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Wear's argument to this point would suffice to deepen what we already know about the theoretical and practical mechanics of the democratic peace. Still, much to his credit, Wear goes on to suggest that peace is more than the avoidance of war; it must be defined in terms of the ways in which republican nations generally relate to one another. On this point, he emphasizes that since the time of the Greek city-states, "republics and only republics have tended to form durable, peaceful leagues."<sup>22</sup> He attributes this finding to the extension of republican political culture, institutions, and dispute-resolution practices from domestic to international society. Naturally, Wear thus favors the adoption of the ideals of equal rights, toleration, and allegiance to political rules by the international community as well as by individual nations. He stops short, though, of advocating republicanism by force. With reference to U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's facile promotion of self-determination (a policy which should have freed peoples from both internal domination and coercion by external powers to select their own leaders), Wear argues that we cannot guarantee international peace by forcefully creating republican regimes—particularly democracies—because to do so would undermine the more immediate and important goal of fostering republican political culture, and the peaceful resolution of international conflicts.

That said, Wear's conclusion remains overall optimistic. Wear suggests that the observed democratic peace is likely to survive and expand, so long as people continue to devote their lives to achieving that goal. This subtle shift from a purely historical to a veiled personal perspective implies that, for Wear, any definitive explanation of the democratic peace must include the many non-quantifiable particulars of societies and individual leaders that he so fluently incorporates into his case studies. I applaud Wear for so extending himself. *Never at War* should be read by anyone who studies or practices international conflict resolution and peace.

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**Worlds Apart: Why Poverty Persists in Rural America. By Cynthia M. Duncan. New Haven and London: Yale University Press (1999), xvii, 235 pp.**

**Reviewed by William W. Dressler, Department of Anthropology and Social Work, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL.**

There are many good things about this book. Foremost among them is that it is a real pleasure to read. Duncan has a writing style that is simple and straightforward, but does not simplify the complexity of the issue she

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2. Wear defines a league as an "association of among several political units with approximately equal privileges and shared institutions" (p. 267).

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is addressing. The primary method employed in the research is the use of open-ended interviews and qualitative analyses of those interviews, but Duncan avoids the analytic pretension that can accompany some studies based on "narrative." She lets people speak for themselves, points out commonalities in the interviews, and places her respondents in a wider context by drawing on census data (discreetly tucked into an appendix).

Her aim in the book is to try to understand, as is made explicit in the subtitle of the book, why poverty persists in rural America. To do so, she compares three rural areas in different regions of the country: the coal mining country of Kentucky; the Mississippi Delta; and rural Maine. She presents the areas in that order, starting with little in the way of explanation for what she is doing. At the outset the tone of the book is descriptive, and she both tastefully and economically sketches pictures of what these places look and feel like, along with portraits of individual respondents who can best exemplify what she regards as the essential social processes related to poverty in each area. But even in the book's beginning section, describing the coal country of Kentucky, an analytic and explanatory framework begins to emerge within the description, a framework that she sustains and develops throughout.

Her analysis of rural Kentucky is rooted in the historic distribution of power in what is, in essence, a system made up of two social classes: the owners of the coal mines and their workers. Although the fortunes of the mine owners have waxed and waned, and although unionization helped to improve the wage structure for those miners who are working (when they are working), little has occurred to alter in any substantial way that power structure. The distribution of power - both economic and political - creates an enduring state of dependency of the workers on the owners. This dependency was once more explicit, such as when workers had to deal only with company stores, but it continues in terms of who gets hired, even outside of the coal mines. Employment is a function of who you know, not what you know.

Critical to the maintenance of this system of social relationships is the school system. Funds are diverted and concentrated in a "city" school that serves the owners and their lieutenants, the small set of white collar professionals (mainly human service providers who receive their positions through patronage with the owners calling the shots) and store owners. It is a cozy little world for this local power elite, while out in the hollows the world is characterized by underemployment, welfare dependency, drug and alcohol use, and a general sense of hopelessness.

But Duncan does not focus exclusively on social structure. She is also concerned with how social class is culturally constructed. There are two main components to this construction. First, there are the clear cultural criteria that define people as "belonging" to the broad American middle class, including such things as having all your teeth, being able to speak in standard American English, knowing how to dress for work or a job interview, knowing the demeanor that is appropriate to a job, and having the literacy skills necessary to know about things beyond your own hollow. At first glance these may not seem cultural at all, but indeed they are behaviors that derive from the knowledge of how to be a middle class person. They represent what the British social policy analyst Peter Townsend refers to as a "conventional" (in the strict sense of being defined by shared social conventions) lifestyle. One of the not-so-hidden injuries of class is that (among other things) speaking in a certain way, wearing certain clothes, and driving a certain kind of vehicle signal who you are in a social sense. In the Kentucky community studied by Duncan, the next pertinent bit of information is your surname, and it all can quickly add up to throwing you into the category of "end-of-the-monthers," those who are welfare dependent and are rarely seen in town except to cash their welfare payments.

The second component to the cultural dimension of this process is the ideology that enables the power elite to maintain its control. While the elite of course recognizes that there are some people down on their luck, and indeed many stories can be told of how they help such people, by-and-large the end-of-the-monthers are the way they are because they don't want to work, according to the owners and their lieutenants. Therefore, when they do get hired, the owners are justified in their exploitation (low wages, few benefits), because otherwise they would be taken advantage of.

This analysis slowly and subtly reveals itself in the description of Kentucky, and then is expanded upon in the description of the Mississippi Delta. Replace the mine owners with large landowners/farmers, replace the coal miners with field hands, replace the "city" school with private "academies," and the structural conditions of poverty are replicated. In the Delta, there is the insidious issue of race added on to the process. But the patron-client relationships, the corruption, and the sense of despair are much the same.

Duncan is far from hopeless herself, however, and in both of these areas she describes people who are agents of change. There are two common themes to the stories of these change agents. First, they got out, and then came back. Essential to being different is being exposed to the wider world, whether it involves joining the military or attending school someplace else. Duncan argues that this enables people to expand their pool of cultural knowledge, to become more proficient in that conventional middle class model. Second, what is also common to change agents

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is their ability to establish a certain degree, however precarious, of economic independence, to be able to function outside the political economy that is firmly in the hands of the power elite.

Finally, Duncan turns to rural New England, only to find a place where poverty is less severe, the exploitive class system of patron-client relationships is missing, and the prospect for getting out of poverty for individuals is real. (This is the part of the book that is going to have diehard Southerners grinding their teeth.) The families that started the paper mills that served as the foundation of the economy in this area were interested in having a well-educated and well-paid workforce, so they supported the establishment of good schools and unions early on. The social differentiation that occurred never solidified into the two-class system of the other areas. "Everybody" went to the same school and participated in the same social system. No one was made to feel inferior because, perhaps, their clothes were not quite as nice or their car was not of the era.

Furthermore, and because of the greater equality, there developed within the town the kind of positive social sentiments and interlocking social networks that Robert Putnam calls "social capital." Upkeep and improvement of the school, the development of programs for young people, and a grass-roots anti-poverty initiative all emerged within the civic society that Putnam argues is a function of high levels of social capital.

In the final section, Duncan makes her theoretical orientation explicit, placing herself in a theoretical space defined by the intersection of a classic British view of social class, melded with the cultural sociology of Ann Swidler. And she goes on to suggest policy initiatives to deal with persistent rural poverty. She has two major recommendations. First, she is positively disposed toward those policy analysts who call for new public works projects to provide employment where the private sector will not, along with a fortified income safety net for families. She is also appropriately skeptical about such a thing occurring. Second, she favors a strong federal role in schools, one that will enforce standards and turn schools from human warehouses to true socialization agents and providers of opportunity.

I will leave the readers of her work to decide on the appropriateness of her policy recommendations. As a way of concluding, I want to emphasize the subtlety and insight of her analyses. In contemporary debates about structure and agency, in many respects attributing a thoroughgoing agency is in vogue. To some readers, then, her desire to bring broad social norms regarding middle class life in America into the explanation will be too old-fashioned, too "modernist." But the ability, or lack thereof, to approximate these expectations of a "decent" (in Veblen's sense of the term) life the lived experience of poverty for people. Their lives are a combination of exploited dependency and the impossibility of being just "ordinary." Examining how this works in the broad context of economic history and social class processes in rural areas is a singular accomplishment of Duncan's work. I highly recommend the book.

**At the Interface: The Household and Beyond. Monographs in Economic Anthropology Series, No. 15. Edited by David B Small and Nicola Tannenbaum. Lanham, NY: University Press of America (1999), 240 pp.**

**Reviewed by Michael P. Freedman, Department of Anthropology, The Maxwell School of Syracuse University.**

The "interface," used variably and understood intuitively in this volume, is the connection between units of sociological interest, such as households and sodalities, the village and the state, individuals and the market. Originally prepared for the 1996 meeting of the Society of Economic Anthropology and for a session of the AAA annual conference, most of the dozen papers comprising this volume share a focus on the household, emphasizing one or another of its connections within the community and beyond.

Four papers treating intracommunity interfaces examine producer cooperatives in Sri Lanka and Mexico, age sets among the Samburu, and the culture of labor exchange among Andean peasants.