that if we can be successful in this week and get the Indians interested and the Ford Foundation, we may profoundly affect a training

57 Spicer Papers, Box 3, folder 12, 7/24/52, Wilson to Dillon Myer.
58 Sackley, “Foundation in the Field,” 239.
59 Spicer Papers, Box 3, folder 12, 9/2/52, Wilson to Spicer.
60 Spicer Papers, 4/2/65, Box 26, Provinse, John H. 1934-1973, Part 2 folder, Spicer to George Spindler, Stanford University; and see the rest of this collection for Spicer and Provinse’s long-running correspondence.
program in relation to Point 4.”61 Along these lines, Wilson also invited the head of his division’s training section, Mary Louise Collings, to participate in Spicer’s seminar and evaluate “how more of this kind of training can be used both for teaching extension and for other oversea[s] purposes in connection with Point IV.”62

By the time of Spicer’s seminar in early October 1952, the visiting Indian officers had already completed several weeks on their whirlwind tour of diverse examples of extension work across the country. After introductory lectures by various USDA authorities in Washington, D.C., the group embarked on visits to various land-grant institutions and agricultural research centers (in Maryland, Tennessee, Alabama, and Missouri); a tour of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, to study the programs “developed for the express needs of the negro people, [and] how they have become inspired” through higher educational and extension opportunities; and personalized stays with farm families in central Missouri. The cross-cultural seminar was then held in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Gallup, New Mexico, with occasional field trips to outlying communities and occasional lectures by Wilson.63

Overall, Spicer and Wilson attempted to instill the major themes and guiding assumptions of the larger Cornell seminar in abridged form, with the additional interest in getting the visiting officials to see “similarities to India here” in the southwest.64 As Spicer later summarized his approach, in a letter to Provinse:

I simply set out to raise the question of why the Spanish, Pueblo, and Navaho farmers were backward as compared with those which they had seen elsewhere in the United States. Then M.L. [Wilson] and I tried to point out cultural factors which could be seen as influencing the situation. We called their attention to successful and unsuccessful techniques of change which extension workers in the area had employed.65

Following up on this, Spicer provided examples of tactical anthropological techniques for “getting people to express their felt needs,” recognizing local people’s perspectives on technological change, and utilizing such knowledge to overcome resistance to change and gain communities’ acceptance and confidence.66

In tailoring this program to the particular interests of the Indian visitors, Spicer and Wilson were further able to rely upon the assistance of someone in the tour group who had just enthusiastically participated in

61 Spicer Papers, Box 3, folder 12, 9/7/52, Provinse to Spicer, and 9/2/52, Wilson to Spicer.
62 Collings’ other responsibility was to help prepare the Indian visitors for the final leg of their journey before returning to India – a brief tour of extension work in Japan – given her recent involvement in home demonstration and extension programs there. Spicer Papers, Box 3, folder 12, 9/2/52, Wilson to Spicer, and 9/25/52, Wilson to Spicer; Emily R. Price, “Standing Tall: U.S. Efforts at Democratizing Rural Japanese Women During the Occupation of Japan, 1945-1952,” unpublished M.A. thesis in History (University of Maryland, 2010), pp. 112-17.
63 “Program for Special Study.” Following Spicer’s seminar, the group then visited academic and government extension services in Arizona and California, before returning to India via Japan.
64 Spicer Papers, Box 3, folder 12, 8/18/52, Wilson to R.A. Harvill, President, University of Arizona, Tucson; Spicer Papers, Box 3, Folder 17, n.d., small spiral notebook, untitled notes for 1952 India seminar.
65 Spicer Papers, Box 26, Part 1 folder, 11/3/52, Spicer to Provinse.
66 Spicer Papers, Box 3, Folder 17, n.d., small spiral notebook, untitled notes for 1952 India seminar.
the Cornell seminar a few months earlier -- the agricultural officer from Bombay, Shripad Bedekar, who was enlisted to help strategize about the training course and liaise with the other officials about their experiences in the southwest and their relevance to situations in India.67

Not surprisingly, the different Indian officials involved responded in a variety of ways to the seminar’s approach and particularly to their exposure to southwestern native societies and development contexts, sometimes in ways unanticipated by Spicer and Wilson. Some of the visitors’ immediate impressions were fortunately documented in detailed interviews conducted with each of the participants at various stages of the program and then compiled in the tour’s final evaluation report.68 These interviews reveal rich and revealing comparisons officials perceived between the challenges faced in extension work back in their home Indian provinces and those they observed in particular projects and programs in the U.S., including those among southwestern Native American communities.

Such comparisons came to the fore even when some of the participants grew disenchanted with the seminar’s anthropological perspective on development dynamics. While overall the majority of Indian officials valued Spicer’s cross-cultural emphasis, there were a few outliers who were much less impressed. In Spicer’s view, these were generally “old-timers” in the Indian government service, “whose capacity for change had probably long since atrophied” and who “struck me as being probably hopelessly insensitive to the cultural approach.”69 One individual he was likely thinking of here was Kashinath Damle, one of the senior officials on the tour from the federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, for whom the seminar seemed to have confirmed his views regarding “backward” cultures as the primary obstacles to developmental progress. For Damle, the most useful lesson he learned in observing the “resistance” of Pueblos and Navajos to “a much more civilized way of life” and comparing it to similar problems in India was that “traditions die very hard”: the administrative problems that arose in both contexts were due to “not so much the defect of the extension worker as a defect in the mental make up of the subject with which he has to deal.”70

A much more common response to Spicer’s seminar was instead genuine appreciation of his cross-cultural framework and its utility in diagnosing administrators’ common challenges with both Native Americans and local farmers in India. For example, B.T. Narayanan, Joint Director of Agricultural Extension in the southern Mysore State, found such similarities particularly in the “little or

68 Wilson Papers, Box 40, files 20-23, Virginia Wilson, “Evaluation Project.”
69 Spicer Papers, Box 26, Part 1 folder, 11/3/52, Spicer to Provine.
no progress” resulting from past ideological chasms and tensions between government administrators and Navajo and Hopi communities. “[I]t possibly shows why in certain situations of antagonism, extension programs in my own country have not progressed.”\(^{71}\) For J.C. Ramchandani, Director of Agriculture for Saurashtra State, the lessons from Spicer’s seminar had “direct correlation with the extension work which we have to carry out with the people of the states [in India].” The cultural differences witnessed in the American southwest reminded him of the challenges of introducing technological changes among adherents of Jainism back home; administrators in both contexts needed to be sensitive to local cultures and religions and thereby “translate” development innovations “to fit the characteristics of the people.”\(^{72}\)

Several officials also commented on how they saw such broader cultural approaches and principles often abandoned in practice in the American southwest. A common refrain in many of the interviews was the value of learning from and averting the BIA’s administrative missteps in Native American communities when engaging in similar work back in India. For instance, Amrit Mukerji, Joint Director of Agriculture in Tripura State, noted how instructive Spicer’s seminar was, since in Tripura “we have some aboriginal tribes like the Navaho, Hopi, and Pueblo Indians”: he now hoped “that we should be able to avoid mistakes which have been committed here so that the human relationships with such tribes could be most happy and contributive of progressive ideas amongst them.”\(^{73}\) Similarly, K. Balachandran, Director of Community Projects in Assam State, described the Spicer seminar as “the most instructive week of the whole tour in America,” since it taught him “one invaluable lesson, namely, how not to do extension work.” From the sentiments and agricultural practices of Navajo families he interacted with in the Fruitland, New Mexico area, it was abundantly clear that the government had pursued a “wrong approach, which was based on a complete ignorance of cultural values of the Indian tribes” and had caused long-lasting “damage” to meaningful development.\(^{74}\) For Ram Sahay, Deputy Development Commissioner in Uttar Pradesh, the Fruitland Navajo example was likewise “useful to me in a negative manner” and added to the overall “lesson that I have learned in our tour of the reservations. My spirits rose 100% when I realized that comparatively speaking the rate of progress achieved by us in our extension program in my state working through adjustments to the local cultures and values has been. . . many times faster.”\(^{75}\)

A few of these officials further criticized what they saw as a key impediment to greater progress in the U.S. government’s development of Native American economies: the relative lack of Native

\(^{71}\) Wilson Papers, Box 40, file 22, Narayanan, pp. 6-7.
\(^{72}\) Wilson Papers, Box 40, file 23, Ramchandani, pp. 5-6.
\(^{73}\) Wilson Papers, Box 40, file 21, Amrit Lal Mukerji, p. 6. See also Wilson Papers, Box 40, file 23, Sukh Raj Sabhlok, Proposed Deputy of Agriculture (Extension), Himachal Pradesh, pp. 4-5.
\(^{74}\) Wilson Papers, Box 40, file 20, Balachandran, p. 4.
\(^{75}\) Wilson Papers, Box 40, file 23, Sahay, pp. 6-7.
American personnel in the government extension services. While Spicer’s course, and the Cornell seminars preceding it, sought to illuminate the interaction of “administrator” and “administered” cultures that could influence local processes of technological change and acknowledged the need for “participation of the administered group” for programs to be successful, they also generally left off the table the political question of Native American representation in government development work.\textsuperscript{76} Yet for a few of these foreign visitors, the issue was immediately apparent. The Bihar extension director was surprised “that even after these 35 or 30 years there was hardly an Indian county agent for extension” working in Native American communities. Since one of the main goals of agricultural development was to gain a community’s confidence, he argued, “it is very essential that we should educate and train up their own people to be employed as their extension workers and I don’t think it should be very difficult to find out a couple of persons in each community who could do that.”\textsuperscript{77} M.B. Ghatge, the Joint Director of Agriculture in Bombay State, saw direct parallels in how to deal with “underprivileged farmers” in his state, “those who are backward and have not had adequate opportunities to develop,” and American Indians. The “psychology” of both societies was “that of the vanquished. To bring about a change in the attitudes of such people it is necessary to appoint persons from within their communities.”\textsuperscript{78} S.C. Roy, the high-ranking Agricultural Extension Commissioner in the national Ministry of Food and Agriculture, was also particularly concerned with this issue and personally brought it to the attention of M.L. Wilson and other USDA officials involved in the tour. From Roy’s observations during a home-stay with a farmer at Nambé Pueblo and touring Navajo areas, he was struck by the significant and unfortunate absence of Pueblo and Navajo extension agents, an administrative problem echoed in India. Though difficult, both the U.S. and the Indian governments needed to contend with the challenges of training and “using men and women of a community with particular and deep rooted cultural characteristics to deal with extension in that community.” An inspirational example by contrast, he added, was the Tuskegee extension program for African American farmers the tour group previously visited, which “demonstrated to us how quickly standards of life can improve” when development efforts are made “through trained workers belonging to the community itself.”\textsuperscript{79}

The southwest seminar thus provided varied opportunities for these visiting Indian officials to make what they saw as meaningful, comparative interpretations of the development scenarios of local Native American communities and the challenges of assisting similarly “underdeveloped” populations

\textsuperscript{76} Leighton et al., “A Field Method,” pp. 10-11.
\textsuperscript{77} Wilson Papers, Box 40, file 20, Akhuary, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{78} Wilson Papers, Box 40, file 21, Ghatge, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{79} Wilson Papers, Box 40, file 22, Roy, pp. 8-10. For similar views, see \textit{ibid.}, Phadke, p. 9. Some two decades after Roy’s comments, Pueblo leaders were still complaining to government officials about the relative lack of Indians hired for technical extension positions; see James A. Vlasich, \textit{Pueblo Indian Agriculture} (University of New Mexico Press, 2005), pp. 257-59.
back home. Though Wilson, Spicer, and Provinse may not have agreed with or anticipated all of the visitors’ responses, they generally saw the generation of such cross-cultural and transnational reflections on development administration as fulfilling the seminar’s larger purpose.\(^80\) Wilson, in fact, was so enthusiastic about the program’s success that he continued to promote such southwestern field experience as a model for future international training programs.

Shortly after the end of the Indian officials’ tour in early November 1952, Wilson took an extended international trip that included a few months in India observing rural development work and reuniting with some of the recent visitors. As he later wrote to Spicer in early 1953, many of the Indian officers continued to rave about their seminar experience in the southwest. Some months later, Wilson went so far as to claim that “the success of the visit of the Directors of Extension has reverberated throughout India.”\(^81\) More pragmatically, as Wilson during this period transitioned to a new position in the Ford Foundation’s Overseas Division, he began scheming about ways for the foundation to initiate new programs that focused on similar immersion in cross-cultural development experiences of the southwest. Over the course of 1953, Wilson strategized with Spicer and administrators at both the University of Arizona and New Mexico State College about establishing a more robust program for training foreign extension workers, with funding from Ford, modeled on the field experiences of the Cornell southwest seminar and building from Spicer’s achievements in the India extension tour.\(^82\)

The following year, Wilson again repeatedly discussed with Spicer various preliminary ideas for bringing foreign and domestic students of agricultural extension to similar field seminars based in the southwest, for some six to eight weeks, “operating in three communities – the Navaho – Hopi and one rather typical community of northern New Mexico” – and then followed up by placement in projects in South or East Asia.\(^83\) Although nothing directly seems to have come from these various discussions and proposals, they reveal the persistent influence of the Cornell seminar approach among a variety of academic, foundation,


\(^81\) Spicer Papers, Box 3, folder 12, 11/3/52, Wilson to Spicer; Spicer Papers, Box 35, Wilson, M.L. 1952-1953, 4/24/53, Wilson to Spicer, and 7/16/54, Wilson to Spicer; Brooks, “The Ignorance of the Uneducated,” 44. Helping to spread the word about the American tour and the southwest seminar was also a film -- *Rural U.S.A. (Through Indian Eyes)*, directed by Charles Linko (1953) – produced by the Ford Foundation and widely distributed to extension departments for instructional purposes across India, that documented many aspects of the visitors’ travels and experiences.


\(^83\) This was to be coordinated with Cornell’s agricultural extension program and its overseas projects. Spicer Papers, Box 35, Wilson, M.L. 1952-1953: 7/16/54, Wilson to Spicer; 9/17/54, Spicer to Wilson; 10/28/54, Wilson to Spicer; 11/10/54, Spicer to Wilson.
and government actors and their collective confidence that Native American development could provide valuable transnational insights.

_Middle East development training in native New Mexico_

Beyond the India extension tour and related follow-up schemes Wilson promoted through his networks, the Cornell seminar also directly influenced a related initiative spearheaded in 1953 by Point Four administrators for the Middle East. One of the key organizers behind this program was an individual with great admiration for the Cornell seminar’s approach as well as deep experience with U.S. government programs among Native Americans and internationally -- Gordon Macgregor.  

As noted in chapter 3, Macgregor had by this time moved from his previous roles in the BIA and the Interior Department’s Office of the Territories to serve as a deputy administrator and cultural advisor for Point Four programs as part of Si Fryer’s NEADS office. It was from this position in Point Four that he helped create a training program for Middle Eastern technicians in the American southwest that melded his career interests in applied anthropology and development administration among “underdeveloped” peoples in the U.S. and overseas, directly borrowing from the Cornell seminar in the process.

In late 1952 and early 1953, Macgregor and other NEADS officials discussed various possibilities for building upon existing training practices, whereby individual technical specialists from Point Four-recipient countries in the region came to study at partnering American land-grant institutions, by organizing new thematically-focused group training programs in the U.S. Evolving out of these discussions was the idea to coordinate with the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (NMA&M) a southwestern training program on agricultural extension and community development work for government officers from various Middle Eastern countries. In early 1953, with the contractual details with the college still in the works, Macgregor saw an opportunity to incorporate into the training project some form of a Cornell-like field program involving local Native American communities.  

Already quite familiar with the work of the Cornell Seminar and the involvement of Point Four

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85 NARA2, RG 469, Entry 830, TCA, Regional Technical Training Staff, folder, “Animal Husbandry-Project”: 6/5/1952, to Fryer and staff, from “NEADS Training Unit: Mr. Pierce”; Adair Papers, Box 9, folder 337: Macgregor, Gordon, 4/2/53, Macgregor to Adair.

86 When individual specialists from various Middle Eastern countries came to the U.S. on study grants, occasionally some were directed to explore what were seen as comparable Native American development contexts in the southwest. See, for instance, the case of Sa’adoun Yousef, from Iraq’s Department of Agricultural Research, who was advised to visit Navajo and Pueblo communities described as “very similar to Iraqi villages” and presenting comparable “tribal differences” and administrative “problems.” RG 48, Entry 879, Box 5, folder, “Training: Bureau of Land Management,” 4/9/1953, Lewis H. Rohrbaugh, Director of Technical Cooperation, Baghdad, to Department of State.
representatives in years past, he was also particularly impressed by the recent Ford Foundation training tour of extension officers from India and Spicer’s condensed version of the seminar. He thus turned to one of the Cornell program’s key organizers, John Adair, to solicit his advice for and potential participation in running a similar training program for Middle Eastern officials that would stress “the importance of the cultural components of technical assistance programs”:

the concept of culture and different cultural patterns, the importance and significance of human interpersonal relationships between officials and people, peoples in one culture with those of another, social structure, leadership, etc., etc. . . . We especially want to introduce a short program patterned on the Cornell Field Training Seminar to get the Arab trainees to see technical assistance from the people[’]s point of view, as well as for many other reasons which you well know.

The course would last some six to eight weeks and be led by a selected cultural anthropologist who could best help the trainees “translate their training to their own country situations.” When Adair eventually declined to take on the job, Macgregor instead hired another pillar of the former Cornell seminar and then field director of the university’s ongoing Southwest research project, Tom Sasaki.

By the time the Middle East development course began in late September 1953, it turned out to be a bit more limited in scope than Macgregor and other NEADS planners had originally envisioned. Rather than representing a wider cross-section of Middle Eastern countries, enrollment in the program instead involved only three countries -- seven men from Egypt, eight from Iran, and one from Iraq. The group’s itinerary lasted four months and consisted of orientation, classes, and tours at NMA&MA and then some five weeks of “field experience” in outlying counties, which included tours of various Indian communities, social centers, and extension programs -- particularly Navajo farm visits organized by Sasaki in the Fruitland and Shiprock areas -- some background lectures on local Indian societies and BIA programs, and an intensive week-long seminar, led by Sasaki and based on the Cornell model, that concentrated on Pueblo and Hispano communities in Santa Fe and Rio Arriba counties. Throughout the program, the trainees were regularly encouraged to apply their field experiences in the southwest and their immersion in cultural anthropology to potential development strategies in their home countries, and then

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87 Adair Papers, Box 9, folder 337: Macgregor, Gordon, 4/2/53, Macgregor to Adair; Adair Papers, Box 15, file 606, Wilson, ML, 8/28/53, Adair to ML Wilson.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
91 For more on Sasaki’s research methods and approach at the time, see Tom T. Sasaki, *Fruitland, New Mexico: A Navaho Community in Transition* (Cornell University Press, 1960).
they were assigned formal papers on the topic towards the end of the course. The final group discussion further revealed the seminar’s tactical and political aspirations, when participants were asked how they would use what they had learned to introduce extension in communities in Egypt, Iran, and Iraq while sensitively responding to resistance and “without starting a revolution.” Following this larger group program, the participants then pursued more individualized academic training in their particular areas of interest at the college or in other states for a few months more, before returning home to their respective countries.92

Unfortunately, the sources available for interpreting the Middle Eastern participants’ experiences provide limited details. The overall study tour’s final evaluation, based on formal interviews and informal conversations with all of the participants, only included their responses selectively, without attribution, and with few specific peoples and places mentioned. Nonetheless, their remarks provide some intriguing perspectives on Sasaki’s field seminar and how they drew connections between local Native American contexts and their own development situations back home.93

Overall, the trainees found profound “similarities in cultural conditions of the Indian tribes” and “villagers” in their home countries. “Sometimes people don’t follow the recommended practices because practices are contrary to the customs and traditions of the people,” one concluded. An Iranian official determined from his observations of Navajo and Pueblo programs that development work needed to be specifically adapted to particular cultures, and he would now work towards a similar plan “for special Extension work with the Ghasghai tribe” of southwestern Iran. One common challenge in the Middle East and in the American southwest, another asserted, was “how to work in Extension with people who are different and do not realize the value of Extension.” While one trainee felt that such cultural difference was the main barrier to developmental success – “The more religion is free from superstitions which prevent progress the more the people progress,” such as he saw in the contrasts in “Anglo” and Indian religions – another instead surmised that some “Indians don’t seem to practice very much the information given them” primarily because of their delayed access to education and technical knowledge.


One participant also pointed to what he saw as a glaring, unaddressed problem both at home and among Indians in New Mexico, echoing a criticism by some visitors on the previous India extension tour – the limited engagement of local people as agents of their own development: “The Government agents work with the Indians like the Government agents of my country work with the villagers. Need more participation on part of Indians.”

These various impressions, though only briefly documented, at least reveal some of the different ways that the Egyptian, Iranian, and Iraqi trainees all located Native American situations in their own comparative understandings of more universal developmental challenges. As with Spicer’s seminar for the India extension tour, Sasaki’s cross-cultural course created a transnational showcase in which Native American “underdevelopment” could illuminate more global observations about the pitfalls and prospects of state “experts’” administrative techniques.

The Cornell Seminar and Quaker Internationalism

Beyond these government-sponsored initiatives, the Cornell seminar and its faculty also directly influenced an additional set of educational projects in the early to mid-1950s, spearheaded by key institutions associated with the religious organization the Society of Friends, or the Quakers. One intriguing example was an international seminar organized by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in 1953, based at the Verde Valley preparatory school near Sedona, Arizona, in which field immersion in Native American “underdevelopment” was the centerpiece of the program’s training in global cross-cultural relations.

In addition to its better-known relief- and assistance-related service work in the preceding decades, both in the U.S. and abroad, the AFSC had also long organized a number of public education initiatives. Beginning in various locations in the U.S., these endeavors provided forums for diverse constellations of students, educators, and religious and political leaders to discuss and promote international affairs, conflict resolution, and inter-cultural understanding. Following WWII, and building from these earlier activities, the AFSC launched a series of “International Service Seminars” in the U.S., Europe, India, and Japan, through which groups of American and foreign participants – usually 25-30 graduate students and early career professionals in a variety of fields – assembled for several weeks in “an experiment in international relations and cooperation.” Under the direction of professors and authorities on pressing world issues, the students explored together the historical and cultural dimensions of

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94 All quotes from Leighton Collection, Box 2, Folder 70, “Evaluation of Middle East Extension Short Course.”
particular international situations of tension and considered ways of using such inter-cultural understanding to develop peaceful alternatives.95

By the time of the Verde Valley program in 1953, a couple of these international seminars had already been held in the southwest and included some brief add-on visits for participants to nearby Indian communities in New Mexico and Arizona.96 But by late 1952, AFSC officers began to discuss how to more directly and intensively incorporate southwestern Native American issues into the international seminar curriculum itself. A major push in this direction was the expansion of the AFSC’s Southwest Indian Program that year, with a new office established in Flagstaff in order to increase the organization’s development outreach in the region. AFSC administrators hoped that coordinating a locally based, Indian-focused international seminar could generate further momentum for the organization’s wider initiatives in the southwest.97

At the same time, the perceived success of the Cornell seminar program attracted the interest of various players in the AFSC – both coordinators of its international seminar program and those working in the southwest – and helped catalyze internal discussions regarding the merits of a Native American-centered international service seminar. A few AFSC officials enrolled in the Cornell summer session in 1952, with the hope of learning methods that could be applied to both the AFSC’s activities in the southwest and in future international seminars, and John Adair was called into a preliminary planning meeting in late December to consult on how the Cornell program’s practical experience could inform a somewhat similar cross-cultural approach for the next AFSC summer seminar, to be held at Verde Valley.98 Drawing from the Cornell model, Adair and his AFSC colleagues produced a working list of key dynamics in the southwest “in which there are striking parallels between the situation in which the

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97 Ibid.; Adair Papers, Box 1, file 18, 6/4/1952, Charles L. McEvers, Secretary, Southwest Indian Program, AFSC, Pacific Southwest Regional Office, Pasadena, CA, to Adair. See also Pickett, For More than Bread, pp. 384-86, for more on the AFSC’s broader Indian activities in these years.
Indians find themselves and international relations.”\textsuperscript{99} As planning continued for the Verde Valley seminar, the imprint of Adair’s input and the Cornell model remained prominent.\textsuperscript{100} At a more substantial preparatory conference organized in Flagstaff in February, the main purpose of the upcoming seminar was defined as the “Illumination of basic world-wide problems in human relations highlighted by Indian life in the Southwest.” Many of Adair’s recommended themes concerning the cross-cultural dynamics of developmental change in the region – such as “The problem of the impact of a highly technical civilization on a less technical one,” or “How to avoid repeating past mistakes in the relationship between differently developed cultures” – were identified as focal seminar discussion points that would contribute to the program’s international goals of improving mutual “understanding” and respect of different value systems.\textsuperscript{101}

The final result was a seven-week program at Verde Valley in July and August, involving over two dozen participants – a mix of undergraduates, graduate students, and young professionals from various countries in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, South and East Asia, as well as from the United States (including, notably, one Navajo student and the sole Native American attending).\textsuperscript{102} Group discussions of contemporary world problems were supplemented by guest lectures from visiting professors in international affairs, while a combination of BIA officials, anthropologists working with southwestern native communities, and members of various tribal councils in the region provided cultural and historical information for sessions on Native American development problems. These lectures were also preparation for a number of multiple-day field excursions to a variety of Indian communities in New Mexico and Arizona – including stops at the Navajo, Hopi, San Carlos Apache, White Mountain Apache, and Papago (Tohono O’Oodham) reservations – where students broke into small groups to observe first-hand the existing conditions at local Indian schools, hospitals, businesses, development projects, and farms.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 1/7/1953, Bob Byrd, Associate Director, AFSC International Student Program, memorandum, “Discussions Concerning the Seminar in the Pacific Southwest”; Adair Papers, Box 1, file 18, 1/9/53, Adair to R.O. Byrd, International Student Program, AFSC.

\textsuperscript{100} Alexander Leighton noted in early 1953 that the AFSC had been “keenly interested” in what had been achieved by the Cornell seminar team, resulting in the upcoming Verde Valley seminar adopting some of Cornell’s approaches. Adair Papers, Box 37, file 32, Cornell Southwestern Program, n.d., Leighton, “Cornell Southwestern Program: A Summary Report on Five Years, 1948-53.”


\textsuperscript{102} This was Albert Smith, who was finishing his teacher training at Eastern New Mexico University and had previously served as one of the famed Navajo Code Talkers during World War II. AFSC, 1953, International Seminars, “Verde Valley, General,” 9/3/53, Walt A. Raitt, College Secretary, AFSC Pasadena Office, “Report of Visit to the International Seminar, Sedona, Arizona, July 29-Aug. 6, 1953.” For more on Smith, see his obituary in the Navajo Times, April 18, 2013.

Little documentation exists revealing the seminar participants’ own views of these various activities or of the larger educational goals intended by the program’s organizers.104 The available correspondence instead illuminates how AFSC staff members and guest instructors critically assessed the fruit of their labors and ended up with rather mixed feelings about the program’s overall success and coherence. Everyone agreed that the participating students had definitely been given valuable exposure to southwestern native societies and their development predicaments, particularly through their community field trips, through which they had been able to see first-hand some of the cross-cultural dynamics and administrative roadblocks Adair and others had highlighted.105 D’Arcy McNickle – the prominent scholar, writer, activist in the National Congress of American Indians, and former BIA employee of many years (see chapter 2) – had participated as a guest lecturer earlier in the summer and was especially full of praise regarding the transnational educational value of this cross-cultural immersion. By this time McNickle was increasingly outspoken about the need for a sustained development program for Native Americans to match the U.S. government’s expansion of Point Four assistance programs for other “undeveloped” parts of the world. Thus, even though this first trial of an Indian-focused international seminar had a few areas that he felt could be improved, he still strongly commended its larger educational purpose – highlighting the “parallels between Indian societies and world situations” – and urged that such themes be explored much further in future AFSC seminars.106

At the same time, several AFSC officers felt that these loftier comparative connections had unfortunately been lost in the shuffle and were not often made directly or clearly to seminar participants. Overall, a number of the seminar’s organizers had lingering questions about the viability of including an Indian focus in the future, and there is no evidence that there was ever again sufficient momentum to repeat this experiment in the international program.107 Instead, a more sustained and focused educational

104 The newsletters produced by students tended to focus on social interactions among themselves or their personal biographies. See AFSC, 1953, International Seminars, “Verde Valley, Publications.”
effort to integrate Native American and international development dynamics was already taking shape in a related Quaker institution in an opposite corner of the country.

**Haverford, the Cornell model, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee**

At Haverford College, a small undergraduate Quaker institution in the suburbs of Philadelphia, a conjunction of forces and ambitions led to the launching of a new graduate program in development assistance in the early 1950s. Haverford had previously experimented with a graduate program in Relief and Reconstruction (R&R) during World War II, whereby students combined specialized coursework (in foreign languages, international affairs, cross-cultural relations, social work, etc.) with practical, hands-on experience in some form of social service work, usually through an organization in the greater Philadelphia area. Following the program, graduates found ready employment in a variety of American and international social welfare and relief programs, in the U.S., war-torn Europe, and beyond. In 1950, with the outbreak of the escalating conflict in Korea, the college again responded to America’s military engagement with a similar commitment to making “a positive contribution toward a peaceful world society” through specialized training that could “prepare individuals for humanitarian service at home and abroad.” At the same time, college faculty and officials desired to support the country’s expanding Point Four interventions around the globe through a more focused and advanced educational program that resonated with the college’s Quaker mission.

Over the course of late 1950 and early 1951, a new Graduate Curriculum in Social and Technical Assistance (STA) was thus created, in part modeled on the earlier R&R initiative, with the goal to equip its one-year master’s students with a sharper understanding of the organization of development assistance, the social and cultural “implications” of such projects, and “the human relationships and cultural perceptions necessary for carrying out these programs” effectively and conscientiously. During the pilot academic year (1951-52), STA students supplemented their relevant academic coursework, predominately in the social sciences, with a one-week service work session in housing redevelopment in a poor, urban Philadelphia neighborhood. For the following three years, a more substantial seven-week winter session

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was integrated into the program – a combined immersion in hands-on development assistance and field seminar in cross-cultural relations, based in the foothills of western North Carolina in the small Eastern Band of Cherokee community known as Big Cove.\footnote{Ibid; Pfund, “Haverford’s ‘Point Four.’” For the final year of the STA program (1955-56), the field session was held instead in Puerto Rico. Haverford College Library, Special Collections, Call no. 1168, Theodore B. Hetzel Papers Box 7, Folder “STA Correspondence 1949-62,” file “STA Correspondence AFSC-Hetzel,” 4/12/56, Theodore Hetzel to Leonard G. Styche. For a broader introduction to the history of Big Cove and neighboring Cherokee communities, see John R. Finger, Cherokee Americans: the Eastern band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century (University of Nebraska Press, 1991).}

An important player behind this incorporation of Native American, particularly Cherokee issues, into the program was Theodore Hetzel, a faculty member in Haverford’s Engineering Department, who had previously participated in the college’s R&R initiative and then served as a key faculty advisor in developing the STA curriculum. Hetzel had also long been actively involved in AFSC activities in multiple ways – at the time of the STA program’s launch he served as director of the AFSC’s numerous summer work camps across the country, several of which were regularly held among Native American communities, including Big Cove and neighboring Cherokee towns. From this dual position in the AFSC and the STA program, and at a time of his deepening personal and professional engagement with Native American issues, Hetzel was influential in ensuring that Haverford build from the AFSC’s presence at Big Cove and initiate an intensive graduate seminar there, beginning in the 1952-53 school year. He and his STA colleagues hoped that this immersion into cross-cultural development relations could provide insights “into a wide range of social, economic, and anthropological problems such as graduates of the program are likely to encounter in social and technical assistance work” around the globe.\footnote{Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO, “Biographical Note,” finding aid for Theodore Hetzel Papers Inventory (M121), and “Biographical Note,” by Stefanie Hetzel Johnston, October 20, 2007, finding aid for Theodore Hetzel Photographs of Native America Inventory (P003); American Friends Service Committee, Annual Report 1952, p. 8; Christine Ayoub, ed., Memories of the Quaker Past: Stories of Thirty-Seven Senior Quakers (Xlibris, 2014), Lucretia Evans interview, pp. 133-34; Pfund, “Haverford’s ‘Point Four.’” Hetzel increasingly worked on Native American causes in the 1950s, chairing relevant AFSC committees and joining the board of directors of the Indian Rights Association.}

As they considered how best to organize this cross-cultural seminar and how to successfully integrate Native American and international development issues, Hetzel and other Haverford faculty, as had the AFSC organizers of the Verde Valley program, turned to the experiences of the Cornell seminar for significant guidance and inspiration. Over the course of 1952 and 1953, STA staff enrolled a few Haverford graduate students in Cornell’s seminar, sent a faculty member to observe the seminar first-hand, visited Cornell to consult with Alexander Leighton and others on course development and teaching methodologies, and recruited Cornell seminar faculty to teach and advise in the STA program directly. Leighton, for example, was hired to participate as a temporary faculty member and influential advisor to the STA directors in preparation for the first winter session at Big Cove. The end result, according to
both Leighton and Haverford staff, was that the session “operated in part like a Friends work camp and in part like the Cornell Field Seminar.”\footnote{Adair Papers, Box 37, file 32, Cornell Southwestern Program, n.d., Alexander Leighton, “Cornell Southwestern Program: A Summary Report on Five Years, 1948-53”; Adair Papers, Box 1, file 18, 6/26/52, Adair to McEvers; Adair Papers, Box 7, file 234, 9/15/53, Hetzel to Adair.} For the following year, Hetzel, now STA director, attempted to hire John Adair to offer a short course on cross-cultural field methods and then run the entire Cherokee winter session, modeled on his work for the Cornell seminar.\footnote{Adair Papers, Box 7, file 234, 7/17/53, Hetzel to Adair; ibid., 7/25/53, Adair to Hetzel; ibid., 9/15/53, Hetzel to Adair; ibid., 9/29/53, Adair to Hetzel.} When Adair ultimately proved unavailable, Hetzel successively turned to two influential anthropologists with backgrounds in both Native American and international development work as well as close affiliations with the principles and practices of the Cornell seminar, particularly its recent reincarnations on behalf of overseas Point Four programs. In the winter session of 1953-1954, the job went to former BIA Assistant Commissioner John Provinse, fresh from his stint as administrator of Point Four programs in South and Southeast Asia and from where he had supported Edward Spicer’s mini-Cornell seminar for the India extension tour. The following year, Gordon Macgregor took on this role, following his similar involvement in organizing Tom Sasaki’s cross-cultural seminar for the Near East extension tour just months before. Macgregor, in fact, would continue to have a close connection with the STA program when he was later hired to evaluate its overall trajectory and achievements.\footnote{Spicer Papers, Box 26, Part 2 folder, 2/26/54, Provinse, Chevy Chase, MD to Spicer; John H. Provinse, “Education for Understanding,” The Progressive 18 (July 1954), 25-27; Hetzel Papers, Box 7, folder “Social and Technical Assistance Program”, file “Unit Lists”, “STA Visitors 54-55”; ibid., Macgregor, “Report on the Graduate Curriculum”; “News and Notes,” American Political Science Review 49, 1 (March 1955), 284-5. In addition to involving these outside “experts,” other prominent administrators with careers in both the BIA and international development were invited to participate in STA seminars. Such visitors included former BIA commissioner John Collier, Dillon Myer (former head of the War Relocation Authority and the Institute of Inter-American Affairs and then BIA commissioner), William Warne (former Interior secretary and then director of Point Four programs in Iran and Korea), and Willard Beatty (former BIA head of education and then UNESCO’s Deputy Director of Education). Dillon S. Myer Papers, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, MO, Box 4, “1953,” 5/4/53, Gilbert White, President of Haverford, to Myer, and 6/2/53, Gilbert White to Myer; Hetzel Papers, Box 7, folder “Social and Technical Assistance Program”, file “Unit Lists”, “STA Visitors 54-55.”}

Over the three years that the winter session was held at Big Cove, with the advice and guidance of Leighton, Provinse, and Macgregor, a few dozen STA students from the U.S. and a variety of foreign countries engaged in different service projects, participated in seminars on cross-cultural methods and development problems, and conducted fieldwork and wrote thesis papers concerning local Cherokee development issues.\footnote{Over the course of the entire five-year life of the program (1951-1956), students enrolled from a variety of countries besides the U.S., including Canada, Japan, India, Nigeria, Jordan, Peru, El Salvador, West Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, and Great Britain.} During this period the Big Cove community was actively pursuing numerous development programs, with assistance from the BIA and local government offices, so STA students were able to participate in and observe such ongoing projects as the construction of a power line, erecting new
sanitation facilities, and repairing public buildings for community functions. For their research, students further investigated a wide range of topics, interviewed residents and tribal council members, and visited local businesses, schools, community centers, and government offices. For example, Neichulieu Nikki Haralu, who came to the STA program in 1952-53 from Nagaland in northeastern India in preparation for a foreign service career, conducted her thesis work on educational policy in Big Cove and neighboring schools. Maurice Bean, an African American working in ECA assistance programs in Indonesia before enrolling in the STA program in 1953-54, examined local administrative problems related to Cherokee tribal enrollment and political participation. Fanasi Mgbako, from Nigeria, had previously studied economics and education in the U.S., and while at Big Cove (1954-55) pursued research on land use dynamics in the community. That same year, Ichiya Hayakawa, an engineering graduate of the Tokyo Institute of Technology, researched and wrote his master’s thesis on housing and environmental health in Big Cove.

From the perspectives of the consulting anthropologists who supervised these students’ work while directing the winter sessions, such intellectual and physical immersion in the development realities of local Cherokee populations was the greatest success of the overall STA program. Much as they had viewed the utility of Native American case studies in the Cornell seminar and its recent spin-offs, these guest instructors and advisers saw Big Cove as a valuable global laboratory that could effectively sensitize students to some of the core essentials of cross-cultural development work as they prepared for a variety of career ventures around the world. In 1954, fresh from his two-month residency as session

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121 Unfortunately, there is little evidence of how these students themselves viewed the connections between what they learned in the Big Cove field session and their wider experiences with and study of international development dynamics.
director at Big Cove, John Provinse published a particularly vigorous endorsement of Haverford’s program in the journal *The Progressive*. The bulk of the article emphasized the importance and relevance of the graduate students’ immersion in Cherokee development issues, beyond the small-scale material assistance provided to Big Cove residents, fleshing out what some “six hurried weeks on a small underdeveloped Indian Reservation [could] do for a group of mature students interested in equipping themselves for a career in social or technical assistance work at home or abroad.” Rather than acquiring particular technical skills, he emphasized, instead “the students have been exposed, here at home, and at a significant time in their training, to the daily routines of another way of life, to the values and motivations of another culture, to the practical difficulties and frustrations of achieving social and technical change in an undeveloped area.” For Provinse, the STA program was thus a “pioneering effort” in “producing leaders or workers with an understanding of people and human relations to match our preeminence in things technical and technological.” “More critically than ever before,” he exclaimed, “the world needs human understanding – person-to-person, group-to-group, nation-to-nation.” The great achievement and broader international significance of Haverford’s cross-cultural development “experiment” was the emergence in the field of “those mutual understandings without which no constructive or cooperative work can be carried on, whether at Cherokee in western North Carolina, or in Abyssinia, or in Nepal.”\(^{122}\)

Following his own stint as winter session director, Gordon Macgregor similarly described the STA program and its Cherokee-focused field experiment as path-breaking, appropriately aimed at “one of the basic needs of overseas technical assistance operations”: inculcating the essential “understanding . . . which would enable Americans to work more effectively with people having other social systems.”\(^{123}\)

Due to increasing financial limitations and administrators’ concerns about the limited measurable impact of the STA initiative, the program overall lasted only a handful of years.\(^{124}\) Yet for its participating advocates and advisers – such as Hetzel, Leighton, Macgregor, and Provinse – the winter session at Big Cove and the enduring influence of the Cornell seminar model held great potential to train early career professionals in important, less tangible ways. As with previous global “laboratories” described above, this Cherokee “experiment” was made possible by a professional network of individuals who shared the twin convictions that, universally, development administration required experiential training in cross-cultural sensitivity and that immersion in Native American “underdevelopment” was a highly valuable educational means of doing so.

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\(^{124}\) *Ibid.*, in which Macgregor discusses how he program had not lived up to some of its organizers’ expectations; Hinshaw, *Living with Nature’s Extremes*, pp. 87-88, describing President Gilbert White’s critical assessment of the STA program’s overall progress.
Conclusion

Borrowing again from Philip Deloria’s ideas about learning from the “unexpected” historical places of connection and meaning [to be discussed in the introductory chapter], the various transnational “laboratories” considered in this chapter force us to reframe traditional accounts of America’s global developmentalism in the immediate postwar era, in which Native American realities are routinely absent. The organization of the Cornell seminar and its multiple spin-offs – through the collaborative efforts of networked actors in various American universities, government agencies, foundations, and religious institutions – placed Native American scenarios at the center of numerous transnational discussions, among a wide diversity of American and foreign trainees, regarding how best to implement positive developmental change among “similar” recipient populations around the world. When viewed collectively, such experiences and conversations – based as they were in America’s enduring colonial relations with its indigenous populations – therefore unsettle the categories often used to define the postwar environment of America’s foreign relations. When visitors from the Philippines to Nigeria participated together in seminars in various Native American communities, where exactly lay the boundaries between the so-called “First” and “Third” worlds? Or when officials from newly independent India encountered Navajo and Pueblo development contexts, was this a “colonial,” “post-colonial,” or some other kind of moment?

This chapter has further explored how these initiatives, through their core assumptions regarding modernization’s necessity and benefits and their emphasis on cultural explanations of economic difference, also helped circulate particular views of Native American and other global cases of “underdevelopment” as primarily cultural problems that could be compared and remedied through refined, universal “cross-cultural” methodologies. As the next chapter will show, such preoccupations and preconceptions would continue to influence American officials’ organization of experiential training programs for international assistance work in the 1960s, as the newly created Peace Corps and USAID again sought comparative global lessons from Native American development challenges.

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