PREDOMINANT PATTERNS OF PARENTAL AUTHORITY AMONG AMISH COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Bruce Collet, Advisor

The focus of this ethnographic case study was to explore the social and cultural factors of informal education that influence Amish adults regarding their approach to parenting. Four Amish participants, living in the Holmes County Settlement located in Northeast Ohio, and two experts on Amish culture participated in individual open-ended semi-structured interviews. The qualitative analysis of this data employed Erik Erikson’s (1993) theory of eight stages of human development as a theoretical background for categorizing and understanding crucial life stages in Amish communities and assisted in understanding how patterns of parental authority develop. These patterns of parental authority were then analyzed within Diana Baumrind’s (1978; 1971) and Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) framework of parenting styles. The cultural concept of Ordnung was found to be central for the development of patterns of parental authority. The findings and analysis of life span development also revealed that the Amish communities studied exhibit only six out of the eight stages of human development presented by Erikson. Utilizing Baumrin’s and Maccoby and Martin’s framework in relation to the findings of this research lead to the conclusion that Amish parents in the community investigated represent a mixture of the authoritarian-autocratic and the authoritative-reciprocal patterns of parental discipline. In addition, the indifferent-uninvolved pattern of parental discipline was found the least suitable to describe the parent-child relationship of the Amish families studied. This thesis aimed to serve as a basis for further research in the field of Amish studies, since it connected cultural socialization processes with parenting styles, which represent an area that has hardly been studied yet. Moreover, this research has implications for policy makers when discussing public
educational policies about the Amish, for educators and educational researchers who are interested in different approaches toward the role of schools and compulsory education, and for the general public who wants to learn more about differences in parenting styles due to differences in cultural background.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Amish are a religious community in the tradition of the anabaptist Christian belief who originated from the Mennonites under the leadership of Jacob Ammann in the year 1693. Since the Amish were persecuted in Southern Germany and Switzerland, they started to emigrate to the U.S., in particular to Pennsylvania, in the 1730s. Starting off from Pennsylvania, the Amish spread out to several other U.S. states and Canadian provinces. The oldest Amish settlements are therefore found in Pennsylvania, but today’s largest Amish settlement is in Ohio (Kreps et al. 1997; Stoltzfus 1975), namely the Holmes County Settlement which, according to Hurst and McConnell (2010), is centered in Holmes and Wayne County, Ohio.

Amish communities are structured in a patriarchal fashion around church districts. One church district includes around twenty families, resulting in about 170 church members per district (Kraybill 2001). Many Amish have large families (four and more children) and run a farm. The father is head of the family and the main breadwinner, the mother runs the household, and the children do chores around the house, which assist in processes of socialization within the Amish community (Kreps et al. 1997). This thesis analyzes socialization processes that take place within Amish families and lays special focus on how these social and cultural factors determine patterns of parental behavior.

Purpose of the Study

This case study explores parent-child relationships and predominant patterns of parental authority among Amish communities in the Holmes County Settlement in Northeast Ohio. In pursuing this study, I examine how culture determines the predominance of specific practices of behavior, and how parents describe their personal experiences concerning parent-child interaction. I attempt to present Amish culture in general and Amish parenting styles in
particular to a wider audience. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the fundamental concepts of Amish culture that are responsible for the creation of a philosophy of life span development in Amish communities and their impact on predominant patterns of parental authority. Educational goals of the Amish are clarified and patterns of socialization, enculturation, and acculturation within Amish culture are discussed. In addition to the main focus on parental authority, the role of schooling within Amish communities is illuminated.

This thesis attempts to explore processes of education within Amish communities. Besides presenting the formal approach toward education within Amish communities, the main focus of this thesis is on processes of informal learning. Barbara Rogoff (2003) suggests to broaden our understanding of the collaborative nature of learning. Hence, Rogoff introduces the approach of guided participation, which emphasizes that learning not only occurs within explicit instructional situations (i.e. at school, at work, etc.), but learning also takes place outside of formal educational settings. This is of particular interest when studying Amish communities and their approach toward education. Rogoff (2003) argues, that “guided participation provides a perspective to help us focus on the varied ways that children learn as they participate in and are guided by the values and practices of their cultural communities.” (p.283f.). Since this study investigates how social and cultural factors and processes influence the members of Amish communities and their patterns of parental authority, it is not only important to understand the formal setting of learning; rather, it is of special interest to analyze what impact guided participation and informal learning have on developing predominant patterns of parental authority. Rogoff argues that learning is a process of changing participation in community activities, and a process of taking on new roles and responsibilities. Hence, analyzing the Amish
life cycle should assist in understanding how guided participation is taking place within Amish communities.

**Background of the Study**

This research utilizes Erik Erikson’s (1993) pedagogical theory of eight stages of human development as a theoretical background for categorizing and understanding crucial life stages in Amish communities. Erikson’s theory assists in understanding the Amish life cycle and its importance for developing patterns of parental authority. These patterns of parental authority are then analyzed within Diana Baumrind’s (1978; 1971) and Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) framework of parenting styles. Baumrind’s (1978) findings are supplemented by Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) work resulting in four main patterns of parental discipline, namely authoritarian-autocratic, indulgent-permissive, authoritative-reciprocal, and indifferent-uninvolved. These four patterns serve as the conceptual framework of this study and its main concern of understanding parent-child relationships in a community outside mainstream America. Besides this theoretical and conceptual framework, studies by leading researchers in the field of Amish studies assist me in developing a critical foundation for this study. Exploring the Amish life cycle and predominant patterns of parental authority among Amish communities through an ethnographic case study involving open-ended semi-structured interview sessions and extensive observations helps to better establish understanding of parent-child interaction in Amish communities, and lays the foundation for a fresh discussion about the Amish approach of education.

The following main research question is addressed in this study:

**How do social and cultural factors and processes influence the members of Northeast Ohio Amish communities and their patterns of parental authority?**
This main research question was followed by the sub-questions below:

1. Which pattern of parental discipline is predominant among the Amish community members studied and why is it most prominent?

2. How are the four patterns of parental discipline represented in the Amish parental community members?

3. How are Amish parents influenced by their own parents’ style of authority and how have they continued with or adapted this style with their own children?

**Significance of the Study**

A significant amount of research on the Amish and their culture has been conducted. Notably, the majority of research was done in the 1970s and 1980s, and only in recent years have a few additional publications discussed the Amish lifestyle. Hence, when analyzing the interrelation of the Amish way of life and parenting styles, we have to rely on older articles and use them as a basis for current research. By expanding the study of parenting styles to the context of Amish communities we may be able to discover shared as well as divergent attitudes concerning parental authority. Therefore, this academic undertaking may be beneficial for modern society as a whole and may help to better understand the Amish approach toward education, family values, and the Amish lifestyle in general. In addition, readers may benefit by reflecting on their own parenting style. It is hoped that this study not only contributes to the academic studies of Amish communities, but also constitutes a good source for, among others, policy makers when discussing educational autonomy and school reform in the context of a pluralistic and multicultural society. The study may also be of interest for educators pursuing alternative educational approaches in my home country, Austria. An approach called “Wiener
reformpädagogische Mehrstufenklassen” which advocates teaching different grade levels in one classroom bears some interesting resemblance with the Amish approach to schooling. Hence, this study may also contribute to the recent discussions within educational reform movements taking place in a different part of the world. Both approaches, the Amish and the Viennese progressive education utilize similar techniques for teaching students.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter I, the introduction, is followed by Chapter II, which reviews literature relevant to this study. The literature review covers the Amish philosophy of cultural socialization by discussing the cultural concepts of Ordnung and Gelassenheit in detail. Next, the life span development of Amish communities and its relation to Erik Erikson’s theory of eight different stages of psychological development is presented by explaining the Amish life cycle and its stages of socialization in the life-process. The Amish school system and in particular the implications of the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Wisconsin v. Yoder are illuminated. Finally, Diana Baumrind’s (1978; 1971) and Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) framework of parenting styles is presented.

Chapter III explains the methods used for conducting this ethnographic case study. After clarifying the researcher perspective, the case and the setting of the research program are presented. In addition, this chapter describes the participants of this study and how they were selected. The methods used for collecting and analyzing data are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter IV identifies the findings of this study and discusses them in relation to the literature review. The presentation of the findings has a narrative character and incorporates
verbatim quotes from the participants of this study. The discussion sections which follow each of these narratives connect the findings to the existing literature.

Finally, Chapter V concludes the study with a brief summary of the study’s findings, discusses potential implications of the study, and makes suggestions for future areas of research.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews previous research and pertinent literature related to the Amish approach toward parenting. To contextualize the study, I first explore existing literature about the Amish philosophy of cultural socialization. Here a particular emphasis is put on the description of the cultural concepts of *Ordnung* and *Gelassenheit*. Next, I present Erik Erikson’s (1993) theory of eight different stages of psychosocial development which serves as a framework for analyzing the life span development of Amish communities. Besides the influence of the life span development of Amish communities on Amish patterns of parental authority, the Amish school system is presented as a means of socialization processes. Finally, previous research on predominant patterns of parental authority among Amish communities is presented. When discussing parenting styles in Amish communities, Baumrind’s (1978; 1971) and Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) framework of parenting styles is introduced and utilized.

**Amish Philosophy of Cultural Socialization**

The following section provides an insight to the Amish philosophy of cultural socialization. Two major cultural concepts found in Amish communities, which are important for the development of an Amish approach to life and for processes of cultural socialization, are discussed in this section, namely *Ordnung* and *Gelassenheit*. These two cultural concepts are central components for the development of parental authority among Amish communities.

**Ordnung**

This section discusses the Amish understanding of community, and explores the life philosophy of the Amish. Roy Buck (1980) states that reinforcement and acceptance of interdependence is crucial for the development of an Amish identity. As a result, “reciprocity” is
a central concept in the process of Amish socialization. Buck (1980) describes Amish culture as very collectivistic and hierarchically organized: on top of the hierarchy is God and the Amish community exists directly under God’s judgment. Right underneath the community follow the different charters, ordinances, and disciplines of the Amish, which is called *Ordnung*.

Kraybill (2001) states that *Ordnung* represents a blueprint for expected behavior in the community, and represents the structure of the whole way of life. Hostetler (1993) adds that *Ordnung* remains in oral and unwritten form and is renewed semiannually by the different church congregations. Kraybill (2001) explains that the *Ordnung* “evolved gradually over the decades as the church sought to strike a balance between tradition and change” (p. 112). Amongst the various Amish congregations the different *Ordnungs* vary.

On a different level, right underneath the *Ordnung*, obedience and brotherly concern follow in the Amish hierarchy of societal organization. At the bottom of this hierarchy one can eventually find the self and its values. Buck (1980) argues that the self is somewhat “buried” in the surrounding faith and tradition, meaning that the purpose of life for the Amish is not so much to leave one’s individual mark in the world, but to be marked by God by purposefully living in the community and following the rules. According to Buck, it is crucial for the Amish to stay within the bounds of community and church disciplines. At the same time, it is also important to enjoy a good life, meaning to accept and partake in the amenities deemed acceptable by the *Ordnung*.

Following the *Ordnung* and living a life devoted to brotherhood and community are central aspects in terms of education and childcare within Amish communities. The concept of *Ordnung* has an important impact on Amish children because it regulates their daily life. For example, the
*Ordnung* does not only regulate the way to dress, it also determines the Amish approach to school education. Since community and family life are organized around this cultural concept it is important to include *Ordnung* into a thorough analysis of patterns of parental authority among Amish communities.

**Gelassenheit**

In addition to *Ordnung*, the concept of *Gelassenheit* is crucial for the Amish philosophy of life. John Hostetler (1993) as well as Charles Hurst and David McConnell (2010) discuss this cultural concept. However, the most detailed explanation of *Gelassenheit* can be found in Donald Kraybill’s (2001) “The Riddle of Amish Culture.” “*Gelassenheit*” is a German term and Hurst and McConnell (2010) translate it as selflessness, humility, or meekness. According to Kraybill (2001), it is best translated as submitting or yielding to a higher authority. Kraybill furthermore states that *Gelassenheit* is an abstract cultural concept which is hardly ever used in speech. Nevertheless, it carries a broad variety of meanings including “self-surrender, resignation to God’s will, yielding to God and to others, self-denial, contentment, a calm spirit” (Kraybill, 2001, p. 29). Kraybill argues that the concept of *Gelassenheit* is therefore crucial for (self-) perceptions, emotions, behavior, and the architecture of Amish society.

Kraybill (2001) emphasizes that *Gelassenheit* also highlights the collective orientation of the Amish self-understanding, since it stands in sharp contrast to values of the modern, individualistic, mainstream American culture. An individual following the rules of *Gelassenheit* finds fulfillment in the service for others, namely the parents, the community and, of course, God. Kraybill argues that serving and respecting others and obeying the consensus of the
community by subordinating the individual interests to the interest of the larger religious community creates cultural capital. Individual and communal energies are tied together.

Kraybill claims that the concept of *Gelassenheit* is represented in various arenas of Amish life. In terms of values, *Gelassenheit* stands for submission, obedience, humility, and simplicity. In ritual life, *Gelassenheit* is shown through kneeling, foot-washing, confession, and shunning. The way to dress, the use of horse and carriage, as well as the use of the significant Pennsylvania-Dutch dialect represent symbols of *Gelassenheit*. Adjectives such as “reserved”, “modest”, “calm”, or “quiet”, which are often used to describe the Amish, stand for the description of personality in terms of *Gelassenheit*. Finally, *Gelassenheit* is also reflected in the social structure of the Amish communities, since they are small, informal, local, and decentralized. On the one hand, the submissive posture of *Gelassenheit* favors silencing and avoidance in conflict management and, on the other, discourages higher education, abstract thinking, competition, professional occupations, and scientific pursuit (Kraybill, 2001).

In terms of education and childcare, the concept of *Gelassenheit* has an important impact on Amish children. Children are taught by their parents to control their self-will and yield to their siblings. These instructions prepare children at a very early age to their yielding lifestyle in the community. According to Kraybill (2001), sometimes even spanking is used to teach the children to yield, to submit, and to wait until it is their turn. In addition, Hurst and McConnell (2010) state that living a life modeled after Jesus Christ also plays a crucial role in training children the concept of *Gelassenheit*. Hurst and McConnell (2010) as well as Kraybill (2001) introduce the reader to the motto of “JOY.” JOY means Jesus is first, Yourself is last and the
Others are in between (Hurst and McConnell, 2010; Kraybill, 2001). These measures are important for preparing a child for a life of obedience to God’s and the community’s demands.

Since Amish life is organized in small communities, in which all follow the concept of Gelassenheit, individualism plays a diminished role. All members of the community know each other well and Kraybill (2001) argues that there is no need to “sell” oneself. Here the Amish distinguish between Hochmut and Demut. Hochmut is German and means high-mindedness, pride, or even arrogance whereas Demut means humbleness or meekness. For the Amish a meek and humble person represent the spirit of Gelassenheit best. According to Kraybill, the Amish reject pride because the Bible says that pride comes before the fall. In accordance with this view, the Amish condemn public appraisal, make up, jewelry, and extravagant clothing or hairstyles. Despite all these restrictions and strict rules, personal praise and recognition is warmly welcomed in face-to-face conversations.

The value of serving the community is best illustrated by the work ethos of the Amish. Kraybill (2001) argues that hard and dirty work is meaningful work, because it builds community. He states that “Amish work integrates; it binds the individual to the group, the family, and the church. Work is not a personal career but a calling from God, and in this sense, it becomes a redemptive ritual” (Kraybill, 2001, p.46). According to Hostetler (1993), Kraybill (2001), and Hurst and McConnell (2010), the Amish favor practical work with a “hands-on” mentality. The Amish oppose high school or higher education, because it distracts from manual work. Besides their work ethic, thrift also plays a crucial role in enhancing the concept of Gelassenheit (Kraybill, 2001). Working hard and saving money are constitutive elements of the concept of Gelassenheit.
Another important element of the philosophy of life span development of Amish communities is the focus on the past and on traditions. The Amish value their traditions and arrange their whole life around them, since traditions regulate the way to dress, childrearing, work attitude etc. Also, the Amish understanding of practical and handy things as a type of luxury reflects the orientation on earlier times. The Amish do not accept labor saving or technological auxiliaries, and the time management of the Amish is quite different compared to modern societies. Kraybill (2001) states that the spirit of Gelassenheit also influences the attitude to work: the Amish are slow in response, change, and pushing ahead. Their concept of time evolves from season or natural daylight.

Both the Ordnung and the cultural concept of Gelassenheit are crucial foundations for the Amish philosophy of cultural socialization. Ordnung and Gelassenheit have a huge influence on the enculturation processes in Amish communities. The internalization of these concepts, furthermore, is important for understanding processes of acculturation when confronted with non-Amish communities. Hence, when looking at predominant patterns of parental authority it is crucial to consider the influence of the cultural concepts of Ordnung and Gelassenheit. In a next step, the influence of these philosophical ideas on the Amish life cycle and the different age stages will be analyzed.

**Life Span Development of Amish Communities**

The following section provides an overview of life span development of Amish communities. For the analysis of Amish life span development, the framework of Erikson’s (1993) theory of eight stages of man is applied. Analyzing the Amish concept of life span
development is crucial for understanding the processes of socialization taking place in Amish communities which in turn have an impact on the development of patterns of parental authority.

The Eight Stages of Man

Erik Erikson’s theory of eight different stages of psychosocial development, which he first presented in his book *Childhood and Society* (1993) is presented and analyzed in this section. Erikson kept constantly working on his theory and published it in several other publications, such as *Identity. Youth and Crisis* (1968). His theory discusses the emergence of the self, the search for identity, the individual’s relationships with others, and the culture throughout life. Erikson assumes that each individual faces a certain developmental crisis at each of the stages of development. The way in which these crises are solved has an impact on the personal development of the individual (Woolfolk, 2011).

The following table by Rice and Dolgin (2005, p.29) presents Erikson’s stages of personality:

Table 1

*Erikson’s Stages of Personality*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Infants (birth - 2 years)</td>
<td>Basic trust vs. mistrust</td>
<td>Optimism and serenity vs. pessimism and anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Toddlers (2 - 4 years)</td>
<td>Autonomy vs. shame and doubt</td>
<td>Self-trust and independence vs. dependency and fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Preschoolers (4 -6 years)</td>
<td>Initiative vs. guilt</td>
<td>Curiosity and energy vs. boredom and apathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade-schoolers (6-11 years)</td>
<td>Industry vs. inferiority</td>
<td>Ability to feel pride in accomplishment and to work hard vs. shame and lack of accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents (11 - early 20s)</td>
<td>Identity vs. diffusion</td>
<td>A sense of one’s current and future self vs. lack of commitment and instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adults (early 20s - 40)</td>
<td>Intimacy vs. isolation</td>
<td>Close, meaningful relationships vs. loneliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged Adults (40 - 65 years)</td>
<td>Generativity vs. stagnation</td>
<td>Growth and giving to others vs. stasis and meaninglessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly Adults (65+ years)</td>
<td>Ego integrity vs. despair</td>
<td>Acceptance of mortality vs. fear of death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Amish Life Cycle**

Some of the most important scholars working on the Amish grew up Amish. Through their personal experience and their autobiographic essays, which reflect on their upbringing, education and life experiences, readers get a better understanding of the Amish culture. John Hostetler (1992) describes in the article “An Amish Beginning” his personal experiences with growing up Amish. He describes his early childhood, his relationship with his parents and finally why and how he broke with his Amish community to become an academic. Another interesting insight into Amish childhood is provided by Robert Kreider (1986). His article “Memories of an Amish Childhood - Interviews with Alvin J. Beachy” is basically a summary of various interviews he conducted with the Amish Alvin Beachy on topics such as being Amish, family and farm life, and his decision on leaving the Amish. This article is of special interest.
since Alvin Beachy is the son of Moses Beachy, who was actively involved in an Amish church division taking place in 1927.

Another aspect of the Amish life cycle is also very much present in the literature the period of adolescence, also called “rumspringa.” In his book *Rumspringa. To Be or Not to Be Amish*, Tom Schachtman (2006) provides detailed insight into the life of Amish teenagers. Schachtman discusses the influence of education, faith and doctrine on the development of Amish teenagers. Also, possible career paths of Amish teenagers are discussed. In his book *Growing Up Amish. The Teenage Years* Richard Stevick (2007) discusses not only adolescence and the period of *rumspringa*, but also aspects of socialization, as well as the influence of faith, school, and parenting on child development. Stevick also discusses cultural gatherings, which are of importance for Amish teenagers (i.e. singings) and finally describes the process of courtship and marriage.

One very important publication on children in Amish societies is by John Hostetler and Gertrude Huntington (1971), namely *Children in Amish Society. Socialization and Community Education*. The authors describe the process of socialization and the importance of community education in Amish society. The following section introduces socialization patterns and the Amish life cycle as explained by Hostetler and Huntington.

Hostetler and Huntington name five cultural themes that are significant for socialization in Amish society: “separation from the world, voluntary acceptance of high social obligations symbolized by adult baptism, the maintenance of a disciplined church-community, practice of exclusion and shunning of transgressing members, and a life in harmony with the soil and nature (Hostetler & Huntington, 1971, p. 4). The authors also highlight that socialization is directly
related to themes of culture and therefore it is crucial to understand the basic values of the Amish. These aforementioned values together with the concepts *Ordnung* and *Gelassenheit* build the foundations of Amish life span development.

In terms of the aspect of the separation from the world, it is important to understand that the Amish are not ethnocentric. According to Hostetler and Huntington, the Amish accept other people without prejudice or attempts to convert them to the Amish way of life. By voluntarily accepting the high social obligations of adult baptism, the Amish commit themselves to abide to the *Ordnung*. Once a person is baptized, he or she is a member of the Amish community for his or her lifetime. Also, members of Amish communities have to be baptized before getting married. Maintaining a disciplined church-community is also an important and interesting marker for the Amish, which is interesting, because the rules of Amish church-communities are not written down. This basically implies that only by means of being an active participant of an Amish community can the rules and norms be learned. This is crucial for understanding patterns of parental authority among Amish communities.

Excommunication and shunning, or as the Amish call it “*Bann und Meidung*”, refers to the violation of Amish norms. Hostetler and Huntington state that after the excommunication of members, who violated religious or cultural norms, these members are also exposed to shunning. The authors explain that Jacob Ammann, the founder of the Amish faith expanded the Mennonite understanding of shunning. The Mennonites excluded offenders just from communion, whereas the Amish expand the shunning to social and economic life.

As noted, a life in harmony with the soil and nature plays a crucial role in Amish communities. What is important for this aspect is that farms are handed down from father to son.
The farm not only represents the connectedness to soil and nature, but it also a cooperative family labor (Hostetler & Huntington, 1971).

Hostetler and Huntington mention Erikson’s eight age categories, and argue that among the Amish only six age categories can be found. Nevertheless, they also state that these six age categories come along with several less defined subcategories within Amish culture. The authors explain that the six age categories need to be understood as stages of socialization in the life-process.

**Infancy.** The first stage is infancy. According to Hostetler and Huntington (1971) infancy covers the period from birth until the child starts to walk. Amish refer to children at this stage as “babies.” The Amish believe that if a baby is crying he or she needs comfort and not discipline. Hostetler and Huntington (1971) argue that the Amish recognize future sex roles, but only very little differences in care-giving between boys and girls can be recognized. In addition, the authors state that “each baby is greeted happily as a contribution to the security of the family and the church” (Hostetler & Huntington, 1971, p.17). Hostetler and Huntington explain that the Amish think that babies should not be fed alone, but have their food together with all other family members, since the Amish believe that eating is a very important social activity. The authors also argue that the Amish pay a lot of attention to their babies’ physical and social needs. This way the babies are able to build trust in themselves and in other members of the community.

**Little children.** At the second stage of the Amish age category are pre-school children, also referred to as “little children.” Little children range from children who just started to walk up until the age of six or seven, when children start to go to school. Hostetler and Huntington (1971) argue that this stage of development is crucial for the Amish since in this period the
parents are responsible for creating a safe environment for their children. The parents should create an environment for their children that protects them from physical and moral danger. At this stage children already get to know the relationship between authority and responsibility. Parents are supposed to educate their children in a way that they understand that obedience is based on love, and that authorities worry about the child’s welfare and what is best for him or her. This way, Hostetler and Huntington argue, children learn that authority is closely linked to responsibility for others. Obedience is taught by Amish parents by being firm and consistent.

In terms of gender roles, both boys and girls wear dresses up until the time they are toilet-trained. Children of this age group start to help their parents around the house. Chores are not divided along gender lines, and both boys and girls start to help their father around the farm or their mother with tasks at home. According to Hostetler and Huntington, Amish children learn these tasks by observing rather than asking how and why questions.

The larger community also has an impact on the socialization process of pre-school children. The community has a comforting and protecting function for children at this age stage. Hostetler and Huntington explain that the environment encourages physical activity, but is somehow skeptical concerning early intellectual initiative. At this stage children learn that tears are only permitted when showing deep emotions, but are discouraged when experiencing physical pain or self-pity. All in all, the authors summarize that the environment for little children is neither harsh nor over-protective.

**Scholars.** The next stage Hostetler and Huntington (1971) discuss is the age group of school children. The Amish call these children “scholars” and this stage covers the ages between six and around sixteen. Although children start to attend school, the family still remains the main
factor for the socialization process. Hostetler and Huntington state that by the age of eight or
nine, the tasks for children around the house become more and more demanding and children
help out wherever their help is needed most, regardless of their sex. The authors argue that most
modern American public and private schools are not suitable socialization-institutions for Amish
children because they focus on individualism and not on the spirit of community. At Amish
parochial schools, Amish children are mainly required to learn the three R’s (reading, writing,
and arithmetic), to learn discipline, Amish values, and to get along with others. Hostetler and
Huntington argue that in physical and emotional terms the school belongs to the Amish
communities. The Amish schools system will be discussed in more detail below.

The approach toward education within Amish schools differs from most modern
American public and private schools. According to Hostetler and Huntington, Amish schools
emphasize accuracy and drill; speed, variety, and freedom of choice are rather discouraged. The
Amish school functions to train a child in becoming a part of the community. This value is
strengthened through the one-room-school. Siblings are not separated into different age groups,
and older students are encouraged to help younger students with their work. In addition,
Hostetler and Huntington state that Amish schools “emphasize shared knowledge rather than
individualized knowledge and the dignity of tradition rather than progress” (p. 24). Amish
teachers are seen to represent an example for daily life and they highlight wisdom rather than
factual knowledge. The Amish’s fight for the autonomy of sending their children to Amish
schools or pulling the children out of public schools right after they finished eighth grade is
discussed in more detail in the section on the Supreme Court decision of the State of Wisconsin
versus Jonas Yoder et al.
Young people. Hostetler and Huntington (1971) argue that right after Amish children complete eighth grade, they enter the next age stage, namely the stage of “young people.” Young people are adolescents who are no longer attending school and who are able to work a full day. This stage covers the age groups between fourteen or sixteen and marriage.

According to Hostetler and Huntington, the Amish withdraw their children from school after the completion of eighth grade so that they are able to train their children within the home and community to prepare them for their adult life. The adolescents are taught to enjoy physical labor and hard work around house and farm. At this stage the phase of *rumspringa* is taking place. Hurst and McConnel (2010), Kraybill (2001), Schachtman (2006), and Stevick (2007) discuss this period in detail, and conclude that it represents a period of experiencing the boundaries of the Amish faith and lifestyle. Hostetler and Huntington argue that during the period of *rumspringa*, which means “running around”, the adolescents also have the opportunity to develop their individual identity. The adolescents break some rules given by the *Ordnung*, such as wearing non-traditional clothes, having cars, or using radios. Hostetler and Huntington state that the Amish accept this behavior. They believe that the young people should have an idea of the world they are going to accept/reject voluntarily by getting baptized/not getting baptized and joining/abandoning the Amish community for life-time. The crucial point here is that the phase of *rumspringa* is supposed to generate a genuine choice situation between life in the modern world on the one hand and life within an Amish community on the other. The feature of voluntariness is important to the Amish for reasons of group cohesion. Group cohesion is enhanced when individual members voluntarily commit themselves to the group’s principles and rules.
The period of *rumspringa* also has the purpose of finding a partner for lifetime. Courting takes place at Sunday evening singings, called *Singen*. After these singings, young boys take the girls home in their buggies. Hurst and McConnell (2010) also discuss the practice of bed courtship or bundling; a boy stays over night in the girl’s bedroom. They spend the night together fully clothed but without shoes, and simply lie together. The authors state that this practice is no longer very common among Amish communities. Stevick (2007) estimates that only about 10 percent of the Amish still practice bundling.

After the period of courtship follows marriage. Before getting married, the young people have to get baptized. Hostetler and Huntington (1971) state that baptism has the function of a *rite de passage*, as discussed by Arnold van Gennep in his work *The Rites of Passage* (1960), since it not only signifies a commitment to the Amish community, but also represents admission to adulthood.

**Adulthood.** The next stage in the Amish life cycle, according to Hostetler and Huntington (1971), is adulthood. Adulthood starts with baptism, since it represents maturity in religious terms. Hostetler and Huntington argue that marriage and childbirth finally bring social adulthood. Childbirth is a marker for social adulthood, because the family represents the basic unit of Amish culture, and childrearing is one of the most important activities within Amish society. Amish families are characterized by stability and represent a very traditional model of gender roles. Hostetler and Huntington state that Amish family structure is patriarchal, meaning that the males are the head of the household. The authors argue that the role of women is not as narrow and subservient as one might expect though. The woman’s position in Amish society is best described by her role in church; women have an equal vote but not an equal voice (Hostetler
The role of women is to support their husbands in all things, especially in the interaction with other people. The males in turn are asked to be considerate of the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of their wives. Ideally, a married couple, when interacting with each other, should treat themselves as separate individuals and when interacting with others they should represent one mind, so to speak. This is also reflected in terms of education, when Amish parents act as a single unit. Hostetler and Huntington (1971) state that “parents are taught that if there is a difference of opinion between them, they should discuss privately and prayerfully and always be one mind when disciplining the child” (p.16).

Hostetler and Huntington present a very interesting aspect of socialization. Amish parents understand their children as socialization agents, since the effort to teach the children how to become a good Amish has an impact on their own (that is, the parents’) behavior. Another reason the authors mention this is that the birth of a child enhances the status of a couple in the Amish community. Childbirth is a very important event for Amish families, and demonstrates the female contribution toward the patriarchal family and the community more generally.

**Old folks.** The last stage Hostetler and Huntington discuss is called “old folks.” The stage of old folks starts when the youngest child of a family finally gets married and starts his or her own family. At that time the youngest child takes over the farm run by the parents, and the parents retire on the farm but in a separate house. This house is referred to as “dawdi house” (Hurst & McConnell, 2010). The grandparents play a crucial role in family life, since the Amish believe that wisdom grows with age. Also, in terms of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren the proximity is of advantage. Hostetler and Huntington argue
that the interaction between the various age groups lessens the strain between the generations. Younger generations provide the old folks with a sense of belonging and being needed.

The Amish do not have separate institutions or homes that take care of the elderly, and normally dying takes place in familiar surroundings (i.e. at home). Stevick (2006) provides a detailed insight into an Amish funeral, and how the community supports the family experiencing the loss of a family member.

In summary, Hostetler and Huntington state that the Amish know only six psychosocial age stages in contrast to Erikson’s (1993) “Eight Stages of Man.” Each stage of the Amish categorization corresponds to a biological phase and a culturally determined social function. The age structure among the Amish is organized differently than in many other cultures which on one hand is crucial for understanding the life span development in Amish communities and for understanding patterns of parental authority on the other. The concepts of Ordnung and Gelassenheit are strongly interwoven into all stages of the Amish life cycle.

Amish School System

Since schooling and socialization are directly related, it is important to understand these cultural themes of the Amish conception of society. As already mentioned earlier, education in Amish schools focuses mainly on instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Furthermore, moral teachings of the Bible are incorporated in the curriculum. The Amish schooling system is characterized as social and communal, and the relationship between teachers and students is central and more personal than in public schools. In the case of the Amish, it is especially problematic to talk about a (centralized) school system, because decisions concerning the curriculum are made by the particular parents, church leaders, and the community in general, and
only lastly the teacher. In the same way in which a local community’s *Ordnung* is highly particularized, so are its schools and what is taught there. For a more detailed background on the historical development of Amish parochial schools, see Dewalt (2006), Harroff (2004), and Keim (1975).

Hostetler (1975) also states that there are no arbitrary distinctions between school and daily life, because the Amish school concentrates on the creation of a learning environment suitable for Amish society. A separation of school from daily routine therefore undermines and threatens the religious life of the Amish. The proximity of Amish schools to Amish farms, for example, prevents children from exposure to alien values. As a result, the location of schools close to the Amish agricultural environment is crucial, because children get a better insight into farm work and might then be rather inclined to aspire to become farmers. Since it is the duty of the Amish community to prepare their children for a spiritual life, it is important to them that qualified schoolteachers are committed to Amish values. Arons (1975) claims that besides schooling, the Amish community also offers vocational training in farming and other valuable skills necessary for the community’s existence. All these aspects are important for the Amish communities and in particular for Amish parents, because the Amish are self-sufficient, and have a long tradition of care-taking for their own community members (Arons, 1975).

The Amish, however, have faced a lot of opposition from various states within the U.S. One of the most prominent fights for the parent’s right to either send their children to Amish schools or pull them out of public schools after they finished eighth grade is documented in the Supreme Court decision of the State of Wisconsin versus Jonas Yoder et al. Analyzing the U.S. Supreme Court decision is central for understanding predominant patterns of parental control
within Amish communities. The outcomes of the Supreme Court decision empowered the Amish parents in their First Amendment right to free exercise of religion, which had been violated. As a result, after the Supreme Court decision, more and more Amish parochial schools evolved. Amish parochial schools are not only controlled by local Amish communities in general, but by the Amish parents in particular. The following sections will provide an overview of this Supreme Court decision and will analyze the role of Amish children and parents in this decision.

**The State of Wisconsin v Jonas Yoder et al.**

The following section analyzes the U.S. Supreme Court decision of the State of Wisconsin v. Jonas Yoder et al. The defendants in this Supreme Court Case were Jonas Yoder, Adin Yutzy, and Wallace Miller who were all members of the Old Order Amish faith. Based on their religious beliefs, the defendants refused to continue sending their children to a public secular high school after they completed eighth grade there. In December 1968, Yoder, Yutzy, and Miller were arrested because they did not enroll their children past eighth grade in the local public high school and therefore had violated Wisconsin’s compulsory school attendance law. The Wisconsin compulsory school attendance law required children to attend school up until the age of 16, and the defendants’ children were aged 14 and 15 at that time. Although the defendants’ children attended a public high school (which, before the legal controversies, was more common amongst the Amish than it is today) they stopped going to this school after completion of eighth grade. For the petitioner, the State of Wisconsin, John William Calhoun argued the case, and William B. Ball argued for the respondents, the Amish families (Supreme Court Decision in Keim, 1975).
In March 1969, the first court trial took place in Green County, Wisconsin. There, the defendants were found guilty. “The court acknowledged that their religious liberty had been violated, but said there was a superior state interest in forcing the children to attend school” (Ball, 1975, p. 120). The Amish families immediately appealed. Therefore, another court trial took place at the district court, where the Amish again lost. After another appeal, this time to the Supreme Court of Wisconsin, the Amish won. The Supreme Court of Wisconsin reversed the lower court decisions and held the opinion that Amish children should be exempted from the Wisconsin compulsory school attendance law (Ball, 1975). The Supreme Court of Wisconsin stated:

The Amish children would experience a useless anguish of living in two worlds. Either the public school is irrelevant in their lives as members of the Old Order Amish community or these secondary school values will make all future life as Amish impossible to them (Ball, 1975, p.120).

On March 30, 1971, following a suggestion of John William Calhoun, the state of Wisconsin formally petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari in the case of Yoder (Peters, 2003). This happened to the surprise of the defendants represented by William Ball.

On December 8, 1971, the case was argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, and on May 15, 1972, the Court handed down a decision in favor of the Amish people (Peters, 2003). The U.S. Supreme Court expanded on the Supreme Court of Wisconsin’s ruling in so far as it stated that the defendants’ First Amendment right to free exercise of religion had been violated. William Ball managed to argue effectively that the state of Wisconsin was violating the religious practices of the Amish. Furthermore, he was able to point out that the religious practices of the
Amish community did not present any significant threat to the compelling state interest in education (Ball, 1975). Ball (1975) argued that the Amish religion is more comprehensive than the state’s definition of religion. Ball stated that the religion of the Amish is more than just worship; in the case of the Amish, religion is of a communal nature. Stated Ball, “Religion is the community and the community is religion” (1975, p. 121). The daily life of Amish is constructed around concepts of religious relationships. Ball was able to illustrate the dichotomy between the freedom to believe and the freedom to act. The state’s view of religious liberty only consisted of a freedom to believe, and did not include the freedom to act on those religious beliefs (Ball, 1975). The U.S. Supreme Court stated that “Wisconsin concedes that under the Religion Clauses religious beliefs are absolutely free from the State’s control, but it argues that ‘actions’, even though religiously grounded, are outside the protection of the First Amendment” (Supreme Court Decision in Keim, 1975, p. 160). The U.S. Supreme Court rejected the idea that religiously grounded conduct is always outside of the protection of the First Amendment (Supreme Court Decision in Keim, 1975). In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court argued that through secondary schooling, Amish children, at a crucial developmental stage of adolescence, are exposed to worldly influences through attitudes, goals, and values that are contrary to their religious beliefs. Therefore, public secondary schooling conflicts with basic religious practices of the Amish, for both the parents and the child (Supreme Court Decision in Keim, 1975).

Although the U.S. Supreme Court argued that secondary schooling undermines basic religious practices of Amish parents and children, it was only the parents who were the subject of the Court’s decision. “It is the parents who are subject to prosecution here for failing to cause
their children to attend school, and it is their right of free exercise, not that of their children, that must determine Wisconsin’s power to impose criminal penalties on the parents” (Supreme Court Decision in Keim, 1975, p. 167). The U.S. Supreme Court pointed out that children were not parties of the litigation, because the Amish children’s right to religious freedom was not part of the court case. Rather, the case was concerned with the Amish parents’ religious freedom to defy Wisconsin’s compulsory education attendance law. The U.S. Supreme Court decision represents a defense against the affirmative duty of Amish parents that requires their children have to attend a public high school (Supreme Court Decision in Keim, 1975).

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of Wisconsin v. Yoder promoted the legal policy that Amish parents no longer could be sentenced as criminals if they chose not to send their children to a public high school after the completion of the eighth grade due to religious beliefs. This, obviously, applies to both those Amish children who have attended public school up to eighth grade on the one hand and those who attended Amish parochial schools (which, by definition, do not provide education beyond eighth grade) on the other. The U.S. Supreme Court argued that the religious liberty of the Amish overrides the compelling state interest of compulsory education until the age of 16. Furthermore, the U.S. Supreme Court stated that every child should be given the opportunity to be heard before a state grants an exemption from the state’s compulsory education attendance law (Supreme Court Decision in Keim, 1975).

**Ideological Foundations of the Supreme Court Decision**

Referring to the First and the Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution of the United States of America, the policy motivating the Supreme Court ruling represents a liberal, and maybe even a libertarian or anti-statist, ideology. Through the U.S. Supreme Court decision of
Wisconsin v. Yoder, the court empowered the local communities of the Amish and the Amish parents and decided against the state of Wisconsin.

The following section presents two different positions on the U.S Supreme Court Wisconsin v. Yoder decision. Richard Arneson and Ian Shapiro (1996) argue in their article “Democratic Autonomy and Religious Freedom: A Critique of Wisconsin v. Yoder” that Wisconsin v. Yoder was wrongly decided. Their main focus of critique concentrates on the role of the parents in this U.S. Supreme Court decision, since the parents and not the children were the addressees of the decision. Arneson and Shapiro (1996) attempt to explore the limits of parents’ authority in the education of children. The authors point out that the relationship between parents and children should be thought of as a trusteeship, because “children are in no sense the property of their parents” (p. 366). Their critique focuses on the Amish parents’ claims of free religious exercise as a foundation of the U.S. Supreme Court decision.

To build their argument, Arneson and Shapiro (1996) focus on the Amish education system. Interestingly, the authors talk about the Amish system of education and acculturation. The term acculturation is used to make a statement about the authors’ perception of the Amish education system. The authors state that Amish children are acculturated to Amish culture, since the children are shielded from the secular world and are at the same time discouraged to actively question Amish values and beliefs.

Arneson and Shapiro (1996) criticize the Amish line of argumentation that the compulsory education statute threatened not only the free exercise of religion, but also the existence of the Amish community. Amish parents argue that according to their experience a greater percentage of children who attend public school after the eighth grade develop a desire to
leave the Amish community. The Amish recognized that this period is very crucial in child
development. Therefore, they argue that the state’s requirement of compulsory education beyond
the eighth grade endangers the survival of the Amish communities and threatens the free exercise
of the parents’ religious beliefs. The state of Wisconsin, on the other hand, argues firstly, that
compulsory education up until the age of sixteen is necessary to prepare citizens for active and
intelligent participation in the political system. Secondly, the state argues that its compulsory
education prepares adolescents for an independent adult life in a modern society. In the decision,
the U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Burger argues that the Amish socialization practices instill
solid virtues of citizenship in their adolescents. Following Burger’s understanding, a good
citizen is law-abiding, stays out of trouble, and stays off the welfare rolls. All of the above,
Burger concludes, are fulfilled by the Amish (Arneson & Shapiro, 1996). Arneson and Shapiro
add that a good citizen understands that he or she has the capacity to vote. To be able to make
democratic decisions, Arneson and Shapiro argue, the voter needs to have critical thinking skills
and an understanding of the modern world. The authors therefore state that education beyond
basic literacy is needed to become a good citizen. To their understanding, in a democracy it is
the parents’ responsibility to educate their children to exercise their powers of citizenship without
threatening or imposing harm on others. Arneson and Shapiro conclude that if the parents fail to
do so, the state has the obligation to intervene. “The duty to educate for democratic citizenship
trumps any religious exercise claims that might oppose it” (Arneson & Shapiro 1996, p. 379).

One of the main aspects Arneson and Shapiro (1996) criticize about the U.S. Supreme
Court decision *Wisconsin v. Yoder* is that, although it is concerned with the education of Amish
children, it addresses the free exercise rights of the Amish parents. Arneson and Shapiro argue
that the parents have to give up their free exercise right of religion when it conflicts with the basic interests of their children. According to Arneson and Shapiro, this also includes basic educational interests. Here the authors raise the important question: “What if the free exercise interests of Amish parents and the interests of Amish children are in tension with one another?” (Arneson & Shapiro, 1996, p. 383). The free exercise rights of religion of Amish children were not discussed in the U.S. Supreme Court decision. Arneson and Shapiro come to the conclusion that if it is in the interest of Amish children to gain education beyond eighth grade, the parents, despite their desire to reproduce the Amish community, have to submit. The authors add that neither the children nor the states should have to endure violations of their rights so that the Amish community is able to sustain itself and reproduce.

A second position on the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Wisconsin v. Yoder is presented by Shelley Burtt. In her article “In Defense of Yoder: Parental Authority and the Public Schools”, Burtt defends a conception of familial authority which gives parents room to shape the educational experiences of their children. Therefore, Burtt defends the U.S. Supreme Court decision in terms of the shared responsibility of parents and states to meet children’s developmental needs. Burtt focuses not so much on the free exercise grounds of religion, but on the states’ accommodation of parents’ educational choices. Burtt (1996) calls her line of argumentation the “principle of parental deference” (p. 414), which basically supports a broad but not unlimited form of parental authority. One of the key questions in her analysis is: “when parents and state (and perhaps child) disagree on what constitutes the child’s educational interests, whose judgment should prevail and why?” (Burtt 1996, p. 414). Burtt emphasizes that
one important exception to this principle applies in cases where children raise independent
claims to shape their own content for their education.

Burtt refers in her article to Arneson and Shapiro (1996), and criticizes their
understanding of the U.S. Supreme Court decision. As already illustrated above, Arneson and
Shapiro (1996) point out that the decision violates the basic principles of a liberal democratic
order by the supporting the acceptance of parental choices. Here Burtt (1996) argues that
Arneson and Shapiro, as well as other authors, put too much value in two additional years of
high school education by stating that “it is difficult to see what has not been achieved by age of
fourteen that will be at sixteen” (p. 415). Her other point of critique follows that line of
argumentation, because she also argues against the curriculum of U.S high schools. Burtt states
that Arneson and Shapiro represent a misplaced confidence in the U.S. high school curriculum in
so far as it is expected to support the development of critical, moral, and autonomous thinking.
In her next point, Burtt also points out that most of the recent philosophical analysis of the
Wisconsin v. Yoder decision does not consider God’s word as a source for learning critical
reasoning. The line of argumentation here is that the exemption of the Amish from the public
school is not in opposition to develop critical thinking, since it simply applies different texts and
methods to reach this goal.

Burtt also discusses the role of children’s rights. The U.S. Supreme Court decision
emphasizes the importance to parental autonomy and the parents’ free exercise right. Here, Burtt
points out that this approach basically privileges the parents’ rights, desires, and life plans over
those of their children. Burtt argues that there is no sufficient justification for favoring the
parents over the children. Hence, Burtt introduces a new approach to meet all ends: the parents’
religious goals and the states’ interest in protecting children’s rights. Burtt defines parental authority as the parents’ ability and willingness to meet the developmental needs of their children. To be able to meet the developmental needs of children, aspects of their character analysis have to be included. This means that not only their moral and spiritual needs, but also their interests as members of a distinct cultural community have to be considered. Here Burtt (1996) argues that “children need an upbringing that enables them not only to discharge their civic and social obligations but to pursue and live a good life as they come to understand it” (p. 425).

Burtt finally comes to the conclusion that once certain minimum standards of educational achievement are met, the parents should be granted the authority to refuse to send their children to public schools. On the other hand, the state has to demand that the parents fulfill the children’s developmental needs in a reasonable way. As long as parental decisions are advancing children’s needs, Burtt argues, the state has no right to overrule or undermine the parent’s decision. Burtt concludes that the Amish fulfill this criterion, and therefore have a right to act on their judgment that the spiritual and educational needs of Amish children are best met by ending formal schooling at the eighth grade.

The above discussion should illustrate the normative reflection of philosophical and political theorists on the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Wisconsin v. Yoder. The presented articles represent just a brief snapshot of the still ongoing discussion of this court decision.

**Results of the Supreme Court Decision**

The U.S. Supreme Court decision can be categorized as a “hard” policy. The court’s decision represents a policy of “benign neglect”, meaning that the U.S. Supreme Court
confirmed a hands-off strategy on educational issues concerning religious communities. Through the hands-off strategy, the U.S. Supreme Court decision has the power to influence American society. This is the case not only with respect to educational policy issues but, more generally, concerning all cases in which constitutional rights and individual liberties conflict with the public interest.

The implementation of the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Wisconsin v. Yoder* will next be discussed. Various publications, such as Mark Dewalt’s (2006) *Amish Education in the United States and Canada* as well as Stephen Harroff’s (2003) *The Amish Schools of Indiana*, provide an insight into the Amish schooling system, and the changes it underwent due to the implementation of the U.S. Supreme Court decision. David McConnell and Charles Hurst, however, provide in their article “‘No ‘Rip van Winkles’ Here: Amish Education Since *Wisconsin v. Yoder*’” an excellent overview on the latest developments in the Amish approach toward education.

McConnell and Hurst (2006) come to the conclusion that the Amish responded to the U.S. Supreme Court decision by adopting five different educational paths. The first response is the increasing creation of Amish parochial schools, which is the most preferred school type among the Amish. This school type is controlled by an Amish board, Amish parents, and Amish teachers. The land for these schools is donated by Amish families, who also hold a share of the schools.

The second response is the introduction of public schools, which are entirely composed of Amish students. Since the Amish pay local property taxes, they are at the same time supporting the public schooling system. Thus, by sending their children to public schools, no
additional financial burden occurs for the large Amish families with many children. Besides the money, however, McConnell and Hurst provide another reason for Amish parents to enroll their children in public Amish schools. The authors state that the Amish believe that these schools prepare their children best for an ever-increasing contact with the “English”, i.e. any outsiders of Amish communities.

According to McConnell and Hurst, the third educational approach of the Amish in response to the U.S. Supreme Court decision is the introduction of homeschooling. However, various Amish communities dislike this relatively new phenomenon, and McConnell and Hurst stress that it actually evoked much stronger negative comments among the Amish than public schooling. Since the Amish are a community-focused society, they question if this educational approach actually encourages cultural continuity. Another argument against homeschooling is the assumption that homeschooling parents have a ‘know-it-all’ attitude.

Besides all of these rather new developments, there is also an educational response of Amish parents to continue to send their children to public schools which serve a large number of “English” children. Here McConnell and Hurst point out that several Amish parents think that if their children only attend school up until the eighth grade, they should at least get a good quality education. The authors also point out that there is not just a “push” from the Amish side, but also a “pull” from public school administrators. Since rural school districts are financially strapped, public school principals are dependent on the enrollment of Amish children.

The last educational development McConnell and Hurst (2006) point out is that they found evidence for studies beyond the eighth grade. The authors state that “this usually occurred in two ways: through pursuit of the GED and/or attendance at short, technical courses offered by
the local career center or state university” (p. 248f.). This fifth response of educational
development can be explained by the increasing social, economic, and cultural pressures the
Amish have had to encounter in the last years.

**Parenting Styles and Amish Communities**

Besides having a closer look at the formal education system within Amish communities,
namely their approach to schooling, one also has to understand differences in parenting styles
and parental authority. Major work in the area of parenting styles has been done by Diana
Baumrind (1978; 1971), who defined three major patterns of parenting: authoritarian parents,
permissive parents, and authoritative parents. In addition, Baumrind (1971) added the category
of nonconforming parents, who are characterized by high scores on enrichment of the child’s
environment and can be described as neither permissive nor authoritative. Baumrind (1971)
assessed the observed and reported parent behavior by 50 parent rating scales where mothers’
and fathers’ behavior was reported separately. An additional 25 scales measured the parents’
joint influence. These 75 items were then used to assess specific manifestations of 15
hypothetical constructs of parent behavior, which in turn provide the basis for the eventual four
styles mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph. The constructs of behavior differentiate
parent child relationships according to, for example, the extent to which they discourage or
encourage emotional dependency, employ firm or lax enforcement policies, and whether or not
they encourage infantile behavior. In addition to Baumrind’s (1978) work, I will introduce
Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) work that is based on and refines Baumrind’s initial framework.
This results in a comprehensive discussion of Baumrind’s four main patterns of parental
discipline.
The Authoritarian-Autocratic Pattern of Discipline

Baumrind (1978) first introduces the reader to the origins of authoritarian discipline and locates them in early Puritan behavior, influenced by British empiricists such as John Locke. This theoretical approach understands children as either dominated by uncivilized urges, or as "tabulae rasae" (Baumrind, 1978). Hence, Baumrind concludes that authoritarian parents are characterized by expecting unquestioned obedience from a child and regard the child as in need of being controlled. Baumrind also points out that authoritarian parents apply forceful measures to curb a child’s self-will. This is especially the case when the child’s actions and beliefs conflict with the parents’ understanding of right or wrong. Baumrind (1978) also states that “the authoritarian parent believes in keeping the child in a subordinate role and in restricting his autonomy, and does not encourage verbal give and take, believing that the child should accept a parent’s word for what is right” (p.244).

Maccoby and Martin (1983) add to Baumrind’s descriptions that authoritarian parents also show higher levels of autocracy. Maccoby and Martin (1983) state here that parents of this pattern of parental discipline “attach strong value to the maintenance of their authority, and suppress any efforts their children make to challenge it” (p.40). The authors also argue that if children do not follow parental rules or guidelines, severe punishment, even physical, is very likely to be employed. Maccoby and Martin provide the following characteristics for authoritarian parents:

1. Attempting to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of their children in accordance with an absolute set of standards

2. Valuing obedience, respect for authority, work, tradition, and preservation of order
3. Discouraging verbal give-and-take between parent and child (p.40)

In summary, authoritarian parents can be described as being low on warmth and responsiveness when interacting with their children. Maccoby and Martin also state that authoritarian parents are high demanding but low responding in their child rearing approach. This very controlling approach of parenting is thought of having a negative impact on the child’s development of self-esteem, because children might develop the understanding that they are not trusted when undertaking activities independently.

**The Indulgent-Permissive Pattern of Discipline**

Baumrind (1978) argues that the pattern of the permissive parenting style has its roots in the children’s rights movement, which was crucially influenced by the writings of the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The theoretical concept of the permissive pattern understands children as having a natural tendency to self-actualization. This basically means that if a child is left to him-/herself it will enable him/her to learn all he/she needs to know. According to this approach, the child will turn to appropriate conventional behaviors without being forced by the parents to do so. Representatives of this approach, such as Alexander Neill even go as far as stating that “imposing anything by authority is wrong. The child should not do anything until he comes to the opinion - his own opinion - that this should be done” (Neill, in Baumrind, 1978, p. 242).

Baumrind states that the prototype of a permissive parent can be described as affirmative, acceptant, and benign toward a child’s impulses and actions. Baumrind (1978) emphasizes that “the permissive parent sees him- or herself as a resource for the child to use as he wishes, but not as an active agent responsible for shaping and altering the child’s ongoing and future
behavior” (p. 244). For this reason the crucial role of a permissive parent is to free the child from any restraints.

Permissive parents can be characterized on the one hand by their warm and nurturing behavior toward children, and for this reason Maccoby and Martin (1983) added the description of indulgent to this pattern of parental discipline. On the other hand, permissive parents can also show tendencies of self-involvement and not wanting to be made responsible for the child’s development. This parenting style allows children to regulate their own lives, and provides only few firm guidelines with only little use of punishment. Maccoby and Martin also point out that subgroups of this parenting style can be closely related to the indifferent-uninvolved pattern of parenting, since some cases rather show inattention and indifference than commitment to children’s rights.

The Authoritative-Reciprocal Pattern of Discipline

In her earlier study, Baumrind (1971) also introduces the authoritative parenting style, which describes parents as firm, fair, reasonable, and sensitive to a child’s maturity. Authoritative parents express a high degree of warmth and affection for their children (Matsumoto & Juang, 2008; Craig, 1999; Baumrind, 1971). As practical representation of this theoretical concept Baumrind (1978) uses the example of Montessori schools. According to Baumrind the method of Montessori resides in three areas: the environment, the teacher, and the children. Since the spheres of the environment and the teacher are controlled, the child is able to develop in a rather “uncontrolled” manner. This means that the teacher has somehow a guiding function by living the good example. Baumrind (1978) explains by stating that “when a child has finished his work he is free to put it away, he is free to initiate new work or, in certain
instances, he is free to not work. But he is not free to disturb or destroy what others are doing” (p. 243). In summary, one can state that the teacher is somehow manipulating the child’s behavior by modeling the right behavior for him/her.

Maccoby and Martin (1983) also summarize Baumrind’s concept of the authoritative pattern of discipline. The authors argue that the authoritative pattern of parenting consists of five different elements. First, due to clear standard settings a rather mature behavior is expected from the child. Second, these standards or rules are implemented in a firm manner, and commands or sanctions are applied when needed. Third, it is crucial to encourage the child in his/her independence and individuality. Fourth, a verbal give and take between parent and child is encouraged, meaning that the parent is also listening to the child’s point of view. And lastly, both the parents’ and the children’s rights are recognized and accepted. Considering all these elements, with special attention to the last two points, Maccoby and Martin add the description of reciprocal to this category of parenting styles.

**The Indifferent-Uninvolved Pattern of Discipline**

In addition to the three parenting styles described above, another pattern of discipline was added to Baumrind’s (1978; 1971) list by Maccoby and Martin (1983). This parenting style is called “indifferent parenting” or “uninvolved parenting.” Matsumoto and Juang (2008), Craig (1999) and others argue that this parenting style is characterized by low levels of interest for children due to the stressful lives of parents. The authors also state that parents of this category demonstrate little warmth toward their children and do not seem to have enough energy left to provide guidance and support for their children (Matsumoto & Juang, 2008; Craig, 1999).
Maccoby and Martin (1983) provide a broader description of the indifferent-uninvolved parenting style. First of all, the authors clarify the term “involvement” insofar as they describe it as the degree to which a person is committed to his/her role as parent. If a person is more involved in other activities, such as work or personal interests, only little time or attention is available for the child. Hence, Maccoby and Martin (1983) state that an “uninvolved parent is likely to be motivated to do whatever is necessary to minimize the costs in time and effort of interaction with the child” (p. 48). The parenting style of uninvolved patterns of discipline can therefore be described as keeping the child at a certain distance, and immediate demands from a child are rather terminated. One can also label the pattern of indifferent or uninvolved parenting as “parent-centered” (selfish) childrearing (Maccoby & Martin 1983).

**Predominant Parenting Styles in Amish Communities**

The above framework provides the foundation for studying predominant parenting styles among the Amish. Joe Wittmer’s (1973) “Amish Homogeneity of Parental Behavior Characteristics” provides one of the few investigations into this particular area. At about the same time as Wittmer’s study, Baumrind started her research on parenting styles and developed the above described three major categories which were supplemented by Maccoby and Martin’s category of indifferent-uninvolved parents in 1983.

Wittmer provides a general overview of parenting and parental behavior among Amish communities. As already discussed in the section on religious cohesion as a means of enforcing group norms, the Amish philosophy of cultural socialization includes no tolerance for non-conformity, ingenuity, or innovation. This is especially evident in child-rearing practices, which follow, a very traditional understanding of gender role models. The Amish male’s life is shaped
after that of his father and the Amish female’s life shaped after that of her mother (Wittmer 1973). In addition, Wittmer points out that a very distinct differentiation between Amish mother and Amish father can be found. Since Amish communities show a strong patriarchal organization, neither an Amish father nor an Amish son would do tasks specified for women. Wittmer states that “the young Amish boy learns early that he is completely different from an Amish girl and that she is subordinate to him. He gains his manhood from being a good farmer and never doing the menial tasks of a woman” (p. 149). Because of the strictly patriarchal family organization, the Amish father is the designated leader of religious life of the family and mother has subordinate role. The sons of Amish families are understood as miniatures of their fathers. According to Wittmer, this means that Amish fathers raise their sons in exactly the same way as they were raised. This is a crucial point, since it affirms that no differences in values evolve over generations.

Concerning parenting styles, Wittmer states that Amish parental behavior seems authoritarian but is at the same time very nuanced. The author supports his argument by quoting Loomis and Beegle who state that “when an Amish father orders a son to do something, one always knows that the father truly believes the act will not be to the son’s disadvantage” (Loomis & Beegle in Wittmer 1973, p. 150). Hence, Wittmer argues that the father’s personalization of authority leads to more and greater satisfaction with it among their children. Although the Amish community is organized in a patriarchic way, one should not underestimate the role of women. Especially in the field of family and childrearing, the role of women is very important. Also as members of Amish communities, both parents underlie social norms which have already been discussed earlier. According to Wittmer, it is important to emphasize that both Amish mothers
and fathers do not believe and accept new methods of childrearing. Here Wittmer states that tradition asks for cooperation between parents when it comes to childrearing practices. Since the parents want their children to follow their footsteps, they have the function of a role model, and both fathers and mothers depend on each other to be fully able to fulfill their role assigned to them by their religious beliefs. Wittmer states that “both Amish parents, as dictated by their culture and religion, make similar selections from possible solutions in rearing their children” (Wittmer 1973, p. 151). The mutual respect for each other and their agreement on parental values enable Amish parents to form a unit when socializing their children.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This instrumental case study utilizes ethnographic techniques to analyze predominant patterns of parental authority among Amish communities in Northeast Ohio. The study focuses on parental authority among Amish communities using the framework of parenting styles. To review, major work in the area of parenting styles has been done by Diana Baumrind (1978; 1971), who defined three major patterns of parenting: authoritarian parents, permissive parents, and authoritative parents. In addition, Baumrind (1971) also added the category of nonconforming parents, who are characterized by high scores on enrichment of the child’s environment, and can be described as neither permissive nor authoritative. Baumrind’s (1978) findings are supplemented by Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) work resulting in four main patterns of parental discipline, namely authoritarian-autocratic, indulgent-permissive, authoritative-reciprocal, and indifferent-uninvolved. This theoretical framework will assist me with finding answers to my main research question:

How do social and cultural factors and processes influence the members of Northeast Ohio Amish communities and their patterns of parental authority?

This main research question will be followed by the sub-questions below:

1. Which pattern of parental discipline is predominant among the Amish community members studied and why is it most prominent?

2. How are the four patterns of parental discipline represented in the Amish parental community members?

3. How are Amish parents influenced by their own parents’ style of authority and how have they continued with or adapted this style with their own children?
Besides the parenting framework, this case study employs interviews with Amish parents, religious leaders, and other experts in the field of Amish studies. Four Amish participants, living in the Holmes County Settlement located in Northeast Ohio, and two experts on Amish culture participated in individual open-ended semi-structured interviews. The study is based on an ethnographic approach which, according to Creswell (2007), is appropriate to describe and interpret “shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group” (p.68). Hence, besides open-ended semi-structured interviews, this ethnographic instrumental case study also includes extensive fieldwork, and (participant) observations. The data collected through fieldwork is presented in a primarily etic perspective (Creswell, 2008). However, this study attempts to supplement the predominant etic perspective by introducing certain emic components such as an emphasis on insider accounts regarding specific cultural concepts. This will be especially relevant when the notion of Gelassenheit is discussed in Chapter IV. In a first step, the data supplied by the participants in the course of the interviews is summarized. Next, this summarized data is discussed from the aforementioned etic perspective. There I interpret the participants’ responses regarding the study’s topic by using the conceptual framework introduced at the beginning of this chapter (Creswell, 2008). For the purpose of triangulation, a broad variety of sources are employed, such as extensive study of literature on Amish communities. In addition, interviews, observations, and audiovisual materials assisted in triangulating the data.

Besides the above stated research questions, the study also formulates and addresses the following assumptions:
1. The authoritarian-autocratic (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) pattern of discipline is the predominant style of parenting among Old Order Amish communities. Amish communities and families have a strictly patriarchal structure where the father is the designated leader of religious life, and the mother has a more subordinate role. Although Amish families show strong gender complementarity, it can be argued that the authoritarian parenting style among the Amish seems to be a bit more nuanced because women also have a very important role in child rearing. Both parents have the function of a role model for children of the same gender, and both fathers and mothers have to depend on each other to fulfill their role assigned to them by their religious beliefs (Hurst & McConnel, 2010; Kraybill, 2001; Kreps et al., 1997; Hostetler, 1993).

2. The authoritarian-autocratic pattern of discipline affects the value ascribed to children among Amish communities. Amish parents expect their children to follow their footsteps and apply the same parenting style under which they had grown up. The cultural concepts of *Ordnung* and *Gelassenheit* serve as tools for the socialization to the authoritarian-autocratic parenting style. In addition, children are valued as cultural capital, which means, especially in peasant or subsistence farming societies, that children are seen as a cheap labor force and social security plan for later years (Hurst & McConnel, 2010; Kraybill, 2001; Hostetler, 1993).

3. The strong religious and social cohesion amongst the Amish is guaranteed through strictly subordinating to the rules of *Ordnung* and *Gelassenheit*. Amish communities are tightly knit and show high levels of cohesion to be able to live their self-sufficient lifestyle. In addition, the very collectivistic and hierarchic structures of Amish communities emphasize the importance of not leaving one’s individual mark in the world, but to be marked by God by
purposefully living in the community and following the rules. Hence, the religious cohesion of Amish communities enforces the group norms, which favor the authoritarian-autocratic parenting style. Amish religion and culture dictates the specific approach of childrearing and enhances reproduction. In the case of the Amish, fertility and cultural values are interrelated, which is reflected by plural motherhood as a mandate issued by God (Hurst & McConnel, 2010; Kraybill, 2001; Hostetler, 1993).

**Researcher Perspective**

Discussing my personal background is important for contextualizing my role within this case study. I am entering this research as an Austrian woman in her early thirties, who grew up in a rural area dominated by agriculture and the proximity of Vienna, the capital of Austria. My academic background is in cultural and social anthropology and development studies, which tooled me with subtlety for intercultural interaction. In addition to my studies in Austria, my international experience as a foreign language teaching assistant in German at two high schools in Scotland, and my graduate studies in Cross-cultural and International Education at Bowling Green State University further strengthened my intercultural skills. I enjoy learning more about various cultures, and life in a culturally diverse country such as the U.S. has always fascinated me.

My academic background, as well as my intrinsic curiosity to learn more about different cultures, assisted me when I was looking for a topic for my thesis. Prior to studying in the United States, I was already fascinated by the Amish culture, however I knew only very little about this religious community. In March 2007, on my very first visit in Ohio, I explored the so-called Amish country by car and was amazed by the Amish way of life. At the beginning of
spring semester in the first year of my studies, the professors of my core classes at Bowling Green State University pointed out that we should pick topics for our class papers which are of true interest to us and which might be expanded to theses topics. For this reason, the research topics should relate to projects which are doable in this area of the U.S. I was thinking immediately of the Amish settlement not too far away from BGSU’s campus. Fortunately, Global Connections, an organization serving international students studying at Bowling Green State University, offered a day-trip to the Amish heartland of Ohio in 2011 and I took part in this opportunity. This trip provided me with the opportunity to get a look inside the daily life of Amish families. The tour guide provided us with detailed information about the diverse Amish communities and I found out that the more I learned about the Amish heritage, the more I became interested. I was able to focus the majority of my class papers on topics related to the Amish, and I was able to analyze the Amish way of life from various perspectives.

Since I am Austrian, my native language is German, which is extremely helpful when studying Amish communities. Almost all Amish are actually bilingual in English and Pennsylvania Dutch. Pennsylvania Dutch, which is also called Pennsylvania Deitsch, is not a variation of the Dutch language, but an ancient German dialect still spoken by Amish communities in North America (Hurst & McConnell, 2010). In addition to the spoken language, the Amish also use High German in their official church ceremonies. The prayer book *Ausbund*, which includes prayers and songs, is still published in an antiquated version of Standard German. Hence, the link I have had of the nearly common language is extremely helpful when studying the Amish. Being able to communicate with members of the Amish communities in a language
that is more valued, due to its prominent role in their religious life, helps to establish relationships and builds trust.

**Case Study Method**

This study applied the methodological approach of an ethnographic instrumental case study. According to Creswell (2007), a case study focuses on an issue which is explored through one or more cases within a bounded system. A case can be bounded in terms of time, place, or some physical boundaries (Creswell, 2008). Yin (2003) adds that “in general, case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p.1). Hence, the method of case study can be used in a variety of situations to expand our knowledge of an individual, a group, an organization, or phenomena of social, cultural, or political character. In any case, this type of study assists in understanding complex social phenomena (Yin, 2003). Creswell (2007) also argues that through the qualitative approach of case study, the researcher is able to explore a bounded system over time, resulting in in-depth data collection. The sources of in-depth data collection are manifold but involve, for example, observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports, which represents the unique strength of this research method. A case study allows the researcher to deal with a broad variety of data.

In an instrumental case study, “the researcher focuses on an issue or concern, and then selects one bounded case to illustrate this issue” (Creswell, 2007, p.74). Thus, an instrumental case study provides insight by illuminating a particular issue or theme. An in-depth understanding of certain issues or themes can be achieved by collecting and utilizing a variety of
data. Besides in-depth interviews with open-ended questions, this might also include pictures and videotapes (Creswell, 2008).

Creswell (2008) describes case studies as an important type of ethnography. However, case studies differ from ethnographies insofar as they focus on a program, event, or on activities involving individuals rather than a culture-sharing group. In addition to the “traditional” case study approach, this study also incorporates aspects of an ethnographic research, since it is not only focusing on individuals. To focus on individuals exclusively is hardly possible in a culture where community and brotherhood play such a crucial role. For this reason, this case study also utilizes research methods more commonly found in ethnographic studies. These methods include the consideration of shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language, fieldwork, description, and researcher reflexivity (Creswell, 2008).

Besides interviewing participants, my fieldwork also involved observations of parent-child interactions, and observations of children and their interaction with their environment in general. These observations resulted in thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) which allowed me to gain a better understanding for the setting of the study and the contextualization of the whole research project. However, this research is not attempting to identify overall cultural themes of patterns of parental authority among Amish communities. It is rather an in-depth investigation of the case of the Amish in Northeast Ohio in the context of parenting styles.

The Case

The case of this research is the Amish of the Holmes County Settlement, analyzed in the context of parenting styles. Hence, the Amish study participants constitute the case, whereas the experts in the field of the Amish illuminate the case.
Setting

The research was conducted in the so-called Holmes County Settlement which, according to Hurst and McConnell (2010), is centered in Holmes County, Ohio, but also includes smaller parts of Wayne, Stark, Tuscarawas, Coshocton, Knox, and Ashland County. The Holmes County Settlement is both the oldest and largest Amish settlement in Ohio. About thirty thousand Amish live in this settlement which makes it, in comparison to the settlement in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, as well as Elkhart and LaGrange County in Indiana, and other settlements throughout the U.S. and Canada, the largest Amish settlement in North America. Hurst and McConnell (2010) state that “today the Amish account for approximately 45 percent of Holmes County’s population” (p.29). The Holmes County Settlement was founded by Amish settlers from Pennsylvania around 1808/09. Nowadays, the settlement includes 221 church districts which can be assigned to eleven different Amish church affiliations/sects (Hurst & McConnell, 2010).

Participants and Participant Selection

This qualitative study is based on purposeful sampling. According to Creswell (2008), when purposefully sampling “researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (p.214). To be able to represent multiple perspectives on the research topic, which is one of the central characteristics of qualitative research, I chose the method of maximal variation sampling. Maximal variation sampling allows the researcher to build complexity into the study, because the participants differ on some characteristics or traits (Creswell, 2008). In the case of this study, the Amish participants differed in age groups. The Amish participants were purposefully sampled from different age groups so that they are able to
provide insight on perspectives of parenting styles from different angles. All Amish participants of this study were members of the Old Order Amish church. Through out the study, I will use pseudonyms for all participants.

Two study participants represented the grandparent perspective because all of their children were grown up and married, except for one who is a person with special needs. These two study participants will be referred to as Jacob and Ruth. They are living in a dawdi haus, which is a smaller house close to the main farm house on a sheep farm. Jacob refers to himself as semi-retired, still assisting his son with work on the farm. Besides being a farmer, since 1972 this study participant has been an Amish bishop. Hence, Jacob also served as an informant from the perspective of a religious leader. His first wife passed away when their children were still rather young. He is now married a second time, and his second wife, Ruth, served as study participant as well. She has no biological children: however, she is a very caring mother for her special needs step-daughter. She was able to provide me with examples from her own upbringing and her experiences of being a grandmother. Jacob and Ruth were interviewed at the same time.

Another participant, Martha, is a mother of seven children and a grandmother of 21, and served as a sample for the group of parents of teenagers. Her two youngest daughters are 15 and 16 years old and are still living with their parents. All of her other children are married and moved away from the farm, except for one son, who is living with his family in a house right next to Martha’s home. The son took over the farm, since Martha’s husband retired from farming a couple of years ago. The husband is now working in a wood shop. He prefers the work in the wood shop to farm work because he has better control over his work hours. Martha
earns a little extra money by offering traditional Amish meals to interested tourist groups.

Martha’s two daughters help her with preparing and serving these dinners.

Miriam, another mother of seven, with six girls and only one boy, all between the ages of 12 and one years old, served as an informant for the category of parents of younger children.

Miriam lives with her family in a farmhouse. Besides the extensive interview with this Amish mother in her early thirties, her husband, Samuel, and her mother- and father-in-law, Mary and Isaac, served as informants as well. Samuel runs the farm, with the assistance of his father.

Miriam’s in-laws live in a dawdi haus next to the farmhouse. The three oldest children, two girls and the boy, already attend school. Miriam’s four youngest daughters, between the ages six and one, are staying at home with her. During the interview with Miriam, I was able to make observations of parent-child interaction. In addition to parent-child interaction, I was also able to observe grandparent-child interaction with this family. Besides interviewing this mother, I was also able to engage in informal conversation with her husband, and her in-laws.

Besides Amish participants, I also conducted interviews with two Amish study experts. The first study participant is a college professor, who will be called Mark. He has several publications on the Amish. His academic expertise and experiences with fieldwork assisted me with developing a deeper understanding of the preliminary findings of this study. The second expert on Amish communities, Kim, is a businesswoman offering tours throughout the Holmes County Settlement. Kim also served as my gatekeeper for finding participants for my study. According to Creswell (2008), “a gatekeeper is an individual who has an official or unofficial role at the site, provides entrance to a site, helps researchers locate people, and assists in the identification of places to study” (p.219). Since Kim runs a business in the field of Amish
tourism, almost all of her business partners are Amish. Over the period of several years, she was able to build relationships with a lot of Amish families, and the Amish know and trust her. It was through Kim’s assistance and expertise that I found not only participants for my study, but I was also able to gain access to other Amish homes and to an Amish school. Especially at the Amish school, I was able to make some very interesting observations of how Amish children learn in a formal setting.

**Data Collection**

After receiving approval for my research from the Human Subject Review Board (HSRB) at Bowling Green State University in the end of February 2012, I started data collection in the Holmes County Settlement. Before I finally got approval from HSRB, I informed my gatekeeper, Kim, that I was able to conduct interviews in the near future. I first contacted my gatekeeper in late summer of 2011, to see if she would be willing to assist me with finding participants for my research project. In late fall of 2011, I submitted a first draft of my literature review to Kim, so that she was able to get a better understanding for my research interests. I updated her via e-mail and phone about the progress on my research project, and discussed with her ahead of time which participants I was looking for. Hence, I was able to arrange my first set of interviews a few days after getting approval from the HSRB office.

The actual data collection started in March 2012 and interviews were scheduled with the assistance of my gatekeeper. Before participating in this study, all participants had to sign a consent form where they indicated their agreement to participate in the study. I read aloud the consent form to the participants and verbally informed them about the procedures of the study.
Creswell (2007) discusses that there are always new forms of qualitative data emerging, but he points out that all data can be grouped into four basic types of information. These four categories are interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials. In addition to an extensive study of literature related to the research topic, this study employed three out of those four categories, namely interviews, observations, and audiovisual materials. This assisted in triangulating the data. The following describes the three categories in more detail.

**Open-ended Semi-structured Interviews**

For the interviews, I used three different scripts with open-ended questions. One script was used for the experts on Amish culture, another one for all Amish participants, and the third was used for the interview with the religious leader, the Amish bishop. Although I used a script for the interviews, the participants often engaged in more casual conversations with me, which resulted in occasional deviations from the original interview scripts. I always asked for permission to audio record the interviews. Since the Amish are skeptical about modern technology, one of my interview partners refused to be audio recorded. As a result during this interview more detailed and extensive field notes were taken.

Language code switching often took place during conversations with the Amish participants, as we occasionally shifted from English to Pennsylvania Deitsch or German. The language code switching can be seen as representing the achievement of a certain comfort level during the interview. The Amish participants of this study had the opportunity to use whatever language they felt they could express themselves with best. The combination of audio recordings and extensive field notes resulted in a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of my interview partners and their information provided. After the first round of interviews with Amish participants, I
also discussed some of my preliminary findings with the other study participants. This was especially the case with the formal interview with the college professor, who is an expert on Amish culture. Doing so provided additional verification of statements made by the Amish participants of this study.

**Observations**

Besides the method of open-ended semi-structured interviews, this study also involved extensive observations throughout the Holmes County Settlement. One site of observations was a large tools auction at a hardware store in Kidron, Ohio. The Amish owned hardware store organizes several auctions of this kind throughout the year. Hence, the majority of attendees of this auction were Amish. Amish males of all age groups dominated this event which provided an excellent opportunity to observe father-son-interaction. In addition, it also allowed me to observe male Amish teenagers going through the phase of *rumspringa*, or adolescence.

I also got the chance to make observations of a family belonging to the group of Swartzentruber Amish, which is the most conservative group among the Amish communities (Hurst & McConnell, 2010). Swartzentruber Amish distinguish themselves from other Amish groups by being very traditional. Members of this group reject a variety of modern amenities, which is reflected for example in the rejection of indoor plumbing or hot water. Their houses are very plain, with no cushioned seats and no central heat. In addition, Hurst and McConnell (2010) state that the Swartzentruber Amish “typically maintain a wall of silence toward outsiders” (p.38). Thus, it was not really possible to win this family for an interview. However, I was invited to their home, and I was able to make some observations of parent-child
interaction. It is also of importance to mention that one of their children has special needs, and I was able to observe how this conservative group deals with special needs children.

Extensive observations were also made at a New Order Amish school. Since the group of New Order Amish can be described as the most “liberal” Amish group (Hurst & McConnell, 2010), the school often times invites “English” guests, meaning outsiders of Amish communities, to visit their classes. At this school I had the opportunity to observe a combined class composed of pre-school and first grade students. I observed students working in class, interacting with their teacher, and playing at recess outside. The observations of formal learning at this school setting and the interactions with both the students and the teacher of this pre-school / first grade class allowed me to develop a better understanding of the learning processes outside home.

With the family that had young children, I was able to make observations of parent-child and grandparent-child interaction. In addition to observing interactions within this family, I was also able to make some participant observations with the three girls between the ages six and two.

**Audiovisual Materials**

Besides interviews and observations, another source of information was various kinds of audiovisual materials. The intense study of literature was already presented in the literature review. In addition to written sources of information, interviews, and observations, I also watched several videos and documentaries about the Amish way of life, which were relevant to my research questions. Creswell (2007) points out that observing through examining videotapes and photographs has emerged as new form of data collection. Since it is rather hard to get access to Amish communities, and it is even harder to convince members of Amish communities to
become participants of an academic study, the critical analysis of videos and documentaries provided another insight into my research topic. Although most of the documentaries were produced for a mainstream audience, they allowed me to develop a better understanding of the Amish culture and way of life, and to discuss my findings in a more holistic manner.

**Data Analysis**

With respect to analysis of the data, I first transcribed the audio files of the interviews and organized them by participants. The first round of interviews was transcribed and analyzed before the next round of interviews took place. The focus was to list the main points of the study participants in order to find themes that naturally emerged from the interviews rather than comparing the preliminary findings to the conceptual framework. Analyzing the first set of interviews before going out in the field to gather more data allowed me to focus on the following data collection sessions on specific topics which might have not been addressed in the first place. Since some parts of the interviews involved German as well, an academic colleague fluent in German and English verified my translations of those passages.

When coding the interview transcripts, I followed Miles and Huberman’s (1994) recommendation of using marginal remarks. The marginal remarks were then later used in the coding cycle, when looking for passages that share common themes. These common themes then became overall codes and were marked by a color system. In a second round of coding some codes were merged together, contributing to more directly answering the research questions of this study. All data were coded by hand.

**Ethical Considerations**
Creswell (2008) states that “the researchers’ quest for information should be tempered by proper ethical constraints aimed at protecting the participants” (p.239). In the interviews, Amish participants were asked to discuss private details of their life experiences with parenting. Before starting with the actual interviews, I followed Creswell’s (2008) guidelines for ethical practices in qualitative research. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, not only by my reading aloud the consent form, but also by my verbal explanation of the research project. Both the role of research participants and my own role in this study were clarified and agreed upon. Out of respect to the research site, which was in the case of the Amish participants their private homes, I dressed appropriately and chose not to wear loud colors, make-up or perfume. Since participants shared private stories with me, confidentiality was of utmost importance. As noted above, all participants were assigned a pseudonym, and are referred to by this pseudonym throughout the study.

**Validity**

In this study, various steps were taken to avoid validity threats and to establish credibility. Maxwell (2005) emphasizes the importance of rich data. In qualitative research it is crucial to provide detailed and varied data so that a full and revealing picture of the study can be drawn. Triangulation of data was used as one approach to enhance the accuracy of this study. Triangulation, as presented in Creswell (2007 & 2008), means that the researcher utilizes a variety of methods to collect data. As already discussed above, besides the extensive study of literature related to the research topic, this study also employed open-ended semi-structured interviews, (participant) observations, and audiovisual materials, resulting in a thick description of participants and settings (Creswell 2007). Creswell (2008) states that this process “ensures
that the study will be accurate because the information draws on multiple sources of information, individuals, or processes” (p.266). In addition, Miles and Huberman (1994) point out that the main focus, when triangulating data, should be on a variety of sources which provide different strengths or biases, resulting in the ideal case that the different sources complete each other.

Besides triangulation, this study also used the method of respondent validation (Maxwell 2005). This means that I shared some of my preliminary findings with the study participants to determine if these findings are accurate. In a way, this means soliciting feedback from my study participants to confirm that the data and my conclusions are valid (Maxwell 2005). In addition to discussing findings with the study participants in a formal interview setting, informal conversations with members of the Amish community also increased credibility and trustworthiness.

To clarify any researcher bias from the onset of the study, as recommended by Creswell (2007), I included a detailed description of the researcher perspective. Also, peer review of the findings and external verification of codes are additional methods used to ensure validity. An academic colleague, whose native language is English, checked this thesis for accuracy and to limit human biases involved when presenting the findings of this study. In addition, I presented the study’s preliminary findings to an expert in the field of Amish studies and categories for coding the findings were discussed together.

**Limitations**

As a result of the population studied in this research, I had to face several challenges and limitations. First of all, the Amish are not naturally open to invite outsiders to their communities or even homes. Hence, I had to work with a gatekeeper, who is well known in the Amish
community of the Holmes County Settlement. Since my gatekeeper was always the first to
contact prospective study participants, it was often challenging for me to make clear to
participants what my research study was about. Often times, Amish families turned down the
request for an interview because they feared that the information they provided would be
connected to their names and published. Also, since Amish communities do not believe in higher
education, a research study from an outsider did not sound appealing to them.

Since my gatekeeper organized all of the interviews with members of Amish communities
for me, I had little influence on scheduling them. This means that I had no influence on who
would be present at home while I conducted the interviews. In the case of Jacob and Ruth, the
interview took place in a combined session. Since the Amish society is of patriarchal structure,
interviewing husband and wife at the same time may have had an impact on whether or not Ruth
felt comfortable speaking out freely. Hence, the combined interview session at Jacob and Ruth’s
house may have resulted in providing more biased and maybe even self-censored information.

Due to the challenges of access to Amish interview partners and the limited period of
time available, I was only able to conduct a limited number of interviews. Although the number
of interviews and observations was limited, I was able to confirm data found in other sources
such as the review of literature and audiovisual materials.

In addition, my own position as a researcher has to be considered as a limitation in itself
since I have no affiliation to an Amish community, did not grow up Amish, and I will never be a
full member of an Amish community. Thus, I can never fully understand what it means to be
Amish or to grow up Amish. However, my academic training in the field of social and cultural
anthropology has tooled me with a sensibility to diverse populations which allows me to develop
a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Amish way of life. Certain features of my research approach therefore resemble (to a very limited extent) the emic perspective.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The primary focus of this study was to explore how social and cultural factors influence Amish adults in their parenting approach. Four Amish participants, living in the Holmes County Settlement in Northeast Ohio and two experts in the field of the Amish participated in individual open-ended semi-structured interview sessions that lasted approximately two hours. The qualitative analysis of these interview sessions provided the data presented in this chapter. The results of this case study are organized by themes. First, the Amish philosophy of cultural socialization is presented. Next, the life span development of Amish communities is discussed in detail. This discussion also includes findings on the role of Amish schools and predominant patterns of parental authority among Amish communities. The Amish school system is discussed in relation to the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Wisconsin v. Yoder and the section on parental authority utilizes Baumrind’s (1978) and Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) categorization of parenting styles. Finally, the findings and analysis of life span development of Amish communities is related to Erikson’s theory (1993) on the eight stages of personality development.

Amish Philosophy of Cultural Socialization

The following section provides an insight to the findings in relation to the Amish philosophy of cultural socialization. Two major themes were found relevant for the discussion of Amish socialization processes, namely Ordnung and Gelassenheit. In both cases, first the findings are presented in an objective manner and later they are discussed in relation to the literature as presented in the literature review section of this thesis.

Ordnung and Amish Life
When all of the study participants were asked about processes of cultural socialization among Amish communities, the role of *Ordnung* was evident. When asked about how one can understand the concept of *Ordnung*, Kim, the expert on the Amish, who runs a business offering Amish tourism tours, provided a definition of this cultural concept:

*Ordnung* to me, you know, it does not have to be a complex issue. It’s order. I looked up the word *Ordnung*: it’s a set of rules. It has to be something that is unwritten. That’s what’s unique about it. *Ordnung* is an unwritten set of rules and you learn the *Ordnung* as you are growing up as a child by seeing it acted out.

Since the *Ordnung* cannot be found in the form of a handbook and is only taught verbally, the expert also emphasized that it is important that the rules and regulations, which a church community agrees upon in the *Ordnung*, have to be acted out on a regular basis. Jacob, the Amish bishop, and his wife Ruth confirmed this by agreeing that the *Ordnung* is mostly lived in their daily lives. Martha and Miriam also verified this statement and described in detail how the *Ordnung* is part of their daily lives, as the following section illustrates.

**Ordnung and clothing.** When asked about the role *Ordnung* plays in her daily life, Martha stated that it “speaks of that we wear caps and the length of the dresses and how they are made.” Miriam argues that the *Ordnung* “helps me as a line of where to keep my children, to dress my children, that all are the same.” Both women emphasized that the *Ordnung* provides guidelines for clothing. Their daughters’ dresses can be any color, as long as the fabric is plain and without any patterns. Martha added that only girls wear light colors, whereas older ladies would rather wear darker colored dresses. Another regulation covered by the *Ordnung* is that all female members of Amish communities are not allowed to cut their hair and that they have to
cover their heads with caps. As for male members of Amish communities, Martha added that their clothes should be mostly dark and without any zippers. Another important aspect of the men’s attire is the hat and, if married, the beard. Both Miriam and Martha stated that the Ordnung also regulates the length and look of Amish men’s beards. Miriam and Martha also pointed out that sometimes the church members help each other with making children’s clothes. However, Martha quickly added that she made almost all of her children’s clothes herself.

**Ordnung and modern amenities.** Another aspect the participants discussed when asked about the role in their daily life, was the use of modern amenities. Miriam explained to me that the Amish bishops get together once a year to decide whether or not to add new regulations to the Ordnung. This was confirmed by the Amish bishop and his wife. Jacob stated: “We have of course some rules that we work on. There are always new things that are trying to come in.” New regulations are discussed when all bishops meet. According to Jacob, this happens once in a while at a place that is large enough to accommodate around 120 bishops. At those meetings the bishops decide on new additions to the Ordnungs. Here Martha provided some examples for new amenities regulated by the Ordnung. First, she pointed out that the regulations for when girls have to start to wear a cap have been changed. She stated that when her girls were young, they had to start wearing the cap at the age of six to seven months “but right now it’s a year old till they do that.” Next she discussed the regulations concerning the use of electricity and gas. She argued that the Old Order Amish do not have electricity in the house because “we don’t want to, you know, have the same as the world.” When asked about gas lightning in her house, she explained that although it is similar to electricity one cannot just “put a switch on to get the light on. You have to have a lighter or a match that’s the difference there.” She went on to explain
that it is important, that turning on the light is a manual process. She also stated that “years ago it wouldn’t have been allowed, but gradually it ... it comes.” In terms of modern farm machinery, Martha states that although the family owns a tractor, they are not allowed to use it on the farmland. The tractors are only used when transporting or picking up bulky, heavy goods such as lumber. Kim, who offers Amish tours pointed out that the support system provided through the Amish community helps the individuals to deal with worldly temptations. She stated that the Amish would discuss questions such as “How are you dealing with this? How are you dealing with the phone? How are you dealing with not having the internet or a website for your business? How are we to deal with it as a culture?”

**Ordnung and community.** Not only does *Ordnung* function as a set of rules, it also serves to build community within the Amish society. Here Kim stated that “in order to maintain the style of living there has got to be order throughout the community or, in other words, they may call it the brotherhood.” She emphasized that it is crucial to understand the common basis of Amish communities in order to be able to analyze their collectivistic lifestyle. She also added that the strength of Amish communities draws from sacrificially giving up the will of the individual: “...whenever people want their own way it falls apart. So you’ve got to be sacrificial and come together. And that’s the strength of the culture. It’s based on the separation and giving up your own way in adhering to or being obedient to the leader of your church.”

Although the Amish society is very much structured, community and interaction with community members plays a crucial role in Amish society. Martha explained that her church consists of about 20 to 25 families. She added that if a church grows to the size of around 40 families, it will be divided. She stated that “the bishop and the ministers, they kind of decide,
where the line will be, kind of in the middle of the church. And then one part will have one Sunday church and the other does the other Sunday.” When talking about the division in the middle of the church, Martha meant that the church will generally be split in the geographical middle. Here Miriam stated, that “this is how we decide who goes where.” Through this regulation, church districts are not overly big. Martha stated that her church district is about two miles wide. This regulation is especially important since the Amish travel by buggy only. Here Martha added that in most cases they are actually able to walk to church. Since she is living on the very end of her own church district it also happens that she and her family would attend church in a neighboring church district, which is closer to their home. All Amish participants confirmed that church meetings are held every other Sunday in the private home of a family, who is a community member. Since church meetings are only every other Sunday, Martha also explained that sometimes they would go and visit their brothers or sisters and attend their church services.

Jacob, the Amish bishop, was able to provide more insight into the church hierarchy. When asked about how he became a bishop, he stated “I was a minster at first, and then we needed a bishop. So three of the ministers were in the lot. And that’s the way I became a bishop.” This was in 1972. Right now, the church he attends consists of 27 families. Jacob and his wife Ruth were also able to define the function of a bishop within the church community:

Jacob: The bishop is supposed to be the leader of the church and not the boss.

Ruth: And he is also their friend.

Jacob: That’s kind of the way we look at it. But we deal with the people. We work with the people.
Other example of the importance of community were expressed by Miriam and Ruth. Miriam pointed out that after our interview she had to go to another church member’s house to work on a community quilting project. Besides several community projects, she also told me that she gets together with her sisters once a week. For this so called “sisters’ day”, she, her married sisters, and sometimes also her mother, get together at the first coffee break of the day. Miriam stated that they then work on projects together, such as needlework, while chatting with each other. Miriam also told me that she always takes her small children along to these meetings where they get the chance to play with their cousins. Ruth also provided an example for community activities within the family:

Our family here has monthly gatherings on the first Wednesday of every month. We take turns having this. It’s called the gathering and we help each other work. And it’s not only the female members, sometimes the guys go too, especially if one of the farmers has it.

**Ordnung and finances.** Another example for helping each other within the Amish community is the existence of a so-called Amish helping fund. When asked about how Amish families are even able to afford having so many children, and how they manage to start a farm, which is normally very cost intensive, the bishop introduced me to the concept of the Amish helping fund. The fund helps young people when they want to buy a home and start a family. Jacob stated that the young families have to stay in the means of their income from what they want to buy. If they want to buy a $120,000 home they have to have a job where maybe they make a $25,000 to $30,000. If not, they can’t get money. [...] It’s a responsibility for them. Every month you make a
payment, not just once you got it. And maybe sometimes they don’t have it, but if they did come and say: “We are just short. We’ll do it next month.” Ok – we’ll go along with that.

In addition, Ruth stated that this system almost works better than if a young couple borrows money from their parents. Martha added that of course sometimes people borrow money from banks as well. However, if young people borrow money from the Amish helping fund they have to pay less interest than at a bank. Martha also explained where the money in this fund is coming from: “you know, old people and rich people they put their money in there.” Jacob also emphasized that this fund is run by Amish people only, with bishops having the oversight of it. The bishop also added that if a family should be short of money due to some expensive medical bills the church community will organize fundraisers, such as benefit auctions. The church will also step in if a family is not able to live off the husband’s income.

**Ordnung and structure.** The community factor and the importance of structure and order in the Amish society is also present in daily routines. All Amish participants reported that their days are very much structured. Martha provided me with a schedule of a typical day when her husband was still running the farm. “We got up at 5, usually, and then the milking, and maybe at 7 o’clock we were ready for breakfast. And soon after that, the children went to school. I got their lunch packed and sent them off to school, and had morning devotions.” She and her husband, as well as the smaller children would then have lunch together. All Amish participants stated that they would normally have lunch at 11:30 a.m. Next, Martha told me that the children would return from school at around 3:00 p.m. and they would help around the house, maybe carry wood for the stove, and maybe feed the chickens and gather the eggs, and just have kind of their chores till supper time at like 5
o’clock. And then after that it’s milking again. So the boys they have their chores to do.

And the girls maybe wash the dishes and straighten up the house.

In terms of bedtimes, again all of the Amish participants provided the same information. Most of the time it is between 9:00 and 10:00 evenings. In addition, Martha emphasized that in winter they would go to bed earlier, whereas in summer they would sometimes also stay up until 10:30 p.m. The bishop, Jacob, pointed out that they always wanted to be on time for their meals. However, he added that sometimes important things come up and dinner was delayed. If some work on the farm needed to be finished before going to sleep, bedtime would be pushed back as well. All of the Amish participants stated that the whole family would sit down to have dinner together, even the very small children. Miriam even stated that in their family this also applies to lunch. Kim summarized this habit as follows:

At 5 o’clock you sit down and have dinner and you bow for silence before your meal. And everyday, everyday, it’s the same thing. So you start to instill that “Yes, now is the time that we bow for our prayer.” In a way it becomes like a routine. And if there is anything out of the routine: “Ok. We are used to do it this way. Why are we changing it?” So the obedience I see is through the consistency of their life.

**Ordnung and obedience.** With obedience, Kim, the businesswoman touched on a very important aspect in regards to the *Ordnung*. She added that she sees obedience through the consistency of life. She stated that “The culture is, what’s a good word here, it’s kind of molded. When you grow up Amish you are kind of in the mold of a realm of where your behavior, your obedience to things keeps shaping.” None of the Amish participants provided information about obedience. However, Martha explained the concept of *Bann* to me. According to Martha, *Bann*
means that if a community member decides to marry outside the Amish church, then they have to be banned, basically because they are no longer obedient to their church community. Martha explained that while the community or family members are banned, you are not supposed to interact with them too much. You are allowed to talk to church members under ban and you are even allowed to interact with them. However, you are not supposed to eat at the same table with them. This regulation emphasizes again the importance of common meals. Here Martha added “it’s not nice to be in a family, you know, not sitting at the table to eat or something like that.” She also stated that this regulation is used to scare other church members from doing the same thing. According to Martha, the ban exists “for a length time or maybe if they get in good standards in that other church. Then the banning would be taken off. That ... yeah ... that happens ... too often.” An interesting finding here was that the Bann will not be applied if a community member marries into another Amish church that might be more conservative.

One of these more conservative groups within the Amish are the Swartzentruber Amish. Martha referred to them as the “basket people”, because Swartzentruber families are well known for their basket production. Swartzentruber families don’t have any gas in their house, not for cooking or lightning. They cook their meals on a very traditional, old-fashioned stove which is fired with wood. In Swartzentruber homes, there is no running hot water, and cold water has to be pumped manually into the house. When I asked Martha, why there are so many differences among her group, the Old Order Amish, and the Swartzentruber Amish she stated “I can’t really explain that. That’s just their group. [...] Yeah, they follow their rules. And they ... they mostly stay like that. They don’t gradually, you know, drift on like this community did already.”
**Ordnung and good life.** Another aspect of the *Ordnung*, namely the importance of enjoying a good life, was also illustrated by the Amish participants. When describing their church routines, Martha mentioned that on the Sundays her church does not meet, they would go and visit friends or “just take the Sunday off and rest and read at home or something like that.” Jacob provided another example of amenities deemed acceptable by the *Ordnung*. His grandson helped him with cooking maple syrup. After they were done with cooking the maple syrup they went on a big sale where people would sell their own produce. Normally Jacob would have gone on his own, but this time he took his grandson along as a kind of reward.

In terms of the good life, Mark, the college professor, shared some of his observations within Amish communities. When discussing taking some time off, he stated that the approach toward vacation has changed a lot. He argued that now they travel all over the U.S. You would not believe the number of chartered buses that come out of Holmes County going to Florida, and not only Florida, but Niagara Falls, out west. New York City! There are Amish tours to New York City!

He added that this is a recent development, because now that more and more Amish are no longer working on the farm, they have time and money to travel. “It’s unbelievable! And they’ve got time and money now, which they never had when they were on the farm. And it’s ... it has really changed things a lot.” However, he also added that this has an impact on the family dynamics and especially on the children because it is a new phenomenon for them as well. Here the professor added that “they grow up expecting vacations, you know, every year or two years or how often they go. I suspect they spin some of the rules of the *Ordnung* a little bit when they’re on vacation, but I don’t know how much.”
**Discussion of Ordnung**

All of the above presented themes in relation to *Ordnung* were also found in the literature and briefly discussed in the literature review of this thesis. As Buck (1980) described, the Amish culture is indeed very collectivist and hierarchically organized. The important role of community is evident and was emphasized by all Amish participants. An interesting finding was the importance of interdependence and reciprocity. This is especially emphasized by the Amish bishop when he discussed his own role in his church community, namely that he sees himself as the leader but not as the boss. Also the fact of financial support from the church and the Amish community through fundraisers or the Amish helping fund are a sign of the strong community and that all members can rely on interdependence. In addition, a fund run exclusively by the Amish community allows the Amish to be less dependent on the outside world and means less interaction with the “English.” The central role of community, interdependence, and reciprocity also has an impact on family life. Amish parents instill the importance of community by acting out a very collectivistic life devoted to the larger society. Miriam, for example, takes her children along to “sisters’ day.” This way her children become familiar with community interaction at a very young age. The children grow into learning that it is important to meet with family members on a regular basis. Also Martha’s and Ruth’s statements can be related to the purpose of instructing the children in the importance of community life.

As Kraybill (2001) stated the *Ordnung* indeed represents a blueprint for expected behavior in the community, and represents the structure of the whole way of life. This can be verified by the strict regulations of daily routines and regulations on how to dress as described in the *Ordnung*. Also Hostetler’s (1993) statement that the *Ordnung* remains an oral and unwritten...
form, which is renewed semiannually by the different church congregations, was confirmed by all Amish participants. The constant renewal of the *Ordnung* is crucial because it is then when the Amish bishops decide if new amenities or new regulations are added to the set of rules. Kraybill’s (2001) statement that the *Ordnung* evolved gradually over the decades so that the church can make sure to find a balance between tradition and change was verified by Martha. She stated that things in her community changed over time. She provided the example of regulations for when baby girls have to start wearing the caps. In addition, Martha also provided insight in changes in terms of using gas as a main power source in the house or the use of tractors in relation to farm work. Although the Amish are allowed to use tractors, they are not allowed to use them for their work on fields. If they were allowed to use tractors on the fields as well, this would have too big of an impact on their daily life and in particular their family life. Hence, the *Ordnung* does not only represent a blueprint for expected behavior in the larger community, it also has an impact on how Amish families structure their whole way of life. Amish parents strictly follow the church rules, for example, in how to dress their children. Following the *Ordnung* instills in children to live a life devoted to tradition. Kim, the businesswoman, also argued along those lines when she stated that the Amish are not so open to change if it has an impact on their routines, their daily life, and their family life.

This statement by Kim can also be read in relation to obedience to the *Ordnung*. As Buck (1980) argued, the self is at the bottom of the Amish hierarchy and the individual should not leave one’s mark in the world but should be marked by God by purposefully living in the community following obediently the rules. This was again emphasized by Kim when she stated that being sacrificial is the strength of the Amish culture. Also, children at a very young age are
trained to sacrificially give up the individual will and yield to others. Buck (1980) also stated that it is crucial that the Amish stay within the bounds of community and church disciplines. If a member of the Amish church decides to cross those boundaries, he or she has to be banned from their community. Here Martha provided a detailed insight on how banning takes place within the community. The most interesting part here is that community members under a Bann are not allowed to sit at the same table as their family members when having a meal. For a non-Amish this type of punishment might not sound harsh, but here we have to understand how important it is within the Amish culture that the whole family would sit down and have their meals together.

The common meals are another crucial element to build bonds and create community within families and the Amish community as a whole.

Buck (1980) also stated that besides living a life strictly following the rules of the Ordnung, it is also important to enjoy a good life. Enjoying a good life meant to Buck that the Amish accept and partake in amenities deemed acceptable by the Ordnung. Hence, I was prepared to learn more about activities involving community interaction. Examples for these activities were provided by Miriam and Ruth. Miriam described in detail working on a community quilting project or meeting her sisters on sisters’ day. Ruth explained the monthly meetings, called the gathering, to me. However, I was surprised to find that recreation and vacation also play a central role within Amish communities. One of my participants, Martha, had just recently returned from a vacation in Florida. When I asked her for the reasons of her travel I intuitively asked her if she was visiting family there. It turned out that one of her daughters had purchased a holiday home in Florida and now all family members take their turns going down for vacation to take some time off and enjoy themselves. I then discussed these
findings with Mark, the college professor; I stated that I did not expect that the Amish go on vacations. I asked him whether he thinks that recreation and vacation became more and more important within Amish communities and I also wanted to learn more about his experiences in regards to the Amish going on vacations. Mark emphasized that in the past “vacation” used to be a bad word, but structural changes within the Amish community, namely that more and more Amish are no longer running a farm, have had an impact on the approach toward vacation. It just became easier for them to take time off. Since the Amish participants of this study live in one of the largest areas of Amish tourism, Holmes County, (Luthy, 1994), they are becoming more and more exposed to tourists interested in and fascinated by their lifestyle. Maybe by serving all these tourists, the Amish learned a new life concept, namely to take time off and explore other places and experience acculturation through tourism. Mark also talked about the impact this new development may have on the family life. Amish children nowadays grow up expecting to go on vacation and take time off. Since this is a more recent development, one has to wait for an impact until the recent children generation becomes parents themselves. Then researchers may want to find out how this new parent generation then incorporate this new approach toward living a good life into their daily routines. In conclusion, the *Ordnung* has a strong influence on daily life and family life, since members of Amish communities have to strictly follow their *Ordnung* and live a life in obedience. This is instilled in children at a very young age. In addition, over time more and more regulations were added to the *Ordnungs* and new amenities deemed to be acceptable. How much of an impact the non-Amish community had on this development, which may influence in particular the family life of Amish communities, needs yet to be determined.
Gelassenheit and Amish Life

Discussing the concept of *Gelassenheit* with my study participants lead to very interesting findings. None of the Amish participants, as well as the businesswoman, were actually able to relate to the term *Gelassenheit*. When asked to provide insights into the concept of *Gelassenheit*, Kim answered as follows:

*Gelassenheit* - you know, I know that word - *Gelassenheit* - I hardly ever use it. I hardly ever teach that. And I don’t know why I haven’t. *Gelassenheit* - isn’t that more of a, gosh, I know that I’ve heard the word, but I don’t have really delved into that, that word. But it has something to do with their way of life. [...] But I can’t say a whole lot on that to be honest. I just don’t hear the word used a lot. And so I’ve never really taken it to a different level with that particular word. Not that it is not part of their way of life.

Kim thought that the Amish bishop might be able to explain this term to me. However, when I asked the bishop and his wife if they could possibly define the concept of *Gelassenheit* for me, they seemed to be a bit lost. Ruth asked me if *Gelassenheit* is a book, and when I explained to her that it is actually a German term, she replied: “I guess that’s a word that we don’t use.” And her husband, the bishop, emphasized this statement by adding: “No we don’t.” Also Martha replied to the same question in a similar manner: “G-G-G-Gelassenheit? Now what ... what does that word mean?” When I asked Miriam if she had ever heard of the term *Gelassenheit* she replied with a simple “No.” Finally, I was able to discuss these preliminary findings with Mark, the college professor, to get an explanation for why the Amish participants were not familiar with this term. Since Mark used the term *Gelassenheit* in one of his publications as well, I wanted to learn more about why it is used in the literature, but is not commonly used by the Amish in my
study. Hence, when I asked him if the term Gelassenheit is a term that was put on the Amish, he responded:

Yah! That’s one. I heard Don Kraybill is writing a book on Gelassenheit. He acknowledges that this is not a term the Amish use in everyday life. He still thinks it is useful for an all encompassing world view, but yeah, as an anthropologist, you know, it’s ... I prefer the emic, you know, insider points of view.

Although the Amish participants were not able to relate to the term Gelassenheit, they were able to provide information on topics related to this cultural concept. For example, all of the Amish participants were able to explain the terms Hochmut and Demut to me. Miriam explained that Hochmut means pride. She added quickly that she doesn’t know the line for what is considered Hochmut or how to judge someone who shows forms of behavior considered Hochmut. Martha defined it by stating: “Hochmut, that would be, you know, dressing up and wanting to be noticed, you know.” Although Miriam defined Hochmut as pride, Ruth gave a very interesting explanation for why it is still important to show some pride overall.

You know, we are into this, because we want to be into this and it’s not something that we do for recognition or... It’s just not us, to try to be on top. I mean yes, you have to be, how do I say ... it’s important to be busy, it’s important to have ... pride is not a word that I would want to use. But you have to have some pride to a certain degree to keep your things in order, to get your work done, and to do it right. But I don’t like pride, I don’t like pride as in “I am better than thou! I’m here because I’m on top of things!” I don’t like that kind of pride! But we do have to have some pride to a certain extent, just to
keep our things in order and to be leveled out in a neat way. Maybe pride is not the right word, but I can’t find another word for it.

However, if a child would show Hochmut in the form of dressing up Miriam stated that she “would say something to discourage her, something like ‘It’s too nice!’” Jacob, the bishop, and his wife Ruth elaborated more on how they would generally react when a family member shows Hochmut. Ruth stated that teaching children not to show Hochmut also depends on the differences in character: “Some people have the ability to say: ‘You don’t want to be that way!’ You know... And yet some people would maybe even get grilled... and tell them in no uncertain terms.” Here Jacob added, that this might even happen in a very aggressive manner. What followed was a conversation between Ruth and Jacob of how to best educate children not to live a life of Hochmut.

Ruth: Everybody has their own little mode and way of relating to the children. And there are some children that are going to listen to that, and then there are some children that are not going to listen to that. And that’s just like it has always been and always will be, I believe. Wouldn’t you say?

Jacob: Probably the most important thing is to show the children terms of how it should be and how to live their life. That would help probably more than anything else.

Ruth: And I think that if the children see that the parents are happy and satisfied, it’s going to rope off. But I am not saying that they are not going to have their time in life when they kind of...

Jacob: ...rebel.
In order for children to adopt the more valued approach *Demut*, parents try to model a life in *Demut* for them. Again, Miriam defined the term *Demut* and stated that it means humbleness. In addition, Martha explained that “we try to, you know, to live a life they are satisfied with, so that they also want that.”

Another aspect that also falls in the category of *Demut* is the yielding lifestyle found in Amish communities. In terms of yielding to siblings and other community members, Miriam provided the example of four- to five-year-olds accompanying their older siblings to school. Miriam explained: “They go with them to school and they sit besides their brothers and sisters and learn to be quiet.” Martha added an example in regards to material goods. She emphasized that parents are trying to teach their children that they should also learn to work without expecting a reward. “They have to learn to do stuff without always being paid or getting something.” This statement was backed up by a comment made by the Amish bishop, when I asked him how the community deals with children who would expect their parents to get certain things for them. His response was: “I would say, it’s not our way of living like that. Let’s put it this way. We teach our children you don’t just get all you want. We get what we need!”

**Discussion of Gelassenheit**

In relation to the literature review of this thesis, the findings of my fieldwork in the Holmes County Settlement had a clear outcome. The term *Gelassenheit*, as introduced and used by Hurst and McConnell (2010), Kraybill (2001), and Hostetler (1993) is clearly a term put on but not developed by the Amish culture. According to Creswell (2008), one could say that the concept of *Gelassenheit* is an etic concept. As mentioned in the methodology chapter of this thesis, this is a prime example of how an exclusive focus on the etic approach proves insufficient
with respect to the task of understanding Amish culture. Looking back on what Kraybill (2001) considered to be part of the concept *Gelassenheit*, a lot of the behavior falling into this category can actually be explained by strictly regarding it as part of the *Ordnung*. The emphasis on selflessness, humility, or meekness is also found in the regulations of the *Ordnung*. These qualities are, for example, reflected in the Amish approach toward community as the Amish life is devoted to the religious community and the brotherhood. As Buck (1980) stated, the self is somewhat “buried” in the surrounding faith and tradition. He also points out that the individual is not supposed to leave an individual mark in the world but live a life marked by God. All of these descriptions can be considered as selfless, humble, and meek patterns of behavior.

Kraybill (2001) argued that *Gelassenheit* also highlights the collective orientation of the Amish self-understanding, since it stands in sharp contrast to values of the modern, individualistic, mainstream American culture. Again, one can argue that the *Ordnung* actually regulates how the Amish society should deal with the “outside” world. This is especially evident in the regulations in terms of modern amenities. According to the findings from the Amish participants of this study, the *Ordnung* regulates the use and restrictions of modern amenities and provides a clear guideline of how and when to use modern tools.

In my opinion, it is not necessary to introduce an etic term such as *Gelassenheit* to describe the Amish society and their approach to life. When Kraybill stated that the individual following the rules of *Gelassenheit* finds fulfillment in the service for others, such as the parents, the community, and, of course, God, I think he tried to use the term *Gelassenheit* to describe the large scope of the *Ordnung*. Kraybill also claimed that the concept of *Gelassenheit* is represented in various arenas of Amish life, such as values, ritual life, the way to dress, the use of
horse and carriage, the use of the common language Pennsylvania Dutch, or the social structure of Amish communities. All of the above are actually categories discussed in the *Ordnung* as well. Even living a life in *Demut* can be related to regulations found in the *Ordnung*. Also the aspect of education and the emphasis on hard work and saving money are categories which are regulated by the *Ordnung*.

To me it is not quite clear why Kraybill (2001) extended the use of the concept of *Gelassenheit* to so many spheres of the Amish daily life. In contrast, Hostetler (1993) used the term *Gelassenheit* to explain the parochial approach of Anabaptist churches. By using the term *Gelassenheit* Hostetler illustrated that, although the Amish church teaches “the new birth” or “regeneration” just as other Christian churches do, the religious community of the Amish is different than other revivalistic groups. Although the biblical texts might be the same, the Amish interpret them in a different manner, which, according to Hostetler, can be explained by the Anabaptist theme of *Gelassenheit*. “As can be demonstrated from historical sources, the Amish stress the Anabaptist theme of *Gelassenheit* with its many meanings: resignation, calmness of mind, composure, staidness, conquest of selfishness, long-suffering, collectedness, silence of the soul, tranquility, inner surrender, yieldedness, equanimity, and detachment” (Hostetler, 1993, p. 306). Since this thesis does not claim to analyze and discuss religious doctrines, my findings lead me to refrain from using the concept of *Gelassenheit* for explaining societal phenomena and in particular patterns of parental authority.

**Life Span Development of Amish Communities**

The following section provides an insight to the findings in relation to the Amish life cycle and how processes of socialization are taking place in Amish communities. The findings
are presented and organized by different age stages which are of relevance in Amish society. The findings mainly derived from extensive observations in an Amish family and a New Order Amish school. After the findings are presented in an objective manner, they are discussed in relation to the literature review of this thesis. In addition, the findings are then related to Erikson’s theory (1993) and Baumrind’s (1978; 1971) and Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) framework of patterns of parental control.

**Infancy**

Findings for this category are derived mainly from the Amish participants of this study. Since Miriam’s youngest daughter turned one on the day the interview took place, I was able to make some very interesting observations not only of the child’s behavior but also how the parents and grandparents interacted with the baby. Besides the interaction between the baby and adult members of the family, I was also able to witness how the older siblings interacted with the baby.

When I first entered the house, I was welcomed by Miriam and her three daughters between the ages two and five. Miriam gave me a short tour of her house and asked me to take a seat at the dining room table. She left the room to pick up the baby girl from her baby bed. Miriam entered the dining room with her youngest daughter on her arm. When the baby spotted me, she immediately started to cry. Miriam just briefly explained to me, that this is her normal reaction, when she meets a stranger. Although the baby was crying, Miriam took a seat next to me at the dining room table and comforted the baby by distracting it.

The baby girl wore a dark purple dress of the exact same color and fabric as her older sisters did. Kim, who organizes tours through the Amish country, provided me with the
information that, no matter if boy or girl, Amish babies wear the same clothing. They wear a
dress-like outfit with buttons in the back, which is just long enough to cover the diaper. The
baby’s legs were not covered, but she was wearing black socks on her feet.

The baby stopped crying after only a few moments and when Miriam got up to fix some
tea for the two of us, she put the baby down on the floor. The baby was not too happy about
being put on the floor and started crawling toward the kitchen. The oldest of the three other
girls, who is turning six in summer, walked over to the baby and picked her up from the floor.
This time the only five year old girl took care of comforting the baby in a very skilled manner.
During the interview, the baby was sitting on Miriam’s lap most of the time. While we were
talking, Miriam fed the baby small snacks and gave her something to drink.

At lunch time, at around 11:30 a.m., Miriam’s husband returned from work on the farm.
He greeted all of us and after washing his hands, he immediately took the baby away from
Miriam. He took a seat on a sofa, located in close proximity to the dining room table, and started
to play with his daughter. The other girls sat down next to him, and they all started to interact
with the baby. A few minutes later, the grandparents came over, and first the grandmother and
later even the grandfather held the baby and interacted with her. At all times, the baby was quiet
and obviously felt comfortable with being surrounded by all family members.

In terms of feeding the babies, I asked the Amish participants if the babies would also sit
at the table with the rest of the family. Miriam stated that all family members sit down to have a
meal together and the baby would sit with the rest of the family as well. Jacob, the Amish
bishop, also provided insight in how meals took place in their family of thirteen. He told me that
sometimes the babies would be fed before the actual meal, but still would sit in high chairs at the
table with the rest of the family. He also added that “sometimes the ladies would sit on a separate table and have children right there and feed them there.” He emphasized that it depended on the situation; however, in their family, they always tried to sit down all at one table when they had their meals.

**Discussion of Infancy**

Hostetler and Huntington (1971) argued that the Amish recognize future sex roles, but only very little differences in care-giving between boys and girls can be recognized. Unfortunately, I was not able to make observations in a family with a baby boy, so that I would be able to draw comparisons of how a family interacts with a baby boy or a baby girl. However, my informants assured me that sometimes baby boys could be mistaken as baby girls because they are dressed the same way. Hostetler and Huntington also stated that each baby is seen as a contribution to the security of the family and the whole community and is therefore always greeted happily as a new member of the group. Especially the mother of seven children with only one son, assured me that every baby was welcomed in their family the same way, no matter whether it was a girl or a boy.

According to Hostetler and Huntington, the Amish think that it is important that babies are not fed alone. In a culture where common meals have such a central role, it is no surprise that the youngest community members should sit at the table when having a meal together. The findings have proven that eating is indeed a very important social activity.

In regards to the authors’ argument that the Amish pay a lot of attention to their babies’ physical and social needs, my observations found that this is very true for the observed Amish family. When the baby was fussy, she was comforted by a number of family members, including
the five-year-old sister. However, the family not only interacted with the baby when it was whiny; all family members talked to the baby and integrated her into the family’s daily routines. The baby’s reaction when she first saw me showed that she recognized me as an outsider with whom she has not built trust yet.

**Little Children**

When conducting the interview with Miriam, I was able to make some very interesting observations of parent-child interaction with the family’s three girls aged two, four, and five. As I entered Miriam’s house, I was greeted by her and her three daughters. In the beginning, the girls were very shy and they all tried to hide behind their mother. When Miriam asked me to take a seat in the dining room, only the two-year-old girl joined me and climbed in her high chair. She looked at me with eyes wide open and it seemed that she was very interested in me. When Miriam got back in the room, with the baby on her arm, the other two girls accompanied her. The five-year-old sat down next to her mother, and the four-year-old was standing right beside her mother.

When Miriam gave me a brief tour of her house, I saw that a whole section of the living room was dedicated to the children. There they had some toys (one thing looked like a little mini-kitchen, and there was also a bed for a baby-doll), and books organized in one corner of the room. Miriam pointed out that the three older children would play here while we were doing the interview. However, during the whole period of time, the children were always around us in the dining room. Sometimes they would get some toys from the living room, but most of the time they were actually not playing but sitting with us at the table. All of the time they were around us, they never interrupted the interview and were very well behaved.
When Miriam asked if I would like to have some tea, she put the baby girl down on the floor where she started to be a bit unhappy because of the change of location. Her older sister, the five-year-old, immediately walked over, picked her up and comforted her in a very skilled manner. Meanwhile, the four-year-old helped her mother in the kitchen. Miriam asked her to put some glasses with water for the girls on the table. The girl carried first two glasses of water, and then one glass and a small spout cup for the baby to the table. She was very comfortable doing this and it almost seemed as if she is very used to doing this on a regular basis. Both, the five- and the four-year-old helped her mother without being asked. They just knew who had to take care of what without getting orders from Miriam.

While the two older girls were very shy and hardly looked at me, the two-year-old was constantly staring at me and even started to interact with me. She wanted me to hand her some snacks which were placed on the table. Although Miriam knew that my native language is German since I mentioned that in my study consent form, she was obviously not aware how much Pennsylvania Dutch I am actually able to understand. Miriam asked her two-year-old daughter in Pennsylvania Dutch, who was sitting right across from her at the table, if she wanted a cookie. As a response, the girl nodded. Since the cookies were sitting out of her reach in the middle of the table, I just reached for the plate and handed it to the two-year-old girl. Miriam looked at me in astonishment, and asked me if I just understood what she said. When I confirmed, she addressed me directly speaking Pennsylvania Dutch and said that we should start also talking in their language. It was then that the two older girls looked up and started to show interest in me as well. Every now and then Miriam added a few sentences in Pennsylvania Dutch, and I responded either in German or English, since I am only able to understand parts of
their language, but never learned to speak it. A few minutes after the family found out that I was able to understand Pennsylvania Dutch, the five-year-old girl got up and whispered something into her mother’s ear. Miriam said, that she wanted us to use Pennsylvania Dutch exclusively, because that way she would be able to understand our conversation as well. When their father and grandparents came over at around lunch time, the girls were very excited to tell them that I was able to interact with them in their language.

At lunch time, when their father, grandfather, and grandmother came over to spend some time with us, the girls happily greeted all three of them. When the father washed his hands after doing fieldwork the four- and five-year old girl “assisted” him. One was handing him the soap and the other one was handing him a towel. The grandfather took a seat at the dining room table, whereas the father and grandmother took a seat on a sofa located close to the dining room table. All three girls climbed on the one or the other lap and interacted with all of the family members.

After the interview was completed, I started to pack my things and was about to get up and say my good-byes. At this moment the two-year-old girl approached me with a book in hands. She talked to me in Pennsylvania Dutch. She obviously wanted me to look at the book with her and to read a story to her. The first book she brought was a book about Easter. She pointed at various drawings and explained to me what she saw in the pictures. I repeated after her, but since she is only two, she was hard to understand and her pronunciation was often times not correct. So whenever I repeated a word in a wrong way, she would shake her head and insisted that I should repeat that word again. We ended up looking at the book using two languages, namely Pennsylvania Dutch and German. When she brought the book, her sisters first watched from a little distance, but soon I was surrounded by the girls. Two were standing
right beside me and the third, the oldest one, climbed on the table so that she was also able to take a closer look at the pictures. After we read through the Easter book, the two-year-old ran, accompanied by her sisters, into the living room to get another book. We went through three books together. When I arrived at their house, the girls were so shy that they wouldn’t even look at me. A few hours later, they were standing very close and were even playing with the ring on my finger while listening to me describing the pictures in German.

According to Miriam and her mother-in-law, children at this age group also start to accompany their brothers and sisters for a day at school. Once they have experienced this, they would also play “school” at home. Sometimes the scholars would join them and function as the teachers. Besides playing “school”, the children of this family have also a variety of toys. In addition to playing with toys, they also like to play outside or play with their pets on the farm.

Discussion of Little Children

Hostetler and Huntington (1971) argued that the second stage of the Amish age category ranges from children who just stared to walk up until the age of six or seven, when children start to go to school. This categorization was confirmed by my observations of the Amish family. Miriam referred to her older children, who are already attending school in a different manner. Also, when she pointed out that her five-year-old daughter, who turns six in summer, would start school in fall, she added that she is becoming a big girl now.

According to Hostetler and Huntington (1971), it is crucial at this stage that parents create a safe environment for their children where they should protect them from physical and moral danger. I guess the big question here is what is considered as “moral danger.” Since I am not Amish, the family knew that I might not share all of their moral standards. However, I was
warmly welcomed into their home and was allowed to actively interact with the children. After all my fieldwork and interaction with members of the Amish community, I sometimes even had the feeling that they are welcoming “outsiders” to their community to give their children the opportunity to learn to interact with the non-Amish. This way they have the opportunity to train their children in how to communicate with outsiders, but also to illustrate what other lifestyles exist besides their own approach. Of course, this way outsiders can also be utilized as negative examples.

My observations also confirmed that children of this age group already start to help their parents around the house. This was best illustrated by the five-year-old girl picking up and comforting the baby and by the four-year-old girl serving drinks to all of her sisters. However, my observations did not support Hostetler’s and Huntington’s (1971) explanation that the family environment rather encourages physical activity than intellectual initiative. The family told me that sometimes the four- and five-year-old girl would accompany their three older siblings to school, where they would sit with their older sibling. There they learn to pay attention and even start to learn what school is all about. Even the children’s interest in reading books can be seen as proof that they enjoy intellectual initiatives. In my opinion, at least in the family I observed, physical and intellectual activity seemed to be well balanced.

Scholars

The Amish call children who attend school scholars. Starting school as a significant marker for a new stage in life, was emphasized by Martha’s comment that children from first grade up would start to help out around the house. She stated that once the children would get back from school, at around 3:00 p.m. they would help around the house. Martha stated that
such activities include, for example, carrying wood, feeding the chickens and gathering the eggs. The Amish bishop and his wife added that doing the dishes or helping in the stables are also typical chores done by children at this age. Jacob emphasized that since he has eleven children, doing the chores had to be organized. The children would take turns in doing certain chores.

Martha argued that there are no typical boy’s or girl’s chores since it depends on the composition of your family. She stated that she and her husband

had the three boys first and the second oldest, he helped me in the kitchen, just like a girl. [...] That’s just helping each other. The boys helped me do laundry and stuff like that. I helped a lot in the barn as well, when the children were little. I helped my husband and, you know, the children grew up and saw that and then they helped as well.

She also added that her sons watched the babies when she and her husband had to go away. Here she argued that this only happened once the children were a bit older, around the age of 15, once they were more responsible. Miriam also stated that her oldest daughter, who is 12 years old, helps her a lot around the house. She commented that her daughter “loves to clean, loves to work, she is like me!” Miriam added that one of her favorite chores is mowing the grass. Since Miriam and her husband only have one son, she also emphasized that there are no gender-specific chores.

Although Miriam’s mother-in-law pointed out that Amish children do not engage in after school activities, as it is often the case with “English” children, but rather help with work on the farm, play still has a central role within this age group. Miriam added that the children’s activities include, for example, baseball and hopscotch in summer and card making, reading, and sledding in winter. Martha stated that her children played a lot outdoors, either with their
scooters or trikes, but sometimes they would also play with their pets, such as dogs or ponies. She emphasized that children learn to play on their own from early ages on. “When they are small, they go on the floor and play with their toys on their own.” However, she also added that she and her husband enjoy playing cards or games with their fifteen- and sixteen-year-old daughters. She stated that they “play a lot with the girls, like games. Yeah, we do that a lot of times! We both kind of like play games and we like to play with the children.” Most of the time they play card games after dinner.

Another important achievement for children at this stage is that they learn how to drive a buggy. Miriam’s husband, Samuel, stated that he taught his son to drive the buggy when he was about six years old. He explained that boys rather than girls take the buggy on their own, when they are still young. Children start at a very early age to learn how to go with a horse and buggy by simply doing so under the supervision of their father. Samuel added that only in dangerous or more complicated situations the father would intervene. The father gives instruction while the child is learning by doing, not by watching. Samuel stated also that at about the same age Amish farmers instruct their sons in how to plough a field. The father lets his son plough all by himself, while he walks behind him, always ready to help out. “This is important, because they cannot switch gears at that age.” Whenever they need to switch gears, the farther steps in and helps out. Samuel explained that at the age of 13 or 14 the boys are able to plough all by themselves. Samuel added: “This is how my father learned to plough, and how he taught me to plough, and how I teach my son to plough. It’s exactly the same way!”

Visiting an Amish school. As part of my fieldwork, I also observed class sessions at a New Order Amish school. Extensive observations were made in a combined class of pre-school
and first grade. Since this school is not an Old Order Amish school, but a school of the slightly more progressive New Order Amish group, the school is not a typical one room school. The school has four classrooms and each classroom serves two grades. One teacher is responsible for teaching two grades at the same time.

I made extensive observations in the pre-school / first grade classroom of this New Order Amish school. The pre-school children only attend school three times a week, namely Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. At my first visit to this school, both grade levels were present. While the first graders worked on their English reading and writing skills, the pre-schoolers colored pictures and practiced dexterity. Children changed between books independently and all of them seemed to know what their work for the day was.

At my second visit at this school, only the first graders were present, which allowed me to have a closer look at the teacher-child interaction and how learning was taking place. On this morning students were working individually on math drills with their teacher. One after the other had to go to the front of the classroom and work with the teacher on math problems individually. First they looked at some practice exercises where the students had to practice mental math. Next, the teacher set an alarm clock and had the students do as many math problems as possible in 60 seconds. With this activity there were two sets of flash cards: the first set had simple additions and subtractions. The second set of cards had pictures of Dollar bills and coins. Here the students were asked to name the amount represented in the pictures. The goal was that every time students worked on these flash cards, they should increase the number of cards they complete in just one minute. In the meantime, the other students worked in self-study first on math exercises and then on writing assignments. If a child needed help while the
math drill was still going on, he or she raised his or her hand and another student tried to help out. In all cases, the other student was able to help his or her peer with the assignment. The students took turns in helping each other out. The teacher later explained to me that whoever sees the raised hand first gets up and helps out. She added that the students take this regulation very seriously.

After the teacher tested all the students on their math skills, she changed topics and started to introduce the reading lesson. For the reading lesson, all students lined up in front of the class, all with their reading book in hand. The teacher took a seat in one of the student’s benches. Again she had her alarm clock with her. This time she set the alarm clock to 15 seconds. Each student had to read for exactly 15 seconds. After 15 seconds, the next student had to pick up reading exactly where the other student had stopped. Later the teacher explained to me that she does not ask the children to finish the sentence when the 15 seconds are over, because this way all students have to actively follow the story and immediately pick up reading, exactly where the other student had stopped. A nice addition was that even the teacher joined the 15-seCONDS-READING assignment.

Once the students had finished their story they were asked to present one after the other little essays they had written for homework. For this assignment, students had to look at a picture and write a short story. One after each other, the students presented their stories in front of the class to their peers. This activity ended by the teacher reading her story to the class. After these class exercises, the students went outside for recess. At recess the students played a game similar to hide and seek. This way recess served as a means of physical activity as well.
**Amish school system.** When we discuss the important life-stage of scholars (i.e. students), it is also crucial to have a closer look at the Amish approach toward school in general. Through my interviews, I was able to gain insight into the Amish approach toward schools and what is central for them in terms of education. All of the Amish participants’ children attended or attend parochial schools. All schools are in close proximity to the farm and most of the time children would walk to school. Miriam stated that “the children walk to school most of the time, sometimes they get a ride with me in the buggy.” Also Martha stated that her children walked to school. In terms of the size of the schools, Miriam explained that the school her children attend has 42 students and two teachers. Miriam’s children go to a typical Amish one-room-school.

When asked about the interpersonal relations between students and teacher, Miriam explained that one of the two teachers is actually her youngest, unmarried sister. The other Amish participants also emphasized that they always personally knew their children’s teachers. The profession of a teacher is considered to be a typical profession for unmarried women. However, Jacob and his wife Ruth added that there are also some male teachers in their area. Jacob also added that there are exemptions and sometimes even a married woman works as a teacher. “There are exceptions. There might be a family that don’t have children, and will never have children, let’s put it that way, and that could be a teacher. But we don’t feel a woman with children at home should go teach. She has got her homework to do at home.” Ruth added that two of their granddaughters are planning to become a teacher in fall. “Actually, our two granddaughters up on the hill are planning on teaching school next fall. And they are so excited! You know they are still young. They still have all that school blood in them. And I think that it is really good that young girls like to do that.” When I asked at what age girls start to teach,
Ruth and Jacob explained to me that they are able to start to teach right after they get out of school, which is at the age of 15 or 16, since all Amish children attend school only up until eighth grade. Jacob stated that “any girl can start teaching at 15, 16 years old if they want to. But I always think it is better a little older.” When I asked them how they feel about having a 16-year-old in charge of teaching and taking care of a number of students, the bishop stated that it might be better if the young girls start teaching when they are already a bit older. “If they teach right when they get off the school, they are only scholars!” Jacob added that the teachers in their district are between 18 and 20 years old.

In addition to the gender and age of teachers in Amish schools, Jacob and Ruth also told me about a recent development in their community. Ruth explained that their community schools now also employ special education teachers, and she quickly added that she thinks this is a great novelty:

And one thing they are doing to our schools, which is so very good, you know. In every school, no matter where it is, there are some children that can’t quite keep up. And so they now have special ed aids, special ed teachers, in the schools to help. It’s only fair, but that did not used to be. [...] Actually had that been when I was single, I probably would have wanted to be one. But no, I had other interests too.

The New Order Amish school that I visited even has a small building right next to the school building which is dedicated to special education with a special education teacher working with students every day. In Jacob and Ruth’s community, the special education teachers are shared between a number of schools. According to Jacob and Ruth, the teachers would go and work
with students in different schools two days a week. Jacob guessed that they have had this system of special education teacher for about ten years now.

The Amish participants of this study also explained that that children start school at the age of six and only attend up until the eighth grade. Jacob stated that some Amish children attend public schools where they would also go to Kindergarten. In their community all children attend parochial schools exclusively. At school, children start to learn English. Miriam emphasized that all instruction is in English, and even at recess the students have to use English. This way the children learn the language in a more playful manner as well. Miriam also listed the subjects her children are covering at school right now. "They learn reading, writing, arithmetics, geography, history, spelling. They don’t have any American government lessons.” All of the Amish participants also added that most of the time students don’t have to do any homework. Miriam stated that homework is “not likely for the most part, but it depends on the student, too.” Martha argued in a similar way by explaining that “maybe a slow learner or a little more like that does. But mostly they do their work at school.” Once children have finished eighth grade, at about the age of 14, they are done with school. Jacob emphasized that he welcomed the Supreme Court Decision of Wisconsin v. Yoder. Jacob added that the idea was, that the Amish needed their children at home after they are 14. And the highest school education is no good for our children. I hope you understand that. It doesn’t really prepare them for life and it draws them to act out into the world. That’s what happens.

In regards to finishing school after eighth grade Kim, the businesswoman who offers Amish tours pointed out that “even though the children go to eighth grade there are exceptions. Some of
the groups say: ‘Once your children get out of eighth grade, they can take a typing course at the public high school.’ So, you know, there are these little exceptions-to-the-rule type of things.” She argued that some of the children who plan on working in a factory or a sales department later on in life will have to use a computer as part of their job. Therefore, they have to learn how to work with modern technology or as the expert stated: “You have to have some skills to take that kind of job.”

Another important function of school was emphasized by the Amish parents, namely that children should attend school to learn to interact and communicate with other community members, especially peers of the same age. In this regard, all of the Amish participants objected to the idea of homeschooling. Martha stated that some people do homeschooling. And they [the children] never learn to give up to other children then, or to communicate with other children. And that goes on, once they are out of school, when they go with other folks they – it’s just better to go to school and communicate with other children and stuff like that.

Jacob, the bishop made a similar comment: “I know places around here where they do that homeschooling. That is ok, I guess I’d say, but they [the children] don’t learn to associate with other children. That’s what I see in that. Because getting along with each other is something that has a lot of meaning, too.” Miriam stated that homeschooling is very uncommon in their community because in their area there are a lot of school houses. Miriam’s father-in-law added to the discussion on schools that the Amish support their own parochial schools and in addition also pay for public schools through tax monies.
Another important aspect, especially in connection to parental authority is corporal punishment. None of the Amish participants provided any information on corporal punishment taking place at school; however, Mark, the college professor was able to share some of his experiences with corporal punishment at school. He argued that over time the teachers’ attitude toward spanking has changed. He stated that teachers “are very reluctant to spank or use corporal punishment.” Mark added that the teachers rather tend to use restrictions such as not allowing students to play outside at recess. He then provided the example of one student, who lied to his teacher. The teacher found out about it, and first contacted the student’s parents to ask if she was allowed to spank him. In this case, the parents preferred the teacher to spank. Mark also added that this is not always the case and sometimes the parents prefer to spank themselves. He also pointed out that the teachers have to be careful about (corporal) punishment, especially in parochial schools, because it is the parents’ rules by which they have to go. This is because teachers are hired by the school board “and the board are all these parents - so you’ve got to be very careful about that [corporal punishment].”

As already stated earlier, Amish children study English once they start with school. The Amish parents also pointed out that one main function of school is that children learn to interact with others. Here the college professor also added that school has not only the function to teach students how to interact with peers, but also to learn how to interact with the outside world, the “English.” When I told Mark that I visited a New Order Amish school, he argued that “one of the things, that they would hope the kids would get out of your visit, is that they would become more comfortable interacting with outsiders.”

Discussion of Scholars and Amish Schools
When Hostetler and Huntington (1971) discussed the age group of school children, they stated that this stage covers the ages between six and sixteen. In the case of the members of the Old Order Amish who participated in this study, all of their children finished school at the age of 14. None of the children attended any type of school after the age of 14. This is a central finding, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section on young people.

Hostetler and Huntington (1971) also stated that by the age of eight or nine, the tasks for children around the house become more and more demanding, and children help out wherever their help is needed most, regardless of their sex. This statement was verified by the Amish participants of this study; however, Martha even argued that the children start to help with chores once they start with first grade, which means that they already help out around the house even before the age of eight or nine. This was also illustrated in the previous section where the only four- and five-year-old girls helped their mother around the house. The Amish participants also agreed that children have to help with chores regardless of their sex. This finding is very interesting since later on in life the division of gender roles is very rigid. The Amish society has a strong patriarchal structure which is also reflected in the daily lives of Amish men and women. It almost seems that at this stage, Amish parents try to train the children in a more holistic manner. In addition, not assigning typical boy’s or girl’s chores helps to build community because everybody can be held responsible for everything. Only if all family members assist each other and work together can work be done in a timely manner. Assigning chores to children makes them feel responsible and gives them the feeling of contributing to the society as a whole.

Hostetler and Huntington (1971) also argued that building a spirit of community can only be achieved through Amish parochial schools, since the modern American schools tend to focus
on individualism. The participants of this study also verified that Amish children are mainly required to learn the three R’s (reading, writing, and arithmetic), and their parents do not want their children to pursue any education after eighth grade. Since parents also want to have an insight, not to say control, on what their children learn at school, they prefer them to attend parochial schools which “belong” to the Amish community. The parochial schools are insofar owned by the Amish parents, as these schools are part of their community and are subsidized by the parents. Directly paying for schools and teachers allows the parents to have an influence on how and what their children are taught.

That Amish schools emphasize accuracy and drill, as stated by Hostetler and Huntington. This was shown in the math flash card assignment that I observed. Here the teacher drilled students to do mental math as quickly as possible. In addition, the teacher also used flash card showing U.S. currency so that students learn to calculate sums in U.S. Dollars at a very early stage. This can be seen of special interest of the parents, because this way their children learn a skill that can be used on a day-to-day basis and that is of benefit for their later life.

Hostetler and Huntington also argued that Amish schools discourage speed, variety, and freedom of choice. However, while I observed various class sessions at the New Order Amish school with a special focus on the first grade, I did not get the impression that the school discouraged speed. The math exercise was timed, and at recess students played a game where they had to be very active and had to react quickly. Also, when students worked independently on their projects, they did not seem to spend a lot of extra time on their assignments or work on them in a very slow manner. It seemed to me that students know perfectly well which amount of work needs to be done during the course of a day at school. In addition, the more work they get
done at school, the less homework needs to be done afterwards. Also, the Amish parents who participated in this study pointed out that they would rather not have their children do homework once they are out of school. Martha even added that most of the time only slow learners have to do additional work at home. In terms of variety and freedom of choice, Amish schools are certainly not offering the broad variety of extracurricular activities as other American schools do, and students are not able to select school electives. However, the approach to learning and also the forms of assessment seem to be quite varied. Although the teachers focus on practical skills, because this is what Amish parents expect their children to learn at school, these skills are taught with a bit of variety. When observing the first grade, it was very evident that the method of instruction was very teacher-centered. On the other hand, the student body also played a crucial role. Through the system of student-helping-student, the community factor is strengthened and children learn to interact and associate with their peers. According to the Amish parents who participated in this study, this represents another central aspect of school to them. The Amish school definitely functions as a means to train a child in becoming a part of the community.

As presented in the findings section, all participants’ children attended or attend parochial schools. All Amish participants emphasized that it is crucial for them that the teachers are committed to Amish values, and have a strong social and communal relationship with their students. An additional factor that seemed of importance to Amish parents was that the schools are all in close proximity to the farm. Hence, children are able to walk to school and the proximity of the schools allows children to build strong bonds within their church community. The teachers are also responsible for creating a learning environment which is suitable for the Amish society. Teaching in close proximity to the children’s homes and incorporating outdoor
activities at recess allow the teachers to create a learning community where students feel at home. Having the schoolhouse close to the family homes allows both the teachers and the parents to prevent the children from exposure to alien values.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Wisconsin v. Yoder* had an enormous impact on Amish communities. The Court’s ruling empowered the local communities of the Amish and the Amish parents with respect to educational choices. Looking at the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, in the context of which only parents were the subject of the Court’s decision, makes clear that it certainly empowered parents and assisted Amish communities in establishing parochial schools as an additional central aspect regarding their children’s education. Arneson and Shapiro (1996) argued that the Amish system of education serves as a means of enculturation in Amish culture, because Amish children are actively shielded from the secular world and are discouraged from actively questioning Amish values and beliefs. They say that “they [the Amish] go to great lengths in designing their system of education and acculturation [*sic*] to ensure that Amish children will take the vow and join the church” (Arneson & Shapiro, 1996, p.369).¹

One might reply to Arneson and Shapiro that every school system serves as a means of enculturation. American public (and secular) schools serve as a policy instrument to enculturate the students to mainstream American culture; not to speak of other parochial schools, such as Catholic ones, that prepare their students for a life as a good Roman Catholic. I would also like to add to this discussion that the instruction in Amish parochial schools is exclusively in English – a feature that Arneson and Shapiro do not pay attention to. When children enter school at the

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¹ As the quoted passage indicates, Arneson and Shapiro use the term “acculturation” incorrectly. Whenever they use the term “acculturation” they should have used the term “enculturation” instead. In the text, I follow the standard usage of the terms “acculturation” and “enculturation.”
age of six, they are only able to speak Pennsylvania Dutch, the language spoken at home within the family. This was verified when I visited Miriam and her family. All of her children, who were not in school yet, did not speak any English. Hence, I believe that it is not correct to state that the Amish enculturate their children exclusively to their culture. By using English as the only language of instruction, children also experience a process of acculturation to the larger society, at least to some extent. However, studying English cannot be seen as a sufficient means to gain individual freedom (in Arneson and Shapiro’s sense), but it allows Amish students to interact with people from the outside. Another method of training children in the interaction with “the English” is to invite outsiders to visit their schools. When I visited the New Order Amish school, I was definitely not the only one learning more about a different culture. Inviting guests who are interested in the Amish culture to interact with children who are not yet well-versed in interaction with outsiders, allows the teachers to slowly introduce them to the different culture and prepare them for life after school.

In addition, I found at my visits to the New Order Amish school, and even through discussions with the participants of this study, that the Amish parochial and American public schools have more in common than one might expect. Although Miriam’s father-in-law pointed out that their parochial school has no citizenship education, I observed at the New Order Amish school that the students used textbooks covering this topic. I had a look at this book, and it covered all the basics of a typical citizenship education class. Hence, the students of seventh and eighth grade at this school obviously cover these topics. My observations were not consistent with the assertion of Arneson and Shapiro, who generalized the Amish school system when they constructed their argument. As the extensive analysis of the complex cultural concept of
*Ordnung* already illustrated, there is no such thing as “the Amish” and, as a conclusion, “the Amish approach toward education” does not exist. Since the parents have a huge influence on what is taught at the parochial schools of the community, the topics covered in Amish schools vary greatly. However, it also has to be stated that the Old Order Amish school, that Miriam’s father-in-law was referring to, does not offer citizenship education and, in accordance with Arneson and Shapiro’s criticisms, violates the duty of educating all children to become American citizens and with respect to their rights and duties they have as citizens. It is not assumed here that schools are the only context within which children and young adults *can* acquire this kind of knowledge. However, with respect to the issue of citizenship rights and duties, it is exactly the point that the state is not merely interested in the *possibility* of its subjects attaining this knowledge (this mere possibility is not ruled out by the Amish); rather, the legal and political disputes concerning Amish education have erupted because the state has an obligation to *guarantee* the acquisition of this knowledge. Normally, this kind of guarantee is realized by either directly providing citizenship classes in public school curricula or, alternatively, by imposing a legal requirement on private schools to provide such classes. Neither of these two options is deemed acceptable by the Amish and their approach to education and, hence, in their case, the state is blocked from *ensuring* that all children/young adults know their rights and liberties (as U.S. citizens) to a sufficient degree.

Shelley Burtt (1996), on the other hand, defended the U.S. Supreme Court decision by stating that Amish children do not lack instructions on critical thinking because “God’s word” (and other theological sources) is used as a source for learning critical reasoning. Burtt argued that Amish schools teach critical thinking, they only use different texts and methods. The
New Order Amish school I visited did not offer classes in bible studies, but the science classes and science books were based on creationism. Also, although all of the Amish participants emphasized the importance of attending parochial schools, none of the participants stressed the role of religious education. School, as seen by the Amish, has the function of socializing children with peers and preparing them with skills they need for their future simple work life. Although religious concepts are definitely interwoven into the curriculum of Amish schools, they do not represent a focal point of instruction.

In reaction to the U.S. Supreme Court decision, Amish communities have developed different approaches to education. Amish parents send their children to parochial schools, or to public schools, which are entirely composed of Amish students or public schools which are attended by both Amish and “English” children. Amish parents may also do homeschooling, and some of them have their children continue school after eighth grade. The approach of parochial schools seems to be most common approach with the Old Order Amish. All of the Amish participants of this study reported exclusively about parochial schools. One interesting finding here was that the Amish participants did not reject homeschooling for the assumption that homeschooling parents might have a ‘know-it-all’ attitude, but for the reason that homeschooling does not contribute to building community as parochial schools do. The Amish participants emphasized that attending school outside the home is important for processes of socialization and to learn how to interact with other community members besides their immediate family.

Young People

According to the Amish participants of this study a new period of life starts after children finish school at eighth grade. Miriam and her husband Samuel stated that the phase of
rumspringa starts at the age of 16 or 17. Also, Martha, and the bishop and his wife Ruth confirmed 16 as the starting age of the phase rumspringa. According to Miriam, “everybody goes through it to some extent.” She added that the period of rumspringa usually lasts until the age when the young people finally join the church. However, all of the Amish participants of this study stated that this life period does not start right after the children get out of school. Here Miriam stated that “after school, after eighth grade, a year or two are spent at home.” Also Martha emphasized that rumspringa “starts when they turn 16.” In addition, she stated that “14 or 15 that’s kind of the age they stay at home with the parents. The ones that turn 16, they are allowed to go more, you know, places and stuff.” Martha also provided examples for what children, who just got out of school, would do before they are granted more liberty. In most cases, the 14- to 15-year-old would help on the farm and work with their parents. According to Martha, the boys would work

with somebody that is a younger farmer, who needs help. [...] And the girls – baby jobs!

They babysit. When somebody got a baby, they help with that. That’s a very good experience for girls – to take a baby job. They learn to cook, and clean, and do laundry.

Yeah, that’s a good experience for girls!

Once the children turn 16, the are allowed to pick up jobs outside the home. In the case of boys, the Amish participants listed a number of professions that they think are suitable for them, namely working at a wood shop or as a carpenter. Martha stated that “if the boys go on with the carpenters to build stuff – that’s good experience for them. Later on they can, you know, build stuff.” Preferred jobs for girls included, working at a restaurant, at a bakery, or at an upholstery store. Jacob argued that it is fine, if girls pick up jobs before they get married; “for if
there is a couple of girls, they are not all needed at home.” Miriam stated that before she got marr}

ried she worked at a greenhouse and nursery. Martha would like to see her daughters work at a bakery. “If they work in a bakery or something like that, that really is a good experience for them. They learn to bake.” Jacob and his wife Ruth also emphasized the girls’ option of becoming teachers. Kim, who offers Amish tours stated that “you only work as a girl single, until you are married. And then you give up that job to become what your mom has taught you to be, and that’s a homemaker.” Also, Martha and Miriam confirmed that they gave up their jobs once they got married. Martha pointed out that a married woman “gives up her job and just works at her house. But still, the husband keeps his job and works.” The Amish bishop added that if a couple is not able to have any children, then the woman could possibly go back to work, for example as a teacher.

Samuel added to the discussion of *rumspringa* that at this life stage “it’s almost expected to cross some lines.” When I asked Samuel for the reason why crossing the lines at this phase of life is accepted he responded: “I guess because it is what I did, what my parents did – it’s a kind of a tradition.” Another significant aspect of this life period is again community involvement. According to all Amish participants, this happens at the so called *Singen*, which take place on Sunday nights. According to Miriam and Martha, the young people get together to sing songs from church books, both in German and English. The young people join the *Singen* at the age of 16 and attend them up until the age they get married. Martha described it as the “kind of the way boys and girls come together.” Both, Miriam and Martha, met their future husband at a *Singen*. Miriam told me the story of how she met her husband:
We were only 15. We met at my cousin’s house. He was there with friends. We did not talk, but we both had a crush on each other. At the age of 17 we dated for 3 to 4 months and then went steady. Once you are going steady, you can go with him and ride in his buggy and also meet his family. We were going steady for 3.5 to 4 years. We got married when we were 20 and 21.

Here the bishop, Jacob, stated that a Singen involves about four to five churches and in addition to that, Martha also pointed out that sometimes also relatives coming from even other church districts join these events. It is this way that teenagers find their partner for life, who might live further away in a different church district.

The Amish bishop provided insight into the regulations that come along with the Singen and also discussed that it is somewhat different than what it used to be years ago. He stated that in the last 20 years a lot of rules were developed that regulate behavior at the Singen, which, according to Jacob, help the young people a lot. Jacob explained that “when 10 o’clock comes, or something like that, they go home. For we did not have that, when I was young at that time.” He added that at today’s Singen no drinking, no smoking, and no music are allowed. Ruth then quickly added that also no cars are allowed. The bishop also mentioned that there are still some young people who do not follow these rules and regulations. In addition, Martha also stated that “there are always, you know, some that are more worldly, that don’t want to go to the Singen and go other places. But we highly recommend them to go to the Singen and stuff like that.”

As stated earlier, young people attend Singen up until the age they join the community by baptism, which happens right before they get married. If a young person is ready to make a commitment to the Amish way of life by becoming a full member of the community, they have to
get baptized. Before that, the young people have to attend counsel sessions which, according to Kim, the businesswomen, involve six to nine weeks of instruction. When I asked Martha when she would consider a boy to be a man, she replied: “Well, once he gets married! Have you noticed their beards? They shave everything and once they get married, they have to leave the beard.” And marriage can only happen after the instruction period and baptism, through which the couple becomes full member of the Amish community.

**Discussion of Young People**

Hostetler and Huntington (1971) argued that Amish children enter the stage of young people immediately after they complete eighth grade and leave this phase of life upon marriage. I do not want to argue that this statement is incorrect; however, within the context of this particular study, this stage is much more nuanced than presented by Hostetler and Huntington. The Amish participants of this study all pointed out that after their children finish eighth grade, they do not immediately transition into the period of *rumspringa*. All participants of this study clearly stated that *rumspringa* starts at the age of 16. They also provided the information that all children who are done with school spend another one or two years at home with their parents. This was for example the case with Martha and her 15- and 16-year-old daughters. Both of them have not started a job outside the home yet. They help their mother around the house, and since Martha is offering Amish meals to tourists, they are always busy. It seems to be of significance that all Amish children return to their home and get some hands-on experience with their parents first before they leave the house to work in a different place. Hence, I argue that the 16th birthday is a significant marker in the life of Amish adolescents. Once children turn 16, Amish parents consider them mature enough to deal with the outside world and allow them to work
outside their familiar surroundings of their community. Although Hostetler and Huntington
mentioned that after completion of eighth grade children are trained within the home and
community to prepare them for their adult life, they did not emphasize how central this at-home-
training is for both, parents and children. It almost seems as if Amish adolescents start an
apprenticeship at home with their parents, and once they have gained more practical experience
and are a little bit more mature, they are even allowed to work for “English” companies.

Once adolescents finally enter the phase of rumspringa, they have the opportunity to
experience the boundaries of Amish faith and lifestyle to some extent. It was interesting to learn
from the bishop that in the past 20 years new regulations were introduced to regulate the Singen,
which are the central meeting point for all Amish adolescents going through the phase of
rumspringa. It seems that the rules, stating that no drinking, no smoking, no music, and no cars
are allowed at the Singen, might have been implemented as a counteraction to developments the
community experienced in the past. Since more and more Amish families no longer run a farm,
the husband as the main breadwinner works as an employee often times for an “English”
company. The family income might have increased this way and extra money that would have
been spent on purchasing new cattle or horses, is set free. Hence, families have more time and
money available and might therefore interact more frequently with people outside the
community. This way adolescents might become more aware of the “temptations” of the outside
world. For this reason, the Amish parents and leaders of the church have decided to introduce a
new set of rules to “protect” their children from external influences. One might also argue that
this development represents the implementation of more conservative church regulations.
Hostetler and Huntington argued that Amish parents accept the breaking of rules by their
children, because they believe their children learn this way what the outside world is like and which way of life they are rejecting by following the rules of Amish communities. By introducing a new set of regulations and restrictions the adolescents have no longer the opportunity to cross the lines at the Singen, which, according to the Amish bishop, used to happen in the past. What impact that has on the development of the adolescents’ individual identity has yet to be determined.

However, it is still at the Singen where young people meet their future mates. All Amish participants verified that most of the adolescents meet their future husband or wife at these occasions. After a period of dating, Amish adolescents, just as Americans, go steady with a partner. My study is consistent with Hostetler and Huntington, who argued that baptism has the function of a *rite de passage*, as described by Arnold van Gennep (1960), since it not only signifies a commitment to the Amish community, but also represents admission to adulthood. According to van Gennep (1960), one can argue that the instruction classes Amish adolescents have to take before they are baptized serve the function of initiation rites.

**Adulthood**

Adulthood within Amish communities is marked by joining the church through baptism, getting married, and founding a family. An Amish wedding is always a big family and community event. Martha stated that “the whole church and the relatives from the spouse’s and from the girl’s side are invited.” Martha also added that Amish weddings are traditionally on a Tuesday or Thursday. She argued that weddings never take place on a Saturday: “Now we never take Saturday! It’s mostly Tuesday and Thursday. But now Wednesdays and Fridays are common, too, but usually Tuesday and Thursday is the day.” In terms of age at marriage, the
Amish participants agreed that in most cases people get married in their early twenties. Again, Martha provided the most detailed information by explaining that young people get married “from 20 on up. Some do 19. That’s young, but some do. I’d say 20, 21, 22, that’s a nice age.” Looking at her own children, she added that the youngest age at marriage was 20 and the oldest 24. She stated:

It kind of depends how soon they find someone. You know it’s not a like for them all. Some are more interested in it younger and some, you know, want to wait till they are older. And that is just as good, well in a way. That way they have more investment, when they wait till they are older, till they get started, because it’s really expensive to get started.

**Division of labor and gender roles.** Once a couple is married, it is expected to start a family. All of the Amish participants stated during the interviews that they are aware that not all couples are able to have children. However, being involved in family life or even having a family on your own are central for the Amish approach to life. As husband and wife, the Amish society expects the couple to follow the society’s patterns of division of labor and gender roles. In terms of gender roles in the Amish society, it became evident that the Amish society has a strong patriarchal structure. Division of labor is strictly taking place along gender lines. Jacob explained it as follows:

The hard work is for the husband. The woman is considered the weaker vessel. But some women are stronger than others and they might do as much work as the man does – depending on the work. We don’t expect to send a woman out with five horses and
plough. We’d be in for a disaster! And that’s not their role. And my role would not be to wash dishes if she can do it.

However, when it comes to decision making processes, the Amish participants of this study pointed out that husband and wife are somewhat equal partners. The husband might have the final say, but big decisions are always made together. “If mom and dad work together the children know what that means. If they don’t they’ll be a mixed up family”, Jacob stated. Jacob also emphasized this statement, with his response to the question about who makes big decisions that affect the whole family: “Both of them, both of them! We don’t want to make a decision that the other one does not think about. [...] They both have to know what’s going on.” Miriam argued that in their family her husband makes the final decisions. Samuel, her husband quickly added: “But you help me!” The couple also emphasized that communicating with each other is the most important part.

Also, the children seem to recognize their parents as equal caretakers. Miriam shared an interesting story with me. Whenever they go to church, the children would normally sit with their mother. However, Miriam stated that her two-year-old daughter just does not want to sit with her in church. She said that “she would be fussy, and, you know, she just won’t sit still. Whereas if she is with daddy, she is happy.” Also, when Miriam’s husband walked in, the girls were immediately all around him not only while he was sitting there comforting the baby when it was a bit whiny.

**Parental authority.** The following section presents a few examples of parental authority and how Amish parents interact with their children. The approaches to keeping children quiet during church services also brought some interesting findings in relation to parental authority
and parenting styles. When I asked Miriam what she would do to make her children sit still in church she left the room and returned with her “baby bag.” The baby bag was a black, box-like handbag, which was filled with a variety of things that should help to keep the children quiet. The “baby bag” included little books and pictures, some small baby dolls complete with a swaddle wrap, and some more things to play with quietly. It also included some crackers and pretzels. Miriam then pointed out to me that children are allowed to have snacks during church services and they are also allowed to play if they are quiet. She also added that when the children are still very small, they basically are not so much expected to really pay attention, but just be quiet. Whereas the older children are expected to sit still and should not play or do anything else. In contrary, Martha commented that

from small babies up we would try to, you know, teach them to be quiet. Like in church, we teach them to sit quiet and that they can’t talk loud. We try to do that from small up. To teach them to sit and not, you know, some do but – I like to see if they don’t stand at the bench and play. Have them sit! So they know that in church you have to sit and be quiet!

Amish parents seem to be very concerned with how to best educate their children. This was illustrated by a story Mark, the college professor, shared with me. An Amish man got home from work late in the evening. He runs a business and his sons are in charge of the stables at home. When he got back home, the boys had not done their chores yet. The boys stated that they had some homework to do, and wanted to work on it when their minds were still fresh. The father’s response then was not to punish his children, which would have been the most common response, because they had not done what their father had told them to do. However, the father
did not punish them but rather helped them with doing their chores so that they get things done. The college professor added that he was impressed by the father’s reaction, because it showed that he was more concerned about being a good father than punishing his children.

Ruth also provided me with an example for parental authority. She told me that her sister has twelve children, and at the time when most of her children were still young, her husband was not well. Ruth pointed out that large families first of all grow up faster, because the older children are already stepping in and helping around the house. However, Ruth’s sister was basically in charge of the farm and her children all by herself, but, according to Ruth, the children all listened to her.

If she said something, they listened to her. They knew that she had no choice and therefore they accepted that and they took that upon themselves. And, I mean, they are not better than anybody else, but they did that. They listened to her and they worked and to this day they are wonderful workers. They really are!

When I shared some of the parent-child observations I made with Martha, I pointed out that Amish children always seem so well behaved when being out in the public. Martha agreed and stated that if you go out in a store, you hardly see Amish children misbehave. She argued: “I don’t wanna say that we can do better than you, but I don’t know. [...] I don’t know what that really is.” She added that Amish children can have a fit at home, but would never do so in public. Martha tried to find explanations for why Amish children appear to be better behaved, and thought that their calm lifestyle might be a reason. “Like we don’t have music, we don’t have loud, you know, television. I don’t know – would that make a difference or not that they kind of are more calm?”
Kim, the businesswoman, on the other hand explained well behaved children by parents’ and community’s consistent modeling of the *Ordnung*. She stated that as an Amish person “you are modeling what you believe your children should behave like and how they interact. So when everyone is on the same page with the *Ordnung* and you are consistent, you hold each other accountable. That’s another thing I have noticed over the years – the accountability factor.” She then added that she also thinks obedience plays a central role. She argued that children are obedient because both of their parents are present at home and this way it is easier for them to instill the Amish way of life. In addition, she stated that Amish children are taught to be quiet and obedient by breaking their will. “‘Do net!’ means ‘Do not!’ I heard it a lot of times in the store. ‘Do net!’ And you know another thing about the obedience? [Corporal punishment] at a young age. When you break the will of the child you got it.”

Since it is hard to make children follow an unconditional obedience, Kim pointed out that corporal punishment is often used to achieve this goal. In the case that a small girl would try to take of her cap, because she is still too young to understand, for what reasons she is wearing it, Martha told me that she would slap her daughter’s fingers. “Well you have to slap their hands and you put it on. You have to put it on! And leave it alone! They get used to it pretty soon. Yeah, they do! [...] But you’ve got to just work on it.” Miriam also stated that she and her husband use punishment as a means of education. “It’s all about trust. If we find something out, we punish! When they are little, I sometimes spank them, but not so much the older ones. The older ones are rather grounded or have to skip certain activities.” Also, the Amish bishop added that small children get paddled “if it gets down to the point that they don’t listen, you know.” Here the college professor pointed out that “one bishop told us: ‘Yeah, you spank them and then...
you take them on your lap and you love them. You tell them why they did that and that.’ And that is very different than, you know, something done out of spate.” Jacob also argued that paddling is only practiced up to a certain age, because then “the paddle might make them more mad than anything else. And then they might come under a rule that for so long they can’t maybe do this or that.” His wife Ruth then added that “a lot can be won also just by admonishing them and just try to be, you know, talk some sense into them if there is such a thing.” Martha added that one type of punishment she and her husband used was to assign chores to the children they do not like, such as having the boys do the dishes.

Mark, the college professor, brought up another interesting means of parental control to get compliance, namely utilizing the children’s fear of the unknown outside world. He told me the following anecdote:

So I was doing an interview at a Swartzentruber family home once, and they had a little kid, [...] maybe one and a half, two years old. Very shy at first, and then as the interview went on, she really kind of got over her fears. And she started coming up, you know, climbing up on the table, grabbing at my notebook starting to interfere with the interview. Her dad was so calm. He said: ‘Do you wanna go home with him?’ That was his comment. ‘Do you wanna go home with him?’ She stopped, turned around, and that’s all that took.

Mark pointed out that he was surprised about the powerful use of the fear of the outside world. He was astonished of how the father must have built up the fear of the unknown with his child so that such a little comment could have this kind of effect on the child’s behavior. Hence, he argued that the boundaries between the Amish and non-Amish are very powerful, and it seems to
be important for the Amish that those boundaries are reinforced during the process of socializing their children. The college professor also added that “as you look at the Anabaptists escalator, as you go from the Swartzentrubers up to the New Order, I think there are some significant differences in the frequency and probably the severity of physical punishment.” That the approach on educating children might have changed was indicated by a comment made by Samuel, Miriam’s husband. He argued that, in comparison to their parents, they changed their approach to education and stated that “you know there are certain things we would not do with our children what they’ve done.”

**Parental trust and children’s independence.** On one of my field trips, I observed a group of young children, they must have been around the age of ten, maybe even younger, driving with their pony cart on a very busy street. Two boys were sitting in the front of the cart, and three smaller children, two girls and another boy, were sitting in the back. I was surprised to see a group of such young children driving alone in the street. Hence, I wanted to learn more about parental trust and the children’s independence among Amish communities.

As already stated earlier, Miriam pointed out that trust is a central concept for the parent-child relationship in Amish communities. This was also emphasized by Jacob, the Amish bishop, who stated: “We do trust our children, if we tell them to do something or what they are supposed not to do. Well, we trust that they will do that.” Although I did not share my observation of young children riding in their pony cart, Ruth, the bishop’s wife, shared her concerns about young children driving in the streets with their pony carts as well:

I have a really good friend, I am getting off track here, but she has this bulk food store. There is this one couple, who sends their pre-school daughter, I think it’s a girl, down to
her bulk food store with yet a younger child with her – with the pony and the cart. It’s not really, really far, but it’s too far for this, because these are very small children. I heard that my friend sent a note home with these children: ‘I don’t want to be the one to come to your house when there was an accident with your children!’ I don’t know what the outcome was. Did they come back again? But you know that was ridiculous! It really was.

However, after sharing this story, Ruth emphasized one more time that you have to trust your children. It is important for them in order to learn to take on responsibility. Both, Jacob and Ruth brought up how important it is, that children are able to take care of the daily business, if their parents have to go away. They know which work has to be done while their parents are gone. Ruth argued that this form of parental trust assists the children in taking on responsibility.

Discussion of Adulthood and Parenting Styles among Amish Communities

Hostetler and Huntington (1971) argued that marriage and childbirth finally bring social adulthood. This was confirmed by the participants of this study, however they also pointed out that of course not every couple is actually able to have children. For a couple without children, due to biological reasons, different regulations apply, as, for example, the wife is then allowed to go on with her job outside the home. The importance of stable families within Amish communities was also emphasized by the study participants. Although Jacob stressed the different gender roles of the Amish and confirmed the strong patriarchal structure, he also added that husband and wife have to work together. The Amish participants confirmed that the males are the head of the household, however when there are big decisions to be made, husband and wife confer with each other. The importance of communicating with one another was also pointed out by Samuel and Miriam. According to the Amish participants of this study, it is
important that Amish couples act as one single unit not only when they interact with “the outside world”, but it is also crucial for raising and educating their children. Here the study was consistent with Hostetler and Huntington’s argument that parents are taught to discuss differences of opinion privately so that they are then one mind when disciplining a child.

Hostetler and Huntington argued that Amish parents “use” their children as socialization agents, because they have to model the life of a good Amish for them, by living a life in Demut. The findings of this study were not only consistent with this, but also made evident that Amish parents utilize the “outside world” as a socialization factor. Inviting non-Amish people to their homes, which are considered as safe environments free from any influences from the “outside world” is used to slowly prepare their children for interacting with “the English.” Not only present parents themselves as the model for how to best interact with community outsiders; rather, the Amish also use “the English” as an example to illustrate the (moral) “dangers” of modern life.

Discussion of the representation of the authoritarian-autocratic pattern of discipline among Amish communities. As presented in the literature review, Baumrind (1978) argued that the authoritarian-autocratic pattern of parental discipline understands children as “tabulae rasae”, which means that parents falling into this pattern of parental discipline believe that their children need to be controlled. Baumrind also stated that this is often times done by curbing a child’s self-will. As illustrated in the findings section above, curbing a child’s self-will and controlling a child’s behavior play a central role in Amish families. Baumrind highlighted that curbing a child’s will occurs mostly when a child’s actions or beliefs conflict with the parents’ understanding of right or wrong. In the case of the Amish, this not only occurs if there are
conflicts with the parents’ understanding of right or wrong, but especially also in terms of the larger community. Baumrind’s description of an authoritarian parent as someone who believes in keeping a child in a subordinate role and restricting his or her autonomy was verified for the Amish participants of this study. Verbal give and take between parent and child is also not encouraged among Amish communities.

Maccoby and Martin (1983) pointed out that if children do not follow parental rules or guidelines, severe punishment, even physical, is very likely to be employed. Not only do Amish parents make use of corporal punishment if a child is not following the parental guidelines, it is also used when a child violates the rules of the community, as described by the Ordnung. As already discussed earlier in the scholars section, even teachers make use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline. However, in most cases the teachers have to check with the parents first, if they are allowed to spank a child. Interestingly the findings revealed that sometimes the parents rather have the teacher spank.

Maccoby and Martin also developed a list of characteristics for authoritarian parents. All of these characteristics were found with the Amish participants of this study. The Amish parents were definitely attempting to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of their children in accordance with an absolute set of standards, namely the Ordnung. In addition, the Ordnung also asks for valuing obedience, respect for authority, work, tradition, and preservation of order. In terms of verbal give-and-take between parent and child, I argue that this not completely discouraged but certainly also was not a focal point of the parent-child relationship.

One could now argue that Amish parents clearly represent the pattern of authoritarian-autocratic parental discipline. However, there were also some contradicting findings. Maccoby
and Martin stated that authoritarian parents can be described as low in warmth and responsiveness when interacting with their children. Especially the observations at Miriam’s house revealed that Miriam and her husband Samuel have a very warm relationship with their children. There was no evidence of high demanding but low responding behavior with this couple when interacting with their children. Maccoby and Martin also argued that the authoritarian approach of parenting has a negative impact on the children’s development of self-esteem, because they might lack the understanding that they are trusted, especially when undertaking activities independently. All of the Amish participants of this study pointed out how central trust is for a healthy parent-child relationship. The several examples presented in the findings section illustrated the importance of trust in Amish families and how independent Amish children are, starting at a very young age.

Discussion of the representation of the indulgent-permissive pattern of discipline among Amish communities. Baumrind (1978) argued that the pattern of permissive parenting style has its roots in the children’s right movement and understands children as agents with a natural tendency to self-actualization. This means that if a child is left to him- or herself it will enable him or her to learn all he or she needs to know without being forced to follow appropriate conventional behaviors. The findings of this study clearly suggest that this pattern of behavior may not apply to Amish communities. My study found that children are urged to follow their parents’ and the Ordnung’s strict regulations. Having ones own opinion is definitely not emphasized in Amish society. The Amish parents are also not benign toward their children’s impulses and behaviors. Although Amish parents see themselves as a resource for their children, which is evident in the constant modeling of a life in Demut, they are active agents responsible
for shaping and altering their children’s ongoing and future behavior. It is not in the sense of Amish parents to free their children from any restraints, which is evident in the central role of responsibility toward the larger community.

Maccoby and Martin (1983) also describe permissive parents as indulgent, because they are also characterized by their warm and nurturing behavior toward children. On the other hand, permissive parents can also show tendencies of self-involvement and not wanting to be made responsible for the child’s development. This parenting style allows children to regulate their own lives, and provides only few firm guidelines with only little use of punishment. A warm and nurturing relationship with their children is crucial for Amish parents. They care for and love their children a lot, especially because their children are also seen as a gift from God. Hence, no evidence was found in this study of Amish parents for high tendencies of self-involvement. Self-involvement did not correspond with their Amish communal way of life. Also, no traces for few firm guidelines and only little use of punishment were found within the communities studied.

Discussion of the authoritative-reciprocal pattern of discipline among Amish communities. According to Baumrind (1978), authoritative parents are characterized as firm, fair, reasonable, and sensitive to a child’s maturity. Amish parents fulfill all of these characteristics, since they also have certain set timelines of when a child is allowed to do things on his or her own. Amish parents assign their children chores around the house, which are appropriate to their level of maturity. To illustrate the pattern of the authoritative-reciprocal parenting style, Baumrind used the example of Montessori schools. The environment, the teacher, and the child are central concepts of this educational approach. According to the Montessori method, the environment and the teacher represent controlled spheres, which allow
the child to grow up in a somewhat “uncontrolled” manner. Since Amish teachers at parochial schools are under the direct rule of Amish parents and the church community, they certainly represent a controlled factor in the Amish approach toward education. Also, outdoor life plays a central role in Amish society, and the outdoor life of Amish children is restricted to their own home or their (parochial) schools. Only after the age of 16 children are allowed to interact independently with the “outside world.” Hence, one can argue that the environment Amish children live in, is also strictly controlled. Under the circumstances that both, the environment and teacher are controlled one might find Amish parents willing to allow their children to develop in a rather uncontrolled manner. As stated in the literature review of this thesis, Baumrind (1978) explained the Montessori approach by stating that “when a child has finished his work he is free to put it away, he is free to initiate new work or, in certain instances, he is free to not work. But he is not free to disturb or destroy what others are doing” (p. 243). This is a pattern of behavior I definitely observed in Amish schools. Since the Amish parochial schools believe in the one-room-school approach, the teachers are actually not able to constantly focus on work with the individual children. While one grade level gets instructions, the other grad levels have to work independently on their own projects. Baumrind also argued that the teachers are somehow manipulating the children’s behavior by modeling the right behavior for him or her. In the case of the Amish this rule not only applies to teachers but also to the parents, who model the right behavior by living a life in Demut.

Maccoby and Martin (1983) listed five elements for the pattern of authoritative-reciprocal parenting. The findings illustrate that the first two elements, namely setting clear standards for the children and implementing rules in a firm manner and applying commands or sanctions when
needed, are clearly fulfilled by Amish parents featured. The third element focuses on encouragement of a child’s independence and individuality. Since the Amish parents, who participated in this case study always highlighted the importance of community, an emphasis on individuality was not found. However, independence in the form of assigning chores to even every young child and making them responsible for certain things around the farm, also allows the children to gain a certain independence. As pointed out in the findings section, if parents have to go away, they can be certain that their children are able to manage without them for this period of time. As already discussed in the previous discussion section, the element of verbal give and take between parent and child is not encouraged in Amish families. Also the last element, namely that both the parents’ and the children’s rights are recognized and accepted does not apply to the Amish approach toward family and parental authority in the community I studied.

**Discussion of the indifferent-uninvolved pattern of discipline among Amish communities.** Maccoby and Martin (1983) described indifferent or uninvolved parents as having low levels of interest for their children due to their stressful lives. Since the Amish have their own, somewhat old-fashioned approach to work, they also spend an enormous amount of time with hard work. According to the Amish participants of this study, both male and female members of Amish communities have a strict schedule they have to follow every day. The men work hard on the farm, whereas the women are busy housekeepers taking care of the youngest children at home. Maccoby and Martin also characterized parents falling into this category of parental authority as uninvolved. By involvement, Maccoby and Martin mean the degree to which a person is committed to his or her role as a parent and if a person is more involved in
other activities, such as work or personal interests, only little time or attention is available for the
child. This is also an aspect that does not appear to apply to Amish parents. Although they
might work hard on a daily basis, family time is always incorporated into the daily schedule.
The common meals at Amish families are just one example for that. This parenting approach,
which can also be called “parent-centered” (selfish) childrearing, is also marked as keeping
children at a certain distance. Hence, I argue that this approach is the least suitable to describe
the parent-child relationship of Amish families.

**Discussion of predominant parenting styles among Amish communities.** The findings
of this study lead me to the conclusion that Amish parents in the community I investigated
represent a mixture of the authoritarian-autocratic and the authoritative-reciprocal patterns of
parental discipline. Amish parents make use of corporal punishment and make their children
follow the strict guidelines of the *Ordnung*. However, Amish parents are also very caring and
warm with a lot of trust in their children, and they allow their children to live an independent
(within the *Ordnung*, of course) life in a safe environment, such as school or the home.

**Old Folks**

Since this case study was based on purposeful sampling, I was able to also get an insight
on the grandparent perspective of the Amish life cycle. Martha and her husband, as well as the
Amish bishop Jacob and his wife Ruth live in a so called *dawdi haus*, which is a smaller house
close to the main farm house. In Miriam’s case, her in-laws also live in a *dawdi haus* right next
to the family home. Miriam explained to me that the house she and her family are living in right
now, used to be the house her husband grew up in. She added that once the children are old
enough and one of the children is ready to take over the farm, the older folks move out of the
main house to a smaller unit next door. They are giving up the big home for the next generation, who needs the space for their always growing families. At this time the older generation is also handing over the farm. Jacob explained to me that there is no general rule about who is going to take over a farm. In most cases it is not the oldest son, but this does not necessarily mean that the youngest son takes over. Jacob told me the story of how his son became the owner of the farm: “Just at the time when my [first] wife died and he had married, we needed somebody. He lived here, so that’s the way it went. Could have been any of the children.”

Miriam stated that her mother-in-law always says that the children can come over to her place at any time, even without giving notice. However, Miriam also emphasized that she always makes her children ask their grandparents for permission if they want to go and visit them. Living on the same property allows the grandparents and grandchildren to have a lot of interaction. Martha, as well as Jacob and Ruth stated that the relationship to their grandchildren is just as close as it is to their own children. Martha pointed out: “I like the grandchildren just as good as my children. We communicate with them just like our children, you know, but still the parents do the teaching and stuff like that.” Jacob answered in a similar way, when I asked him if there is a difference in how he interacts with his grandchildren in comparison to how he interacted with his own children when they were still young, he said: “I don’t think so. They are just like our family!” Ruth then added that she and her husband “by far have more to do with the children living right next door, than we do with the other. Because they are here and we are here, you know.” However, Martha pointed out that it is crucial that grandparents and grandchildren interact with each other as often as possible. When I asked her about her own routines on visiting her parents when her children were still young she told me that they “didn’t get to go to
them every week, but every couple of weeks. And they also came to our house, every now and
then. Yeah, we really keep in contact with each other!”

In Miriam’s case, her children often stay with their grandparents, whenever Miriam has to
run errands or is busy with community work. When I visited the family, the grandparents came
over to visit after lunch. All girls were very happy to see their grandparents, and they
immediately started to interact with them. The grandmother rocked the baby girl, and one of the
other girls immediately climbed on her grandfather’s lap. Before I left, Miriam asked me if I
could possibly give her a ride in my car to a church member’s house, where they had to finish a
community project. When I asked her if the girls are coming with her, she explained that the
baby was already asleep in her baby bed and that the girls had been excited all day, because they
were allowed to spend the afternoon with their grandparents. And after I said my good-byes to
the girls, they all took each others’ hands and ran over to the dawdi haus.

Discussion of Old Folks

Hostetler and Huntington stated that the stage of old folks starts when the youngest child
of a family gets married and starts his or her own family. In the case of Martha, the two
youngest daughters were still living with her, because they are not married yet. However,
Martha’s husband is no longer working on the farm but in a wood shop and one of his son’s took
over the farm. The Amish bishop also explained to me that it is not always the youngest child
who takes over the farming and it often times depends on a variety of circumstances, such as
health issues etc., when the older generation decides to retire. In Jacob and Ruth’s case only one
daughter with special needs still lives with them. Jacob referred to himself as semi-retired,
because whenever a helping hand is needed around the farm he would step in and help out. Also,
Samuel is neither the youngest nor the oldest child and took over the farm from his parents. In his case, his father is still very active on the farm, but he is no longer responsible for making the final and big decisions and doing all the hard, physical work.

Hostetler and Huntington also argued that the *dawdi haus* plays a central role for the relationship to grandparents. It was clear to see with all Amish participants that the proximity of living is of enormous advantage for the grandparent-grandchild relationship. Also, one could tell that Miriam’s mother-in-law was looking forward to spending an afternoon with her granddaughters. Now that she no longer has small children on her own, looking after her grandchildren fills her life with new sense.

**Discussion of the Eight Stages of Man and the Amish Life Cycle**

The following section brings together Erikson’s theory (1993) on the stages of personality and Hostetler and Huntington’s understanding of the Amish life cycle. Table 2 illustrates the psychosocial development of the Amish in relation to Erikson’s theory (1993) as seen by Hostetler and Huntington (1971).

Table 2

*The Amish Stages of Personality as seen by Hostetler and Huntington and as compared to Erikson*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amish Age Group</th>
<th>Erikson’s Stage</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Infancy (birth - child starts walking)</td>
<td>Basic trust vs. basic mistrust</td>
<td>Trust of infants is built through physical and social attention of parents and other caregivers of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amish Age Group</td>
<td>Erikson’s Stage</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Little Children (children who just started walking - 6 or 7 years)</td>
<td>Autonomy vs. shame &amp; doubt Initiative vs. guilt</td>
<td>since “why” and “how” questions are not encouraged, child develops sense of caution about expressing new ideas; doubt is stronger than autonomy; independence is not encouraged; curiosity of children apparent thorough observations and imitations of adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Scholars (6 or 7 years - completion of eight grade)</td>
<td>Industry vs. inferiority</td>
<td>industry of child depends on role models, informal teachers, and school teachers; community plays crucial role; feeling of pride in accomplishments is discouraged, because pride is too individualistic; hard work for family and community is strongly supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Young people (after completion of eighth grade (14-16 years) - baptism / marriage)</td>
<td>Identity vs. role confusion</td>
<td>period of <em>rumspringa</em> to overcome eventual role confusions; <em>rumspringa</em> assists to develop a strong sense and understanding of current and future self; strong ego identity formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Adulthood (baptism / marriage - marriage of youngest child / retirement)</td>
<td>Intimacy vs. isolation Generativity vs. stagnation</td>
<td>close and meaning full relationships, also because of God’s will; sexual activity without contraception; personal growth through community and children - children as agents of socialization; life filled with meaning, because of family, community, and God’s will</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Erikson understands psychosocial development as a passage through the sequence of the different stages. According to Erikson each stage has its particular goals, concerns, accomplishments, and dangers (Woolfolk 2011). Erikson’s theory of the eight stages of psychosocial development provides a good foundation when analyzing the Amish life span development. Nevertheless, several adaptations to Erikson’s framework needed to be made to fit the Amish understanding of psychosocial development. Hence, Hostetler and Huntington argued that Erikson’s second and third stage, i.e. autonomy vs. doubt on the one hand and initiative vs. guilt on the other, had to be brought together to fit the Amish understanding of life span development. This change has been necessary, because the Amish encourage their children to be active at an earlier stage than Erikson suggested. Also, the development of a sense for guilt sets in earlier with members of Amish communities. Following Hostetler and Huntington’s line of argumentation, another change needed to be made regarding Erikson’s sixth and seventh stage. Once a person is baptized he or she becomes an adult according to Amish perception. The Amish believe that full adulthood is achieved by the birth of the first child. In most cases, Amish people are baptized right before they get married and they have their first child right after marriage and, hence, the period until full adulthood is very short. Therefore, Erikson’s period of
young adults and the period of middle-aged adults merges within Amish communities to just one period, namely adulthood.

This study raises a question regarding Hostetler and Huntington’s interpretation of the Amish life cycle. All of the Amish participants of this study pointed out that after finishing school and before entering the phase of *rumspringa* the adolescents return to their parents’ homes and help around the house. To me it seems as if this short period of time is very central in the Amish approach to education and is crucial for parent-child relationships within the communities studied. In the years before the children turn 16, which is a marker for the beginning of the period of *rumspringa*, they return to their homes for more practical, on-hands training within the family. The boys are allowed to help out young farmers with their work, and the girls are allowed to assist young mothers with their babies. In most cases, the people these adolescents help are community members or relatives. They are not yet allowed to work in the outside world. Working closely with family or community members serves as a kind of social apprenticeship for the later challenges of work life and in most cases the parents have the function of an “instructor.” In the community I examined, the period of scholars is extended up until the 16th birthday, which means that the period of young people stars with 16, the marker for the Amish phase of *rumspringa.*
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The following chapter provides a summary of my findings and analysis, implications of the study, and suggestions for future areas of research. This case study was conducted in the Amish Holmes County Settlement located in Northeast Ohio, which is the largest Amish settlement in the U.S. The research utilized Erik Erikson’s (1993) theory of eight stages of human development as a theoretical background for categorizing and understanding crucial life stages in Amish communities. Erikson’s theory assisted in understanding the Amish life cycle and its importance for developing patterns of parental authority. These patterns of parental authority were then analyzed within Diana Baumrind’s (1978; 1971) and Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) framework of parenting styles, which served as a conceptual framework of this study.

Besides the theoretical and conceptual framework, publications by leading researchers in the field of Amish studies assisted in developing a critical foundation for this thesis. Exploring the life cycle and predominant patterns of parental authority among Amish communities through an ethnographic case study was found to be suitable approach for addressing the following main research question:

How do social and cultural factors and processes influence the members of Northeast Ohio Amish communities and their patterns of parental authority?

This main research question was followed by the below sub-questions:

1. Which pattern of parental discipline is predominant among the Amish community members studied and why is it most prominent?

2. How are the four patterns of parental discipline represented in the Amish parental community members?
3. How are Amish parents influenced by their own parents’ style of authority and how have they continued with or adapted this style with their own children?

The main research question and the sub-questions were aimed toward establishing a better understanding of parent-child interaction in Amish communities.

**Summary of Analysis**

A number of social and cultural factors were identified as significant for understanding the members of Amish communities regarding patterns of parental authority. The first cultural concept that has a major impact on developing predominant parenting styles in the Amish communities studied is the *Ordnung*. The *Ordnung* represents a blueprint for expected behavior within the community, and represents the structure of the whole Amish way of life. Not only does the *Ordnung* for example regulate the way to dress, it also emphasizes the importance of interdependence and reciprocity. The central role of community, interdependence, and reciprocity also has an impact on the Amish conception of successful family life. The Amish parents, who participated in this study, instill the importance of community by acting out a very collectivistic life devoted to the larger society. Hence, the *Ordnung* not only represents a blueprint for expected behavior in the larger community, it also has an impact on how Amish families structure their whole way of life.

The second cultural concept discussed in relation to the Amish philosophy of cultural socialization was *Gelassenheit*. One outcome of this case study was that *Gelassenheit* represents a term that has been used with respect to the Amish by outsiders but has not been developed by the Amish themselves. According to Creswell (2008), one could say that the concept of *Gelassenheit* is an etic concept. Kraybill (2001) claimed that the concept of *Gelassenheit* is
represented in various arenas of Amish life, such as values, ritual life, the way to dress, the use of horse and carriage, the use of the common language Pennsylvania Dutch, or the social structure of Amish communities. All of the above are actually categories discussed in the Ordnung as well. However, investigating the concept of Gelassenheit assisted my learning more about living a life in Demut opposed to living a life in Hochmut. Hochmut means pride whereas Demut stands for humbleness or meekness. Another crucial aspect of Demut is the yielding lifestyle found in the Amish communities investigated. In order for children to adopt the more valued approach Demut, the parents, who participated in this study, try to model a life in Demut for them.

The detailed analysis of the life span development of Amish communities using Erik Erikson’s (1993) theory of eight different stages of psychosocial development assisted my understanding of emergence of the self, the search for identity, the individual’s relationships with others, and the culture throughout life within the communities I studied. The study established that the Amish life cycle of the communities investigated can be divided into only six stages of personality; namely, infancy, little children, scholars, young people, adulthood, and old folks. In terms of education and parental authority, it proved to be important to have a closer look at the Amish school system. Within the communities studied, the Amish school definitely functions as a means to train a child in becoming a part of the community, as opposed to merely teaching a curriculum divorced from community life. All Amish participants emphasized that it is crucial for them that the teachers of their parochial schools are committed to Amish values and have a strong social and communal relationship with their students. An additional factor that seemed of importance to Amish parents, who participated in this study, was that the schools are all in close
proximity to the farm, because this proximity allows students to build strong bonds within their community. Another interesting finding of this study was that after scholars, i.e. students, finish school at eighth grade, they spend another one or two years at home with their parents until they turn 16 and enter the phase of *rumspringa*. The Amish participants of this study pointed out that this short period of time is very central within the Amish approach to education and that it is crucial for parent-child relationships. In the communities investigated, working closely with family or community members serves as a kind of social apprenticeship for the later challenges of work life, and in most cases the parents have the function of an “instructor.”

Using Diana Baumrind’s (1978; 1971) and Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) framework of parenting styles was helpful when discussing predominant patterns of parental authority among Amish communities. The findings of this study lead me to the conclusion that Amish parents in the communities I investigated represent a mixture of the authoritarian-autocratic and the authoritative-reciprocal patterns of parental discipline. Amish parents I studied make use of corporal punishment and make their children follow the strict guidelines of the *Ordnung*. However, Amish parents are also very caring and warm with a lot of trust in their children, and they allow their children to live an independent life in a safe environment (within the *Ordnung*, of course), such as school or the home. The findings also revealed that the Amish parents, who participated in this study generally follow the pattern of parental authority their parents used; however, gradual changes in the *Ordnung* also had an impact on them adopting some different approaches in socializing and educating children. The younger and maybe more “modern” Amish participants pointed out that they use less corporal punishment than their own parents did,
and they spend more time with the family, which is also reflected in the growing interest in going on vacation.

The indifferent-uninvolved pattern of parental discipline, which can also be called “parent-centered” (selfish) childrearing, is marked as keeping children at a certain distance. Maccoby and Martin also characterized parents falling into this category of parental authority as uninvolved. By involvement, Maccoby and Martin mean the degree to which a person is committed to his or her role as a parent and if a person is more involved in other activities, such as work or personal interests, only little time or attention is available for the child. This is an aspect that did not appear to apply to Amish parents investigated. Hence, I argued that this approach is the least suitable to describe the parent-child relationship of Amish families in this study.

As summarized in the methods chapter, however, certain limitations with respect to this thesis’ conclusion should be kept in mind. Firstly, a gatekeeper was needed to gain access to the Amish communities studied. Hence, the gatekeeper was the one to initially present my project to my study participants (before I was able to do so). Secondly, working with a gatekeeper also had an impact on setting up the interviews, which means that I had no influence on who would be present when conducting an interview. This resulted in Jacob and Ruth’s combined interview session, a setting which may have influenced Ruth’s openness in answering my questions. Thirdly, the number of participants is rather small, which was unavoidable given the above constraints. Lastly, my own position as a non-Amish researcher has to be considered a limitation in itself.

Implications for Further Research
This case study contributed to existing literature in the field of Amish studies. So far, only little research has been conducted on Amish as parents in general and on their predominant patterns of parental authority in particular. In order to understand patterns of parental authority among Amish communities, social and cultural factors and processes had to be considered. In addition, learning more about the life span development and the Amish life cycle were crucial for understanding learned gender roles and parental behavior. This study was an attempt to explain the impact processes of cultural socialization have on developing patterns of parental authority. This small scale case study represents only a starting point for a more through investigation on parental authority among Amish communities.

This research has implications for policy makers who are hopefully able to employ this study as a resource for discussions in the field of public educational policies about the Amish. One such big discussion in the past was the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Wisconsin v. Yoder. However, the study can also serve more generally as a sample for studying a minority culture’s attitudes toward education. Taking into consideration parents’ culturally diverse attitudes toward education may assist policy makers in successfully implementing new education policies which affect minority and migrant populations. Hence, this study is a source for policy makers when discussing educational autonomy and school reform.

The research may be of interest to educators who are interested in why Amish children only attend school up until eighth grade. And it may explain why Amish parents, whose children attend public high schools, pull out their children after they finish eighth grade. The study provides extensive explanations for the parents’ motivation to have their children finish school at this relatively early age.
Furthermore, the study introduces educators and educational researchers to a different approach toward the role of schools and compulsory education. The Amish one-room-school may be appealing to representatives of the Viennese progressive education called “Wiener reformpädagogische Mehrstufenklassen”, which is a rather new educational approach in my home country, Austria. This approach advocates teaching different grade levels in just one classroom. Hence, this research may also contribute to the recent discussion of an educational movement taking place in a different part of the world since both approaches, the Amish and the Viennese progressive education, utilize similar techniques for teaching students.

In addition, this case study may be of interest to parents in general who want to learn more about differences in parenting styles due to differences in cultural background. Besides parents, the study also serves as source of information for non-Amish people living in counties densely settled by Amish communities. The study may contribute to understanding differences in approaches toward child-rearing, parent-child interaction, and parenting styles in general.

Finally, this study aims to serve as a basis for further research in the field of Amish studies, since it connects cultural socialization processes with parenting styles, which represents an area that has hardly been studied yet.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

List of Interview Questions

The following list represents interview questions for all study participants. However, questions listed in bold font are for Amish parents only. Questions indicated with (E) are only for experts or parents, who grew up Amish but are no longer members of this religious community.

• How is Amish society structured?

• **What function has the Ordnung in your daily life?**

  • What function has the Ordnung in the daily life of the Amish? (E)
  
  • What role do obedience and brotherly concern play in terms of societal organization?
  
  • How is this obedience and brotherly concern communicated to children / learned by children?
  
  • How do children learn about the role of the Ordnung?
  
  • Is the Ordnung only restricting or does it also include descriptions of amenities deemed acceptable?
  
  • Could you name some of these amenities?
  
  • Can you explain the concept of Gelassenheit?

• **How is Gelassenheit lived by your family?**

  • How is Gelassenheit lived by Amish families? (E)
  
  • Is the concept of Gelassenheit easy to understand for children?
  
  • **What kind of examples do you use when explaining the concept of Gelassenheit to your children?**
  
  • Can you name some arenas of your daily life where Gelassenheit is represented?
• Can you name some arenas of the Amish’s daily life where Gelassenheit is represented? (E)
• What impact does the concept of Gelassenheit have on education and childcare?
• What role does yielding for others play?
• How do children learn to yield to others?
• Which forms of punishment would you use in order for your children to learn the importance of yielding if you had to use any form of punishment at all?
• Do you know which forms of punishment are used by the Amish in order for their children to learn the importance of yielding, if they had to use any form of punishment at all? (E)
• Can you describe the concepts of Hochmut and Demut to me?
• What are some examples of Hochmut?
• What are some examples of Demut?
• How do children learn these two concepts?
• How would you react if your child showed behavior of Hochmut?
• How would Amish parents react if their child showed behavior of Hochmut? (E)
• Could you describe an act of Hochmut and an action of Demut?
• How do you encourage your children to live a life of Demut?
• How are Amish parents encouraging their children to live a life of Demut? (E)
• Which support do you get from the community to educate your children to live a life of Demut?
• Which support do Amish families get from the community to educate their children to live a life of Demut? (E)
• What role does work play in your life?
• Which role does work play in the life of the Amish? (E)

• **How are your children assisting you with your work?**

• How are Amish children assisting their parents with their work? (E)

• **What type of work would you consider to be good work?**

• What type of work would Amish families consider to be good work? (E)

• **What type of work would you wish your children would pick up?**

• **What is a good job for a boy?**

• What is considered to be a good job for an Amish boy? (E)

• **What is a good job for a girl?**

• What is considered to be a good job for an Amish girl? (E)

• **How are your children trained for work?**

• How are Amish children trained for work? (E)

• **Are girls also allowed to do typical boys’ work? Why or why not?**

• Are Amish girls also allowed to do typical Amish boys’s work? Why or why not? (E)

• Could you explain the concepts of “Bann und Meidung” to me?

• Do you personally know of a case of excommunication and shunning? How did the community react? How did the parents react?

• Two academics found, that the Amish life cycle can be explained by six age categories, namely infancy, little children, scholars, young people, adulthood, and old folks? Do you agree with this categorization? Why or why not?

• **What is your immediate reaction when a baby is crying?**

• Is there a difference between taking care of a baby boy or a baby girl? Why or why not?
• When and how are babies fed?

• **How do you take care of toddlers and pre-school children?**
  
  How do Amish families take care of toddlers and pre-school children? (E)
  
  Where and with whom do toddlers spend the most of their time?
  
  What is the role of toddlers and pre-school children in a household?
  
  Do children at these ages cry often?

• **What is your reaction when a child of these ages cries? Is this reaction different to the one when a baby cries? Why or why not?**

• **At what age do you send your children to school?**
  
  At what age are Amish children sent to school? (E)

• **What type of school are your children attending?**
  
  What types of schools are Amish children mainly attending? (E)

• **Have you heard about the concept of homeschooling? What do you thing about this type of educating your children?**

• **What do children at school-age learn at school?**
  
  What do Amish children at school-age learn at school? (E)

• **Is that different to what you have learned in school? Why or why not?**

• **How do your children get to and from school?**
  
  How do Amish children get to and from school? (E)

• **What do your children generally do after they return home from school?**
  
  What do Amish children generally do after they return home form school? (E)
• Who is / are their teacher(s) and how can the relationship between your children and the teacher(s) be described?

• What do children learn at school?

• Do they also have religious education? Who is responsible for religious education?

• What is important to you that your children should learn at school?

• What type of school do you personally prefer - one-room-schools or public schools?

  Why?

• Is there a certain age at which your children leave school?

• Is there a certain age at which Amish children leave school? (E)

• What do children do after they are done with school?

• Could you tell me more about the period of rumspringa?

• How did you experience this phase in your life?

• Has the period of rumspringa changed over time? Why or why not?

• Do young adults generally meet their future partner in this period of life? How and where does that generally happen?

• Where did you meet your husband / wife?

• When do young adults finally enter the stage of adulthood? Is there a significant event after which young adults become adults?

• When would you refer to a young adult as mature?

• What is the woman’s position in the Amish society?

• How do husband and wife support each other in Amish communities?
• How do parents generally interact with their children? Who is making the decisions and why is the decision making process this way?

• What function do children have for Amish couples? Is there also something parents learn from their children? Can you name some examples?

• When do members of Amish communities generally enter the stage of old folks?

• **How is your relationship with your own parents?**

• Where do they live?

• How often do you see them?

• Who is taking care of them?

• Could you describe the relationship between your parents and your children? How do they interact with each other?

• What would you consider a good life for your children? Why?

• Would you consider yourself an “authority?” Why or why not?

• Do you expect unquestioned obedience from your child? If so, how do you achieve this?

• Do you think that it is sometimes necessary to curb a child’s self-centered will? How would you go about this?

• Do Amish families curb a child’s self-centered will? How do they go about this? (E)

• Do you think that children have a subordinate role in Amish families?

• **What types of punishment do you apply when educating your children?**

• What types of punishment do Amish families apply when educating their children? (E)

• **How would you describe your relationship with your children? What words would you use to describe your relationship?**
• How do you react to a child’s natural curiosity?

• How do Amish parents react to a child’s natural curiosity? (E)

• Do you think it is your responsibility to shape and alter a child’s ongoing and future behavior?

• Who is made responsible for your child’s misbehavior? You, your child, your family, your community,...?

• Who is generally made responsible for an Amish child’s misbehavior? The parents, the child, the family, the community,...? (E)

• How important is it for you to model the right behavior for your child? Is this an easy task for you? Why or why not?

• How important is it for Amish parents to model the right behavior for their children? (E)

• What role does farm life play for your child’s development?

• What role does farm life play for an Amish child’s development? (E)

• Do you consider it as necessary to implement commands or sanctions? When and why do you consider this as necessary?

• How much time do you spend with your children a day?

• How much time do Amish parents spend with their children a day? (E)

• How would you describe your role in your child’s life?

• What values do you consider to be the most important ones in your life? Do you convey these values to your children? How and why or why not?
APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORM

Research Participant Information and Informed Consent Form

Introduction:
My name is Medea Loibl and I am a graduate student studying for a Master’s degree in Cross-cultural and International Education at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. My study, under the guidance of Dr. Bruce Collet, looks at predominant patterns of parental authority among Amish communities.

Purpose:
The results of my study help educational and developmental psychologists, and educators in general, to understand how the parent-child interaction and predominant patterns of parental authority among Amish communities work. This academic study is beneficial for the society as a whole to better understand the Amish approach toward education, family values, and the Amish lifestyle. There are no direct benefits to you by participating in this study. However, you can probably benefit by talking about your own parenting style and you can clarify why you treat your children in a particular way. This study can also contribute to other academic studies of Amish communities.

Procedure:
This study is done in person and involves interview sessions with open-ended questions. With “open-ended” I mean questions that allow you to elaborate your answers as much as you like. The interview will last about two hours or longer. I, Medea Loibl, would like to audio record the interview with your permission. In addition to the interview, I would like to observe your interaction with your children. This observation can take up to an hour. I will summarize my observations in a note-book, so called “fieldnotes.” If you are a religious leader, I would like to learn more about your personal parenting experiences and experiences you have observed in your community. If you are an expert on the Amish, I would like to learn more about your observations and experiences concerning Amish parent-child interactions. If you are an expert on the Amish you might not be eligible to provide answers to all the interview questions. You must be at least 18 years or older to participate in this study.

Voluntary nature:
Your participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions or stop participation at any time without penalty. There will be no compensation for being in this study.

Confidentiality:
The information you provide in this interview will not be linked to your name. All transcripts of our conversations will use a number as opposed to a name for classifications purposes. A
pseudonym (a false name) is used to protect your identity. Any additional information that might reveal your identity will be altered as well.

The audio tapes and transcripts from our conversation will be kept under lock and key in a secure location in my, Medea Loibl’s, office, and will be available only to me. Once the study is completed, the audio recordings of the interview will be destroyed.

**Risks:**
There are no physical or mental health risks to participating in this study. Some participants however may feel uneasy about sharing their information with a non-Amish. Your decision to participate or not in this study will not impact your relationship with Bowling Green State University.

The following steps are taken to minimize any discomfort:

- We will have our conversation at a location and environment that you feel is safe and that you are comfortable in.
- If at any time during the interview you feel uncomfortable or you want to stop, just let me, Medea Loibl, know and I will stop the interview immediately.
- If you wish to clarify certain questions, or maybe want the questions to be restated in German (instead of English) just ask me, Medea Loibl, to do so.

**Contact information:**
If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues or how to do any part of it, please contact the researcher, Medea Loibl, at Bowling Green State University, 121 Shatzel Hall, Bowling Green OH 43403, medeal@bgsu.edu; 419-378-4285.

You can also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Bruce Collet, at Bowling Green State University, 560 Education Building, Bowling Green OH 43403, colleba@bgsu.edu; 419-372-7354.

You can also contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research.

Thank you for taking your time to participate in this study!

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary. I agree to participate in this study.

_____________________________________
Participant Signature
APPENDIX C. SCRIPT FOR GATEKEEPER

Script for phone call for recruiting participants through a gatekeeper

Hello, my name is Medea Loibl. I am a graduate student at Bowling Green State University, currently pursuing a master’s degree in Cross-cultural and International Education. I am writing my thesis on the topic of “Predominant Patterns of Parental Authority among Amish Communities.” I know that you have good connections to the Amish community and I was wondering if you could possibly help me find participants for my study. The study will involve open-ended semi-structured interview questions and observations of parent-child interactions. Do you know someone who would be eligible and interested in participating in my study?
APPENDIX D. SCRIPT FOR OBSERVATION OF CHILDREN

Script for observation of children

Script for younger children

ENGLISH: Hello, my name is Medea. I want to learn from your parents and watch you play/work with your parents for 30 minutes. You don’t have to allow me to do this if you don’t want to. Nobody will be mad if you don’t want me to do this. You can let me know at any time if you want me to stop watching you. Is it ok if I watch you play/work with your parents?


Script for older children

ENGLISH: Hello, my name is Medea. I am doing a study on Amish parents and I want to watch you interact with your parents when playing/working for 30 minutes. You don’t have to be part of the study if you don’t want to. Nobody will be mad, if you don’t want to join in. You can let me know at any time if you want me to stop watching you. Is it ok if I watch you play/work with your parents?

du das nicht möchtest. Du kannst mir jeder Zeit sagen, wenn du nicht mehr mitmachen möchtest. Ist es ok, wenn ich dir beim Spielen/Arbeiten mit deinen Eltern zusehe?
APPENDIX E. HUMAN SUBJECT REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

DATE: February 29, 2012
TO: Medea Loibl
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board
PROJECT TITLE: [288384-4] Predominant Patterns of Parental Authority among Amish Communities
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: February 28, 2012
EXPIRATION DATE: February 12, 2013
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Comment: There is a typo in the child assent script:

"You can let men know at any time if you want me to stop watching you. Is it ok if I watch you play/work with your parents?"

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

You have been approved to enroll 8 participants. If you wish to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on February 12, 2013. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.
Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hrsb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board's records.