

be expected in conducting such research.

For outsiders to truly understand and appreciate Amish lifestyles and values is difficult, since most have been socialized into believing that the "modern ways" of industrialized societies represent progress and improvement of some kind. This idea is usually taken for granted in "the everyday construction of social reality" without entertaining alternative views of human existence. Although sociologists are intellectually aware that all of us view the world through "tinted glasses" with the tint being our own socialization experiences, even they are not immune to emotionally-based cultural biases and stereotypes. And the Amish are particularly perceptive of, and sensitive to, the cultural prejudices of outsiders. Perhaps it is well to reflect, in this connection, that the Amish have successfully avoided most of the negative effects of technological and social change within the last half century. This period of time has been marked by the appearance of the Nuclear Age, the Space-Age, the Cybernetic or Computer Age, and Post-Industrial Society. Yet each of these "advances" have brought with them new social and moral problems, seemingly ever-larger and more serious in their implications than those faced by human beings in the past. Understanding this may help us to view the Amish with a greater degree of appreciation and respect.

Critique

The fact that the Old Order Amish have resisted acculturation processes in the United States is not startling news. The generally successful persistence of many aspects of traditional Amish culture as islands within the mainstream of American society has been well-articulated in general studies by John Hostetler and others. It is also documented in more specific community studies, for example the work of Elmer and Dorothy Schwieder at Kalona, Iowa, published in 1975—a source not cited in the above article, although that community was also among the individual Old Order Amish groups studied by Savells and Foster. Similarly, the need to understand the value system of a group one is studying is a long-standing ethnographic axiom. *Verstehen* is mandatory whether one is studying an ethnic or similarly-demarcated group within American society or whether one is going off to learn about the culture of people in the Trobriand Islands or some other area which is relatively isolated from western society.

Beyond these matters, the article by Savells and Foster offers food for thought along several dimensions of interest regarding the subject of ethnicity: (1) the matter of *voluntary* separatism as opposed to forced

boundary maintaining mechanisms which are imposed by outside groups, (2) the mistaken impression that the Amish never react to events or influences in the dominant society, (3) a myth that the distinctive Amish culture will soon disappear, and (4) a common misconception that there are no intra-group differences of opinion within the Amish communities. The fact that the Amish consciously and continuously define their socio-cultural domain is significant when considering how ethnic groups originate and, more importantly, how they continue. There is action, reaction, and change within Amish society, although the rates of change differ from those in the society which surrounds them. Savells and Foster's brief discussion of the dynamics of the Amish response to the proposed location of the power line, for example, is suggestive in pointing to the interplay of modern economic and political elements as well as traditional religious values. Even more intriguing to the discussant is the matter of intra-group factions, subtle though they be, among the Amish. To more fully understand ethnicity, we must comprehend not only the factors upon which boundaries are drawn *between* groups but also the polarities *within* these groups. Of course, as Savells and Foster nicely point out, members of various groups usually attempt to provide a "united front" when dealing with outsiders. The data summarized here from the Amish are instructive when compared to studies which have been made, for example, among factions within American Indian communities or the differences between American Reform Jews most of whom originated from western Europe and American Orthodox Jews who immigrated primarily from eastern Europe. The resulting perspectives may be confusing at first, but they challenge us not to think in static terms when dealing with ethnicity. The dynamics of intra-group connections as well as the structure of inter-group relationships are important in understanding coping strategies in the twentieth century.

As demanded by the space limitations of a journal article, Savells and Foster appear to have only skimmed over the data in their two related studies. It is hoped that they will further expand on this study not only in terms of the Amish example *per se* but also in a comparative framework oriented toward the perspective of ethnicity. Such a work should include a copy of the structured questionnaires, the interview protocols, and the kinds of qualitative information obtained from open-ended interviews. These materials would allow the reader to better determine the nature of the data base and to explore the cross-group comparisons which would assuredly elucidate a number of dimensions of ethnicity.

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