Section I

Introduction to Riddle

The Riddle of Amish Culture (hereafter Riddle) focuses on the Amish settlement near Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The first edition, based on fieldwork in the mid-1980s, was published in 1989. The revised edition (2001) was completely updated with new information from interviews and demographic data drawn from a sample of ten church districts.

The purpose of Riddle is fivefold:

- To provide a social history of the Lancaster (PA) Amish community;
- To analyze Amish culture and society in a particular Amish settlement;
- To interpret Amish practices from an “inside” perspective;
- To study how the Amish have negotiated between their traditional practices and the forces of contemporary society; and
- To explore questions about contemporary culture and society that are prompted by the Amish story.

Although the interpretative narrative of Riddle follows the broad sociological tradition of “cultural analysis,” the study focuses on Amish social organization as well as culture. Data were gathered primarily through face-to-face interviews and participant observation in the Lancaster settlement. The specific practices described in Riddle reflect the life of the Lancaster Amish. While many of the values and beliefs described in the book pertain to other Amish settlements, it is hazardous to generalize to all “the Amish” of North America because practices vary greatly across the country. Customs of dress, use of technology, life styles, and occupations fluctuate from settlement to settlement. For example, some communities permit the use of tractors at the barn while others do not. Similarly, many churches allow their members to hire a “taxis” for transportation on a regular basis, but some do not. With more than a
dozen different Amish sub-groups and some 1,300 congregations, it is risky to generalize from one settlement to another. Nevertheless, many of the values and convictions described in *Riddle* are shared by members of other Amish communities.

Readers often ask about the sources of the photographs. For the most part, I obtained them from professional photographers. A few of them were provided by local photographers who developed close friendships with some members of the community. In a few cases, professional photographers took some specific photographs at my request. Although the Amish generally will not pose for photographs, some do not object to having photographs taken of their property. Members who have a long standing friendship with a photographer may be willing to cooperate in other ways as well. They are not censured by the church for appearing in photos taken without their consent, however, they may face disciplinary sanctions if it appears that they intentionally posed for a photograph.
Introduction to The Guide for Instructors and Students

Section II:  Instructional Aids

The Guide for Instructors and Students (hereafter Guide) provides resources and suggestions for instructors who are using Riddle (Rev. Ed.) in educational settings. Many of the materials will be helpful to students as well. Sections of the Guide may be copied and distributed for student use. The instructional aids are organized around the chapters of the book. For each chapter the material is divided into five sections: Overview, Key Points, Questions, Statements, and Activities.

Overview. The overview section summarizes the purpose of the chapter and its major themes.

Key Points. This section underscores key ideas in the chapter as well as suggestions for presenting the material in various educational settings.

Questions. A list of questions related to each chapter is provided for classroom discussions, small group discussions, or essay exams.

Statements. The statements are debatable propositions that begin with ‘Support or Refute’. These one-sided statements are designed to stir reactions and engage students. They can be used for classroom discussions, debates in class or assigned for an essay that develops an argument that supports or refutes the statement. Classroom debates that ask teams of students to argue on different sides are a good way to engage students in the material. The “Support or Refute” statements are effective means of motivating students to grapple with the issues raised by Riddle.

Activities. A list of projects and activities related to each chapter provides options for classroom activities and/or assignments between classes.
Section III: Resources on Amish Culture

Section III of the Guide includes additional resources for instructors and students. Among these are possible research topics for student papers, Amish information centers, Amish magazines, websites, and additional books for reading and research.

Revisions of the Guide

I welcome suggestions for improving the Guide. New ideas for projects, exercises, questions, films, and other resources can be sent by e-mail to Donald B. Kraybill at Kraybill4@aol.com.
Section II - Instructional Aids

Chapter One: The Amish Story

Overview

Chapter One offers an orientation to the Amish story and the rest of the book by providing:

- An introduction to Amish and Anabaptist history;
- An overview of the Lancaster Amish settlement;
- A profile of the growth of this particular Amish community;
- An introduction to key concepts: social capital, cultural capital, resistance, negotiation, cultural bargaining, structural bargaining, and defensive structuring;
- A statement of the book’s argument; and
- A brief history of the divisions (1877, 1910, and 1966) in the Lancaster settlement.

Key Points

- The key question — the riddle — that undergirds the book is this: How does a tradition-oriented group thrive in the midst of a high-tech, modern society?
- The primary argument of the book is that the unique Amish practices which baffle outsiders, can be viewed as negotiated cultural compromises that blend traditional Amish practices with external social forces. Many of these compromises emerged as the Amish tried to preserve social capital and to prevent the assimilation of their culture and the fragmentation of their community.
- Consider stereotypes readers have of the Amish. Which five words first come to mind when people hear the word “Amish”. What are the sources of these images/stereotypes? Where and how have we learned about the Amish?
Explore the forces in contemporary society that threaten Amish culture. Why are these a threat? How might they place Amish society at risk?

The text (pages 21-23) argues that the Amish engage in “defensive structuring” to protect their culture and identity. Use examples from sports, war, and business competition to show how groups and organizations routinely mobilize to defend and protect their interests.

The Amish outlook has been deeply shaped by their persecution in Europe as recorded in the *Martyrs Mirror*. What traits, values, or world views might the Amish share with other minority groups that have experienced extensive persecution — Jews (Holocaust), African Americans (slavery), Native Americans (genocide) etc.? Asian Americans (Internment during World War II).

Compare the Amish in greater depth with one other religious minority in American society — how are the Amish similar or different?

**Questions**

1. Why are Americans so fascinated with the Amish? What attracts people to them?
2. What is the riddle of Amish society? Why is this an important question?
3. Define social capital and cultural capital. Provide examples of each concept from contemporary society.
4. Kraybill argues that the Amish both *resist* modern culture and *negotiate* with it. What does he mean by this? What would be the long-term consequences for Amish society if the Amish engaged in only *one* of these activities?
5. How does their religious persecution in Europe continue to shape Amish views today?
6. Why do the Amish emphasize separation from the world? How might their cultural practices change without this belief?

7. Kraybill argues that social fragmentation is a key trait of modern society. Provide some examples that illustrate this point.

8. What does it mean to “negotiate with modernity?” How do the Amish do this? Why is it important to their survival?

Statements

1. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish are a cultural relic from the past and have no relevance for modern society.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “Because they are so old-fashioned there is little we can learn from the Amish.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “The public media portrays the Amish as people without faults, blemishes, or problems.”

4. Support or Refute this statement: “With their close-knit, humane society the Amish offer a model community for the future.”

Activities

1. Interview three friends who are not enrolled in the course. Ask them two questions: (a) what five words first come to mind when they hear the word “Amish”, and (b) Ask them on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = low, 10 = high) to rate the Amish on: (1) Friendly, (2) Trustworthy, (3) Industrious, (4) Inclusive, (5) Racist. Summarize your findings in an essay that focuses on “popular perceptions of the Amish.”
2. Explore several Websites related to the Amish (note the Websites listed in the Resources in Part III of this *Guide*). What do these Websites tell you about how the Amish are defined and perceived by other Americans?
Chapter Two: The Quiltwork of Amish Culture

Overview

Chapter Two introduces the basic values of Amish culture by:

• Introducing the concept of Gelassenheit as the master cultural value that undergirds the entire Amish cultural system;
• Showing how Gelassenheit shapes other dimensions of Amish life — personality, symbols, values, rituals, and structures;
• Demonstrating the differences between Amish values and mainstream American values;
• Profiling their primary religious beliefs, convictions, and understandings;
• Describing key values — obedience, self-denial, separation from the world, work, thrift, and tradition; and
• Summarizing the “upside-down” values that set Amish culture apart from mainstream American culture.

Key Points

• Chapter Two focuses on culture — values, beliefs, norms; whereas Chapter Three views Amish social structure and patterns of social organization. Contrast the concepts of culture and society.
• A central concept of Chapter Two, and throughout much of the book, is Gelassenheit. Compare/contrast the values of individualism in American society with the values associated with Gelassenheit in Amish life.
Riddle Guide - Chapter Two

• Make a distinction between dominant culture, subculture, and counterculture.
  Demonstrate how the Amish are a subculture. Identify the values and behaviors that they
  share with the dominant culture, as well as those which are unique to their subculture.

• Identify and discuss the core values of American society and compare them with the
  values summarized on page 52 of Riddle.

Questions

1. Discuss the importance of Gelassenheit in Amish culture. In what ways is it central to
   their way of life?

2. How do Amish children learn the habits of Gelassenheit? What activities and practices
   teach these values to children?

3. How do child-rearing practices differ between Amish and American culture?

4. Discuss the role of a résumé in Amish and American society. Why is the word “résumé”
   a foreign concept in Amish culture?

5. Kraybill argues that kneeling is the posture of Gelassenheit. Why is that the case? What
   is the typical posture of American individualism?

6. In what way do Amish values provide cultural capital for the operation and success of
   Amish society?

7. How do American child-rearing practices prepare non-Amish youth to succeed in an
   individualistic society?

8. What is unique and distinctive about the Amish view of spiritual salvation? How do
   Amish views of salvation differ from some other religious groups?
9. Why is personal pride such a threat to the harmony and stability of Amish society?

Statement

1. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish are mindless robots who are captives of their culture.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “Because it suppresses individualism, Amish society is an oppressive society that stifles human freedom and happiness.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “Unlike the Amish, other Americans are free from traditions and customs.”

4. Support or Refute this statement: “Because their religion is shaped by tradition and custom the Amish are not ‘saved’, in a spiritual sense.”

5. Support or Refute this statement: “Because they restrict individualistic and emotional expressions of religious faith Amish people cannot experience ‘personal salvation’.”

Activities

1. Construct a list of words and phrases that are associated with individualism in American culture. How do these shape daily behavior as well as social policy?

2. Visit an Amish cemetery and a public cemetery. Describe how individualism and Gelassenheit are symbolized and displayed even after death?

3. Compare Amish child-rearing practices with how you were raised as a child. How do different values in the two cultural systems impact child-rearing?
4. Interview five friends (not in the class). Ask them to rank order the following five values: Freedom of choice, obedience, conformity, independence, and entertainment. How does their ordering of values compare with Amish values?

5. Assume that you were considering joining the Amish. List the ten things that would be the hardest for you to relinquish? Why do you value these things; why would it be difficult to give them up?

6. Identify four important traditions in American culture. Why do Americans comply with these traditions? What happens to those who violate them?
Chapter Three: Symbols of Integration and Separation

Overview

Chapter Three focuses on four key symbols in Amish society: Dialect, Dress, Horse, and Carriage. The text argues that these symbols:

• Are foundational to Amish identity;
• Reflect fundamental Amish values;
• Help to integrate various components of Amish culture;
• Serve as external markers that separate the Amish from the larger American culture; and
• Have been “negotiated” over the years as the Amish interacted with the larger society.

Key Points

• The central argument of Chapter Three is that the four symbols have both symbolic and substantive roles that are central to the identity of Amish society, both internally and externally.
• Emphasize that symbols represent basic Amish values and mark off boundaries with the outside world.
• Show how a symbolic artifact such as a car, signifies cultural meanings and also makes a practical difference in social behavior and interaction.
• Explore the importance of language for shaping reality in every society. Why is language so important in shaping world views and perceptions of reality.
• Demonstrate how language is one of the most powerful forms of social control in shaping the world view and values of children.
• Explore how use of Pennsylvania German dialect in retarded Amish assimilation into the larger society. How might the Amish be different today if they did not speak a dialect?

• Show how contemporary dress styles, uniforms, and clothing in American culture symbolize connections and ties to social groups. Illustrate the connections between clothing and certain groups (sports, music, social class) in the larger culture.

• Emphasize how dress in Amish culture reflects conformity to their community and how, in contrast, dress in American culture is a tool of individual expression.

• Explore gender differences related to dress in both Amish culture and mainstream culture.

• Note how horse-and-buggy transportation is a powerful symbol of Amish separation from modern culture and technology.

• Consider how all four of the defining symbols of Amish society have changed — have been negotiated — over time as the Amish have adapted to the larger culture.

Questions

1. What feelings and ideas do Americans associate with the American Flag? How do non-Amish children learn the feelings associated with the flag? Why does flag burning trigger strong reactions?

2. Why might changes related to the symbols of Amish life — dialect, dress, horse, and carriage — stir strong feelings among the Amish?

3. How do the symbols of “horse-and-buggy” unite the Amish as a community?

4. Explain how the use of horse-and-buggy transportation is a prime symbol of Amish nonconformity to American society.
Riddle Guide - Chapter Three

5. Identify and discuss how the buggy symbolizes key Amish values?

6. Discuss how the Pennsylvania German dialect unites the Amish community and forms a border with the larger culture?

7. What practical difference do dress standards make in the daily life of Amish people?

8. Compare and contrast the role of dress in Amish and American society. Which group conforms the most to dress styles?

9. In what ways does the buggy — as a “negotiated” symbol, serve as a general metaphor of social change in Amish society?

Statements

1. Support or Refute this statement: “The Pennsylvania German dialect is critical to the survival of Amish society and should be maintained at any cost.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “The government should require Amish children to learn English from non-Amish teachers so the children learn to speak without an accent in case they ever want to leave the Amish.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish spend less time than other Americans worrying about dress and clothing.”

4. Support or Refute this statement: “Americans are free from social constraints related to dress.”

5. Support or Reject this statement: “Amish identity is dependent on the horse-and-buggy and without them Amish society would die.”
Activities

1. Assume that you are an Amish Bishop. Some members come to you because they are worried about the erosion of the Pennsylvania German dialect and the fact that some children are using English while playing together. The members want you to reprimand parents who let their children speak English among themselves. How would you respond? Is the loss of the dialect a trivial matter? Or is this an urgent issue that church leaders should address immediately and search for ways to preserve the dialect? Make a list of five problems that could develop if the dialect gives way to English. In contrast, list five reasons why the loss of the dialect would not hurt the future of Amish society. What do you conclude and why?

2. Most Amish communities do not permit members to hire a taxi on Sundays unless they have an emergency or need to visit a family member in a far away hospital. Again, assume that you are an Amish Bishop. Several members approach you and ask permission to hire a taxi to bring some disabled members to church because it is difficult for them to ride in a carriage. How would you respond to this request? List the reasons for and against granting the request.

3. Make a detailed list of the clothing in your wardrobe. Estimate how much money you have spent on clothing for yourself in the past 12 months. Estimate how often you typically go shopping for clothing each month. Compare your clothing practices with an Amish person of similar gender and age. Who do you think spent more time and money on clothing over the past year? What does this say about the role of clothing in the two societies?
4. Identity the brand names of ten clothing products and show how they signal group identity or affiliation for the people that wear them. Why do brand names matter? How is clothing in American culture used to signify group affiliation? How does that compare to the social role of clothing in Amish society?
Chapter Four: The Social Architecture of Amish Society

Overview

Chapter Four focuses on the patterns of social organization and social structure in Amish society by accenting:

- How the social architecture (social structure) of Amish society contrasts with the social organization of contemporary society;
- The impact of age and gender roles in Amish society;
- The changing role of women;
- The influence of the extended family;
- The centrality of the local church district (congregation) in the life of the community;
- The relatively flat and informal organizational structure of the settlement;
- The networks of social capital that provide resources for the community; and
- The distinctive features of Amish social organization and structure.

Key Points

- This chapter provides an opportunity to demonstrate how social structures reflect cultural values and, in turn, how social structures shape personal behaviors.
- How does the extended Amish family structure impact the personal behavior of individuals related to: child-rearing, sibling influence, and number of grandchildren and first cousins etc?
• Explore the role of women in Amish society. How does it differ from the role of women in contemporary society? In many ways traditional farm families have pre-industrial gender roles. Explore with students the difference between pre-industrial, industrial, and post-industrial gender roles.

• What are the sources of happiness and satisfaction for Amish women? How do their sources of satisfaction differ and coincide with those of contemporary women?

• Children are an important source of labor and economic production in Amish society. How does the labor of children in Amish society differ from the labor of children in mainstream society?

• Consider how the role of the contemporary American family has changed over the past 50 years? How does day-to-day Amish family life compare and contrast with suburban family life in North America today? Do other ethnic-minority groups in American society have similar family structures to the Amish?

• Invite students to explore how involvement in the local Amish church district compares with the involvement of members in the typical congregation, parish or synagogue in American religious life.

• A remarkable feature of Amish society is their relative lack of bureaucratic structures. Identify how informal social bonds integrate Amish society instead of formal bureaucratic structures and policies.
Riddle Guide - Chapter Four

- Sociologists often distinguish between *gemeinshaft* (local, informally organized) and *gezellschafter* (large, highly specialized, and bureaucratized) societies. Identify the ways in which Amish society reflects the features of a *gemeinshaft* society.

- On pages 101-105 the text identifies various committees and informal organizations that have emerged to address special needs in Amish society. How do these function as reservoirs of social capital? Why are they important to the vitality of Amish society?

- The text on pages 106-110 summarizes the distinctive features of Amish social structure and social organization. Identify some distinctive features of American social structure. How does the social structure of the two societies differ?

Questions

1. In a book called *McDonaldization*, George Ritzer argues that many aspects of contemporary society have been “McDonaldized” — by an emphasis on rationality, specialization, and predictability. To what extent is Amish society McDonaldized? In what ways?

2. How do small families in American society support the values of individualism in American culture?

3. Select an adult woman in your extended family. How do the expectations and obligations for her role differ from the role expectations of a typical Amish woman?

4. The text argues that power accumulates with age in Amish society and that men have more power than women. How does this pattern compare to the power structure of contemporary society? Who has the most power and why in the larger society?
5. If you are a member of a religious community, use your own experiences, if not, consider the experience of a friend. Describe how the expectations for the involvement of members in a local parish, congregation, or synagogue might differ from expectations for Amish members to participate in their local congregation? What differences do these expectations make?

6. What are the positive and negative implications for friendship and emotional support of being a member of an Amish church district with 25 to 30 families?

7. Some religious groups develop their own organizations for education, insurance, and retirement, as well as other needs. Consult the list of informal Amish organizations in Table 4.3 on page 103. Why are these organizations important to the vitality of Amish society? What might Amish life look like if these services were obtained from the general public?

8. The text of Riddle, pages 106-110, lists five characteristics of the social architecture of Amish society. Take each characteristic and compare it to the structure of American society. What difference does each of the five characteristics make in the lives of individuals in both societies?

Statements

1. Support or Refute this statement: “All things considered, the average Amish woman is happier than the typical woman in American society.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “The growth and vitality of Amish society rests largely on the important role of the local church district.”
3. Support or Refute this statement: “Unless the Amish develop stronger formal organizations they will not survive in our large bureaucratic modern society.”

4. Support or Refute this statement: “Bishops have too much power in Amish society.”

Activities

1. Develop a profile of your family. List the number of siblings, first cousins, aunts and uncles on both the maternal and paternal side of your family. Also list the number of grandchildren your maternal and paternal grandparents have. How many divorces have occurred among your aunts and uncles? Compare the profile of your family with a hypothetical Amish family of eight children. Compare each generation. List the number of cousins, aunts, grandchildren, etc. Compare the differences in the two family structures. Discuss the impact that different family structures have on child-rearing, socialization, personal identity, and values.

2. The text of *Riddle* argues that Amish society revolves around the home and that there is relatively little geographical mobility in Amish life. Identify the number of times that your family has moved since you were born. Ask two or three of your friends how often their families have moved since they were born. Compare the number of moves with a typical Amish family which, at most, may be once. Why do Americans move so much. How does the high mobility impact family and community life? How does the immobility of Amish life contribute to its stability and continuity? Is mobility a positive or negative factor in the formation of personality and family life? If your family had never moved since you were born, how would your family and social connections be different today?
3. Make a list (one for the groom and one for the bride) of the assumptions and expectations for marriage of a newly married couple among your friends. Make a similar list of understandings about marriage for an Amish couple. How do the two understandings of marriage differ? Why do they differ? What difference do these different understandings make?
Chapter Five: Rites of Redemption and Purification

Overview

Chapter Five describes and interprets religious rituals that shape Amish life by focusing on:

• The importance of the *Ordnung* for regulating Amish behavior;
• The centrality of baptism as a rite of entry into the Amish church;
• The patterns of worship and fellowship in the local church district (congregation);
• The importance of the biannual communion service for unification and revitalization;
• The selection and ordination of leaders through a process known as “the lot”;
• The importance of confession for cleansing moral decay and restoring transgressors;
• The procedures of excommunication when other means of social control fail; and
• The ritual of shunning that shames excommunicated persons.

Key Points

• Explore the illustration of an orchestra (page 111 of the text) to show how ritual rests on both culture and social structure. Select other examples — an athletic event or a family gathering — to distinguish between culture, ritual, and structure. Show how ritualized interaction rests on culture and structure and also blends them together.
• Emphasize the importance of the *Ordnung* for defining the Amish moral order. Although unwritten, it defines the normative order and moral boundaries of Amish life. Explore with students why the norms of Amish life are unwritten and less formalized than those in contemporary society. Are there equivalents of the *Ordnung* in contemporary society?
• As Anabaptists, the Amish emphasize the importance of adult baptism as the primary rite of entrance for membership in Amish society. Baptism is a point of no return for Amish youth because at baptism they promise to uphold the *Ordnung* for the rest of their life.
life. Indeed they will face excommunication if they break their promise. Explore the different meanings of baptism in the Amish church compared to mainstream Protestant and Catholic churches. Identify and discuss other initiation rituals in contemporary society (sports teams, prison, gangs, and military) that carry significant life-long consequences.

• Show how the Amish worship service embodies and ritualizes key Amish values — patience, humility, self-denial, gelassenheit, communal solidarity, gender roles, power and status. How does a contemporary Protestant, Jewish, Buddhist or Catholic worship service embody cultural and religious values?

• Explore how the preparations leading to communion and the communion service itself, help to maintain social control, preserve unity, and energize the life of an Amish congregation. The Amish do not permit persons who are not members of the local congregation to participate in the communion service. How do the Amish communion practices reflect different cultural values compared with typical Protestant communion practices?

• The selection of Amish ministers differs radically from the ordination practices of many mainline Protestant groups. Show how the ordination procedures of the Amish give extraordinary religious legitimation to the authority of Amish leaders. How might using the lot to select ministers diminish dissension and conflict in the congregation?

• Amish leadership selection practices identify the best potential leaders in the local congregation who are known by the members and who in turn know the members well. What are the strengths and weakness of this model for selecting leaders?
In many ways the public confessions in members meetings, which are expected of wayward members in the Amish church, clash dramatically with the individualistic values of contemporary culture. Amish adults are accountable to the other members of their congregation for their behavior. Explore how public religious confession runs counter to the individualism of contemporary society. How does the role of therapy in modern life, compare, and contrast with confession in Amish culture?

Excommunication sounds harsh to modern ears. Are there contemporary equivalents to excommunication when the larger society deals with social deviants, political traitors, criminals, terrorists, or employees with poor performance? The Amish argue against the use of force in military, law, litigation and politics. Does their use of excommunication contradict their rejection of force?

Shunning is a powerful form of social control. How do the Amish rationalize the use of shunning and harmonize it with their commitment to love? Show how shunning is a symbolic ritual of shaming rather than absolute exclusion that terminates social interaction. What forms of shaming and exclusion are found among families, friendship groups, and political groups in contemporary society? Is imprisonment a form of shunning?

Questions

1. Discuss the important social functions of the Ordnung in Amish society. How does the Ordnung change and evolve over time?

2. Why do Anabaptist groups like the Amish take baptism so seriously? How does it contribute to Amish life and vitality?
3. Identify and discuss the values of Amish culture that are ritualized in the Amish worship service.

4. Identify and discuss the key differences between an Amish worship service and the typical worship service of a non-Amish religious group with which you are familiar.

5. How do Amish communion services embody different values than the typical service of Protestant communion or Catholic mass?

6. What reasons might typical Protestants give for objecting to a self-examination service before the communion service and for making public confessions in church for their transgressions?

7. Discuss how the use of “the lot” to select leaders reflects Amish values. How does it provide a powerful legitimation of the authority of Amish leaders?

Statements

1. Support or Refute this statement: “Baptism is the most important practice and the most central value in Amish religious life.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “Excommunication is an inhumane practice that violates Amish values of love and nonviolence.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “Shunning is a cruel practice that has no place in a Christian church that seeks to practice love and compassion.”
Activities

1. Assume that you have decided to join the Amish. Make a list of the things that you would have to “give up” before you could be baptized. What would be the five most difficult things to give up? Identify the five most important things you would gain if you joined the Amish.

2. Some Amish-raised youth decide not to join the Amish church and some adult members are excommunicated. These folks leave for many different reasons. Some leave with good feelings about their Amish heritage and others leave with bitterness because of painful experiences in their family or church. Explore the material on a website (http://www.amishabuse.com) written by an ex-Amish man who left an ultraconservative Amish community with painful experiences. What do these vignettes tell us about some of the shadows of Amish life? Summarize your reactions and thoughts by writing an essay on the “Pros and Cons of Amish life.”

3. Social control is central to the operation of any society. Make a list of the informal and formal means of social control in American society at large, in your local community, in your school, and in one of your groups. List the means of social control — informal and formal — in Amish society. What are the purposes of social control among the Amish and in the list you have constructed? How do different groups use different means of social control? Why is social control necessary, even critical for the survival of any society?
Chapter Six: Auctions, Frolics and Gangs

Overview

Chapter Six focuses on networks of social capital, patterns of social interaction, and leisure activities in Amish life by exploring:

- The inputs of cultural and social capital;
- How capital is threatened and mobilized;
- The consequence of social and cultural capital for individual and community well being;
- How cultural and social capital is generated from childhood through adolescence;
- The role of youth groups and gangs in Amish society;
- The importance of weddings as festive gatherings and ritual transitions;
- The alternative Amish holiday schedule;
- The role of work frolics and various informal circles of support;
- The practice of mutual aid as a means of assisting members with material need;
- How the Amish serve people outside their community; and
- Expressions of social support at the time of death and mourning.

Key Points

- Figure 6.1 (page 143) summarizes the argument about social and cultural capital that extends throughout the book. Social and cultural capital are potential resources that can be mobilized to address needs that arise. Numerous forces (shown in figure 6.1) threaten to deplete social capital in Amish society. Why are these a danger to the Amish?
- Consider how controlling the threats helps to preserve and protect Amish life and explains many Amish practices related to technology and government intrusion.
Riddle Guide - Chapter Six

• The period of adolescence in Amish society is very short. Many youth marry when they are 19 and 20 years of age. Show how the length of adolescence in a particular society is related to industrialization and the larger structures of the society. At what age does adulthood begin in contemporary society?

• Compare Amish teenage activities and dating practices with teenage behavior in contemporary society. How do Amish teenage activities reflect the values of their society? How do Amish youth activities strengthen social capital networks across the settlement and build a foundation for the future?

• Despite the cultural differences, in many ways Amish teens and their parents have struggles that parallel non-Amish families. Why might some Amish parents tolerate some of the rowdy behavior of Amish youth?

• In Chapter Five (page 112) the text noted that Amish weddings do not have rehearsals. What does the lack of wedding rehearsals say about the ownership and control of ritual in Amish society? What does it say about individualism? There is also only one way to have a funeral in Amish society. Families do not meet with the mortician to plan Amish funerals. Everyone knows what will happen. What do these features about weddings and funerals say about the nature of ritual and its relationship to the individual in Amish society?

• Demonstrate how weddings, holidays, frolics, and other social activities both preserve and operationalize social capital in ways that benefit the individual and the community.
The circles of emotional and material support in Amish society offer significant assistance to members under the cover of an Amish umbrella. How would it impact Amish society if these social services (various forms of insurance) were purchased on the outside public market?

Social theorists argue that the transaction costs, both in time and dollars, are much lower in societies with strong networks of social capital. Expenditures (time and dollars) for services such as medical aid (insurance) in Amish society are substantially lower because they are provided through informal Amish networks without paid officers or formal offices.

Amish social relationships are often multiplex — meaning that a person interacts with the same people in many different roles — family, religious, work, play, and education. Said another way, the social networks of Amish society are dense, overlapping concentric circles of religion, family, education, work, and play. These forms of social networks differ greatly from the patterns of social ties in contemporary society.

The willingness of the Amish to aid outsiders surprises those who think that separation from the world leads to exclusion and social isolation. Explore why the Amish are willing to assist those beyond their own cultural family.

Consider differences in death and dying in both Amish society and American society. Because of large extended families live close together and because grandparents typically live near their children, young children are more frequently exposed to death than they are in the larger society. Moreover the care of the corpse prior to burial by members of the family, keeps family members closely involved with the process. Death is a major moment when the community surrounds the bereaved with love and care.
Questions

1. What is the difference between cultural and social capital? Use a barn raising to explain how the resources of cultural and social capital are mobilized in Amish life.

2. Compare the process of childbirth in American society with an Amish delivery at home. How does this event illustrate different resources of social capital in the two societies?

3. Compare and contrast Amish youth activities with American teen culture. How are American and Amish teens similar and different?

4. Discuss possible reasons why some Amish parents tolerate the rowdy behavior of their youth. Why does the church tolerate the rebellious behavior of youth?

5. Explain how Amish holidays create identity and solidarity within Amish society and establish boundaries between the Amish and the larger society.

6. Many interpersonal ties in Amish society overlap. Compare the continuity of Amish life and the its thick web of social relationships with the social fabric of contemporary society.

7. Mutual aid is a cardinal value of Amish life. Contrast Amish and American expectations of mutual aid.

8. Compare and contrast the American and Amish experience with death. Discuss the role of the family and community during the time of a death.

Statements

1. Support or Refute this statement: “Church leaders should crack down on rebellious teens and forbid them from engaging in rowdy behavior.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “Amish society frowns on fun and humor.”
3. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish church should baptize youth at an earlier age (10-14 yrs.) to prevent rowdy teenage behavior.”

Activities

1. List your five best friends. How many of them are related to you? Participate in the same religious group? Live in your neighborhood? Go to your school? Work at the same place that you do? How might the overlapping, multiplex relationships of an Amish teen compare with your social ties to your friends.

2. Compare the clean-up and rebuilding activities after a fire at an Amish home and a non-Amish home. How might the responses be different? Identify the cultural capital (values, beliefs) in each setting. Identify the social capital (networks, traditions, rituals) that are mobilized.

3. Contrast death and dying practices in Amish and non-Amish society in the following areas.
   a. The number of funerals a person might attend in the last five years.
   b. Family support during the process of grief.
   c. Family involvement in the preparation of the body.
   d. Variation in funeral practices. Who controls the type and style of funeral?
   e. Symbolic and ritual practices for mourning.
Chapter Seven: Passing on the Faith

Overview

Chapter Seven focuses on education and the transmission of Amish culture across the generations by:

• Setting the historical context of Amish education;
• Tracing the conflict between the Amish and state officials over education;
• Summarizing Amish arguments against consolidated, public schools;
• Describing the rise of private Amish schools;
• Explaining why public education threatens the survival of Amish life;
• Describing the organization, curriculum and goals of Amish schools today;
• Tracing the compromises and agreements that developed between the Amish and state;
• Exploring why some of the graduates of Amish schools rebel in their teenage years; and
• Explaining how teenage rowdiness may help to build adult commitment to the church.

Key Points

• Amish schools emerged in the last half of the twentieth century and are very important to the transmission and preservation of Amish life and culture. In a few states a small number of Amish students attend small rural public schools but the bulk of Amish youth attend private Amish schools.
• Explore the historical factors that made one-room rural public schools acceptable to the Amish. Why were the Amish comfortable with the rural public schools in the first half of the twentieth century?
• Consider which aspects of the consolidated public schools threatened Amish values? (See the list on page 173). Two key concerns were relationships with non-Amish peers and the values and world view taught by non-Amish teachers. Show why the threat of
public schools was so serious that some parents were willing to sit in prison to keep their
cchildren out of public schools.

• Kraybill argues (pages174 -177) that the public school was a Great Separator that would
pull Amish society apart, lead youth away from Amish life, and immerse them in modern
life and culture. Is this a persuasive argument? Does the experience of other minority
groups in American society confirm the Amish fear of public schools?

• In many ways, Amish schools with their local and parochial approach to education
restrict the consciousness of Amish youth (see page 177). Does such a parochial
education shortchange Amish youth by suppressing awareness and limiting educational
opportunity? Do the larger benefits of Amish society outweigh the limitations of their
schools?

• Should the competence and proficiency of Amish schools be judged by public school
standards or by the needs of Amish society? Should the state be involved in evaluating
Amish schools? Who should set the standards for Amish schools?

• Wisconsin vs. Yoder was an important U. S. Supreme Court decision that not only
protects Amish education, but the religious freedom of other groups as well. Explore
some reasons why the Supreme Court was willing to make this historic decision that
benefitted the Amish.

• Social continuity is a key difference between present-day Amish schools and public
education. In Amish schools one pupil may have the same teacher for all eight grades.
An Amish teacher may only need to relate to a dozen families, because each has several
pupils from first to eighth grade in a 30-pupil school house. How does such tight social
continuity compare with the diversity and discontinuity of contemporary public schools?
• Without electricity, Amish schools are devoid of virtually all the technology that is typical in public schools. Will Amish schools, in their present form, adequately prepare the rising generation of Amish youth to survive as more and more members are leaving farming and entering business?

• Kraybill argues (pages 184-187) that Amish youth have a perceived choice as to whether or not they want to join the church and that the perception of choice may enhance the commitment of adults to the Ordnung of the church. Thus the sowing of wild oats may actually help to increase adult compliance with church regulations. Is this a viable argument or just a sociological spin that puts a good face on a social problem?

Questions

1. Identify and discuss the reasons behind the Amish fear of public education.

2. How might Amish society be different today if all Amish children were educated in public schools today?

3. Describe the role and purpose of Amish schools and assess how well they are fulfilling their mission and purpose.

4. Compare the curriculum of a typical Amish school with the subjects you studied in the first eight grades. How did the curriculum that you studied prepare you for life in contemporary society? How does an Amish education prepare youth for citizenship in Amish society.

5. Is the freedom given Amish youth during their Rumspringa years a blessing or a blight to the Amish Church?
6. In 1998 two Amish-raised youth were arrested for buying drugs from members of the Pagan Motorcycle Gang and selling the drugs to Amish youth. What does this story suggest about the role of Amish schools, social contact with the outside world, and the future of Amish society?

7. Propose changes to the Amish school system. List and discuss specific ways that you would improve Amish schools.

**Statements**

1. Support or Refute this statement: “Amish children should be required to spend at least two years in public high schools so that they have a better understanding of the outside world, and more vocational opportunities, and can make a good choice about joining or leaving the Amish.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “Amish schools are suppressing consciousness, restricting freedom and curtailing human rights and thus should be closed.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “The U.S. Supreme Court made a big mistake when it permitted Amish youth to leave school at the end of eighth grade.”

4. Support or Refute this statement: “The government should require all Amish schools to teach science so that Amish youth have a well-rounded education.”

5. Support or Refute this statement: “State governments should set the standards for Amish schools, require teachers to pass competency exams, and evaluate the schools according to state educational standards.”

6. Support or Refute this statement: “With all due respect, the Amish cannot be considered an “educated” people.”
Activities

1. Identify the total number of teachers that you had from kindergarten through eighth grade. Make a list of all the subjects that you studied in school over the same period of time. A typical Amish child may have only one or two teachers and about 6 different academic subjects. How does your number of teachers and subjects differ from a typical Amish experience? What does this say about the nature of the two different educational systems?

2. Conduct a brief interview with three of your friends. Ask them several questions about Amish youth. Such as: a) Have any Amish youth ever been arrested for selling drugs? b) Do Amish youth have a choice about joining the church? c) How many grades must Amish youth complete before they can leave school? d) What do Amish youth do for recreation? e) Should Amish youth be required to attend at least two years of public school?

3. Assume again that you are an Amish Bishop. A 21 year-old baptized member of your congregation visits with you and requests permission to attend high school so she can go to college to become a nurse and help people. How would you respond? What would you argue and why?

4. Compare and contrast the following aspects of an Amish school and public middle school:

- Cultural diversity
- Sports
- Size
- Music
- Values
- Science
- Dress
- Extracurricular activities
- Technology
- Art
Chapter Eight: The Riddles of Technology

Overview

Chapter Eight explores the riddles of technology related to the telephone and the use of electricity by highlighting the following themes:

• The events that led up to the division of 1909 that involved the telephone;
• The role of the telephone in marking social boundaries between the Old Order Amish and more progressive groups;
• The evolution and growth of telephone use in the last half of the twentieth century;
• The compromises regarding telephone use that have been negotiated in recent years;
• The historic factors that influenced the decision about the use of electricity;
• The evolution of the distinction between 12 Volt electricity from batteries and 110 Volt from public utility lines;
• The acceptance of bulk milk tanks with electric motor to stir the milk;
• The rise and use of inverters to make “homemade” 110 volt electricity;
• The compromises that emerged to permit wider use of electricity; and
• The increasing use of “Amish electricity” (air and hydraulic power) to operate machines in Amish shops and barns.

Key Points

• The use of the telephone was influenced by an internal division in 1909 and the telephone became a symbol of progress. Consider how a tool like a telephone has not only practical significance but can also assume symbolic meanings to distinguish groups. How do cars perform a similar symbolic function that signals social class or social prestige?
• Explore why the telephone might threaten social relationships in a community bonded together by face-to-face conversation. Consider the arguments against the telephone in pages 191 to 193. Do these make sense to people living in a high-tech culture?

• The Amish live in a high-context culture where people are embedded in tight social relationships that overlap in many ways. Demonstrate how the use of the telephone decontextualizes interaction by taking speakers out of their social context and thus represents a threat in a high-context culture.

• Does gender play a role in the Amish restrictions on the telephone? Some Amish men worry that a telephone in the home would permit women to gossip too much. Telephones have more widely been used for business and farming purposes. The telephone has always been restricted from the home, which in many ways is the woman’s domain. Since men make most of the rules of the Ordnung perhaps gender is entangled in the pattern of telephone restrictions.

• Explore the ways in which the use of public utility electricity could threaten the values and practices of Amish society. The decision to reject public electricity was a foundational decision that eliminated many appliances. How might Amish life be different today if they had begun using public utility electricity along with the larger society?

• Consider the impact of non-use of electricity on Amish family life. How are Amish homes and family life different without hair dryers, radios, television, dishwashers and microwaves?
The development of “Amish Electricity” (air and hydraulic power) has had a major impact in the productivity of Amish farms and businesses. This key technological development has dramatically improved their financial success. How might Amish life be different today if the Church had forbidden the use of diesel-generated air and hydraulic power?

The recent development of inverters makes it possible to create “homemade” 110 V current to operate electric typewriters, cash registers, copy machines, and digital scales. Will this be a “dangerous” pattern that might lead to wider use of electrical appliances and even the adoption of radio, television, and video?

A key point to underscore in this chapter is the symbolic meanings that become attached to the use of technology. Patterns of technology used not only changes social behavior, but they also signify meanings and feelings related to ethnic identity, progress, tradition, etc. and also mark the turf between various subgroups.

To what extent does technology control and govern our lives? What does the Amish experience say about technological determinism? Is it possible for human communities to control technology and shape it in ways that serve them?

Questions

1. Do people serve technology or does technology serve people? How do Amish patterns of telephone usage answer this question?

2. Explain why a telephone might threaten traditional patterns of social life in a high-context culture.

3. Discuss the role of gender in the development of Amish telephone rules and practices.

4. Describe in detail how your home and family life would be different today if your home was not equipped with electricity?
5. How might Amish society be different today if they had permitted the use of public electricity in the mid-20th century?

6. Why are the Amish so strongly opposed to television, radio, computer, and video?

7. The Amish often make a distinction between owning technology and using it. Why is this an important distinction and how does it help to control social change and preserve Amish values?

Statements

1. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish are hypocrites because of the double standards that they have for the use of telephones and electricity.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “Many of the rules in Amish culture governing the use of technology are silly and irrational.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “The use of air and hydraulic power instead of electricity to operate sizeable machinery is a ridiculous practice that simply demonstrates the close-minded rigidity of Amish tradition.”

4. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish church has no business making rules about the use of telephones.”

Activities

1. Consider the role of the telephone in your life. How often do you use a telephone each day? How would your behavior change without access to a telephone? Identify the specific ways your life would change without the use of cell phones, stationary telephones, or e-mail?

2. Amish youth and adults are not exposed to television in their homes. In an essay, identify how the absence of television would change your personal life and your family life. How does the presence or absence of television impact social values, communication, consumer styles and expectations, role models, awareness of public and civic events? How does the absence of television impact Amish life and culture?
Chapter Nine: Harnessing the Power of Progress

Overview

Chapter Nine continues the discussion of the use of technology by focusing on motor vehicles and farm equipment. The narrative explores the Amish

- Response to the advent of the automobile;
- Distinction between ownership and use of motor vehicles;
- Worries about how ownership of automobile would disrupt the community;
- Growing use of motor vehicles for business and trips to other settlements;
- Reasons for rejecting the use of tractors in the field;
- Distinctions between using tractors at the barn and in the field;
- Use of modern farm machinery pulled by horses;
- Division in 1966 over farm machinery; and
- Patterns of accepting, rejecting, and modifying technology.

Key Points

- The rejection of the car was a critical decision in Amish life because it shaped later responses to technology and developed their identity as a horse-and-buggy society.
- Explore the reasons why the taboo on car ownership has had a profound impact on the social organization and cultural patterns of Amish life. The decision to continue using horse-and-buggy transportation reinforced the local base and social fabric of their community and supports face-to-face interaction.
- Identify the specific ways in which adoption of the car would have threatened social capital resources in the Amish community. What would have been lost if the Amish had permitted private ownership of motor vehicles?
• The current compromise between the taboo on ownership and the hiring vehicles for business and long-distance travel reflects the delicate tension between traditional constraints and convenience and mobility.

• Identify the perceived threats of tractor farming to traditional Amish farming. Why did the Amish waver more on the tractor decision than they did on the car taboo?

• Using tractors at barns but not in fields, shows how the power of past practice (using threshing machines at the barn) is negotiated with the need for major power at the barn.

• An important developments in agricultural productivity was the willingness of the church to permit the installation of gasoline engines on new machinery that was pulled through the field by horses. An ingenious compromise, this development enabled Amish farmers to increase productivity and expand the size of their dairy herds without using tractors.

• The important role of technology in the life of the church is underscored by the fact that the internal division in 1966 was primarily driven by disputes about the use of farm technology. Compare and contrast this experience with other religious groups. How many have divided over the use of technology?

• The Amish are not Luddites that reject all forms of new technology. They readily accept some new technology, but are cautious about its social impact. They assess and screen technology to determine how it might impact their social life and community values.

• Use the information on Table 9.2 (page 236), to review the history of technological change in Amish society. What pressures and forces led to some of these changes? How might gender issues be related to the acceptance and modification of technology in Amish society?
Questions

1. Explain why the Amish might permit members to travel on buses and trains but not own and use their own automobiles.

2. Describe the ways that ownership and use of automobiles would threaten social capital and change the patterns of social life in Amish society.

3. Discuss the ways in which the current Amish policies for motor vehicle use are a “negotiated compromise.” What are the benefits and liabilities of this compromise?

4. How might Amish life and culture be different if the Church had permitted members to own and operate cars?

5. An Amish bishop once said about new farm machinery, “if you can pull it with a horse, you can have it.” What did he mean? How did his statement shape Amish farming practices?

6. Discuss why the Amish church takes technology so seriously. Why doesn’t the church just let its members make their own decisions about the use of technology?

7. What are some lessons that we can learn about the use of technology from the Amish?

Statements

1. Support or Refute this statement: “The distinction between owning and hiring vehicles is a silly difference that shows how petty the Amish are.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish should stop trying to control the lives of members and let individuals make their own decisions about technology.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish are so outdated and mired in tradition that they have little to teach the rest of the world about technology.”
4. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish could permit members to own cars
without destroying their identity or breaking up their community.”

5. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish will eventually be forced to own
computers in order to compete in business.”

Activities

1. Imagine a world without cars! Identify how the car has changed American society.
   Develop an essay on “How the car has transformed American life.”

2. Discuss the ways in which Americans limit and restrict technology. Under what
circumstances do Americans limit technology? Can you cite specific examples?

3. Craft an essay and develop an argument around the theme “What Americans can learn
from the Amish about technology.”
Chapter Ten: The Transformation of Amish Work

Overview

Chapter Ten traces the dramatic shift in the nature of Amish work in recent years by:

- Summarizing the Amish agricultural heritage;
- Identifying the forces that produced the transformation of Amish work;
- Reviewing the options for responding to the changes;
- Describing present day patterns of employment;
- Tracing the rapid growth of Amish business involvements;
- Reviewing the various types of Amish businesses;
- Identifying the sources of success with Amish businesses; and
- Assessing the impact of business involvements in Amish life and society.

Key Points

- The Amish have a rich and powerful agricultural heritage which continues to shape their cultural values today even though fewer families are farming.
- The shift from farming to business is the most consequential social change in Amish society in the last century. What evidence exists to support this statement?
- Identify the ways in which Amish owned businesses represent a cultural compromise between the agricultural tradition of the past and moving into a full-scale embrace of modern businesses.
- Explore the unique characteristics of Amish work and show how it differs from work in mainstream society. Consider the ways in which the nature of work shapes the other patterns of social life in a society.
Consider the role of social and cultural capital in the formation and success of the Amish shops. How does Amish culture provide both resources and restraints to the development of Amish businesses?

Identify some of the reasons that Amish businesses have been so successful when they are not using electricity or computers and their owners have not had the benefit of high school or college-level courses.

Estimate how the movement into business may encourage the development of a three-tier class structure in Amish society. How could this change Amish society in the long run?

Consider the long-term consequences of the rise of Amish-owned businesses. What changes will they likely bring related to family life, values, use of the dialect, child-rearing, technology, gender roles, and interaction with the outside world.

In many ways the Amish have been a pre-industrial society. Does their shift into small business represent a stage of industrialization or are they still a pre-industrial or post-industrial development?

Questions

1. An Amish bishop once described factory work as a “lunch pail threat” which could disrupt Amish society. What did he mean by this and why was he worried?

2. Identify and discuss the possible reasons why the Lancaster Amish did not migrate to more rural areas in the United States where they could continue their tradition of small family farming.

3. Describe the unique characteristics of Amish enterprises. How do they differ from non-Amish businesses?

4. Identify and discuss the possible reasons for the success of Amish businesses despite all the cultural restrictions related to electricity and motor vehicles.
5. Explain why working at home has a big impact on Amish social and family life.

6. One analyst has called small businesses the Trojan Horse of Amish life. What did he mean? Do you agree with his assessment? Why or why not?

7. Nearly one-fifth of the Amish-owned businesses are owned by women. Discuss how this development might change gender roles and power relations in Amish society.

8. Amish schools developed when the Amish were virtually all involved in farming. How will Amish schools need to change to be able to serve the needs of the children who will become business owners in the future? Or will the present-day schools to be adequate?

Statements

1. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish movement into business represents the most important and significant change in Amish life in the last century.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “The rise and success of Amish business enterprises is a worm that will eventually (over several generations) destroy Amish life and culture.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish church should make wealthy Amish business owners give all of their profits to the church to prevent the development of an elite Amish social class.”

4. Support or Refute this statement: “Amish women are oppressed because they have to work so hard.”

Activities

1. Search the Internet for examples of Amish products. (See the list of Commercial Sites in Part III. Begin with Amish.net). Make a list of the most frequently appearing products.
2. Explore the attraction of Amish products. Why does the general public have such a strong interest in Amish products? Why are Amish products so appealing to Americans? Develop an essay around the theme “Why Amish products are popular.”
Chapter Eleven: Managing Public Relations

Overview

Chapter Eleven deals with Amish interaction with the outside world and government by exploring:

• Civic involvement in local community organizations;
• Amish attitudes toward government and the use of law;
• Relations with government agencies (federal, state, local);
• Involvement in politics and military service;
• Amish reactions to Social Security and government subsidies;
• Controversies surrounding the movie *Witness*;
• Recent controversies over child labor and puppy mills;
• The development and impact of tourism among the Amish; and
• The ironies of tourism in the context of Amish society.

Key Points

• The Amish cultural gap between the Amish and the outside world had widened at the same time that the Amish are more enmeshed in the economic structures of the world.

• The Amish do participate in some local community organizations such as fire companies but avoid those emphasizing leisure and entertainment. They also contribute to some public service organizations involved with disaster relief.

• Explore the reasons why the Amish are reluctant to participate too closely with government. In some ways they do not have a modern conception of citizenship but take a differential attitude toward government. The Amish pay all typical taxes except Social Security and Workers Compensation which they consider insurance.
Because their theological principles stress mutual responsibility within the church and because of the principle of separation of church and state the Amish typically turn down all forms of government subsidies.

Assess the economic contribution or liability of the Amish for the larger society. Consider issues like public schooling, homelessness, unemployment, incarceration, drug abuse, and the receipt of government subsidies. Are the Amish leeches or contributors to the larger socio-economic system? Who are the winners and losers in the equation?

Explore the controversy surrounding the production of the movie, “Witness.” Should government regulations be more restrictive of such cultural intrusions on minority groups or are such movie-making ventures useful and necessary? Apart from Witness, what other images of the Amish have appeared on public media — TV, advertising, movies, and magazines?

The rise of Amish shops and businesses have created new conflicts with the law over the role of children which were not problematic on the farm. Amish vocational training typically happens through apprenticeships on the farm or in small shops and businesses. How does “Child Labor” among the Amish differ with large urban industrial settings?

Consider the rise and impact of tourism in Amish areas. The Amish have a love-hate affair with tourism. Identify how they benefit from tourism as well as its negative impacts on their life. Why have the Amish become entangled with tourism rather than migrating to more rural and secluded parts of the country?

Questions

1. Describe how the Amish can interact with the larger society and yet maintain their own distinctive identity.
2. Identify and discuss the reasons why the Amish shy away from involvement in government and in politics.

3. On what basis should the government exempt groups like the Amish from the national system of Social Security?

4. Based on your reading of *Riddle* and your viewing of the movie *Witness*, describe the ways that *Witness* was and was not sensitive to Amish values and practices.

5. Develop an argument for why the Amish should be exempt from national child labor laws.

6. Identify and discuss some of the reasons that tourists are attracted to the Amish. What draws people to the Amish?

7. Explain how tourist sites help aid the Amish by keeping tourists away from their homes and farms, thus decreasing tourist disruptions on Amish life.

**Statements**

1. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish have only survived because they have been lucky to live in a country with a government that tolerates religious minorities and freedom of conscience.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish have used their religion as an excuse to get exemptions from the government that benefit them economically.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “The government (Federal, State and Local) should treat everyone fair and never make any special legal exemptions for the Amish.”

4. Support or Refute this statement: “If there is a draft, the Amish should have to join the armed forces and fight to protect their freedom like everyone else.”
5. Support or Refute this statement: “Because the Amish were exploited in the movie “Witness,” the government should forbid movie production companies to produce any more movies on the Amish.”

6. Support or Refute this statement: “The government should forbid Amish children and youth under 18 years of age from working in their parent’s shops and businesses.”

7. Support or Refute this statement: “Advertisers should not be permitted to use Amish images, objects or photographs in advertisements.”

8. Support or Refute this statement: “Because all Americans should be treated equally, there should be no exemptions for the Amish (i.e. social security).

Activities

1. View the movie Witness. Write a critical essay that argues pro or con “The movie Witness is a sensitive portrayal of Amish life and values.”

2. Use the Internet to learn more about tourism. Review websites promoting tourism. Though e-mail or telephone request tourist brochures/booklets form Amish tourist centers. Based on your research, write an essay that argues pro or con, “The tourist industry exploits the Amish.”
Overview

Chapter Twelve explores the process and patterns of social change in Amish society by:

- Identifying the areas of social change in recent decades;
- Describing who manages the process of change and by what criteria;
- Identifying the cultural regulators that control the speed and impact of change;
- Clarifying the political context and factors that regulate cultural change;
- Providing an interactive model for understanding change;
- Identifying some post-modern challenges to traditional regulations;
- Summarize concessions made by the Amish and to the Amish in recent decades; and
- Suggesting possible solutions to the riddle of Amish survival and growth.

Key Points

- The Amish have experienced enormous change in recent decades. The stereotype that they are frozen in time is simply false!
- Consider the various domains of Amish life (farm, home, shop, school, church) and note which ones have experienced the most change, or the least. Which areas are most resistant to change, or least resistant?
- Compare the Amish response to television and cell phones. Television is under a firm taboo. Cell phones are strongly discouraged, but they are a temptation to many people. Explore how these two technological items reflect different realms of influence. Why have the Amish responded differently to them?
Riddle Guide - Chapter Twelve

- Explore the process of social change. How are new things adopted, or rejected. How deliberate and calculating is the Amish response to social change. Note the symbolic meaning of some items and how the label of “Worldly” is used to control the speed of change.
- The 15 cultural regulators (pages 303-305) suggest that social change is a dynamic process whose outcome is always uncertain. Identify the most influential regulators, and the least important ones.
- Social change can threaten to pull the settlement apart into smaller factions. Note the points of tension. Explore how the Amish have been able to keep their settlement (and fellowship) together despite rapid social change.
- Review the outcomes of the extended bargaining process between the Amish and the larger society. Note the four types of outcomes. Who has fared best? Worse?
- The culmination of the chapter identifies ten reasons that may help to solve the riddle of Amish survival and growth. Which of these are most influential, or least important? Which additional factors may help to solve the riddle?

Questions

1. A typical stereotype suggests that the Amish do not change. With the use of specific examples, demolish this stereotype.
2. Compare the process of social change in Amish society to the process of change in the larger society. Show how they are similar and different?
3. A bishop once said, “That it’s not a sin to have a car. It’s just a matter of where it might lead.” What did he mean and what does his statement say about Amish understandings of social change?
4. Describe how cell phones violate older cultural boundaries and understandings.
Chapter Twelve

5. Identify and discuss the major issues that the Amish have conceded in recent decades.

6. Identify and discuss the major issues that the government has conceded to the Amish in recent years.

7. Describe what the Amish have not conceded and why?

8. Identify and discuss the five most important reasons for the growth and success of Amish society.

Statement

1. Support or Refute this statement: “Women are second-class citizens in Amish society because they do not have a formal role in making decisions about new technology.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “Social change in Amish society is driven by economic factors, not by religious values.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “The label ‘Worldly’ is just used as an excuse to control social change.”

4. Support or Refute this statement: “The many compromises that the Amish have made with technology and other social practices are silly distinctions that show the irrational character of Amish life.”

5. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish are more involved in civic engagement than other Americans.”

6. Support or Refute this statement: “Amish society is a cultural relic of the 19th century that rarely changes.”
Activities

1. Call one of the information centers listed in the resources in Part III. Ask to speak with a staff member about the Amish community in the area. What are the three biggest changes they have observed in the Amish community in recent years.

2. Consider how the Amish have changed in the 20th century. Identify the five biggest changes the Amish have experienced during the 20th century. Draft an essay that addresses the question, “Why the Amish change?”
Overview

Chapter Thirteen is a concluding chapter that steps back from the details of Amish life and reflects on the larger questions of the Amish in contemporary society by:

• Exploring questions that the Amish raise about progress and modernity;
• Asking are the Amish pre-modern or post-modern in their world view and practices;
• Using the Amish experience to raise critical questions about contemporary culture;
• Considering why we (outsiders) are attracted to a people that eschew values (exclusivity, parochialism, sexism, uniformity, etc.) that we often deplore;
• Comparing the assets and liabilities of both the Amish and American social systems;
• Asking how well Amish culture and society address basic human needs for meaning, belonging, identity, and happiness; and
• Reflecting on what we can learn from the Amish experience in shaping our society.

Key Points

• On the one hand, the Amish appear primitive — driving horse-and-buggy and reading by gas light — but they have made many deliberate choices about education, technology, etc. If choice is a key feature of modernity, then perhaps the Amish are quite modern.
• Ironically, the Amish appear to be in control of many aspects of their life and society. How is it that Americans who engage in excessive planning often appear to be out of control?
• Consider the subtle aspects of modern conformity. Are Americans who applaud individualism actually as free as they appear to be? What are some of the elements of conformity in modern, mass society?
• Explore the positive and negative aspects of both Amish and contemporary society in terms of social problems like drug abuse, homelessness, domestic violence, imprisonment, unemployment, etc.

• From a strictly financial standpoint, consider the value of the Amish in modern society. Are they economic parasites, contributors, or is their economic contribution a wash?

• Explore the question of human freedom. In what ways do the restrictions in Amish life provide freedom from many pressures of modernity?

• Identify the ways that Amish culture and social organization meet basic human needs for meaning, identity and belonging? What are the features of Amish life that contribute to fulfilling these needs?

• What lessons emerge from the Amish story? Do they have anything to teach those of us living in contemporary society? What can we learn from them as we seek to strike a balance between unbridled individualism and excessive conformity?

Questions

1. Are the Amish models for the future or irrelevant social antiques? Develop an argument that addresses this questions.

2. What is the difference between a traditional and modern society? Where do the Amish fit?

3. Why are moderns attracted to the Amish who espouse values (exclusivity, parochialism, uniformity, conformity and low levels of education) that moderns applaud?

4. Identity and discuss some of the benefits of being a part of a group like the Amish with strong cultural traditions.

5. List and discuss what you consider the most important disadvantages to Amish life.
Statements

1. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish have created a humane society that protects the needs of disadvantaged members better than most modern societies.”

2. Support or Refute this statement: “The world would be a dismal, dark place if everyone lived like the Amish.”

3. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish are financial parasites on the larger American economy.”

4. Support or Refute this statement: “Americans are not conformists like the Amish.”

5. Support or Refute this statement: “The Amish have only survived by living off the good graces of a tolerant national government.”

6. Support or Refute this statement: “As conscientious objectors, the Amish do not deserve the protection of the American military forces.”

7. Support or Refute this statement: “All things considered, the Amish are happier than most Americans.”

Activities

1. Create a list of the benefits and of being both Amish and non-Amish. This will result in four listings. Develop an essay that supports or refutes the following statement: “All things considered, the benefits of Amish society outweigh the liabilities.”

2. Why are non-Amish people attracted to the Amish? Why are we (non-Amish) attracted to a people who reject many values (diversity, inclusivity, higher education, science) that we cherish? Develop an essay that addresses these question.

3. In some ways, the Amish both enchant us and torment us. List the ways the Amish enchant us. List the ways they torment us.
Section III - Resources on Amish Culture

Films and Videos

- *A Stoning in Fulham County* (1988). A county prosecutor encounters resistance when he attempts to bring the teen-age killers of an Amish child to justice. Available to rent at most Blockbusters.


- *The Amish and Us*. A creative interpretation that focuses on the reactions of tourists. Available from dclvideo@aol.com. ($95.00 and $7.00 shipping and handling, pre-payment required).

• *The Amish Riddle.* EKIS Agence de Reportages, Granges 12, 2300 La Chauz-de-Fonds, Switzerland. A documentary of the Amish of Lancaster County. (50 minutes).


* Recommended.
Resources: Information Centers

Many of the Information Centers provide helpful information on the Amish in their area, sell books, and in many cases, have a historical library. A call or e-mail to their staff may provide helpful assistance. Staff at some of the centers may be able to arrange a field trip to a nearby Amish community as well as a visit to their Information Centers. Many of the Information Centers have primary and secondary source materials that can be useful to researchers.

Heritage Historical Library
Aylmer, Ontario N5H 2R3
[http://heritagehistorical.mennonite.net](http://heritagehistorical.mennonite.net)

Menno-Hof
PO Box 701
Shipshewana, IN 46565-0701
(219) 768-4117; E-mail: [mennohof@tlh.net](mailto:mennohof@tlh.net)
[http://www.mennohof.org](http://www.mennohof.org)

Mennonite Heritage Center
565 Yoder Rd
PO Box 82
Harleysville, PA 19438-0082
(215) 256-3020; E-mail: [info@mhep.org](mailto:info@mhep.org)
[http://www.mhep.org](http://www.mhep.org)

Mennonite Historical Library
Goshen College
1700 S. Main St.
Goshen, IN 46526
(219) 535-7418; Fax: (219) 535-7438
E-mail: [mhl@goshen.edu](mailto:mhl@goshen.edu)
[http://www.goshen.edu/mhl](http://www.goshen.edu/mhl)

Mennonite Information Center (Ohio)
5798 Country Road 77
PO Box 324
Berlin, OH 44610-0324
(330) 893-3192; E-mail: [behalt@sssnet.com](mailto:behalt@sssnet.com)

Mennonite Information Center (PA)
2209 Millstream Rd
Lancaster, PA 17602-1494
(717) 299-0954
E-mail: [menninfctr@desupernet.net](mailto:menninfctr@desupernet.net)
[http://mennoniteinfoctr.com](http://mennoniteinfoctr.com)

Illinois Amish Interpretive Center
111 S Locust St
PO Box 413
Arcola, IL 61910
(217) 268-3599 or (888)-45AMISH
[http://www.ilohwy.com/i/illiamic.htm](http://www.ilohwy.com/i/illiamic.htm)

Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center
PO Box 1007
Metamora, IL 61548
(309) 367-2551
[http://www.illhistarch.mennonite.net](http://www.illhistarch.mennonite.net)

The People’s Place
3513 Old Philadelphia
PO Box 419
Intercourse, PA 17534-0419
(800) 390-8436; Fax: (888) 768-3433
E-mail: [custserv@thepeoplesplace.com](mailto:custserv@thepeoplesplace.com)
[http://www.thepeoplesplace.com](http://www.thepeoplesplace.com)

Pequa Brudershaft Library
Gordonville, PA 17529
Ohio Amish Library
4292 State Route 39
Millersburg, OH 44654
(330) 893-4011

The Sider Institute for Anabaptist, Pietist, Wesleyan
Messiah College
P.O. Box 4033
Grantham, PA 17027-9795
(717) 766-2511 (ext. 7379)
E-mail: dzercher@messiah.edu
http://www.messiah.edu/siderinstitute/

The Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies
One Alpha Drive
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
(717) 361-1470; Fax: (717) 361-1443
E-mail: youngctr@etown.edu
http://www.etown.edu/youngctr/
Resources: Amish Related Periodicals

- *The Budget.* A weekly newspaper that includes reports of scribes from local communities across the nation. Sugar Creek, Ohio 44681.

- *Die Botschaft.* Brookshire Printing Inc. A weekly newspaper that includes reports from local scribes in many Amish settlements across the nation. 200 Hazel Street, Lancaster, PA 17608-0807.

- *The Diary.* A monthly magazine reflecting issues, events, and opinions from many Amish communities. P.O. Box 98, Gordonville, PA 17529.

- *Farming.* A new magazine that focuses on small-scale farming. P.O. Box 85, Mt. Hope, OH 44660.

- *Plain Communities Business Exchange.* A monthly newspaper for Old Order businesses. PO Box 328, Lampeter, PA 17537 Telephone: (717) 295-7667 Fax: (717) 295-7686.

- *Young Companion.* A monthly magazine for young people. Published by Pathway Publishers. Route 4 Aylmer, Ontario N5H2R3 OR 2580N, 250 W. LaGrange, IN 46761.


**Resources: Amish Related Websites**

**Informational Websites**

- Amish Beliefs and Practices
  http://www.religioustolerance.org/amish.htm

- Amish Buggies. General information on buggies including accident statistics.
  http://members.tripod.com/amish buggy

- Amish Buggy Safety. Information on safety issues in Ohio.
  http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~Amish

- Amish Diary. A non-Amish writer lives with an Amish family. Join her each day for an intimate look behind the “simple” life.
  http://www.discovery.com/area/exploration/amish/amish1.html

- Amish.Net provides links to many other Amish-related sites.
  http://www.amish.net/

- Amish of Northern Indiana. Professor Yoder provides an overview of the Amish of Northern Indiana and links to related sites.
  www.goshen.edu/~Ionhs/SamYoder.html


- Electric Amish. The name of a humorous non-Amish band.
  www.ElectricAmish.com

- Holmes County Ohio Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau
  http://www.visitamishcountry.com/
Riddle Guide - Resources

- Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Information on businesses, attractions, restaurants, and lodging in PA's Dutch Country.
  http://www.amishwebportal.com/

- National Committee For Amish Religious Freedom. The Committee seeks to defend and preserve the religious freedom of the Old Order Amish religion in the United States.
  http://www.holycrosslivonia.org/amish/

- Ohio’s Amish community and attractions.
  http://www.amish_heartland.com/

- Professor Joel Harman’s website provides many links to other Amish sites.
  http://web.missouri.edu/~rsocjoel/

- Professor Lee Zook’s Website brings together Internet material to one site and highlights the positive influences of diverse ethnic groups in the USA.
  http://www.luther.edu/~library/pages/courli/amish.htm

- The Illinois Amish Interpretive Center
  http://www.amishcenter.com/

- The Pennsylvania Dutch Welcome Center. Provides information on the culture and the attractions of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Dutch Country.
  Contains questions and answers about the Amish, the Mennonites, the Brethren, and the other “Plain People” of the Pennsylvania Dutch Country.
  http://www.800padutch.com/index.html

- The People’s Place resource center in Intercourse, Pennsylvania
  http://www.thepeoplesplace.com/
**Commercial Websites**

- Amish Connection: Play Houses & Playground Equipment

- Amish Crafted Solid Oak & Cherry Furniture

- Amish shopping Mall

- Amish Trading Company

- Aunt Sarah’s Kitchen

- Ayers’ Amish Furniture House

- D & R Furniture: Quality Amish Built Furniture
  [http://www.grm.net/drfurniture/](http://www.grm.net/drfurniture/)

- Homeplace Structures

- The Oak Peddler. Amish crafted solid oak furniture

- Yoder’s Country Kitchen

A search for “Amish” on the Internet will likely identify more than a thousand additional sites!
Resources: Books

Key Sources for Additional Reading and Research


Riddle Guide - Resources


For additional works on the Amish life and culture consult the publications of the following presses that frequently publish Amish related books:

**John Hopkins University Press**
2715 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
1-800-537-5487
(410) 516-6900 (General)
(410) 516-6956 (Book Orders)

**Masthof Press**
Mill Road
Route 1, Box 20
Morgantown, PA 19543-9701
(610) 286-0258
Fax: (610) 286-6860
E-mail: masthof@ptd.net

**Pathway Publishers**
Rt. 4
Aylmer, Ontario N5H 2R3 CANADA

OR

2580N 250W
LaGrange, IN 46761 USA
Riddle Guide - Resources

Herald Press
616 Walnut Avenue
Scottdale, PA 15683
(724) 887-8500
(724) 887-3111(Fax)

Good Books
Intercourse, PA 17534
1-800-762-7171
(717) 768-7171
(717) 768-3433(Fax)

* This is the largest and most prolific Amish owned and operated publisher
Possible Topics for Research Papers (and lead sources)

One way to stimulate student scholarship is to require a comparative research paper that contrasts an Amish practice(s) with a typical one in American society. For example, a research paper on Amish education might 1) describe the Amish practice, 2) describe the typical American practice and then, 3) analyze and discuss the consequence of these different practices for the two societies. For example, what difference does it make to have an educational system with one-room schools that ends with the eighth grade? If the topic is telephones — what differences does it make for social organization and social interaction not to have telephones in the home. The primary question of the research paper is: What difference do the cultural differences make?

1. Transportation

Kraybill, Donald B.


2. Education

Fisher, Sara E. and Rachel K. Stahl


Hostetler, John A. and Gertrude E. Huntington


Kraybill, Donald B. and Marc A. Olshan, eds.

3. **Child-Rearing**

Hostetler, John A.


Hostetler, John A. and Gertrude E. Huntington


4. **Gender Roles**

Kraybill, Donald B. and Marc A. Olshan, eds.


Stoltzfus, Louise


5. **Technology**

Kraybill, Donald B. and Marc A. Olshan, eds.


6. **Telephone**

Kraybill, Donald B. and Marc A. Olshan, eds.


Umble, Diane Zimmerman


7. **Tourism**

Kraybill, Donald B. and Marc A. Olshan, eds.

8. Business

Kraybill, Donald B. and Marc A. Olshan, eds.

Kraybill, Donald B. and Steven M. Nolt

9. Medical Care

Kraybill, Donald B. ed.

10. Military Conscription

Kraybill, Donald B. ed.

11. Politics and Voting

Kraybill, Donald B. ed.

12. Conflict with the State

Kraybill, Donald B. ed.

13. Taxes and Social Security

Kraybill, Donald B. ed.

14. Farm Technology

Kraybill, Donald B.
15. Amish Youth

Kraybill, Donald B.

16. Quilts

Granick, Eve Wheatcroft

Kraybill, Donald B., et al.

17. Weddings

Scott, Stephen

18. Use of Electricity

Scott, Stephen and Kenneth Pellman

19. Worship and Religious Rituals

Igou, Brad, Comp.

Kraybill, Donald B.

Scott, Stephen
20. Food

Good, Phyllis Pellman

Miller, Bob and Sue Miller

21. Dress

Igou, Brad, Comp.

Scott, Stephen

22. Aging and Elderly

Hostetler, John A.

Igou, Brad, Comp.

23. Death and Dying

Bryer, Kathleen B.

Igou, Brad Comp.

Niemeyer, Lucian and Donald B. Kraybill

24. Marriage

Hostetler, John A.

Igou, Brad, Comp.