

## Culture



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[See table of contents](#)

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### Article abstract

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# Suburban Coast Salish Inter-Household Co-operation, Economics and Religious Movements.

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The Coast Salish Indians studied here have lived with pervasive financial insecurity. Most Indians have coped partly through preaching and practice of a collective ethic of sharing. Some with relatively high earned income have moved in the direction of a more narrow, competitive individualism. Those with social assistance incomes maintain a broad sphere of assistance with kin and community. Families who are strongly committed to Spirit Dancing and the Shaker Church keep alight the most broadly defined generosity towards kin and Indians in need.

*Les indiens Salish de la côte Pacifique, étudiés ici, vivent dans une constante insécurité financière. La plupart d'entre eux ont réussi à s'en tirer en prêchant et en pratiquant une éthique collective de partage. Ceux qui possèdent un revenu relativement plus important se sont dirigés vers un individualisme plus étroit et compétitif. Ceux qui jouissent d'un revenu de l'assurance sociale maintiennent une vaste sphère d'assistance avec la famille et la communauté. Les familles fortement engagées dans la Danse de l'Esprit et dans l'Église des Trembleurs (Shaker) attisent la générosité plus largement définie envers les membres de la famille et les Indiens dans le besoin.*

I address myself here to some relationships between economic variables and networks of economic assistance for households on a suburban Coast Salish reserve in British Columbia.<sup>1</sup> The relationships are interpreted in light of information on kinship networks, religious affiliation and participation, and conflicting ethics of individualism and Indian collectivism.

As with other native peoples, many Coast Salish have been dependent on limited and unstable resources throughout their lives. Though detailed studies of the effects of such dependence on the interactions of reserve Indians exist, many have focused on household composition (e.g. Jorgensen, 1964, 1971, 1972; Mooney, 1979; Munsell, 1967; Robbins, 1968) and on religious movements (e.g. Aberle, 1982; Jorgensen, 1972). In contrast, I will focus on the existence of much-activated networks of kin and even unrelated persons beyond household boundaries, despite, or perhaps because of, integration into a market economy and wage labour. In addition to supplementing the descriptive literature on contemporary economic and social life of reserve Indians, the study contributes towards demonstration of the economic context in which inter-household networks arise and persist, and some factors affecting their composition.

The network concept used assumes that the social networks of various "focal" units, households here, may overlap but rarely are identical, and that networks of various kinds—economic, kinship, religious—likewise may not be entirely congruent. It is important to note that the definition of "economic" goes beyond the monetary to include such matters as provision of transportation, sharing of food or equipment, house and equipment building and repairs, caring for others' houses or children or ailing, gifts of clothing or equipment—a whole range of services particularly important in harsh circumstances.

### *The Setting and the Sample*

The reserve studied is located among small bulb and fruit farms within a short distance of Victoria, British Columbia. When fieldwork began in 1971-72, the band had roughly 250 members, of which some three-quarters resided at the reserve in 34 households. While band membership has increased somewhat over the years, the reserve itself remains very small in numbers of persons and households, as well as in area. Eight other Vancouver Island Coast Salish reserves of similar size are found within a range of 30 kilometres, the closest being some 8 kilometers distant. A high frequency of visiting and inter-marriage is maintained among the various Coast Salish reserves, as indicated by the fact that in only one of the households sampled are both spouses from the same reserve.

My research with the Coast Salish has been ongoing since 1971. Initially, pursuing assistance networks from household to household, I conducted scheduled interviews with household heads and/or their spouses for 17 of 34 households on the reserve. Where possible, other adult household members were interviewed as well. Although the sample thus obtained was small the 50 per cent coverage of households permits some cautious generalizations. The contacts and research I have maintained involving residents of the reserve and nearby reserves subsequently have yielded additional information and insights in a less structured manner.

Whereas all respondent households are located at the reserve, non-respondent households of the networks are not only at the same reserve but at nearby reserves, cities and their environs, more distant reserves on Vancouver Island, and mainland British Columbia and Washington as well. On some points when sufficient information is available for these cases, they are cited as supporting evidence.

### *Economics*

The reserve's location offers access to the job markets of several cities, as well as more localized work such as highway construction on former reserve land, gravel pit quarrying on the reserve itself, Indian Affairs-sponsored apprentice carpentry programmes at the reserve and nearby reserves, and a band-operated campground and kindergarten. Despite the apparent availability of job opportunities and the use of the reserve's resources, however, few people can safely assume they will never be out of work. For example, persons in almost all sample households with able-bodied males under age 70 had suffered periods of unemployment even within the previous two to three years. Moreover the Coast Salish' perceptions of the employment climate match this high jobless rate. Members of some three-quarters of the sample households specifically mentioned discrimination in hiring. Some believe that whites, even those with inferior training, are more likely to be hired than Indians while others claim that Indians are the first to be laid off work. Many stress the importance of having contacts either among non-Indians in strategic positions or among the more economically and politically powerful Indians who are sometimes asked for job recommendations by non-Indian employers; the need for contacts extends even to seasonal berry picking.

For those who have jobs, underemployment is common. In practice, many men are only seasonally employed, and with little stability at that, as farm labourers near the reserve or in Washington. Similarly, seasonal, usually unsteady and part-time berry, potato and weed picking or bulb sorting are almost the only sources of employment available for women, children, and older people. Few men fish commercially any longer, as capital costs for competitive boats and gear are high, while fishing licences have been difficult to obtain and keep. Many lost their licences, which pertained to boats rather than to individuals, when they lost their boats through default in payment for them. The sorts of non-seasonal jobs available to the men are primarily unskilled or semi-skilled blue collar labour in logging, shipyard work and highway construction. (It might be added that a number of people interviewed spoke of their families' personal experience of the high accident rates for these jobs.) Only a few men and women in the sample held positions for which they had received special training and certification (though several others were in training and several retired persons had certification).

The Indians at the reserve, then, for the most part have appeared over the years as providers of

low-skill, low-pay, seasonal and sometimes high-risk labour, as providers of resources, and as consumers. Elsewhere I have demonstrated that, even when compared systematically with non-Indians superficially occupying the same economic niche and living in the same areas, the southern Vancouver Island Coast Salish have a lower economic standing as shown by a greater degree of unemployment, greater frequency of an unstable employment pattern featuring changes in place of employment, lower incidence of working wives bringing in a second income, and lower occupational levels (Mooney, 1976a). Generally they have lived with an awareness of discrimination and insecurity, realized in their income. Thus, some 47 per cent of sample households were heavily dependent on social assistance, a very high proportion. The median household income was \$5,300 per year in 1971-72, ranging from \$1,500 to \$33,450 per year but skewed towards the lower end of the distribution. Allowing for inflation, the picture remains much the same today. And as will become clearer in the discussion of networks, even the comparatively successful have close relatives at the reserve or elsewhere who are foundering economically, or have done so in the recent past; many of the relatively successful have themselves foundered in the past.

The remainder of the paper will deal with the conflicting ethics, the religious movements, and the sharing of money, resources and skills which offer themselves as means of coping with insecurity. As will become evident however, income is only one factor among several necessary to account fully for the existence of networks of economic assistance: kin and friends in need are so by virtue of one or a combination of misfortunes, including dependence on social assistance, unemployment, a large family or household, shortage of housing or of space, lack of equipment, absence or shortage of men or women needed to perform household tasks, illiteracy, illness, alcoholism, old age, or outright disaster (frequently fire). Although most of these conditions are associated with low or unstable income, many constitute in themselves further indices of oppression (see also Aberle, 1982; Jorgensen, 1972).

## Ethics

Throughout their lives, the Coast Salish at the reserve and elsewhere have been subject to conflict among the Protestant ethic, which fosters competitive individualism and is both taught in schools and advocated by the non-Indian majority; the corporate

collectivism sometimes stressed by the government; an escapist hedonistic individualism; and the ethic of Indian collectivism or sharing and generosity, preached by the elders in the home, the community, and the religious and political movements.<sup>2</sup> The individualist competition called for by the Protestant ethic and by the Department of Indian Affairs may be illustrated with reference to *The Indian in Industry: Roads to Independence*, an Indian Affairs booklet published in the 1970s and intended for distribution to prospective employers. The booklet describes the "disadvantages" of Indians as employees:

They are less individually aggressive and competitive....

Indians have a warmer sense of obligation toward relatives than non-Indians have. They will sometimes impoverish themselves to help an uncle or a cousin.

Generally Indians attach less importance to outward appearances, material possessions and saving than non-Indians do. Relatives and neighbours will help the Indian when he is in need. If he has saved some money they may claim a share of it. Therefore, some Indians reason, why save? (Mortimore, 1970:7).

Such "disadvantages" require "tact and goodwill to overcome." In other words, native people are urged to work hard, delay gratification and save money, withholding support from any kinsman or fellow Indian who is less ready "to take his place on a basis of equality in Canadian society." Additionally, of course, the Protestant ethic calls for persons to compete for God's favour: work and pray hard, abstain from sin not because it is socially wrong but because it will offend the deity, and "save" grace.

The opposing corporate collective ethic and policy, requiring band corporations to compete in the economic market, has likewise been put forward by government. As George Manuel (Manuel and Posluns, 1974: 104-6) and the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) have pointed out, the small size relative to the magnitude of needs, high interest rates and short repayment period of loans for native enterprise (e.g. the Indian Economic Development Fund launched in 1970) have tended to force Indian bands into incorporation, with the danger of property seizure in case of default in payment. As another example, the Native Economic Development Program established in 1983 uses native - owned and - operated financial institutions as a vital component. According to Don Moses, the first chairman of the NEDP Advisory Board, such native financial institutions "will be comparable to Credit Unions

and will have to learn to say 'no' as importantly as they say 'yes'" (cited in Bear, 1985:25). Within four years, these institutions are required to become viable businesses sustaining enough revenues to operate on their own; unlike small businesses and municipalities, however, Indians for the most part have no organization that directly provides legal advisory bodies that could be compared to a Chamber of Commerce, although native people themselves have tried to establish business associations (e.g. The National Indian Business Association, formed by the Assembly of First Nations in 1982, subsequently shut down when Indian Affairs withdrew funding) (Bear, 1985:25). The pattern is familiar in Indian history: as the only alternative to minuscule and insufficient government aid, a risky commercial course in which Indians must incorporate is advocated. While some such corporate enterprises will succeed, in the long run many have tended to fail for two major reasons: as has been suggested, the Indians are well-integrated economically as consumers and as providers of resources and labour, but not as producers; and the ethics and policies encouraging corporate collectivism conflict with those encouraging a Protestant ethic individualism.

Against these non-Indian-urged ethics and policies, the Indians themselves set Indian-urged collectivism, and hedonism. Hedonism, the obverse of Protestant ethic individualism, is typified by the alcoholic who helps not even his or her family, but is rather a drain on the resources of others. Opposed to all three ethics and their practice, the collective Indian ethic advocates communitarian spirit and cooperation: each Indian is asked to support kin and friends selflessly, sharing money, resources and skills when needed rather than saving for his or her own narrow gain. Concerning edibles, for example:

Mom's got an old army oven that bakes twenty pies at a time. I give away all my apple and raisin pies. If it's a large family, or if they say they like it. Not usually just to the immediate family. I laugh when I think of Ted and Alice, some whites from Saanichton. Ted said he'd beat Alice if she threw his money around like that.

There is rarely any expectation of a definite return, certainly not in the immediate future, and little attention is given to the equivalence of values. As one Indian commented, "White men keep tables in their heads of what they do for others, we don't." Or, "When I do something for someone, I don't remember, it's not right to remember it." Still another remarked, "When you do something for someone, it

all comes back to you in the end, I just do it and others do it for me and I don't remember. (See also Mooney, 1976b: 326-7). Thus Indian collectivism is in constant conflict with the Protestant ethic and government individualism. Protestant ethic individualism in turn conflicts with government corporate collectivism, as does the Indians' primary economic role as consumers; and hedonism conflicts both with non-Indian-urged individualism and any form of collectivism.

With particular reference to the residents of the Coast Salish reserve, a tendency towards corporate collectivism appears among those who have advocated an increase in the number of band council or tribal association programmes either to cope with a shortage of personal assistance or at least partially to replace it (as, a transportation service staffed by persons on welfare; a home service for persons in need of sick care, baby-sitting, or housework; carpentry apprenticeship; leasing of band facilities to a kindergarten and a campground). For some, a slight tendency in the other direction, towards hedonism, is reflected in their fellows' reluctance to continue to squander time and resources in aiding them (as, the busy mother of a large family who is continually asked for rides to the beer parlour). The greatest conflict at the present time, however, appears between the Indian collective ethic and the Protestant ethic which appears as a means of escape from improved but nevertheless difficult conditions.

Despite the hardships delineated here, the reserve has been called a model of economic "progress" by the Department of Indian Affairs. With greater prosperity for some, fewer children have had to leave the schools to help their families (as did a number of persons in their 30's and older). At the same time many Indians have been educated at integrated public schools—which many Indians suggest facilitates assimilation (or the adoption of the Protestant ethic and associated life-way). A number of persons, particularly the better educated or relatively steadily employed and their close kin, express a Protestant ethic when it comes to succeeding in the world. As one woman put it, "Indians can do anything if they try hard enough... they shouldn't fall back on the crutch of discrimination as an excuse for not succeeding." Another stated, "I don't really know those Indians... I'd like to put a match to their houses... they're lazy, don't value a nice house... I have better things to spend money on than Spirit Dances." Another agreed, saying "We (she and her husband) mustn't throw money away (by giving goods to others, especially alcoholics)... we must think of the children now (i.e. her nuclear family)."

Presently the association of employment and relatively high income with a reduced sphere of assistance for *certain items* will be explicated. As among other Indians such as the Ute and the Shoshone (Jorgensen, 1972), the flame of collectivism appears to burn brightest in the several Salish religious movements, as will be more fully discussed below. Yet acceptance of an ethic of collective responsibility, and its practice, remains for *most* Indians the primary means of coping with deprivation. The clearest manifestation of the ethic in the present study is in household networks of economic cooperation, dependence, and obligation, and in generalized provision of services and resources to any Indians in need of help.

### *Coast Salish Religious Movements*

The leading religious movements of the Coast Salish, the Spirit Dance and the Shaker Church, have been described at length in the literature (e.g. Amoss, 1978; Jilek, 1974; Kew, 1969; Barnett, 1957). Briefly, the Spirit Dance is a modern version of traditional religious beliefs and practices. When an individual receives a spirit vision in a formal initiation ceremony, the spirit confers upon him or her a song and dance. Later, at the Winter Spirit Dances held in traditional-style "big houses," people who have been through the initiation perform their songs and dances before the crowd of both Dancers and non-Dancers. Spirit Dancing is often described as a source of "help," often for illness, alcoholism, and mental and emotional distress. It should be emphasized that its context is not by any means largely pathological, however. It is a source of strength for the healthy as well, emphasizing Indian kin ties, solidarity and identity. Although on Vancouver Island many of the speeches made at Spirit Dances are given in Cowichan or other Coast Salish dialects rather than in English, and although the Coast Salish do not allow recording in any form at these dances, the following English sample is typical of the sentiments expressed in the speeches, illustrating the weight placed on Indian collectivism:

Your great-great-grandparents have started the fires to burn in these smokehouses in bygone days. You carry the heritage of your ancestors. These Indian names, the names of a great people, these names were known throughout the land they will be known again! Nowadays we are all related in one way or another, this is why the words come out, because our Indian people all belong together.

Those in the Spirit Dance here turn around to teach the young that's coming behind; without that our Indian ways would all be forgotten.... Help one another at all times so that the Indian ways will grow! (Jilek, 1974: 112).

Membership in the Spirit Dance has been growing rapidly in B.C. and the northwestern U.S.A. in recent years.

The Shaker Church likewise involves the individual member's receipt of supernatural power, but it is basically a Christian church. Among the most striking elements of Christianity are the belief in the Christian god and bible, and the use of crucifixes, bells, and candles. These have been melded with traditional elements, one of the most immediately obvious of these being the use of the native language in the ceremonies. Perhaps more important for present purposes is the emphasis placed on a broadly expressed individualism rather than the narrower Christian version. Like the Spirit Dance, the Shaker Church is a source of "help" for the afflicted and strength for the healthy, and reinforces Indian kinship and solidarity as a distinct group.

Finally, some of the reserve's Shakers have been influenced by Pentecostalism. Although the non-Indian variant of the Pentecostal religion stresses individual salvation, the two to three weekly meetings held at the reserve by a Shaker preacher apparently emphasize broad individualism within the context of Indian identity. Since few individuals are involved I will consider only their Shaker affiliation and not their Pentecostal membership in the remainder of this paper.

### *Inter-Household Economic Assistance*

In response to need then, all sample or "focal" households have formed networks of economic assistance of two to nine households each, involving strong sentiments of obligation and dependence. Reciprocity is mutual but generalized (Sahlins, 1972: 193-4) in that returns may be delayed and the timing and value or amount of the return are not closely calculated. Each focal household repeatedly shares with the households with which it has direct assistance links some combination of transportation, groceries, gathered edible delicacies, money, material goods (as vehicles, boats, tools, washing machines, kitchen utensils, clothing), services (as house, car, boat, or equipment repairs, housework, child or sick care), hiring and lodging. Relations of assistance intensify as the exigencies of the moment demand; at times households are economically

linked primarily by sharing of edible delicacies (as game, fish, shellfish), transportation, and some services.

The co-operating households are usually those of close kinsmen (as parents, offspring, siblings, parents' siblings, siblings' offspring), though it will become apparent that the networks of persons primarily dependent on social assistance income and persons most committed to religious movements include particular households of more distant kin and unrelated persons as well. Respondent households having co-operative relations with only one or two others generally have few close kinsmen at hand. Reserve members of the same network do not necessarily reside in clusters, particularly since a number of houses have been moved for highway construction, most people have inherited land at several locations on the reserve, and with a housing shortage many live wherever they can, regardless of neighbours. Where household members have at some time resided elsewhere, or have kinsmen who have moved from the reserve to other locations, economic relations may be maintained over considerable distances, abetted by the high frequency of visiting and the movement of grandchildren among the households of their parents and grandparents. Even when located entirely at the reserve, assistance networks of the various focal households may be overlapping or contained, but in no instances congruent.

Most of the networks involve some households having real difficulties making ends meet financially, with household incomes at or below the median. But in an atmosphere of pervasive insecurity and deprivation, relations of assistance obtain between households with adequate to high income as well (\$11,000 to \$33,450 in 1971-72). These favoured households share not only with their less fortunate fellows but with each other as well. In some cases this is a relatively uncalculated but conscious form of insurance against future need. Some, for example, fear future loss of income ("Indians get laid off first, the unions don't help"). And members of five such households speak of the past intensification of assistance at times of major transition in residence or occupation (as when building a new house or boat, moving to a new house, starting a business enterprise, obtaining land to settle or develop). For most of the networks, then, the numbers of households with adequate and inadequate incomes tend to balance. Subsidiary reasons mentioned for assistance highlight networks as a response to deprivation rather than as a response to income amount or stability alone, income being but

one measure of deprivation. These subsidiary reasons include large households, illness (especially when combined with lack of plumbing), old age, divorce, separation, death in the family, living alone, working mothers, ineligibility for Indian rights (non-status Indians), alcoholism in the family - and lack of parents to help one out. Many of these can, of course, be translated into income variables, but most involve importantly male or female labour needs as well.

Outside the networks of more intensive economic assistance, household members share transportation and hand-gathered/grown/baked delicacies, first with other of their close kin, then their more distant kin, "the old people," "anyone that needs it" or, simply, "Indians" at their own and other reserves. In addition, most persons contribute food, furniture, or money to collections for funerals and fire victims (Mooney, 1978). These more casual, neighbourly relations, like the household networks, both answer real economic needs and maintain solidarity as insurance against possible times of greater need.

Most Indians "help out" on at least two levels, then, one serving to promote goodwill at the same time that it provides necessities of food and transportation, the other involving strong sentiments of mutual obligation and dependence and a sharing more intensive in content and frequency. The major point to be gleaned from the complete tableau is that, living with an awareness of discrimination and instability, members of *all* sample households are involved at *both* levels. In light of the information presented here, then, it seems likely that any Indians who do *not* form household networks have few or no ties with the reserve or other Indians in the first place, as when a child is raised off the reserve by non-Indian parents, or perhaps in the case of some (but by no means at all) non-status Indians.

### *Employment, Income, and Spheres of Assistance*

Distantly related kinsmen and unrelated Indians may often receive (and give) neighbourly offerings as described, but apparently in most cases they cannot *depend* on doing so. Within the sphere of close kin, relations of assistance often cross reserve boundaries. This, in a number of cases, is coupled with maintenance of only the more casual ties with other Indians at the reserve, slight acquaintance, and ignorance of the names of some long-time residents (see also Suttles, 1963; Leacock, 1949; Mooney,



1976a). Voicing their perceptions of the present-day practice of the collective ethic, a number of Coast Salish attribute a more limited sphere of assistance to individuation of interests with relatively steady employment: the better educated with good jobs and high salaries, they claim, are the very ones who do not help their fellow Indians apart from their immediate families<sup>3</sup>. I suggest that this represents a tendency towards Protestant ethic individualism. In contrast, others attribute a limited sphere of assistance to low income and unemployment: people need money in order to help, they say.

It would be redundant at this point to recount the great generosity of all Indians in the sample towards both their kinsmen and their fellows. Nevertheless, two spheres of assistance may be distinguished, the first confined to close kin only, the second embracing distant kin and unrelated Indians as well. These assistance relations involve much-repeated provision of items other than transportation or edible delicacies to either specifically designated households or to anyone and everyone in need. In the discussion below, I do not include the more formal and institutionalized exchanges: contributions for ceremonial dances, religious occasions and church collections, collections for funerals, festivals and fire victims, nor politically strategic distributions (see Mooney, 1978).

TABLE 1

Sphere of Inter-Household Economic Assistance  
by Major Source of Household Income

Coast Salish Sample 1971-72, Seventeen  
Respondent Households

SOURCE OF INCOME	<i>Assistance Sphere</i>		
	<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i>	
	(Close kin)	(Close kin & distant &/or non-kin)	
Employment	7	3	10
Social Assistance	1	6	7
			17

Table 1 lends support to the posited relationship between employment and a sphere of such assistance more restricted to close kin. Although the table includes only respondent households, consideration of the non-respondent households giving economic assistance to distant/non-kin would add 12 cases to the six social assistance cases that share widely, the total being then 18. The single exceptional household on social assistance but sharing only with close kin has economic assistance ties with five households having predominantly earned income; four persons in two of these households had had steady, modestly highly-paid skilled wage labour employment for at least the past two or three years, and one member of the exception household itself was on the point of starting a skilled white collar job. The three exceptional cases with earned income that share widely are households in which both the head and spouse are members of the Spirit Dance, and in one case the Shaker Church as well. Here the preaching and practice of Indian collectivism in the leading movements, noted previously, appear to have been to some effect. Two of the six social assistance cases that share widely are committed Spirit Dance participants as well.

Relationship between relatively low income and close kin-restricted reciprocity appears to be considerably less strong than that between employment income and such reciprocity. This is because employment may be unstable, giving low income. Income stability does not correspond particularly well with close kin-restricted sharing. Again, this result is expectable given that employment income may be unstable, while unearned income may be stable. (For discussion of the effects of social distance, rank, and relative wealth on the nature of reciprocity as seen in modern native exchange networks, see Mooney, 1976b and 1978.)

It appears, then, that households of persons with earned income are involved in intensive sharing with their close kinsmen, and give generously of their time and resources in providing food, transportation, and funeral and fire contributions to others as well. Those with social assistance incomes maintain a broad sphere of assistance relations with kin and community, giving and receiving such items as clothing, money, equipment, car repairs, housework and sick care, as well as food and transportation. I now turn to the role of participation in the several religious movements.



## *Religion, Income, and Network Composition*

In the preceeding discussion, involvement in the Spirit Dance or Shaker Church on the part of both the household head and his spouse appears to obviate distinctions of income source and amount, keeping aflame a broadly defined collectivism. Two of the households of Dancer/Shakers mentioned plus an additional household of low predominantly unearned income Shakers comprise the most committed participants at the reserve, commitment being measured by (recent) regular and frequent attendance, dancing and shaking as opposed to observation, office holding, display of associated material items (as Spirit Dancers' ribbons, white Shakers' crosses), participation in meetings with members at other reserves on the island and mainland, and expressed sentiments. Several household members who are not members of either religious movement nevertheless display interest in or enthusiasm for Spirit Dancing and/or the Shaker Church, and often attend meetings. Each of the three households maintains assistance relations of dependence and obligation with particular households of relatively distant kin and/or related Indians as well as with their closest kinsmen. Whereas the *total* number of neighbourly and more intensive economic network links (exclusive of transportation and hiring) with specifically designated households ranges up to ten for the 14 sample households of non-Dancers, non-Shakers, or relatively weakly committed persons, the number is from 16 to 23 for these three. All three are further involved in sharing as multi-family households, and two have miscellaneous non-family persons present in the household as well. (For a discussion of economics, ethics, and household composition see Mooney, 1979.)

As suggested by studies of religious factionalism among such Indians as the Western Shoshone Peyotists (Lieber, 1972), religious ties may command a new allegiance, shifting an individual's or a household's locus away from close kin and affines to a new assistance network. Examination of the network composition of the committed Coast Salish Dancers and Shakers reveals patterning of assistance networks with religious networks. But only in the case of one sample household of Dancer/Shakers have several households of adult offspring at the reserve apparently been excluded from the network. Such diversion of assistance appears to occur only as these households and the focal household are relatively secure financially, however (in this case with stable annual incomes, which in 1971-72 ranged from \$8,000 to \$17,000); several years previously,

when the head of one of the households was suffering a period of employment instability, he and his family pooled resources with his parents under their roof.

It may be added here that relatively high stable income within the sphere of closest kinsmen accords with another form of network change involving some conscious dissociation from fellow Indians and increased social contract, marriage, and assistance ties with non-Indians. The three households most concerned not only have relatively high and stable annual incomes (\$11,000 and above in 1971-72, from combined self-employment, band employment, skilled and unskilled wage labour), but the annual incomes of the kin in their networks are relatively high (averaging roughly \$10,000, \$12,585, and \$16,267 per household in 1971-72). It seems, then, that households with strong commitment to the Spirit Dance or the Shaker Church tend to have at least partially congruent assistance and religious networks, embracing both kinsmen and unrelated Indians (see also Amoss, 1978). Apparently only when close kin are relatively secure financially, however, may assistance be to some degree diverted from them towards fellow Dancers/Shakers — or towards non-Indians. Earlier it was suggested that any Indians, including those with relatively high stable income, who do not form household networks of assistance have few or no ties with the reserve or other Indians in the first place. Relative financial security among close kinsmen appears rather to make some *modification* in assistance network composition more feasible.

## *Conclusions*

It has been argued that, despite ready access to several job markets, the Coast Salish studied have lived for many years with pervasive financial insecurity. Most Indians have coped partly through preaching and practice of a collective ethic of sharing and generosity. Some with relatively high earned income have moved in the direction of a more narrow, competitive individualism as an escape, yet maintain economic assistance relations of dependence and obligation with close kin, and give generously of their time and resources in providing food, transportation and funeral and fire contributions to others as well. Those with social assistance incomes maintain a broad sphere of assistance with kin and community. Families who are strongly committed to Spirit Dancing and the Shaker Church keep alight the most broadly defined generosity

towards kin and Indians in need, fellow Dancers or Shakers and those without Indian religious affiliation. Only when closest kinsmen are relatively secure financially may assistance be diverted to some degree towards fellow Dancers or Shakers, or towards non-Indians.

Following an indication of the many "benevolent" institutions engaged in exploitation of Canadian Indians, institutions providing satisfying and lucrative roles for their non-Indian representatives but not for the Indians, Heather Robertson concludes that

The Indian situation today is the product of a tight, closely supervised economic system which produces not only the wealth of many Canadians, but also the destitution of the Indians (1970: 10).

Such a conclusion suggests not only those reached in other more detailed and theoretically orientated analyses of American Indians (e.g. Frank, 1967; Jorgensen, 1971, 1978; Mooney, 1976b; Ponting and Gibbins, 1980; Weaver, 1981), but also that arrived at here — the financial insecurity of the Coast Salish reserve's residents has resulted from their economic integration as consumers and as providers of resources and low-skill, low-pay, often seasonal labour for non-Indian producers. And, although numerous studies have the effect of reducing the scope and importance of kin ties beyond the nuclear family (e.g. Parsons, 1943; Shorter, 1975), the existence of the Coast Salish assistance networks of kin and even unrelated persons is at least in part explained by their integration into an exploited niche in the market economy, wage labour, and the "modern world."

## NOTES

1. I wish to thank the persons at the reserve who assisted me in the research throughout the 1970s and 1980s, as well as those who helped in the preparation of this paper. Joseph G. Jorgensen, Marshall D. Sahlin and Edwin N. Wilmsen made many useful comments on an earlier version of the paper, and Leland H. Donald gave valuable assistance with research, analysis and writing.

2. The ethics as presented here are ideal types, and instances of their manifestation in both non-Indian and Indian policy and practice are intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. See also Jorgensen, 1972.

3. The supposed cleft between the generosity of employed and unemployed persons is given physical definition in the generally recognized distinction between

the beach and more inland segments of the reserve; although ties of economic assistance join households on both segments, the fit of employment, economic power, contemporary political power, and hereditary big man status with the spatial distinction apparently accords to a considerable extent. Such spatial separation is reminiscent of earlier class sectioning of villages, as described by Barnett (1955:19-20) and Suttles (1958).

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