

or "go gay" and who own land in the center of the community often sell their land for very high prices to the more conservative who desire that location. This tends to increase the conservatism of the center. In time the value of farms is determined by the distance from the center of the community rather than by their relative productivity or money-making potential. Wealthy Amishmen who live in the center may buy land from non-Amishmen on the fringes and by hiring or renting to Amishmen of lower rank build up the usually rundown land left by non-plain people.

AN AMISH CHURCH ADOPTS THE AUTOMOBILE ²¹

A Case of Successful Systemic Linkage

As in every instance of evaluation and decision making, the adoption of the automobile by the Old Order Amish, which we shall call The Hoog Church, has a particular history. The Hoog group was one of four House Amish religious communities in Pennsylvania County. The House Amish groups were more conservative than the four Church Amish groups in the County. The Hoog group was the most progressive of the House Amish, resembling the most conservative of the Church Amish as much as they did the next most progressive group of House Amish. The Hoog group originated fifty years ago as an offshoot of the then most progressive of the House Amish. While the group shares the same general culture as other Amish in the territory the details differ considerably. Shirts, suspenders, and in some instances broadfall trousers are purchased when available at the nearby store. Buttons are permitted on work jackets. The men's hair extends over part of the ear, which is considerably shorter than the hair length for men in the next most progressive group. Tractors, including those with rubber tires, are used for farming operations. The brims of men's hats are smaller than those of all other Amish. **Until the acceptance of automobiles carriage tops were black.** The ban on the use of electricity was lifted 10 years ago; since that time farms have been modernized considerably. Farming is completely modern and tractor-oriented but religion centers in house worship. *Norms and boundary maintenance de-*

Loomis, Charles P. 1960. "The Old Order Amish as a social system." pp. 212-48 in Social Systems: Essays on Their Persistence and Change. Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand Company.

vices had already been relaxed. Partial systemic linkage with the larger society in agricultural practices had already been achieved.

For a number of years members of the Hoog Group used tractors in the field and for farm work. With the appearance of pneumatic tires, they were also used on the road, to pull wagons to town and to run errands to nearby farms. Several members installed high speed transmissions especially for road work. During deer hunting season tractors could be seen on the mountain where they were parked while their operators were hunting. The tractors were equipped with huge platforms on the rear for hauling milk. Boxes were also attached in which Amish youngsters were transported. One church official of the group commented to the writer: "This seemed inconsistent to me and I was afraid to be seen on the road anymore with the tractor." *The objective of occupational efficiency was added and was sometimes in conflict with the old objective of remaining "God's peculiar people." New norms were institutionalized, new facilities added to accomplish the old objective of making money, an objective given a higher priority by the evaluative process.*

Some of the younger members commented on the inconsistency of driving rubber-tired farm tractors on the road, but using horses for transportation to church. One informant predicted, "It won't be long until some change will have to be made. When the youngsters grow up they will not understand why horses must be used on Sunday, when rubber-tired tractors can be used during the week."

Members often traveled long distances, to and from other Amish settlements in the state or even beyond in order to maintain contact with relatives who had migrated. They often hired taxicabs or the service of a neighboring Church Amish member for whom automobiles were not taboo. *Communication and interaction patterns could not be maintained under the old norms. Strain resulted.* One of the bishops of the Church Amish informed a minister of the group: "You cannot expect to keep up this practice."

Some of the parents bought or financed autos for the young men who had become members of the Church Amish. There were no dominant negative sanctions for such generous acts on the part of the House Amish father to his Church Amish son as there

was in stricter Amish groups. In this way the entire family had transportation. *Note that members of the same family held memberships in two different church groups, a type of systemic linkage.*

The desire for automobiles became dominant in informal conversation among some of the members. One farm hand in particular constantly kept ribbing his employer, a minister of the group, about inconsistency, and the difficulty of hitching up horses. Horses were too much trouble, too slow a form of transportation, and besides it was dangerous to drive a carriage on the open highway. This informal conversation and "egging" undoubtedly played a significant part in preparing the minister for a favorable decision later when the time came for a nod in the church. *Communication about new norms to a person holding a status-role vested with power was important.*

No amount of informal conversation concerning the desire for an automobile could make the subject legitimate for discussion in church. Only if some person violated the restriction could it be discussed. Early one spring a young man of a well-thought-of family became the first offender. Without the consent of his family and church he purchased a used automobile under considerable pressure from a used car dealer. The youngster had secured a learner's permit; he drove the automobile to the home of his parents. The father objected to having the car on his property, and after a good deal of persuasion on the part of his parents, the sixteen-year-old boy returned the car to the dealer with the promise from his parents that he could have it back if the church should come to a favorable decision whenever the subject came up for discussion. *The objective of full fellowship was important to the family as was the Godliness represented by the Church.*

In the following week, a young married man who was employed in the nearby village purchased a new automobile. He kept it at the place of his employment, continuing to use his tractor to commute to and from work. With the aid of another friend he had taken a driver's test and satisfactorily passed it.

In the latter instance the offender was immediately excommunicated for purchasing a car, and in order to be received again into full fellowship he was advised to put it away until the church could come to a unanimous decision on the ownership of auto-

mobiles. He sold his new auto to a friend for one dollar, and after the church had approved, he took it back. Meanwhile, a brother of the young married man was offended that his brother was excommunicated; in retaliation he also purchased an automobile. Like his brother, he too was promptly excommunicated. *Rank is evidenced here; evidently the two excommunicated brothers had lower rank than the first offender who was granted an immunity from the negative sanctions.* By this time the officials of the church had enough justification to bring up the question for discussion and taking the "Rot" or vote of the membership. *The status-role of the officials is here articulated. They use their power to initiate the evaluation and decision-making processes.*

Following the excommunications, informal discussions continued. Meetings were held informally in the homes. The second offender, in desperation for help, on a Sunday afternoon went to see the bishop of one of the Mennonite (Church Amish) congregations. He informed the bishop of his predicament and stated his desire to become a member of the Mennonite Church. The bishop advised him not to be in a hurry about joining another church. The next day the third offender came to the same bishop stating his desire to join the Mennonite Church. The bishop suggested to him that he call a meeting with other persons who, like himself, wanted to have an automobile. About 30 persons both men and women came to the meeting which was held in a private home. *Members intimately acquainted and sharing the same need, continue to reinforce sentiments and opinions and evaluate action through informal communication.* The bishop, accompanied by one of his assistant ministers, stated his position and read the Bible and led prayer. He explained that for people to join a church because they want an auto "usually doesn't help the church they jump into." He advised them to take the matter to their own ministers and see whether they couldn't come to some solution. The bishop's position was that in the previous years he had received many of the Amish members for no other reason than that they wanted automobiles. He was not interested in having more members of that kind, or just for that reason. *The bishop realized that his church as a social system was a complex of belief, sentiments, objectives and norms. Agreement on one*

norm, perhaps this one concerning automobiles in particular, is not enough to insure dedication to the whole system.

The six ordained men of the Hoog group in the meantime had counselled with each other informally. None of them opposed the on-coming automobile question, but one wife did. "Where will this lead to, if our young people are given the privilege of going wherever they want?" was the chief objection she raised. *Sentiments and opinions were formed and modified by the communication process.*

The decision finally came before the assembled church. The process of decision making has been defined as the reduction of the alternate courses of action available so that some course of action can take place. Since the Amish church provides that each district maintain its own regulations and discipline it was up to the Hoog group to decide.

The "Rot" is usually taken at the members' meeting following the worship service. The two deacons polled the church, one taking the vote among the men and the other among the women. The bishop as a rule states the opinion of the ministry on any issue up for consideration, after which the membership affirms the minister's decisions, disapproves of them, or remains neutral on the question. *The process of decision making had become institutionalized.* The terms used to describe the outcome of the vote may be three: unanimous, practically unanimous, or not unanimous. In this case the report was practically unanimous in favor. Only four persons did not give assent, and they chose to join a stricter conservative Amish Church in the community. *Those in conflict with the new norms sought a group whose objectives, norms and sentiments would be like theirs.*

On the following Sunday at worship services eight automobiles were present. Several weeks later most of the members came in automobiles, and today from 40-50 automobiles are parked in a single barnyard with perhaps one or two carriages present. Only four of a total of 70 household heads have not purchased autos, and all of these are old people. Members were advised to secure only black automobiles or to have them painted black, and they were not to drive trucks.

The bishop had his own view of what had happened. The general practice of using tractors for road work and business trips

to town helped to bring on the automobile. The bishop felt it was not so much the fault of the young people as it was the fault of the parents—those who purchased automobiles for their boys who were either not yet members or were members of Church Amish groups. The frequent practice of young drivers dropping their parents off at preaching and then returning for them after the service was a primary reason for the innovation, according to the bishop.

The legitimation of the automobile by the Amish Church is a case of successful linkage of the Amish social system with that of the outside world. The change agent in this case was the group of Amish "young Turks" who advocated and successfully introduced the automobile into the Amish community. The target system, as the recipient of the "egging" and the direct attempts at innovation, was the Amish community represented by the ministers whose objectives, at first, were the maintenance of the status quo.

The results of the systemic linkage which brought the automobile to the Hoog group will take some time to manifest themselves. After all the boundary maintenance devices failed to prevent the invasion of sacred norms, and in a matter of weeks forces were released which in the larger society required half a century to partially regularize and to control through continuous institutionalization. Except for infrequent and expensive "taxi" rides, the community had been the chief arena of interaction; now the interaction arena has been increased in size to cover the eastern part of the nation. Young people who formerly courted in prescribed ways now have the automobile, a facility viewed with mixed feelings by almost every parent with children of courting age even in the larger society. Such are the problems which the automobile has brought to the Hoog group.

NOTES

1. Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Society, Culture, and Personality: Their Structure and Dynamics* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 40.
2. The principal source of information about the Amish is Walter M. Kollmorgen, *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community—The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania* (Rural Life Studies [Washington, D.C.: Department of Agriculture, September 1942]). For additional refer-

ences see John A. Hostetler, *Annotated Bibliography on the Amish: An Annotated Bibliography of Source Materials Pertaining to the Old Order Amish Mennonites* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1951).

3. Stanley A. Freed, "Suggested Type Societies in Acculturation Studies," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Feb. 1957), p. 591.

4. Walter M. Kollmorgen, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

5. Talcott Parsons, *Religious Perspective of College Teaching in Sociology and Social Psychology* (New Haven, Conn.: The Edward W. Hazen Foundation, 1952), p. 12.

6. C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century* (Morristown, Pa.: The Pennsylvania German Society, 1929), pp. 12 and 13.

7. Charles P. Loomis, "Farm Hand's Diary, Amish Family," (Typewritten Manuscript, Earnst Correll Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana). See John A. Hostetler, *Annotated Bibliography*, p. 85.

8. John A. Hostetler, *Amish Life* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1952), p. 10.

9. Charles S. Rice and John B. Shank, *Meet the Amish, A Pictorial Study of the Amish People* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1947), p. 9.

10. Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: University of Columbia Press, 1949), p. 133.

11. Robert Dubin, "Deviant Behavior and Social Structure: Continuities in Social Theory," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (April 1959), pp. 147ff. The present author agrees with Merton's judgment that an important distinction omitted from Dubin's and Merton's own typologies is that of public and private attitudes. Merton's separation of the "three elements-goals, norms, and means" is also appreciated. "Social Conformity, Deviation, and Opportunity-structures: A Comment on the Contributions of Dubin and Cloward," *ibid.*, p. 183. Actually, from the present author's point of view, the weaknesses of both Dubin's and Merton's typologies are their strength: parsimony of dimensions and concepts. To be able to type a demagogue as accepting cultural goals but rejecting institutional norms and means (value ritualism) is so simple that it is appealing. However, for a problem such as that posed in the present essay and the others in this volume systemic linkage of the systems involved in terms of beliefs, norms, ends, sanctions, and other components must be included. Is the cognitive aspect of demagoguery of no consequence? The author believes it is and for this and other reasons uses more than three elements to describe action. Thus Dubin's conceptualization "institutional norms" is defined as the "prescribed behavior and proscribed behaviors in a particular institutional setting." He refers to the professions as such a setting but this gives no clue to the systemic linkage between the society and the sub-system. Certainly the linkage would be different in the case of the Amish, an organization of "professional" thieves, and the Michigan Medical Society.

12. "Withdrawal, flight, emigration—this was by now their institutionalized reaction to any major threat to the dogmas of their faith, particularly to principles which distinguished them from other Christian persuasions." E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia—The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1955), p. 35.

13. Walter M. Kollmorgen, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
16. John Umble, "The Amish Mennonites of Union County, Pennsylvania," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Vol. VII (1933), p. 92.
17. Walter M. Kollmorgen, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
18. C. Henry Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
19. John A. Hostetler, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
20. Walter M. Kollmorgen, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.
21. This case resulted from field research carried on by John A. Hostetler who wrote the original case. Hostetler, a former Amishman who became a Mennonite and is now a sociologist at the University of Alberta is an authority on the "plain people." The adaptation of the original case written by Hostetler was made by the present author who supervised the research supported by funds from the Division of Hospital and Medical Facilities of the United States Public Health Service for a project entitled "Anglo-Latino Relations in Hospitals and Communities and the Carnegie Corporation for a Project dealing with boundary maintenance and border relations. Italics have been added to indicate to the reader the pertinent elements and processes from the PAS Model as they are involved in the action.