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**Review of *World's Apart: Why Poverty Persists in Rural America*.
Cynthia Duncan. Reviewed by William Rainford, University of
California, Berkely.**

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the dominant framework of a market economy and that, alas, the huge economic disparities, further sharpened during the current economic boom, will not be attenuated anytime soon.

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Cynthia Duncan, *World's Apart: Why Poverty Persists in Rural America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999. \$27.50 hardcover.

Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, current national policy requires states to provide benefits to adult participants only when they actively seek employment, become employed, or participate in employment training activities. Welfare reform, embedded in the theory of labor-force attachment, will fail in areas of the country where jobs are scarce and a few politically powerful individuals control opportunity. Discrimination, whether overt or latent, provides a significant barrier to self-sufficiency, undermining the efforts of participants to end their dependency on welfare.

World's Apart takes the reader deep into the heart of rural poverty. Three geographical areas are examined—areas that have depressed labor markets and where opportunity is in short supply. In the first two areas, Blackwell—a community in the Appalachian Mountains, and Dahlia—a community in the Mississippi Delta—inequality and lack of opportunity are functions of overt discrimination. Here, discrimination coupled with a depressed labor market serve as structural barriers for which the welfare participant has no recourse. No amount of legislated work requirements can mitigate the conditions that prevent the participant from achieving self-sufficiency.

Blackwell's poverty population consists of primarily low-skilled whites, while Dahlia's poor are primarily black. Despite the difference in ethnicity, both impoverished populations experience very similar inequality and oppression. Opportunity is dished out as a reward or withheld as a punishment by the controlling elite. These oligarchies have a long history as part and parcel of the social, economic, and even spiritual fabric of the community.

In contrast to the discriminatory practices of Blackwell and Dahlia, Grey Mountain—a rural community in New England—has embraced its poverty population, developing opportunity and fostering equality for its poorest members. By comparing and contrasting the three rural communities, Cynthia Duncan is able to provide examples of the crippling effects of discrimination on a community. In Blackwell and Dahlia, corrupt politics, fueled by the power-elite, leave the community incapable of development and growth, thereby feeding a viscous cycle of unemployment and welfare dependency. In contrast, Grey Mountain is experiencing growth, development, and stability due to its efforts to assist all its impoverished citizens, regardless of ethnicity or community status.

Duncan explores the three communities using qualitative methods that include examination of social history, economic analysis, observation within the community, and in-depth interviews. The author quantitatively examines ten decades of Census Bureau data in order to demonstrate the perpetuation of poverty in rural communities. By using this mixed methodological approach, Duncan successfully opens up the rural community to the outside world, allowing the reader to understand the nature of power relationships and their impact on the powerless individual, as well as the community.

As any good social scientist will, Duncan translates statistics and observations through the use of the research subject's voice. By providing analysis in juxtaposition to personal interviews, the author brings cold and distant data to life in a way that brings the reader into the stories of lives lived in rural poverty. This is a powerful technique that is difficult to accomplish. Duncan demonstrates that she has mastered the craft of telling the tale while reporting the research. It is also evident in her writing that she is passionate about her role as a researcher and author of poverty studies.

World's Apart is a well-written book that should be included in any college course on poverty and inequality in modern America. It serves as a reminder that despite the efforts and desires of the architects of welfare reform, poverty persists and will continue to persist where opportunity is lacking and discrimination is flourishing. The book also demonstrates the practical application

of social development theory, which calls for the integration of economic and social investments as strategies in combating poverty. Community organizers, policy makers, and political leaders, whether they are from rural or urban communities, would do well to read this book.

Perhaps the only drawback to Duncan's work is that, while it was written in an era of welfare reform and retrenchments in social services, the author does not acknowledge the impact of the new legislation on the population under study. To some extent, welfare reform, with its mandates for employment-related activities, will mitigate the lack of access to opportunity. How much it is able to do so is not clear, and some would argue that the legislation will further entrench discriminatory practices in communities such as Blackwell and Dahlia. Whatever the case may be, the author needs to visit the subject and identify the impact of welfare reform. This would only strengthen an already strong presentation on rural poverty in America.

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Frank F. Furstenberg Jr., Thomas D. Cook, Jacquelynne Eccles, Glen H. Elder Jr. and Arnold Sameroff. *Managing to Make It: Urban Families and Adolescent Success*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999. \$32.50 hardcover.

While there have been many studies on parenting and the well-being of children, too few of them have focused explicitly on the link between family and community that may play a central role in the transition to adulthood. This book, by sociologist Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. and an interdisciplinary team of colleagues, is about parenting strategies that are tied to successful early adolescent development within the context of disadvantaged communities.

Managing to Make It builds on the theoretical traditions of Weber and Dahrendorf who conceptualized ways in which structural opportunities and limitations, or life chances, are internalized and thereby shape future possibilities. The authors note the importance of interdisciplinary scholarship including the work of Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn, Coleman, Jencks and