Southern Appalachia: Analytcal Models, Social Services, and Native Support Systems[1]

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It is argued that the analysis of social services in southern Appalachia benefits more from a model based on ethnicity than on more commonly used models based on lower socioeconomic status or rural residence. A theoretical model of ethnicity is generated which covers structural, cultural, and symbolic aspects. Results of an exploratory study of ethnic differences between Appalachians and non-Appalachians in a mountainous North Carolina county are presented which lend validity to the ethnicity model.

Southern Appalachia, covering West Virginia and the mountainous part of six other states (Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia), is a largely rural region and so shares much with other rural parts of the United States. All too often, however, the distinct cultural heritage of the Appalachian people is ignored by social scientists who emphasize only the poor, rural nature of the area. Moreover, while the region and its people have generally been discussed coterminously, large population increases and the influx of newcomers have complicated local social organization. In this paper, I argue that the analysis of social services in Southern Appalachia benefits more from a model based on ethnicity than on more commonly used models based on social class (the culture of poverty model) or rural residence (the peasantry model). Close attention is given to the development of the ethnicity model since there is considerable controversy

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among researchers as to the nature of ethnicity in general. Finally, there is a discussion of educational and mental health services in the context of Appalachian ethnicity and the potential for using native support systems in improving these services.

MODELS APPLIED TO SOUTHERN APPALACHIA

Culture of Poverty Model

The culture of poverty model is best illustrated by Jack Weller's (1965) influential book, *Yesterday's People,* in which southern Appalachians are contrasted with "middle class Americans." Written by a Presbyterian minister about the West Virginia coal miners he served, Weller's book became the source book for antipoverty workers in the 1960s. Weller characterized mountaineers as, among other things, fatalistic, suspicious of authority, present-oriented, action-seeking, unable to save or budget their money, unable to work in groups, and ambivalent about education. Weller found these particular traits, which he believes developed because of the geographic, social, and economic isolation of life in the mountains, responsible for the mountaineers' subsequent failure to change or advance economically. Moreover, he stated that even if the situation changes and economic development occurs in Appalachia, the mountaineer "cannot experience this free break with the old culture of his parents, since he may still live enmeshed in the traditional patterns that have molded his ancestors" (1965, p. 138). Thus, Weller's description fit Oscar Lewis' (1959) model of a culture of poverty: a cultural value and belief system which develops in poverty and contributes to its persistence. The culture of poverty becomes so ingrained that its elimination would take more than one generation.

There are others who have employed a culture of poverty model in describing Appalachians. Rena Gazaway's (1969) anthropological study of "Duddie's Branch" described a group of people living in desperate poverty with few "positive" cultural traits and total social disintegration beyond the family. Her attempt to culturally "rehabilitate" one young boy by taking him out of the valley to live with her ended in failure. Interestingly, in a discussion of Gazaway's research, Oscar Lewis accepted the culture of poverty label for the people of Duddie's Branch, remarking that a culture "can persist without being satisfying to its members" (in Finney, 1969, p. 78).

Two of the most stereotyped versions of an Appalachian culture of poverty are found in Ball (1968) and Goshen (1970). Ball feels Appalachian culture is dominated by symptoms of "fixation, regression, aggression and

resignation." These traits are the results of frustration in the face of impossible challenges in the environment, according to Ball (1968), and produce sub-traits including "obstinate traditionalism," the "Welfare Syndrome," "extreme familism," "feuding behavior," and fatalism. The resulting "rigid" subculture is difficult to change and will tend to survive even if the environmental circumstances are eliminated (p. 893). Goshen, a physician, feels the Appalachian lower class (made up of "cultural primitives"/poor hillbillies and "traditional farmers") has an unredeeming culture which contributes to mental illness among people, the hillbillies being characterized as schizophrenic and the farmers as neurotic!

Critiques of the use of the model with Appalachians have included criticism of the culture of poverty model in general: It blames the victim; it assumes that adaptive values in the face of poverty are cherished cultural values. Additional criticisms are specific to its use with Appalachians (Fisher, 1978; H. Lewis, 1970; Maloney & Huelsman, 1972; Walls & Billings, 1977). Fisher (1978) pointed out that the model tends to generalize about Appalachia as a homogeneous lower class society when it actually has important class divisions. Careful ethnographies found class levels even in very small rural communities (Schwarzweller, Brown, & Mangalam, 1971; Stephenson, 1968). Miller (1978) contended that some of the traits assumed to especially characterize the Appalachian poor, such as familism, are in fact characteristic of all social classes in Appalachia and are actually general culture traits. Two studies based on survey data found no evidence of a culture of poverty. Ford (1962) concluded that Appalachians accept the middle-class values of American society. In a comparison of people in the North Carolina mountains versus the piedmont, Billings (1974) found no difference in cultural value orientation to explain the difference in economic development of the two regions.

Walls and Billings (1977) also criticized the culture of poverty model for ignoring the social stratification evident in Appalachia, and they advocated the study of class maintenance and elites in order to understand the economic exploitation in the region. Walls has suggested that class is more relevant in the study of Appalachia than culture (1976) and has advocated an "internal periphery" model to account for the poverty in Appalachia (1978). This model is largely a response to and an extension of the internal colonalism model applied to Appalachia by several researchers, notably Helen Lewis (1970; Lewis, Kobak, & Johnson, 1978). Walls found internal colonialism inapplicable in Appalachia because much of the dominance is affected by an indigenous elite not just the external elite. Furthermore, while colonialism implies the subjugation of a colonized ethnic group, Walls failed to see Appalachians as ethnics. The prejudice against hillbillies, he stated, is simply prejudice against the lower class. Walls believes Appalachian underdevelop-

ment is the result of the class domination characteristic of an "advanced capitalist society" where peripheral regions are exploited for the system at large. Despite Walls' disagreement with much of the culture of poverty model, his periphery model shares an emphasis on class as the chief causal factor in Appalachian behavior.

Peasantry Model

A second model used frequently in Appalachian research is that of rural peasantry. This is the basis for three ethnographies by Hicks (1976), Pearsall (1959), and Stephenson (1968). Hicks described the people of "Little Laurel" with such characteristics as egalitarianism, personal independence, resistance to authority, sex-role segregation, a value of kinship and family honor, reliance on mutual aid, lack of experience with secondary relations, suspicion of urban things, and a value of rural life. In the Foreward, George and Louise Spindler remark on Little Laurel's "continuities with other areas of rural America" and, more broadly, Anglo-European peasant life (Hicks, 1976, p. viii). Stephenson, whose study was done in the same area of North Carolina as Hicks' study, cited many of the same characteristics and more recently stated that he doubts Appalachian culture is different from that of rural Southern America (Stephenson & Greer, 1981). Pearsall (1959) spoke of the eastern Kentucky area she studied, "Little Smoky Ridge," as part of the Southern frontier which "became a folk world of small, isolated, homogeneous societies with a simple and almost self-sufficient economy" (p. 127).

Two articles specifically apply the term *peasantry* to Appalachia (Knipe & Lewis, 1971; Vogeler, 1973). Both included not only subsistence agriculturalists but also miners, loggers, and others in a subordinate position to urban society. Knipe and Lewis (1971) argued that this subordination produced many of the peasantlike adaptations characteristic of mountaineers such as fatalism, traditionalism, suspicion of outsiders, individualism or avoidance of societal responsibility, and present-orientation. Comparing two types of miners, Knipe and Lewis concluded that handloaders and other truck miners are in various degrees of peasantry while stably employed mechanized miners have urbanized values.

Most researchers using the peasant model also depict Appalachians in the process of change to a more urban way of life. Hicks (1976) remarked about the effects of the forces of change in Little Laurel: industry, better highways, and increased communication. Stephenson (1968) employed a "folk/urban continuum" to describe the change in "Shiloh." Most of the religion), Ford found Appalachian traits have weakened and "most of the

families, he stated, are in transition from the traditional Appalachian sub-
culture to a modern, middle class, contemporary culture. Similarly, Pearsall
(1959), using Robert Redfield's folk society model, concluded the "frontier
folk society is passing" as modern American culture encroaches in the
mountains.

The process of acculturation is pictured by other researchers using the
peasantry model in much the same way: Folk values are being replaced
by urban values. Photiadis (1970) spoke of Appalachians "becoming in-
tegrated into the larger American society" (p. 19). Schwarzweller (1970)
foresaw Appalachian society being "absorbed into the mainstream of
America" (p. 64). In his 1962 survey, Ford pronounced the almost complete
disappearance of Appalachian peasant culture, as implied by the title of his
study, "The Passing of Provincialism." Testing attitudes toward four "frontier-
agrarian" values (individualism, traditionalism, fatalism, and fundamentalist
religion), Ford found Appalachian trait have weakened and "most of the
people of the Region, according to the evidence of the survey data, have adopted
the major goals and standards typical of American society" (p. 32).

There are general criticisms of a folk–urban continuum which are per-
tinent in its application to Appalachia: A single continuum oversimplifies
change; it ignores the variation in folk societies and in urban societies. Ad-
ditionally, the extent to which the traditional notion of peasantry (involving
substantial political and economic disenfranchisement) can be applied to Ap-
palachia has yet to be tested. There are also problems in the area of documen-
ting changes in Appalachia from folk to urban society. As Ford (1962) pointed
out, it is impossible to know the extent of change in Appalachian values since
no data exist to document the earlier state of value orientations. In fact, Ford
questions how widespread the often-quoted traits were in the past in Ap-
palachia. Another problem is the peasant model's depiction of homogeneity
in Appalachia. Just as the culture of poverty model applies only to the lower
class and fails to encompass the behavior of middle and upper class Ap-
palachians, so the peasantry model applies only to the rural dwellers and
ignores the urbanities in Appalachia.

Ethnicity Model

There is considerable controversy in the literature regarding the
classification of white Appalachians as ethnics. Authors have argued, on the
one hand, that mountaineers are not a unique subculture (Billings, 1974;
Fisher, 1978), and, on the other hand, that there is a distinctive culture (Jones,
1978; Pearsall, 1966) or that, in any case, mountaineers are an identifiable

subgroup exploited by the larger society (Batteau, 1980; Lewis et al., 1978). Before considering the case for Appalachians, we need first to establish a working definition of ethnicity.

Researchers would probably agree that ethnicity is a many-faceted concept. The problem, of course, lies in determining the exact nature of the various aspects of ethnicity which are essential for a general definition. In a review of ethnic theory, Leo Despres (1975) identified two general approaches to the concept of ethnicity: objective and subjective. From the objective point of view, the earliest model of the two, an ethnic group is distinctive from other such groups on the basis of cultural traits and/or the relative accumulation of resources including wealth, social status, and political power. Thus, ethnic groups have commonly been defined on the basis of language, religion, or national origin, and, in general, competition for scarce resources has produced the stratification of ethnic groups within society. The increasing popularity of the term *ethnicity* among anthropologists is related to this condition of group competition because, as Ronald Cohen (1978) pointed out, anthropologists are less likely nowadays to study people in relative isolation (generic term = tribe) and more likely to study groups in situations of culture contact (generic term = ethnic group). The subjective definition of ethnicity, on the other hand, puts emphasis on self-identification and the perception of cultural differences. This approach has contributed to the growing interest in the concept of ethnic identity, which is defined variously as a "shared feeling of peoplehood," or a sense of "primordial attachments" between members of a group with a feeling of a common historical past and shared descent (Geertz, 1963; Gordon, 1964).

It is the opinion of Despres (1975) that both objective and subjective criteria contribute to the phenomenon of ethnicity. Many other authors agree, including Greeley (1974) and van den Berghe (1976) who saw ethnicity as the sum of common culture and a sense of belonging to a group and Keyes (1976) who defined ethnicity on the basis of the idea of shared descent and the result of intergroup relations. This model can be further refined to include three general aspects of ethnicity: structural, cultural, and symbolic (Keefe, Reck, & Reck, 1983). The structural aspect of ethnicity refers to the boundedness and opposition of groups within the larger society. Cultural ethnicity is based on a distinctive pattern of traits shared by members of a group. Last, the symbolic approach to ethnicity puts emphasis on ethnic identification and perceived cultural differences. These are distinctive though interrelated aspects of ethnicity in general. According to this definition, then, ethnicity refers to the distinctiveness of two or more groups that are in contact yet set apart in structural, culutral, and symbolic ways.

The relative significance of one aspect or another, of course, may vary through time and from ethnic group to ethnic group. Researchers' defini-

tions of ethnicity, therefore, tend to emphasize those aspects which stand out with regard to the groups they have studied. Barth (1969), for example, maintained that ethnicity is exclusively the result of the structural differentiation of interacting groups and that any shared culture is a result of ethnic group organization, not a primary characteristic of ethnicity. Keyes (1976), on the other hand, argued that Barth's definition reduces ethnicity to purely situational phenomena with no essence which remains from situation to situation. Keyes would retain culture as a primary defining characteristic but goes on to say that among the Thai, whom he has studied, it is not cultural attributes per se which set ethnic groups apart but the *idea* of shared descent and a common culture. It is hard to imagine, however, a situation in which symbolic differences alone set ethnic groups apart, unsupported by any observable differences in cultural traits. If cultural differences did not exist in the past, one would expect them to be created to some extent by the members of the group in order to support the idea of symbolic difference. In the same way, cultural difference seems to be inherent in situations of structural ethnicity, for the structural separateness of a group would create a situation where cultural distinctiveness could be maintained or would develop over time if not already present. Therefore, while the relative importance of the three aspects of ethnicity might vary in the application of the definition, one would expect all aspects to contribute in the final analysis to the phenomenon of ethnicity.

As implied above, ethnicity is affected by processes of change, including acculturation, assimilation, and changes in ethnic identification. For example, ethnic groups in contact situations may over time become very similar culturally, a common process in the United States where immigrant groups are Americanized for the most part in a few generations. Due to discriminatory practices as well as loyalty to an ethnic heritage, however, many of these immigrant groups remain ethnically distinct. This is most obvious with regard to groups which are physically different, such as Asians and Hispanics, but as Michael Novak (1971) pointed out, white ethnics may be similarly "unmeltable." In the study of ethnicity, then, it is possible to investigate processes of change and mutability while at the same time acknowledging the existence and persistence of distinctive groups.[3] In other words, the fact that ethnic boundaries and symbols of ethnic identity are constantly recreated or that some individuals from an ethnic minority group assimilate or successfully "pass" into the dominant group does not necessarily mean that the condition of ethnicity is insignificant or declining in importance.

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[3]In fact, Anya Peterson Royce (1982, p. 48) argues that "Mutability is the most important single feature of ethnic identity."

Proceeding further with the analysis of aspects of ethnicity, Table I indicates several dimensions of the three aspects and methods of measuring their significance in an ethnic population. Structural ethnicity has at least six dimensions: stratification, group boundedness, ethnic institutions, ethnic political interest groups, prejudice, and discrimination. Ethnicity, like socioeconomic class, refers to a condition of stratification, but the stratification is vertical rather than horizontal in nature. Ethnic groups may have internal class divisions (Gordon, 1964, uses the term *ethclass* for this), yet at the same time, ethnic groups as a whole clearly have unequal access to resources. Cultural ethnicity refers primarily to the dimension of cultural traits, but, of course, this is made up of numerous subcategories including language, religion, core values, family organization, sex roles, and so on. Symbolic ethnicity involves ethnic identification, ethnic pride, and the perception of cultural differences and attachment to cultural symbols.

In order to test the validity of the structural, cultural, and symbolic aspects of ethnicity in the Appalachian context, an independent marker of Appalachian ethnicity is needed. One marker which is easily determined, ob-

Table I. Aspects, Dimensions, and Measures of Ethnicity

Aspects and dimensions	Measures
Structural	
1. Group competition for resources Group stratification by wealth, status, and power	Group differences in socioeconomic status
2. Group boundaries Interaction within group boundaries	Presence of intraethnic social networks Perception of different groups
3. Ethnic institutions, communities, associations	Presence of ethnic institutions, communities, associations
4. Conflict with other groups Ethnic groups as political interest groups	Presence of ethnic conflict on political issues Participation in ethnic political action Ethnic differences in opinion on political issues, leaders, and groups
5. Forced identification prejudice	Presence of derogatory ethnic names, stereotypes Perception of prejudice
6. Discrimination	Perception of discrimination Presence of discrimination
Cultural	
1. Pattern of cultural traits	Recognition of and adherence to cultural traits
Symbolic	
1. Ethnic identification Sense of peoplehood "Primordial attachments"	Identification with positive group name Cognitive identification with people, land, and culture
2. Ethnic pride	Pride in group and culture Feelings of positive affiliation
3. Perceived cultural differences Symbols of cultural differences	Perception of cultural differences Recognition of and attachment to cultural symbols

jective, and appears reliable is "association with place" as measured by relative depth of generational time in the Appalachian region. The southern Appalachian region has been defined geographically by a number of authors and agencies (Appalachian Regional Commission, 1974; Campbell, 1921; Ford, 1962). Although many studies of Appalachia assume that all people living within the geographic boundaries are "Appalachians," I suggest that Appalachians are but one group distinguished from inmigrants coming from outside the region. Specifically, Appalachians are those people whose families have lived in the mountains for "n" generations. This definition can be operationalized by asking for the birthplace of the informant and the informant's parents and grandparents. Birthplace can be categorized as Appalachian or non-Appalachian using the geographic boundaries of one of the aforementioned studies. It is suggested that $n = 3$; that is, three generations in the mountains is necessary to claim Appalachian ethnicity and "an association with place."

Inmigration has occurred in southern Appalachia primarily since 1970. In western North Carolina, the population has increased rapidly with the growth of tourism and resort/retirement developments. For example, in the county in which I have done research, the population grew by more than 30% between 1970 and 1980. Regional planners estimate that almost 70% of the recent population growth in this region is due to the inmigration of people born outside the area (Hammersly & Henderson, 1983). Clearly, the newcomers in Appalachia are different in origins. Some come from the south, some from the north. National heritage and religious affiliation are heterogeneous. On the other hand, some commonalities emerge: most are white, middle class, and have an urban background. Furthermore, newcomers tend to be "mainstream" Americans, following the cultural norms typically cited as "American." Thus, it appears that there are essentially two identifiable groups in this region: (a) native Appalachians whose families are from the mountains and (b) recent non-Appalachian inmigrants.

Recent remarks by native Appalachian scholars lend credence to this independent marker of ethnicity and to the idea of ethnicity per se as applied to Appalachains. Ronald Eller (1982) begins the Acknowledgments section of his book in the following way:

> The evolution of this book began with the author's own personal odyssey. Almost two hundred years ago my ancestors migrated into the Blue Ridge country of North Carolina and Virginia, where they remained for almost four generations, until at the turn of the century they were drawn by the promise of a better life into the coal mining camps and timber mill towns of southern West Virginia. In the 1950s, they joined the great outmigration of mountaineers to the industrial centers of the North, settling in Ohio among neighbors and kin forced out of the hills by unemployment and economic despair. After a few years, they returned home to Appalachia, but not before I received a scholarship opportunity to attend a northern college. It was during those years as an undergraduate that I became interested in my people, in their distinctiveness, and in their experience as Americans. Being the first of my family to attend

> college, I became at once proud of my heritage and embittered at the inequalities
> and exploitation I found in my region. When I could locate no scholarly histories
> of the mountains and little in the published literature to help me understand the moun-
> tains experience, a friend and teacher encouraged me to pursue my interest and to
> begin the research that has culminated in this book. (p. vii)

It is clear that Eller was talking about Appalachia as a geographic region, but it means more to him than simple location. Appalachia is where his family has lived for generations; it is the "home" of his "people" who carry a distinctive heritage and who have been subject to exploitation.

David Whisnant (1980) begins the preface of his book in much the same way:

> I should begin by telling how this book came to be. I was born and raised in the
> Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, which have kept their hold on me
> through my more than twenty years of being away. I felt their hold quite early in
> life, but have been long years coming to understand it. I began to understand, in
> fact, only after a period of alienation and exile such as has been experienced by hun-
> dreds of thousands of other Appalachian out-migrants. Writing this book has been
> a major part of my quest for understanding.
>   At one level, therefore, the book is an artifact of one person's political and cultural
> education, a record of an attempt to come to terms with the complex history of both
> self and region, neither of which can be distinguished entirely from the other. The
> problem of description has at every point provided inseparable from the problem
> of *relation*. And because relation, as both fact of my birth and continuing process,
> has shaped my point of view, it is only fair that it also should be described. (p. vii)

Whisnant, like Eller, emphasized the powerful feeling of attachment to the mountains that is the result of the ascribed fact of birth but also the knowledge that the mountains and self are "inseparable."

AN APPLICATION OF THE ETHNICITY MODEL

An exploratory study was undertaken by the author to investigate potential ethnic differences between Appalachians and non-Appalachians and the proposed cultural, structural, and symbolic aspects of Appalachian ethnicity. Twenty-three members of a craft cooperative in western North Carolina were interviewed in Spring 1983.[4] The craft cooperative includes native Appalachians and non-Appalachians and sampling was designed to tap these two groups. The final sample consisted of 17 Appalachians and 6 non-Appalachians. Interviews were conducted by trained college students and the author at the informant's home or studio; the interviews took about 1½ hours to complete.

[4]Students in the author's Methods in Anthropology class helped in designing the structured interview and interviewing a large portion of the sample. Appreciation is extended to James Sparks, Richard Piland, Cathy Hilton, and Thomas Osborne for their participation in this research. See Keefe (1984) for a full description of the results.

The Appalachians are all at least third-generation natives of the county in which they were interviewed. Two of the non-Appalachians were born in the piedmont of North Carolina, one was born in Florida, and the remaining three were born outside the south. The non-Appalachians have lived in the mountains for an average of 10 years. The Appalachians average only 9.8 years of education, whereas the non-Appalachians average 15.6 years. All of the non-Appalachians and all but two of the Appalachian natives currently reside in rural areas of the county.

A structured interview was constructed mostly of open-ended questions which were formulated to tap each of the dimensions listed in Table I. Questions were asked about four aspects of cultural background: language, food, family structure, and religion. Informants were asked specifically about their perception of language differences (in accent, use of colloquialisms, and grammar) between Appalachians and non-Appalachians; their perception of diet differences between Appalachians and non-Appalachians; their own consumption patterns with regard to daily foods, holiday foods, and wild foods; their vegetable gardening activities; their extended family structure and frequency of visiting and exchange with kin; and their church affiliation and participation. Structural ethnicity was tested with measures of the ethnicity of associates, preference for ethnicity of associates, perception of different groups, perception of prejudice and discrimination, and position on political issues. Last, symbolic ethnicity was measured by questions about group identity, pride in mountain culture, and strength of attachment to the mountains as "home." Answers to each of the open-ended questions were combined in the process of content analysis into a small number of categories in order to make general intergroup comparisons.

On almost all of the measures of ethnicity, there were differences between and structural separation of the two groups. Observation in the community at large lends supports to these findings. Thus, there is considerable evidence based on the structural, cultural, and symbolic aspects of our definition of ethnicity that Appalachians and non-Appalachians constitute different ethnic groups in the region, Structurally, the two groups differ in socioeconomic status, the Appalachians having much lower levels of education. Members of the two groups appear to have primarily intraethnic social networks and tend to perceive two separate groups, that is, native Appalachians and newcomers. The church is an important ethnic institution, most of the Appalachians belonging to small, rural, homogeneous churches. The non-Appalachians all attend large churches in town, despite the fact that they live in the countryside. The two groups differ on general political issues, particularly legalizing the scale of alcohol and permitting prayer in school, as well as political action within the craft cooperative (see Keefe, 1983). Prejudice is evident among members of both groups toward the other group.

There are derogatory labels used to refer to mountaineers in the area; "redneck" and "hick" are the most common. The term *outsider* for nonnatives also has a negative connotation. Moreover, at least one of the groups (non-Appalachians) perceives discrimination against both groups.

Culturally, there are differences between the two groups in all four of the areas investigated: language, food, family structure, and religion. Informants tend to perceive a difference in speech patterns between Appalachians and non-Appalachians. Many say they sometimes find it difficult to understand members of the other group. Differences in general diet and holiday foods were found. In addition, although members of both groups tend to have gardens and process food, native Appalachians do a greater variety of food processing, including making preserves and honey and curing hams, and they are more likely to eat wild meat, fish, berries, and wild greens that they have hunted and gathered for themselves. Mountaineers have a traditional extend family structure with many relatives living nearby and frequent visiting and exchange. Most of the non-Appalachians, on the other hand, have no relatives living in the county and tend to associate more with friends. Although the majority of both groups attend church, almost all the Appalachians are Baptist, whereas the non-Appalachians belong to a variety of other denominations. Furthermore, the mountaineers tend to go to church more frequently (often two or three times per week) and they are more likely to attend various church activities other than Sunday services, such as covered-dish suppers, prayer meetings, revivals, and singings.

Important for symbolic ethnicity is the fact that the two groups also *perceive* cultural differences, for example, in language and diet. Of further significance for symbolic ethnicity is the evidence of different identities for members of the two groups, the Appalachians tending to identify as "country people" or "mountain people." There is also an indication that the mountaineers have pride in their culture and their people. Asked what they can be proud of concerning mountain culture, Appalachians frequently mention helping others, hard work, being Christian, "making do," honesty, and strong familism. Finally, there are differences between the two groups in ties to the land and feelings about the mountains, an emotional symbol of mountaineers' heritage and otherness. Land is generally important to Appalachians in more kinds of ways than to non-Appalachians. Land is perceived as a means of maintaining children's ties to the area through inheritance. Family graveyards and "homeplaces" also tie native Appalachians to specific pieces of property. Mountaineers are unequivocal in saying they feel strongly attached to the mountains and most say they would never leave for any reason. Although non-Appalachians speak of the beauty of the mountains, on the other hand, the mountains are called "home" only because they live in the mountains at this time. If need be, the non-Appalachians agree they would move out of the mountains, especially for economic necessity.

I doubt that readers will deny the differences that appear to distinguish the two groups studied. More difficulty may come, I think, in interpreting these differences as ethnic rather than something else. It is essential, therefore, to briefly consider alternative models in light of the findings.

Another way to interpret the findings would be to conclude they indicate rural/urban differences. Appalachian natives are frequently compared to other rural Americans. Of course, this denies that many Appalachians live in urban areas. In fact, two of the Appalachians interviewed live in a town whereas all of the non-Appalachians are rural dwellers. In general, it might be the case that non-Appalachians frequently move in from an urban area, but then the migration literature on Appalachia makes it clear that many Appalachian natives have migrated out to urban, metropolitan areas and have returned. Moreover, when the literature on rural/urban differences in way of life is examined closely, it is apparent that there are really few distinctions that social scientists agree are specifically rural versus urban.[5] Other factors generally have much more explanatory power than rural/urban residence or background, especially in the contemporary United States.

An alternative interpretation would be to conclude that these differences fall under a simple insider/outsider distinction. This, in fact, appears more legitimate on the face of it than the rural/urban distinction. All the Appalachians are, indeed, insiders having been in the county for three or more generations, while the non-Appalachians are recent inmigrants who also happen to be called outsiders by the local population. However, the insider/outsider distinction would not appear to go far enough in capturing the situation, that is, the relative homogeneity of the cultural and symbolic aspects of the two groups and the deep-seated social division between them. In the same way, the term *subcultures* as applied to the two groups may adequately summarize the groups' cultural differences and the term *subgroups* may adequately summarize their separate structural nature, but neither term is holistic enough to accurately convey the full significance of the groups in context.

Class analysis is often used in Appalachia to explore the relationship between Appalachians and others. One cannot help but be struck by the fact

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[5]In an excellent theoretical review, Philip Hauser (1968) examined the Western ethnocentrism of most conceptions of rural/urban models. Taking another tack, John Gulick (1973) argued that what are often conceived of as "urban" traits actually vary in extensiveness from one city to the next, implying urbanism per se is only one of many determinants of the way of life in cities. Richard Dewey (1960) and Firey, Loomis, and Beegle (1957) contended that in modern America, there may be little difference between rural and urban ways of life due to communications and transportation systems. A Dewey pointed out, many small communities may have both rural and urban traits. A college town, for example, may be relatively small but have a highly literate population, be fairly secular and scientific/rational, and put little emphasis on kinship. In fact, Dewey argued that only five qualities appear to be influenced definitely by the size and density of population: anonymity, division of labor, heterogeneity of population, impersonal and formally prescribed relationships, and symbols of status that are independent of personal acquaintance.

that the people of Appalachia are relatively poor by socioeconomic criteria. Furthermore, the negative regional impact of exploitive ventures by outside interests has been well documented (Appalachian Landownership Task Force, 1983; Eller, 1982), and the field of regional studies has recently emerged in an effort to take into consideration the class relationships within Appalachia, the regional context, and the relationship between Appalachia and other regions (see Simon, 1983). Of course, the concept of regionalism tends to ignore the presence of non-Appalachians within the region. There are, on the other hand, clear class differences between the two groups, Appalachian natives and non-Appalachians, and these differences are perceived by members of these groups. But these socioeconomic differences are only one consideration in these individuals' self-perceived distinctions between the two groups, and it is the more holistic expression of difference, ethnicity if you will, that captures the relationship of the groups.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

The significance of the ethnicity model for social services is the emphasis it puts on the culture context. Of course, socioeconomic class and rural/urban residence are important factors in the delivery of services in Appalachia as elsewhere. Unlike the rest of the United States, the majority of the population in Appalachia is rural dwelling and this presents obvious problems in accessibility of services. Demographically, however, the rural nature of Appalachia can be overworked. For example, in 1980, 48% of the population in Appalachia was urban dwelling (Appalachian Regional Commission, 1982). Demographics notwithstanding, what is important to recognize is that some problems in service delivery apply to both urban and rural residents in Appalachia as well as to different class strata. A brief discussion with regard to educational and mental health services serves to illustrate this.

The low educational achievement and high dropout rate in Appalachia rival those of blacks, Hispanics, and other ethnic minority groups in the United States. For example, the Appalachian Regional Commission's Educational Advisory Committee found the Appalachian dropout rate between Grades 1 and 12 averaged 65% compared to 36% nationally (Parker, 1970). Appalachian writers frequently argue that cultural differences encountered in school are in large part responsible for the educational failure experienced by Appalachian youths. Language and communication problems plague Appalachian children from the beginning of their school career (Fusilier, 1971). Teachers emphasize Standard English and may denigrate the local dialect (Miller, 1977). Jim Wayne Miller, for example, recalled his own experience in school when one of his teachers set up a "graveyard" on a classroom table with tiny crosses added each time a student used a colloquial expression or pronunciation, such as *h'it* for *it*. Textbooks also tend

to reinforce the idea that mainstream American values and behavior are superior, while Appalachian culture and history are either disdained or ignored (Hill, 1971; Skinner, 1967). Appalachian youths in schools with large number of non-Appalachian inmigrants may also be the object of prejudice and discrimination among their peers. Research carried on by the author and two colleagues indicates native Appalachians entering high school are labeled *rednecks* regardless of class or residential background (Keefe et al., 1983).

Sensitivity to the cultural context is needed in Appalachian schools. Textbooks and the curriculum should foster pride in Appalachian culture and people. Low self-concept is prevalent among Appalachian students (Reck & Reck, 1980) and attention should be given to developing a positive ethnic identity. Above all, ethnic prejudice and discrimination must be recognized for what it is. Ironically, school personnel and students who might otherwise consider themselves liberal and eschew using derogatory terms such as *nigger* see nothing wrong with using the term *redneck* and deriding the local dialect. This is not unlike the mass media's continued use of the hillbilly stereotype (e.g., Snuffy Smith, The Beverly Hillbillies) whereas other ethnic stereotypes are avoided. Without the label of "ethnic group," this abuse of Appalachians appears less damaging than it is.

In mental health services, as in education, an understanding of the cultural context is essential. Native definitions of illness, conception of causation, and preferred cures differ to some extent in Appalachia compared to mainstream America. One native illness category receiving attention recently, for example, is the condition of "nerves" (Ludwig & Forrester, 1981; Van Schaik, 1984). Nerves can include a broad range of general complaints (e.g., nervousness, anger, fearfulness, depression, gastrointestinal disturbances, weight loss, headaches) and is linked to pervasive and accumulated social distress. Van Schaik (1984) found that physicians are important in validating this illness and treatment typically involves taking "nerve pills" and "shots" and occasionally includes hospitalization. There is additional evidence which suggests that physicians and other alternatives to professional mental health care are generally preferred more in Appalachia than in the population at large for the treatment of mental and emotional problems (Steinman, 1970). Religion also appears to be much more important in Appalachia both as a source of etiological beliefs and treatment. Researchers have observed that illness in Appalachia is often believed to be the will of God or supernatural punishment for sins (Herlihy, 1963). Time is generally set aside during the religious services of the fundamentalist Protestant churches which proliferate in the mountains to ask for supernatural helping in healing the sick. Some healing services may be more instrumental with faith healing and the laying on of hands taking place (Kane, 1974).

The delivery of mental health services in Appalachia are also affected by cultural differences. Mental health practitioners are often not native Appalachians. This can create communication barriers with clients due not on-

ly to alternative concepts of illness and treatment but also to accent and language differences which may create misunderstanding (Stekert, 1971). Cultural conflict may actually emerge between non-Appalachian practitioners and native clients due to differences in values and life style (Plaut, 1983). Furthermore, the delivery of mental health services may be affected by prejudice of practitioners toward clients negatively stereotyped as hillbillies.

THE ROLE OF NATIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

A focus on ethnicity in Appalachia leads not only to a more careful consideration of cultural difference in the delivery of social services, it also encourages the consideration of native support systems which can be powerful aides in improving the quality of life in Appalachia. Ethnographies of the Appalachian region emphasize the significance of family, church, and community as the bases of social organization (Beaver, 1976; Hicks, 1976). Researchers frequently point out their powerful role in easing as well as creating stress for individuals. The family, for example, which is defined in extended terms in Appalachia, provides a primary personal identity and source of security for its members. Families have reputations in the community which extend to all family members, and family members remain important role models throughout an individual's life. A child's identity, then, is in large part ascribed and once in school, teachers' expectations based on family surnames may have an enormous impact on students' academic success. Parents and relatives may have strong negative opinions about the local schools based on political and cultural differences with the school administration rather than a negative attitude toward education per se; either way, children's attitudes toward school are influenced. The extended family in Appalachia tends to be geographically proximate and ties with parents and siblings remain strong throughout an individual's lifetime. Thus, native Appalachians have a large network of close kin on whom they can rely for help with personal and emotional problems. The correlate of this, however, is that relatives' problems become one's own problems. In the same way, the close bond with an extended kin group can provide not only a sense of security, it can also mean that grief at the loss of a family member is especially intense.

Clearly, the educational and mental health systems must take extended kin networks into consideration in order to improve services. A relevant therapeutic technique in Appalachia would be family therapy. Extended family members need to be consulted to ensure cooperation and help with treatment. Therapeutic goals which seek to reduce what is perceived as dependency on family are probably doomed to failure. With regard to schools, ways should be sought to increase parents' and other relatives' involvement with

students' education. One of the reasons for Eliot Wigginton's (1972) success in producing the *Foxfire* series with the help of high school students in north Georgia is that the knowledge and beliefs of parents and grandparents became a respected resource for the educational system.

The church in Appalachia tends to be a small, homogeneous association in which membership is often a lifetime commitment. Church, family, and community overlap a great deal, and the reciprocity between relatives and neighbors also extends to church members. One's preacher or minister is a frequent source of advice and support. Religion and the Lord are called on regularly to help individuals through crises (Van Schaik, 1984). Mental health practitioners rarely receive training in religious beliefs of client population and often, in fact, have strong prejudice against fundamentalist churches which prevents culturally relevant treatment. On the other hand, success is reported by those practitioners who make use of Biblical quotations and grant respect for religious beliefs in therapy (Humphrey, 1981). Although church and school remain constitutionally separate, there is room for the same kind of respect for religious beliefs that may color classroom discussions, written essays, and students' club affiliations. Furthermore, successful passage of local school bonds and implementation of new curricula can often depend on the extent of political support garnered from church leaders and congregations.

Community in Appalachia is best conceived as a fluid network of people anchored to a particular location but not bounded irrevocably by geography (Beaver, 1986). Network boundaries expand and contract given the task, information, or crises in question. Community encompasses a more heterogeneous population which nevertheless retains a single identity and can respond in a unified way to needs or threats. Schools obviously require the support of the local community. With the school consolidation movement and the expansion of state and federal guidelines for education, however, schools have been less able to respond to individual community's needs and communities sense a loss of control over the educational system. Schools must seek to ensure broad community representation on parental advisory groups and committees. Many times, school systems in Appalachia dismiss community concerns as uninformed or unimportant; this can be based on class — or cultural — bias. The result is lack of support of and trust in the school system and a greater sense of dissonance for schoolchildren. Community attitudes also have significance for mental health clinics. It has been suggested that the stigma of mental illness is greater in Appalachia than elsewhere (Weller, 1965), which implies greater barriers to utilization of formal mental health services. Given the strength of informal community networks in Appalachia, however, self-help groups focused on particular problems might be both more appropriate and culturally compatible.

CONCLUSIONS

The model of ethnicity has been applied in this paper to Appalachian natives. The problems suffered by Appalachians in terms of high dropout rates, institutional discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping are familiar to other ethnic minority groups. Yet because the majority of the population in Appalachia are racially indistinct from mainstream Americans, there is resistance to the notion of ethnic difference. This has significant repercussions. Ironically, service providers and others in the region often recognize the distinctive nature of native Appalachians while, at the same time, reaffirming that they are white Americans like anywhere else. This is often said with good intentions. The result, however, justifies a lack of action taken to improve services for native Appalachians. If they are perceived as no different, inequalities go unrecognized and unredressed. If, on the other hand, differences are perceived only on the basis of socioeconomic class and/or rural residence, social services may miss the cultural dimension that may be all-important in identifying problems and potential means of improvement. It is hoped that application of the notion of ethnicity to mountain people will be helpful in the structuring of human services in the region.

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