Theoretical Implications of the Beachy Amish-Mennonites

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

One of the hallmarks of social science is the interaction of theory and methods/data, the former guiding the latter and the latter refining the former, in a cyclical relationship. The goal of theory is to provide explanations for and even predict a range of human behaviors. One potential cause of theoretical stagnation is an over focus on a singular, usually easily accessible group. Given the persistence of plain Anabaptists like the Amish as a highly distinct subgroup in American society, their utility for refining sociological theories is persuasive, but has rarely been employed to this end because of their social inaccessibility, shyness towards social science research, and the popular interpretive frames placed on them that distract would-be investigators. Even with Amish-focused scholarship, the emphasis has been largely on describing the population or applying theory to understand the Amish case, but not returning findings back to theory in critique and revision. This dissertation introduces and contextualizes the plain Anabaptists, then describes the Beachy Amish-Mennonites, a group within the Amish religious tension, but dealing markedly with tensions between separatism and assimilation. Following this introduction are three independent studies that demonstrate the use of plain Anabaptists to refine theory.

The first study focuses on migration motivations. Rational choice theory is the dominant perspective in understanding migration causation: actors migrate to achieve personal ends at as low a cost as possible. Some migration may be motivated by values,
such as religiously based migration. This study proposes a theory of religiously motivated migration. Inasmuch as values are derived from groups, religions with strong membership cohesion must maintain this cohesion in the face of emigration so members continue acting on value-based demands. Religious cohesion is maintained through community-level migration and affiliation-level networks, which both provide members with unbroken religious systemic integration after emigration. Three religious reasons for migration are identified: sacred command, context conducive for religious practice, and awareness of potential membership losses from religious competition. This theory is demonstrated through the case of domestic and international Amish-Mennonite migration.

The second study focuses on subgroup tensions over assimilation. While numerous ethnic groups have assimilated into the American mainstream, the Amish church has embraced cultural and structural separatism on religious grounds. Elements of their cultural system are not just demarcations of social identity but direct members’ social ties, values, and interests inward, permitting the perpetuation of group socialization. However, some members may perceive a level of assimilation desirable and so pursue structural power and mobilization of external cultural resources. Because structural and cultural assimilation reinforce one another, when one weakens, the other may follow and further weaken the first. Separatist-assimilationist conflicts have dotted Amish history, most notably when progressively-oriented Amish-Mennonites have withdrawn from the Old Order Amish. While two past Amish-Mennonite movements assimilated over several generations, the most recent movement, the Beachy Amish-
Mennonites, still retain a partially separate identity, though with some difficulty. Inasmuch as separatism must be maintained across generations, the orientation of Beachy young adults is of particular interest. This study investigates the social structure of a Beachy young adult network to determine what kinds of people occupy positions of power and its implications for assimilation of a third Amish-Mennonite movement. The results indicate that those who attempt to alter the content of, rather than replace and negate, separatist practices occupy positions of power, suggesting a third actor type in the separatist-assimilation conflict: revisionists.

The third study focuses on mainstream Americans seeking to join the plain Anabaptists. For all the liberties granted Westerners, a small but regular stream of people seek to join seemingly austere plain Anabaptist sects (Amish, Mennonites, etc.). What are these “outsiders” seeking? I developed a survey to explore this question and posted it on a prominent Anabaptist website, offering outside seekers information about nearby churches in exchange for their time. Usable responses numbered 1,074 over two years. Evangelicals, Baptists, females, people in the Midwest and South, and the young were overrepresented. Strongest attractions include devout Christianity, strong community, and modesty. A factor analysis of 17 sources of information suggests groupings by mediated and direct information sources. A factor analysis of 21 attractions suggests six types of seeker interest, characterized by emphases on family, femininity, religious conviction, primitivism, social support, and returning to the group. Relationships between the six attraction factors and information sources, age and gender, U.S. region, and religious background and explored through regression analyses.
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Chapter 1: Situating the Plain Anabaptist and Beachy Amish-Mennonite Society
Historically and Theoretically

Social scientists have scoured the globe looking for distinctive subcultures that provide new insights into human behavior. Yet, North America hosts such a people in its own backyard, people who can serve to test the utility of various sociological theories. The Amish have persevered as a distinctive ethnoreligious group for nearly 300 years in America. From their plain clothes to their horse-and-buggy transportation and even to the more subtle ways they think and behave, the Amish remain highly distinct from the American mainstream, and, have done so in the midst of strong social forces to modernize and assimilate.

The Amish are an ideal group by which to critically explore a range of theories. Their highly distinctive culture is a product of elemental assumptions that diverge from those of modern Western society. In applying the dynamics of Amish society to sociological theories, there is potential to reveal the assumptions built into these theories and potentialities to deepening their utility. Thus, in this dissertation, the Amish case serves as a critical investigation of several theories, ultimately suggesting improvements where these theories fail to provide sufficient explanation for the full range of human behavior found in advanced societies, such as the United States.
The field of “Amish Studies” has remained narrow, with a focus that is either more descriptive and anecdotal than theoretical (Bachman 1942; Johnson-Weiner 2010; Kephart and Zellnar 1976; Smith 1958) or simply applies a variant of sociological theory to describe and understand some aspect of the Amish way of life (Enninger and Wandt 1979; Hostetler 1993[1963]; Hurst and McConnell 2010; Loomis 1960; Redekop and Hostetler 1977). With only a few significant exceptions (Bailey and Collins 2011; Olshan 1990; Reschly 2000), scholarship has not examined the Amish as a way to critique and revise social theories.

This dissertation uses the Amish case to test theories in several sociological sub-disciplines. Each chapter represents a single, article-sized study, in which a sociological theory is applied to the Amish case. Each study uses a different or distinctive methodology and data collection approach, and applies the significant findings back to a discussion of the theory, suggesting avenues for theoretical expansion and revision. Hence, the ultimate purpose of this collection is two-fold: first, to engage in the application of specific sociological theories; and, second, to demonstrate through a cross-section of studies the relevance of the Amish to the re-development and refinement of various sociological theories. Further, very few scholars have studied the most progressive Amish faction, the Beachy Amish-Mennonites. This dissertation’s various studies will rely primarily on the Beachy subgroup, as the social dynamics are very alive in this faction that is betwixt mainstream Amish and mainstream America.
History of the Anabaptists

The Amish are part of the greater Anabaptist movement that originated across Germanic Europe in the 1520s, which has created ripples of new movements in the centuries since. Value-driven behavior has been a central component of Anabaptist history and persists to today. Several core beliefs distinguished early Anabaptism from both Catholics and Protestants. Anabaptists emphasized faith and rebirth through both inner regeneration and outer discipleship (obedience to Bible commands and prompting of the Spirit). They believed all people are endowed with a free will, by which they may choose to yield to God’s prompting, first in adult baptism, then through a disciplined lifestyle. Both the Bible and the Holy Spirit guided believers to follow Christ’s laws.

The Body of Christ existed literally as the Christian community, where commitment was lived out, and through whom the Holy Spirit spoke into members’ lives. Believers assisted one another in mutual aid and keep the community pure by disciplining and expelling deviants. Theological truth was not abstract, but expressed in everyday lifestyle decisions and relations with others. Distinctive practices included baptism of adults (not infants) and refusal to swear oaths (Klassen 2001[1973]; Snyder 1995). Despite these commonalities, the faces of Anabaptism were many, often theologically unaligned, especially in the use of violence and in end times prophecy. Anabaptism at the dawn of the reformation represented a radical response to state churches, established religious

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1 While Lutherans advocated salvation by confession of belief alone and Calvinists salvation only for the preordained elect, Anabaptists believed that salvation is by grace, but only to those who have faith in God and do what God commands.

2 As opposed to strict Biblicists, who hold only that which comes from the Bible is inspired.

3 Anabaptists believed the church is necessary to Christian life, but that the church is an assembly of believers without stratification; all have access to God, but access as a church. This was different from Lutherans, which believed the church is not necessary for Christian life, and Catholics, which believed access to God was only through the church. See, for example, the illustration from Raith (1980), page 139.
hierarchy, and inequality, including the disastrous German Peasants’ War and Melchior Hoffman’s apocalyptic visions that prompted the short-lived seizure of Münster (Reschly 2000).

Unlike these two violent uprisings, a third attempt to exert political power in Switzerland established a non-violent, and enduring, legacy in Anabaptism. In the early 1520s in Switzerland, a current of scholarly theological debate led by Ulrich Zwingli brought about a renunciation of Catholicism and a state reformation. However, some of Zwingli’s closest followers were dissatisfied with perceived compromises of Zwingli in accommodating various state positions and maintaining infant baptism. In 1525, after a political tussle between Zwingli and his former students, the Swiss government formally supported Zwingli’s position and in response the dissenters baptized one another as adults. The new Anabaptist (meaning “re-baptizers”) movement quickly spread across much of Germanic Europe despite omnipresent governmental repression including fines, imprisonment, and capital punishment. By the late 1600s, the Swiss Anabaptists (or Swiss Brethren) began migrating to North America, where they flourished. Specifically, they immigrated to Pennsylvania upon invitation of William Penn. From there they moved into Virginia, Ontario, and the Midwest, following the frontier as it opened to European settlement (Dyck 1966; Loewen et al. 1996; Snyder 1995).

A second, somewhat independent Anabaptist movement arose in Holland. Anabaptist precepts leaked into the country from the Rhine River city of Strasbourg in present day France during the early 1530s. Over a few short years, the new movement grew, but divided into violent and nonviolent strands. Menno Simons, a Catholic priest,
joined the nonviolent branch in 1536. He successfully organized the scattered followers and presented a thorough and articulate written defense of beliefs, so that his Anabaptist orientation came to dominate, extending from the Low Countries across Northern Germany and to Danzig, Poland. Though the “Mennonites,” as they came to be known, enjoyed almost two centuries of economic prosperity and governmental tolerance after an initial wave of repression, some moved to the Ukraine (Russia) beginning in the 1780s on invitation of Catherine the Great, who was seeking German farmers to build up the land (Dyck 1966; Klassen 2009; Snyder 1995). When their exemption from compulsory military service discontinued less than a century later, many began migrating to the American and Canadian Great Plains beginning in 1874. Two world wars, repeated famine, and communism took a severe toll on the remaining Russian-based Mennonite communities. With the help of American Mennonites, refugees attempted immigration to Germany, western Canada, and South America, though not nearly as many left as sought to. Today, colonies of plain Russian (or “Low German”) Mennonites exist throughout the Americas (Dyck 1966; Loewen 2008).

In 1528, Anabaptists in the Austrian Tyrol and Moravian regions united and, in 1533, many agreed to establish communes as encouraged by their leader, Jacob Hutter. Moravia became a haven from persecution, and at their peak, these so-called Hutterites had something on the order of 20,000 to 40,000 people living in up to 85 to 90 colonies there. They appealed to a variety of classes and nationalities, which joined the colonies (Gross 1997; Packull 1995). The Thirty Years’ War destroyed many colonies, climaxing in the final 1622 forceful eviction of all Hutterites. They migrated east into Slovakia,
Hungary, and Romania/Transylvania, and beginning in 1770, into the Ukraine. Through all this migration and persecution, their practice of community of goods was weakened and largely discontinued for a time. Three movements of communal resurgence arose in Ukraine, and each subsequently migrated to South Dakota in the late nineteenth century, escaping political changes in Russia. During World War I, nearly all Hutterites then moved to Canada to flee American draft pressure. These three major communal branches persist today across the American and Canadian Great Plains (Bennett 1967; Hostetler 1974; Janzen and Stanton 2010; Peters 1965).

These three—the Swiss Brethren / Mennonites, the Dutch / Russian Mennonites, and the Hutterities—were the major, enduring expressions of Anabaptism, but the movement continued to have its impact. Today, much diversity inhabits the Anabaptist movement. This diversity may be foremost understood as belonging to at least one of seven traditions that emerged at the founding of Anabaptism or in the centuries thereafter. The first three traditions, discussed above, were established during the Anabaptist movement’s first years. The Amish, as well as the Brethren, the Apostolic Christian Churches, and the Bruderhof, were post-inaugural resurgences of Anabaptist theology. The social, political, and geographic context of each group during its origins and historical trajectory shaped each tradition uniquely as their Anabaptist creed and practice responded to context-specific shifts and attributes (Huntington 1993). Figure 1 portrays the seven Anabaptist traditions beneath which are select plain affiliations.

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4 The Schmiedeleuts now consists of two groups, making the actual number four.
Figure 1: Seven Plain Anabaptist Religious Traditions and Select Affiliations
Of particular interest here are the Amish. In the 1670s and 1680s, Ulrich Müller, a convert to the Swiss Brethren, was ordained bishop and became an itinerant preacher, especially in the Swiss Oberländer region where many converted to Anabaptism. This wave of new converts came to clash with the longer-established Swiss Emmentalers. In the summer of 1693, the convert group appointed Bishop Jacob Amman to reason with the Swiss Emmentalers. By then, many of the Swiss Brethren, especially the newer converts, including Ulrich Müller, had relocated to the Alsace region of present day France, including Jacob Amman. Jacob Amman returned, and under risk of apprehension by authorities, spent the remainder of the year negotiating points of communion frequency, relation with those who assist but do not join the Anabaptists, extent of shunning transgressors, and points of separation from society in daily practice. The meetings failed and Amman and accompanying delegates excommunicated six leaders. However, in March of 1694, the Swiss Emmentalers issued a notice of separation to all who fellowshipped with Amman, thus initiating a total separation (Beachy 2011), though the string of meetings and immediate attempts at reconciliation continued through 1697, suggesting no decisive year that the Amish, as such, were established (Gallagher 1994).

The Amish were not long staying in Europe, due to ongoing persecution, restrictions, and spatial dispersal. Through the 1700s, the Amish settled Pennsylvania and followed the Midwest frontier as far west as Kansas. The Amish tended to migrate and settle in family clans, rather than establish central, cohesive communities, as in Europe. As their clans grew, Amish continued purchasing land between family clusters. Additionally, more Amish migrated from Europe in the 1800s. Population growth and
geographic consolidation were significant steps in establishing ceremonial organizations, consolidating dispersed family units. Given Amish emphasis on separatism, the question arose: in what way shall a unified expression of separatism be accomplished (Hopple 1971/1972; Landing 1970a)? Thus gave rise to a series of conflicts that prompted annual meetings beginning in 1863. By 1865, feeling outdueled, the conservative (Old Order) group withdrew from the meetings, and the Amish gradually divided into Old Order and conservative (Amish-Mennonite) groups (Nolt 2003[1992]; Yoder 1991). Thereafter, into the twentieth century, regional conferences of Amish-Mennonites merged with mainline Mennonites and today have lost their Amish identity (Bair 1952). A second wave of Amish-Mennonites, the Conservative [Amish] Mennonite Conference, was established in 1910 as in-between the Amish-Mennonite conferences and the Old Order Amish, but across the twentieth century they, too, followed a path of assimilation (Scott 1996). The third wave of Amish-Mennonites, the Beachys, will be the denomination of primary focus in the three present studies, and shall be discussed in greater depth.

A Descriptive Review of the Beachy Amish-Mennonites

The Beachy Amish-Mennonites are a conservative Anabaptist denomination with Old Order Amish origins. They support the 1632 Dordrecht Confession of Faith, established by the Dutch Mennonites and serving as a point of contention in the original Amish-Swiss Brethren division of the 1690s, and also maintain a set of distinctive practices and limits on lifestyle choices. However, they are not as strict in their practices as the Old Order Amish and are also evangelically oriented, prompting them to engage in outreach and mission programs. The Beachy denomination is congregational but with
many service programs stitching the individual churches together. While the formal

Beachy denomination is the largest Amish-Mennonite constituency, several other closely
related constituencies have developed in recent decades, including Maranatha Amish-
Mennonite, Ambassadors Amish-Mennonite, Berea Amish-Mennonite, Midwest Beachy
Amish-Mennonite, and Mennonite Christian Fellowship.

Historical Origins: 1900-1950

The Amish division of the 1860s produced two parallel expressions of
Amishness: the Old Order Amish, most readily recognized today by their non-ownership
of motorized vehicles, and the progressive Amish-Mennonites, who have more readily
accepted theological and technological innovations. While the Old Order stream has
grown and diversified into multiple sects, the Amish-Mennonite congregations have
typically discarded an Amish identity for a mainstream Mennonite one.

The Beachy Amish-Mennonites represent a third major wave of Amish-
Mennonites. As technological innovations appeared in rural North America in the early
decades of the 1900s, some Amish more readily accepted these changes than others,
including telephones (Zimmerman Umble 1994) and farm tractors (Beachy 1955). Those
most disposed to innovation adoption also tended to oppose shunning members whose
only offense was transferring membership to another plain Anabaptist denomination
(Beachy 1955; Lapp 2003). When innovation adoption and/or shunning became an
irreconcilable contention, divisions occurred. Factions of permissive Amish appeared in
Ontario (1903), Lancaster County, PA (1909-10); Somerset County, PA (1927); Plain
City, OH (1938); Virginia Beach, VA (1940); Nappanee, IN (1940); Holmes County, OH
(1941); Kalona, IA (1946); and Belleville, PA (1954), among other locations (Beachy 1955). While these Amish factions may have shared fellowship in early years, adoption of the automobile brought about a severance of fellowship. Yet, as each faction allowed automobiles, they again associated with this network of technologically permissive Amish (Anderson 2011b).

These congregations were known by several names in the early years, but the Beachy Amish-Mennonite title prevailed. Moses Beachy was a junior bishop in Somerset County, PA, Amish settlement. His was one of the earlier congregations to adopt automobiles, after dividing with the Old Order on June 26, 1927. From then until his death in 1946, he was instrumental in assisting technologically permissive Amish factions (Beachy 1952; Mast 1950; Yoder 1987). Thus, the group became the Beachy type of Amish-Mennonite. However, the Beachy movement took shape independent of any single personality. John Stoltzfus of Weavertown Amish-Mennonite in Lancaster County, PA, assisted two congregations that sought to disfellowship from the Conservative Amish-Mennonite Conference (Lapp 2003). David Burkholder of Maple Lawn Amish-Mennonite, like Moses Beachy, assisted several Amish factions (Beachy 1955). The isolated decision of leaders in other Amish communities—including Belleville, PA (Kauffman 1991) and Milverton, ON (White 2009)—to permit automobiles and associate with the Beachy network further contributed to the movement’s numbers.

Early on, the bulk of cultural and religious practices of the Old Order Amish were retained among the Beachys. Beachy churches tended to reflect the patterns of local Amish. Settlement-wide trends of tobacco usage, courtship practices, and personal
religious devotion were mirrored in both the Amish and the Beachy churches. Across the affiliation, services were conducted in German and included off-Sundays for visiting. Families were large and most households relied on agriculture for income and subsistence (Reschly and Jellison 1993). In thought and deeds, the Beachys were basically liberal Old Order Amish (Anderson 2011b).

*Evangelical Transformation: 1946-1977*

The Beachy denomination was transformed at mid-century by both the incorporation of revivalist Amish who had defected from their Old Order churches and by revivalist influences growing within the Beachys. The religious revivalism had at least three sources. First, those Amish young men who spent time in alternative service (C.P.S.) during World War II came into contact with other Christians and were drawn to greater religious piety. The message they carried back to their communities was the need to engage in proselytizing and to reform lifeless and even sinful church practices (Nolt 2001). Second, in the 1950s, a wave of evangelical Protestant revivals swept America, such as the tent crusades of Billy Graham. The fervor trickled down to the Anabaptist setting, where several Mennonite evangelists started their own tent meetings. Some Amish attended these meetings. The spirit of revival meetings were kept at a distance until the itinerant Amish evangelist David A. Miller of Thomas, OK adopted the style and gave it an Amish face (Branson 1967). Many Amish were stirred by the preaching of the Mennonites and David Miller. Finally, Amish subscribed to Mennonite periodicals reinforcing revivalist theology and programs.
Amongst the Amish, the revivalists established annual mission conferences, a missions board, Mission Interests Committee (M.I.C.), and several mission outposts; at the local level, they met for Bible study and prayer meeting. At first, the reforms were not uniformly and soundly condemned by Amish leaders, but as the movement persisted outside of the jurisdiction of the existing religious structure, leaders confronted the movement, prompting an exodus. By the end of the 1950s, the revivalists had largely withdrawn from the Amish, taking their programs with them. They tended to have more lenient views toward technological innovations and thus permitted automobiles and other innovations from the start (King 1963; McKnight 1977; Miller 2008; Nolt 2001).

At the time they withdrew, the Beachy movement was more theologically Old Order than evangelical. However, a nucleus of Beachy churches was shifting towards the revivalist movement. These churches succeeded in establishing Amish-Mennonite Aid (A.M.A.) in 1955, a relief program for West Germany, later extended to hurricane relief work in Belize. The bulk of Beachy leaders accepted A.M.A. with ambivalence, and on the condition that the work is relief and not proselytizing. However, both projects had evolved towards the latter by the mid-1960s (Petersheim 2005). It was this nucleus of Beachys that attracted the Amish revivalists to affiliate with the redefined Beachy Amish-Mennonite denomination. A.M.A. and M.I.C. became the flagship organizations for the revivalists. They were amongst the first churches to switch from German to English in services, to import Mennonite expressions of revivalism like protracted meetings and tract distribution, to write a statement of faith and standard of practice for the local
church, and to reconfigure local dress patterns to a universal garb, blending Mennonite and Amish elements of styles (Anderson 2011b).

While centralized through mission programs, the Beachy churches remained autonomous. Each church ordained its own leaders, wrote its own standards, maintained its own church property, and accepted and dismissed members on its own terms. Nevertheless, during the 1960s and the 1970s, local churches invited bishops and ministers to investigate unresolved church conflicts. The interventions typically resulted in a two- or three-way division. The blending of different sources of influences gave rise to several expressions of “Beachy.”

Some accepted the moral reforms of the revivalist movement (such as forbidding tobacco and restricting courtship practices) but desired to maintain Amish patterns of church and theology (such as German in services and patterns of dress). These became the Old Beachy and are today organized as either the Berea Amish-Mennonites or the Midwest Beachy Amish-Mennonites. Another set of Beachys rejected the moral reforms, desiring to retain an identity as liberal Amish, not revivalist Amish-Mennonite. These churches, also referred to as Old Beachy, remained unorganized, but the network could be referred to as the “highest Amish.” A final group arrived late on the revivalist scene. These ex-Amish, ex-River Brethren, and ex-Old Beachys received assistance from the Amish revivalist churches in Holmes County. As the Holmes County-based churches associated more closely with the increasingly permissive Beachys in the years sandwiching 1970, these latecomers grew distressed over compromises in distinctive practice. In 1977, they discontinued associations and established the Mennonite Christian
Fellowship denomination (Anderson 2011b). The tensions as to how best implement an ideal religious program while remaining separate enough from society was clearly a divisive issue.

Growth and Trials: 1960s-1990s

Despite the divisions, the nucleus of revivalist Beachy churches continued to grow, and the religious programs were increasingly carbon copied from Mennonites: evening church services, choirs, Sunday schools, revival meetings, church offices, and distribution of religious pamphlets, amongst others. In 1970, the Beachys established and sponsored Calvary Bible School in Arkansas, as their youth were inundating Mennonite schools. That same year, Calvary Messenger debuted as the official denomination-sponsored periodical. Mission work expanded form the 1960s to the early 1980s. A.M.A. moved into El Salvador and Paraguay (Petersheim 2005), while M.I.C. moved into Belgium and eventually Ireland (Allemang 1997). Individual congregations initiated church plantings, whereby several families moved to a region without a conservative Anabaptist congregation. Popular destinations included the U.S. southeast—some settlements having started as Old Order Amish before going Beachy (Landing 1970b)—and Costa Rica. Voluntary service units for young people—either a home for elderly or mentally handicapped—sprung up, especially in response to the need for alternative service opportunities during the Vietnam War. Six Beachy-sponsored homes were established, of which three exist today, Faith Mission Home, Mountain View Nursing Home, and Hillcrest Home.
The Beachys sympathized with the plight of Mennonite factions withdrawing from larger assimilating conferences in order to maintain distinctive practices like dress and limitations on technology, such as the Conservative Mennonite Fellowship, Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church, Southeastern Mennonite Conference, and Midwest Mennonite Fellowship (Scott 1996). However, the origin of the Beachys was a liberal division with a conservative group, unlike the new Mennonite denominations. With a hybrid of Amish, Mennonite, and evangelical Protestant thought and practice, the Beachys began a perpetual course of identity formulation and reformulation. This included boundary concessions, standard revisions, and disciplinary relaxation, a path similar to the two preceding Amish-Mennonite movements. The rapid changes alarmed many of the leaders, who discussed the possibility of establishing a constituency board to address the problem. This vision was implemented at the 1991 ministers’ meetings in southern Ontario.

The Beachy Bishop Committee was charged with taking 18 voiced areas of concern and addressing them in a denominational-level statement of practice. However, the private opposition of several leaders derailed the project, and it was never implemented. Generally from more assimilationist-oriented churches, they opposed the restrictiveness of the statement and its centralizing effect. By the end of the decade, of the 18 issues, the ministerial body only accepted a prohibition against radio and television ownership (Anderson 2011a). The original document, *A Charge to Keep, I Have*, was ultimately abandoned. When committee members began rotating in 1997, the newly elected generally expressed concerns about drift, but preferred to address it through
statements of recommendation rather than binding agreements. Several churches sought an independent course when it was clear that *A Charge to Keep, I Have* would not be implemented. They established the Maranatha Amish-Mennonites, and then later the Ambassadors Amish-Mennonites (Anderson 2010).

**Organizational Growth**

As the Beachy population grew, they were able to develop separate religious programs from the mainstream Mennonite programs, on which they relied in earlier years (Nolt 2011). Segments of the denomination began supporting local niche and/or broader para-Anabaptist projects. These were not constituency-wide projects like A.M.A. or M.I.C., but missions that garnered strongest support from a cluster of churches whose values and practices resonated closely with those of the given mission program. These included publishing and printing ventures, international church planting and relief efforts, ministry programs like a retreat and counseling centers, post-secondary (though non-accredited) Bible schools, prison and inner-city religious programs, and religious instructional seminars and weekend programs. The extent varies to which Beachys agreed to support any of these programs. Missions and programs that have a strongly defined ideology—like Bible schools, counseling centers, or nurture programs—are more controversial than ones that focus purely on material aid—like Christian Aid Ministries or Mexico Mennonite Aid. Constituency-sponsored programs receive more uniform support than unaffiliated programs, which draw support from those with particular interests.
Beachys ascribe to the tenets of the 1632 Dordrecht Confession of Faith and would feel their core beliefs are adequately summarized in Daniel Kauffman’s *Doctrines of the Bible*. In addition, they believe in nonresistance, the women’s head covering, the need for church membership, and the prohibition of remarriage following divorce. Value distinctions made by the Beachys are, one, universal ethnical laws that transcend the need for a direct commandment from God or religious authority (e.g. stealing, violence, slander); two, regulations that are non-universal, contingent of God’s law, and, non-alterable by authorities (e.g. Sunday as a holy day, woman’s religious head covering); and, three, regulations that are non-universal, not spelled out in God’s law, and alterable by community consensus and/or authorities (e.g. clothing details and restrictions on technology) (Nucci and Turiel 1993). Perennial attention is given largely to the third category, given their contingent nature, as well as their highly visible, tangible demarcation of separatism. Unlike the Old Order Amish, who tend to accept this third category “as is” as a matter of policy, the goal of Beachys in religiously focused debates is to rationally validate or invalidate the legitimacy of detailed practices, such as garb, technology, possessions, courtship and marriage propriety, and amusement. The Beachy Amish-Mennonites have engaged these issues since the evangelical sweep beginning in the 1950s.

Several major themes are prevalent in religious discussion. First, many of the specific, carried-over Amish practices do not have a specific defense from a Bible text, so it is common for Beachys to frame Bible teaching as *principle*, concepts that do not
change, and *practice*, the outworking that can change. Second, the burden of proof rests
more on the old practice than the new, whereas the burden is reverse among the Old
Order. Third, Beachys believe that good teaching is needed to develop conviction, and
that this is more powerful in guiding behavior and choices than rules and prohibitions,
though not to the complete exclusion of the latter. Finally, Beachys call for “balance” as a
way to dull the effect of a strict religious emphasis that causes dissonance in the
community. These, and other minor themes, have facilitated a path of ever-lessening
strictness and symbolic distinctiveness: lowering restrictions on dress and technology,
reducing use of Pennsylvania Dutch, increasing acceptance of higher education,
increasing recreational expenditures, relying more on the mainstream market economy,
reducing completed family sizes, and moving away from agriculture (Blackford 1978;
Brown 2011; Plancke 1984; Pollack 1978; Schwieder and Schwieder 1977; Smith 2013;
Yutzy 1961). While Beachys have yet to surrender a separatist identity, they are
ambivalent about this direction. While they fear eventual assimilation in a path similar to
previous Amish-Mennonites, they also champion changes as religious progress.

Several forces slow and restrain assimilation. Among these is the primacy of
community life and the boundaries this erects against mainstream society. Members
interact in a dense social network where social ties overlap in the work environment,
private church school, the church service, kin, home life and visitation patterns,
recreation, and community service/outreach programs, illustrated vividly in several
community studies (Camden and Gaetz Duarte 2006; Gaetz Duarte 1994; Schwieder and
Schwieder 1975; Smith 2013; Yoder 1980). This dense network reinforces collective
behavior and provides informal checks on members’ lives. A second force is the teaching of submission and obedience to the church. Insubordination is equivalent to sin and can serve as a catch-all charge against deviant members. Finally, the lifestyle has appeal for its members, who derive a level of satisfaction from it. Frequent shifts in meaningful symbols may unsettle this contentment, so rapid change is generally guarded against.

While only one congregation as an organizational unit has left the Beachys and assimilated, as most sooner go extinct (Anderson 2012a), many individuals and families have chosen to leave for the mainstream, largely those who do not see value in numerous behavioral regulations (Nisly 2006). This is not surprising, given that the individualist nature of evangelical Christianity would nullify the influence of community solidarity, necessary to resist assimilation (Anderson 2013; Plancke 1984).

Church Life and Structure

Beachy congregations hold services every Sunday morning, which includes a cappella singing (often four part harmony), Sunday school, and a sermon. Members sit in silence before the service begins; informal visiting after services is an important way to reinforce bonds among members. Most churches also have routine Sunday evening services and Wednesday evening prayer meetings. The Sunday midday meal is extensive and an opportunity to host guests or to be hosted.

A full plural ministry includes one bishop, one deacon, and one or more ministers per church. The ordained are chosen through the lot. Much like the Amish (Gallagher 1994), leaders more represent the will of the congregation, mediating competing interests, than an authoritarian figure that creates church polity. Each church has a locally
composed written statement of beliefs and practices by which members agree to abide. Those desiring to join a church will be put on proving, usually for six months. It is a time of adjustment for the church and the proving member to become acclimated to and familiar with one another.

Unlike the Old Order Amish, Beachys believe that outreach and proselytizing are Bible-mandated commands, and around half of the literature they find most influential comes from mainstream evangelical sources (Matthews 2001). They have several ways of implementing the evangelical doctrine. First, Beachy churches engage in local outreach through community service projects, visitation with institutionalized populations at nursing homes and prisons, singing at hospitals, and distributing gospel literature. Second, Beachy churches may decide to send several families to a new location without a conservative Anabaptist presence, establishing a new enclave (Matthews 2001). Finally, Beachys have developed various foreign mission programs in which a family commits several years to living at the mission base (Van Kampen 2009). Some seekers have attended and then joined, but retention rates of converts are generally low, as unforeseen cultural and religious obstacles and complexities make full integration difficult for outsiders socialized into other systems (Allemang 1996; Allemang 1997).

Culture

Families are large by American standards. Couples typically have between four and seven children, though the number has been falling (Anderson 2005; Pollack 1978). Children are raised in relatively secure, stable households (Morris 1993). Household units are rarely broken by divorce. The relative contributions of married Beachy women to
community is in flux, given the rapid change in community practices and lifestyle, and the consequent difficulty it presents for women attempting to socialize children into successful Beachy adults (Anderson 2013). The elderly have frequent intergenerational contact and demonstrate a high level of psychological well-being and community integration (Lesher 1983).

The peak age bracket for marriage is around the early to mid twenties. Courtship periods are for around one year. Young men initiate the process by inquiring about courtship with a young woman, often with her father’s permission to seek courtship secured first. To begin courting is more serious in many respects than engagement, as most couples that start courting marry. Weddings occur on Friday or Saturday. The service resembles a Sunday morning service, but may include special singing, mixed gender seating, coordinated dress colors and styles, and, of course, the vows. A reception follows. Attendance ranges from 350 to 500, which includes many kin. Wedding ceremonies and receptions may have both traditional and stylish elements, to the extent the couple wishes to express their affirmation of either intergenerational continuity or peer culture, respectively. Finally, while marriage is the expectation, there is a minority of adult women beyond youth age who are single. There are few single middle-aged men compared to single middle-aged women (Pollack 1978).

Farming and construction/craft-related work are the primary occupations for men, with the former on the decline and the latter on the rise. Minor occupations include teacher/principal, missionary, publishing, retail store owner, and factory work (Miller 2011). There are a few Beachys who hold professional occupations, and these are diverse.
Men are either self-employed or else work for a plain Anabaptist business. Adolescents turn a portion of their income over to their parents until they reach a certain age. Single women may be employed as teachers, receptionists, cashiers, house cleaners, nurses, waitresses, babysitters, or office jobs. They may also work at home or on the family farm. Married women with children do not work outside the home in formal occupations. Socioeconomic class differences are relatively small among Beachys, as most are financially secure if not well to do.

Primary and secondary education is provided by church- and patron-sponsored private schools. Teachers are hired from within the religious community. Women teach lower grades and men teach upper grades. Some schools offer eight grades while others offer high school (Allabach 1977; Crockett 1999; Waite and Crockett 1997). Several churches require or permit homeschooling, but all churches prohibit public school attendance. The Beachy-sponsored Calvary Bible School (C.B.S.) offers twelve weeks of courses each winter at its campus in Arkansas. Young adults may also attend a similar Mennonite-sponsored Bible school, but neither C.B.S. nor the other Bible schools are similar in curriculum to colleges. A handful of Beachys do pursue post-secondary degrees, but the field is commonly service-oriented, like health or education.

Because of the intimate social networks in which Beachys live, several hobbies dominate Beachys’ interest. For young people, volleyball and softball have been the sports of choice; these games accommodate large groups and varying abilities. Saturday day-long tournaments—usually in major Anabaptist settlements—attract the players who are looking for something more intense than church youth group games. A cappella
choirs also command the interest of many, mostly young adults but also the middle aged. Church choirs may practice for several months before giving a handful of programs, while special touring choirs provide a slant towards professionalism for the devote hobbyist. These emerge out of networks of friends or a formal program like Bible school. Boys and men enjoy hunting and fishing, and like sports and choir, is pursued as a form of recreation to varying intensities. Electronic media like the Internet and DVD viewing is a hobby confined to churches that make accommodations for such technology. In addition to the above, women may enjoy walking, gardening, or cooking as a hobby. These themes are explored in more depth in chapter three (the second essay).

Theorizing the Plain Anabaptists

With a descriptive overview of Beachy Amish-Mennonite society presented, this section reviews past research in plain Anabaptist studies in order to theoretically frame what plain Anabaptists like the Beachy Amish-Mennonites are sociologically. The term “plain Anabaptists” presupposes an agreed-upon definition of “plain.” The word’s meaning suggests something drab, absent of ornamentation, simplistic, and unadorned. Applied to people, the word suggests a group whose social patterns, routines, thoughts, and symbols are rudimentary, archaic, unreflexive, common, face-value, and without modern complexity. And yet, plain Anabaptists may build half million dollar houses, patronize coffee shops, operate combines and forklifts, guzzle down Mountain Dew, and wear name-brand clothes (others may eschew all of these). While many Americans quaff nostalgia from the plain Anabaptists’ plainness, recalling a rudimentary, unreflexive era (Trollinger 2012; Weaver-Zercher 2001), the plain Anabaptists themselves are prone to
seek simplistic nostalgia, as evident in their attraction to Thomas Kinkaid paintings, quaint folk proverbs, rustic interior decorating such as that of P. Graham Dunn, and novels of far off places and people. Such pursuits suggest their lives and culture are more complex than “plain” allows. Such inventory suggests the term’s inadequacy in describing the array of people like Beachy Amish-Mennonites who inhabit the classification “plain.” In the absence of a better alternative, I propose continuing its use, but here expanding what the term is intended to package sociologically.

What are the “plain” Anabaptists? Social scientists have applied miscellaneous theoretical frameworks to the plain Anabaptists, finding explanatory power and areas of lack in each. In reviewing the literature, I propose that the “plain Anabaptists” have three distinct components: they are a religious group, an ethnic group, and a social system. What are the plain Anabaptists? If packaged into one phrase, the plain Anabaptist groups are “ethno-religious societies.” The melding of these three dimensions is like a chemical change—inseparable. Disconnecting one societal element clearly from another for study is formidable; they are better understood as interactive, not cohabiting (Nolt 1999). With that caveat, to flesh out each concept further, I will analyze the core of each element, exploring what is meant by religion, ethnicity, and social system, occasionally pointing out areas of melding.

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5 Many plain Anabaptists have similarly erred in dichotomizing “doctrine” (that which is verbatim spelled out in the Bible—like “religion”) and “application” (the practice of the doctrine, which is not literally spelled out—like “ethnicity” and “society”), a theological framework borrowed from evangelical Protestantism. It suggests the highest form of religion exists in a vacuum above human experience, whereas the historic thrust of Anabaptism has been the reality of religion through human experience.
Descriptions of Anabaptist traditions and identity leave little room for questioning the religious underpinnings of the plain Anabaptists. How, though, does one understand their religion? At least three somewhat related theoretical frameworks are evident in the literature: a religious sect, a social movement, and counterculturalists. While sect and social movement have some explanatory power, they also forward contradictions to the plain Anabaptist case, contradictions not contained in framing their religion as countercultural. Countercultural comes up short in its lack of theoretical flesh.

Church-sect-cult typologies distinguish between a religion that is, respectively, supportive of the host society’s status quo, a faction from the former group in tension with the societal status quo and aiming to restore the religious group to a prior pure state, and an innovative religious movement (Stark and Bainbridge 1979; Troeltsch 1931[1911]). The plain Anabaptists have been characterized as a sect. On religious grounds, they oppose secular social institutions, intensely practice religious beliefs that distinguish them from societal status quos, and are societal marginals (Hostetler 1993[1963]; Mook 1973; Redekop and Hostetler 1977). While this triangular theoretical framework is a magnet for scholarly critiques, it well accents the plain Anabaptists’ inherent tension with society because of their religious beliefs and past time orientation.

I do find two significant inadequacies with a sect formulation. Among the plain Anabaptists, and especially the Beachy Amish-Mennonites, sect-like movements calling for a return to “early Christianity” and “early Anabaptism” emerge perennially, accusing

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6 The oft-discussed concept of the plain Anabaptists as a “redemptive community” may be considered a religious attribute in some ways, but here is discussed later under social system.
parent conservative or Old Order groups of having lost their Christian essence, as if these
parents bodies were a status quo “church” (Petrovich 2013; Pride 2003; Waldrep 2008).
In this regard, the sect typology insufficiently describes all plain Anabaptists. Are sects of
sects becoming like a “church” in their slight shift toward assimilation and
destructuralization, or are sects of sects the true “sect” because of their use of past
Christian periods in leveling an emphatic religious critique against the present sects,
which are themselves a sort of sub-societal “church”? Further, sect typologies suggest
that sects slowly transform into a church, spawning new sects in an endless cycle (Stark
and Bainbridge 1979). The plain Anabaptists are far from transforming into a church;
they have remained distinct for centuries and, even in this modern age, have regularly
encountered diverse points of explicit tension with the host society while retaining their
identity (Hostetler 1984; Kraybill 2003[1993]; Loewen 2008; Place 2003[1993]; Wittmer
1971).

Attributes of a (religious) social movement are similar to characterizations of a
sect. Both possess an ideological critique of society that rejects the prevailing social
order. However, unlike a social movement and a sect, the plain Anabaptists are not
actively seeking to revise society beyond the light evangelical activity of some.
Additionally, existence of social movements and sects are undermined when their
objectives are met, while the plain Anabaptists are less responsive to host society reforms
(Redekop and Hostetler 1977). As a framework, social movement literature is thorough
and precise, and therefore useful in a highly focused study that dissects nuances in
schismatic plain Anabaptist movements, as demonstrated in Kniss’ (1996) analysis of three plain/mainline conflicts among the Mennonites.

The comparative studies of Foster (1997) and Olshan (1984), which contrast the Amish to, respectively, eastern mystics and Latin American Catholic base communities, flesh out the unique attributes of a plain Anabaptist “countercultural anarchism” (to use Foster’s term), which accounts for some inadequacies in sect and social movement frameworks. Classifying plain Anabaptist religion as “counterculturalist” reinforces notions of divergence from contemporary societal norms inherent in these two frameworks. Similarly, “counterculturalist” suggests that their ideology informs multiple cultural domains and practices, including material wealth, violence, arts, technology, and social control (Foster 1997). Because the resulting lifestyle is so fundamentally different, they withdraw from the host society’s cultural and structural patterns to keep their religion pure. While counterculturalists may withdraw from society, sects and social movements do not. They explicitly advocate reforms within the dominant group (Olshan 1984; Redekop and Hostetler 1977), a characterization that better fits some mainline Anabaptist groups (Driedger and Kraybill 1994) and select Anabaptists at the movement’s birth (Snyder 1995) than plain Anabaptists today, whose separatism does not have for a goal society’s transformation (Oyer 1996).

Plain Anabaptists felt society was fundamentally flawed and sought a more authentic mode of existence through separation (Foster 1987). The nature of their countercultural religious separatism reflects an end towards alternative existence. They prefer custom and local coordination over law for social and religious control, establish
local leadership whose authority is derived from the community rather than extra-communal hierarchies, are inward focused, seek smallness of scale, and emphasize voluntary membership (Foster 1997; Olshan 1984). None of these attributes are inherent in sect and social movement frameworks because their goal is not separatism, but societal reform.

Are plain Anabaptists countercultural, or “countercultural anarchists,” as Foster suggests? The term possesses connotations with beatniks, hippies, Goths, Rastafarians, Hare Krishnas, and other twentieth century youth movements that have relaxed or transformed prevailing social norms and moral orders, especially through artistic expression. “Counterculture” suggests a movement disrespected by mainline society for their offensively dissident cultural claims. Despite living at odds with society like a counterculture, plain Anabaptists are not transforming social norms in a way offensive to the host society, notwithstanding occasional, history- or geography-specific cases (Byers, Crider and Biggers 1999; Erickson 1975). Their practices appear nonthreatening and inoffensive, if not inspiring to some (Trollinger 2012; Weaver-Zercher 2001). Plain Anabaptists, if subversive, are only so indirectly, in that “…they make visible the assumptions of the dominant culture” (Olshan 1984, 37).

In retrospect, then, the plain Anabaptists are an ideological system with supernatural beliefs, that is, they are a religion. Specifically, they are an inoffensive separatist religion that makes little to no attempt at reforming the host society or dominant religions, yet neither bars converts from the host society nor suppresses implicit critiques of the host that emanate from the plain Anabaptist’s very existence. No
theoretical framework captures the religious component of the Anabaptists perfectly, though all make a contribution to our understanding, if not by what they correctly predict, than by noticeable divergences.

Ethnicity

The plain Anabaptists may be understood as an ethnic group in that they share common values and behavioral patterns, maintain systems of symbolic and (sometimes) linguistic identification, erect boundaries between their in-group and outsiders, similarly stereotype non-members, direct primary social and psychological ties inward, and possess a shared sense of history, heritage, interrelatedness, and peoplehood (Enninger 1986; Gordon 1964; Nolt and Meyers 2007; Pratt 2004; Redekop and Hostetler 1977). Ethnicity, though a fuzzy and contested concept, fits the plain Anabaptists well. The strength of this ethnic identity delineates them from largely assimilated, mainline Anabaptists, for whom ethnicity is less clear (Nolt 1999).

Ethnicity is a separate, but interrelated concept, with religion. In Belize, the Mennonite ethnic identity is pronounced enough that the state census includes “Mennonite” as a people group category. Yet, because some non-ethnic Mennonites have joined the Beachy Amish-Mennonite churches there, the census distinguishes between “ethnic Mennonite” and “religious Mennonite” (Roessingh 2007; Van Kampen 2009). In southeastern Pennsylvania, all of the people from the German-Swiss region of Europe were referred to as the “Pennsylvania Dutch,” which included plain Anabaptist sects, but also Moravians, Lutherans, Schwenkfelders, and Reformed. As the non-Anabaptist Pennsylvania Dutch assimilated into America through the twentieth century, they
simultaneously lost much of their ethnicity (Huffines 1986). Only the plain Anabaptists retained a distinctive Pennsylvania Dutch ethnicity, to the extent where “Pennsylvania Dutch” has been widely confused as synonymous with plain Anabaptism (Weaver-Zercher 2001).

Each major Anabaptist tradition represents a distinctive ethnicity. In one sense, they all have mainland European Germanic heritage, yet they have shaped and evolved elements of this regional culture into a distinctive expression of peoplehood. For example, each plain Anabaptist ethnicity retains elements of Germanic style clothes, albeit varying based on European locality (Bates 2008; Hostetler 1956). These styles have evolved in the interval years so that while they insinuate some resemblance to the old world era, they are now distinctive identity markers of a cohesive ethnic group (Enninger 1980; Janzen and Stanton 2010; Scott 1997[1986]; Weiser 1998). Women’s head coverings, for example, have diverse minor modifications—variations on a theme—among subgroups within a tradition, but all are of the same historical species. Hutterite, Swiss-German Mennonite, and Russian Mennonite women’s coverings are of different genus (Anderson 2013[2010]). While each group of coverings traces their origin to a European region, the styles have shifted slightly so that identity is no longer tied to that region. As another example, among those plain Anabaptists who still retain an oral German dialect, the language has evolved so that it is now at variance with the mother tongue of their homeland. Their evolved and now unique language is a marker of ethnic identity (Huffines 1986; Johnson-Weiner 1998; Wandt 1988).

7A notable exception to covering styles is the sudden popularity of generic or fancy cloth styles, which represent a sudden and perplexing shift in ethnoreligious identity.
Inasmuch as the plain Anabaptists represent ethnicity, they qualify for two subcategories of ethnicity: minority group and transnational group status. Minority status implies ethnic marginalization by the host society because of numeric inferiority and distinctiveness from the dominant people group. Minorities may relinquish this status if they shed unique traits, but instead they typically press for recognition and equality with other ethnic groups. While the plain Anabaptists number far less than the members of any given host society, they are rarely subjected to marginalization, except that which they impose on themselves through voluntary separation (Redekop and Hostetler 1977). For all their peculiarities, in the modern era they have typically functioned quite well socially and economically with their host society, wherever they may be, in comparison to the European epoch of Anabaptist history.

As ethnic groups, plain Anabaptists are better subcategorized as a transnational people than strictly as a minority people. Being a minority group implies more of an attachment or affinity to a geographic place despite marginalization in that place, whereas transnationalism suggests perpetual minority existence for lack of geographic rootedness. The plain Anabaptists are such a migratory people without a homeland (Good Gingrich and Preibisch 2010; Lamme 2001). Even in regions where their presence is long established, where their ethnic imprint is evident on the cultural landscape (Kent and Neugebauer 1990; Noble 1986; Sawatzky 2005; Scott 2001[1992]), their apparent willingness to move to emigrate to escape undesirable social changes evidences their lack of a country or region of origin (Anderson and Donnermeyer 2013; Donnermeyer and Cooksey 2010; Loewen 2008; Testa 1992). Under the right conditions, America may
trigger the plain Anabaptists’ transnational impulse, emigrating en masse and leaving behind only those who will soon assimilate, as happened to the Amish in Europe and the Mennonites in twentieth century Russia. Yet, the modern rootedness of plain Anabaptists in America and Canada, their overwhelming and disproportionate dominance in North America against other countries in the world, does create some complications with them being fully transnational, albeit conservative Anabaptist churches are growing rapidly through Latin America and eastern and southern Africa.

Social System

Many ethnic immigrants to America have assimilated over the course of several generations, relinquishing their ethnic identity and defining traits. Plain Anabaptist ethnicity is one of few ethnic identities that has remained stable across multiple generations (though not without periodic defections to mainstream America). While some mechanisms of survival are embedded in their unique religious emphases—such as in literal separation from the world—and distinctive ethnicity, others are found in their social system.

The social system is partially a product of their religion. The plain Anabaptists have created goals based on religious beliefs, and these goals validate the institutionalized means of achieving those goals (Loomis 1960). This institution is, broadly speaking, their social system. Researchers seeking to describe the essence of their social system in a single phrase have used “redemptive community,” underpinning first the social system’s religious basis and second the local nature of these systems (Cronk
Macro-level forms of plain society exist at the ethnic and religious level more than the social system.

The redemptive community structures a brotherhood permeated with the nature of Christ. Yieldedness to God and the redemptive community is imparted to members, reinforcing the social system, which reinforces in turn members’ spirit of yieldedness (Cronk 1981; Hostetler 1993[1963]; Kraybill 2004). The redemptive community provides a buffer between the individual—who is prone to collective influence—and competing social systems that vie for individual allegiance (Anderson 2012b; Nisbet 2010 [1953]). The plain Anabaptists view their social system as in conflict with external social systems, with which it attempts to limit linkage (Loomis and Jantzen 1962).

The redemptive community contains a variety of specific social mechanisms (Bennett 1977; Hostetler 1996; O'Neil 1997), which vary with tradition (Kraybill and Bowman 2001). They are many and of varying importance, and scholarly attempts to document them are sincere, but often cherry-picked. For the sake of example, here I will cite several social system processes that, one, constitute and reinforce a redemptive community, and two, flesh out the social system component of what plain Anabaptists are. Their social system includes ceremonial events like rites and rituals (Cronk 1981; Enninger and Raith 1982; Scott 1988), rewards and sanctions on social action (Hamilton and Hawley 1999; Hostetler 1964; Loomis 1960; Stoltzfus 1977), informal boundary maintenance behaviors (Huntington 1984), domains of socialization like family (Huntington 1981[1976]; Smucker 1988) and school (Enninger 1987; Hostetler and Huntington 1992; Redekop and Hostetler 1964), control over technology and/or sources
of external information (Longhofer 1993; O'Neil 1997; Scott and Pellman 1999[1990]), and nuanced economic structures (Dana 2007; Hawley 1995; Longhofer 1993). Some systemic elements serve both a community and a religious or ethnic function. For example, while clothing is a marker of ethnic and religious identity, as discussed previously, clothing also functions to assign and communicate privileges and roles among members (Enninger 1982).

Other social system frameworks suggested for understanding plain Anabaptists have remained obscure, contested, or limited in explanatory power. The preeminent Amish scholar of the twentieth century, John Hostetler, more than any other scholar has grappled with frames defining what plain Anabaptists are. In Amish Society (1993[1963]), he makes three systemically related proposals. First, he defines “commonwealth” as people having “a sense of productivity and accountability in a province where ‘the general welfare’ is accepted as a day-to-day reality” (5). Of significance, plain Anabaptists lack a “province,” the political foundation underlying this framework. The “commonwealth” has received the least attention and is the least defined, least sociological or anthropological, and most usurped by the “redemptive community” framework.

The “high context culture” (Hall 1976) emphasizes people’s involvement with one another and the protection this affords from information overload. In contrast is a “low context culture,” which elevates literacy, logic, rationality, and institutionalization. Over-structuring societies in such formalistic ways alienates individuals from one another, fragments informal social structures, and breeds manipulation through codified

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8 That is, three in addition to the Amish as a sect and the Amish view of themselves.
processes. Related is the *Gemeinschaft* typology, which emphasizes kinship, neighborhood, and friendship (Redekop and Hostetler 1977). In both, the social system is comprised of informal connections. Yet, these are somewhat abstract, idealistic types of social systems, not concepts with theoretical rigor, variables, and predictions. Communities may have intense elements of both high and low context, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. They are borderline nostalgic. Their empirical usefulness in expounding in detail has either not been demonstrated or is simply not there. The lack of engagement with the high/low context culture framework beyond Hostetler testifies, perhaps, to its ambiguity.

The most talked-about of Hostetler’s theoretical frameworks is the “folk society” (Redfield 1947). He highlighted from this typology Amish characteristics of distinctiveness, smallness of scale, homogeneity, and self-sufficiency from which oral communication and conventionalized ways integrate all of life. He emphasized that tradition sustains the community.

Hostetler’s use of “folk society” to describe the Amish social system was criticized for three assumptions. First, technology, quaint clothing, and other apparent elements of folk culture were not in themselves a measure of folk society. Second, and related, critics argued that the Amish were not unreflexive adherents to traditionalism. Through individual agency, some leave, some deviate within the social system, and some choose to stay. Those who stay rationally calculate their decisions to achieve a desired end, which may include technological or fashion restraint. Third, opponents argued against the structuralist view that tradition alone sustained the cohesion of individuals.
Rather, individuals may collectively construct tradition as a symbolic culture (not a societal location) (Bronner 2004; Olshan 1981). While such critiques are valid, they may in turn overstate Amish individualistic rationality. The plain Anabaptists’ social system may be more aligned with bounded rationality, which recognizes agents’ rational choice is limited by context, cultural systems, information gaps, and a constellations of minutiae decision-making irrationalities (Brock 2010). These complexities are inherent to (if not the hallmark of) high context culture, Gemeinschaft, and folk societies, but bounded rationality incorporates the critiques of methodological individualism. The systemic functions of plain Anabaptist society are, then, both a product of social limitations and latent human behavior as well as intentional, rational construction within those limits.

Further, scholars of the Hutterites and Russian Mennonites in particular conceptualize these plain Anabaptists as a European-style village. Structures are arranged around a commons area and include dwelling units, businesses, and buildings used for specialty services and community functions. Surrounding the village are fields where farming is conducted. Trades were operated on a guild system, where specialists oversee the work; division of labor is gendered. Village governance power is distinctive from religious leadership. Households are subject to the community through conditions of land control, production rights, and technological access (Bennett 1976; Hostetler 1974; Longhofer 1993). While the European-style village framework of the plain Anabaptist social system is confined more to Hutterites, Russian Mennonites, and Bruderhof communes than the other groups, its strength is highlighting a social system that accommodates more than one religion, as with the Russian Mennonite colonies of Belize.
(Plasil and Roessingh 2009), whereas up until now the assumption was one social system per religious group. While the Amish may have semblances of a village style where settlement is dense and land ownership is largely contiguous, the Beachy Amish-Mennonites are spatially dispersed, owing in part to their acceptance of personal automobile ownership, and therefore have not created village-like social systems.

Dissertation Overview

Having set the descriptive and theoretical foundation for a deeper analytical investigation of specific Beachy Amish-Mennonite societal domains, this dissertation will now progress through a series of three studies. They address very different, but complementary phenomenon. Chapter two contains a theoretical proposal that addresses community-level religiously motivated migration. Chapter three is an investigation of adolescent social networks as a possible vehicle of social change. Chapter four explores why mainstream Americans may attempt to cross subcultural boundaries by joining restrictive religions like the plain Anabaptist. At the heart of each of these studies is the tension between the behaviors of a minority culture and the homogenizing characteristics of a majority society. Thus, this dissertation probes separate categories of sociological theory, yet unites them through a single umbrella theme. It simultaneously makes advances in general sociological theory, the field of Amish Studies, and public understanding of a minority group’s behavior that, at first glance, may seem peculiar, but can be understood as our theories and interpretive lenses are sharpened.

Scholars assume that the migration process is conducted rationally by those involved, that is, people are interested in advancing their self interest, both economically
and socially, and will migrate to achieve ends, such as an increased salary or better living conditions (Brown 2002; Massey et al. 1993). Migration literature as applied to the United States and other advanced societies has been built almost entirely on assumptions about individual-level rationality. However, in the first of three studies, the Beachy Amish-Mennonites are presented as a case of religiously-motivated, community-level migration, whereby migration decisions are made at the group (rather than individual or household) level, and with the purpose of satisfying a religious objective, even at personal cost. I distinguish between migration motivated by self-interests and religious-interests, respectively. In this modern, individualistic western society, social scientists tend not to interpret social behavior as value-rational but rather means-end rational. The Beachy Amish-Mennonites provide an interesting case demonstrating how value-rational social action still motivates social behavior in a modern society. The results have implications for other groups, not the least of which are the Old Order Amish. Since the Old Order Amish are among the fastest growing populations in American society, and are a prominent feature in rural regions of Ohio and many other states (Donnermeyer and Cooksey 2010), understanding the dynamics of their migration is essential to explaining why certain rural counties become points of destination for new communities and the sudden arrival of several dozen Amish families.

During the mid-century heyday of assimilation studies, an assortment of theoretical and methodological tools were used, including some early agglomerates of cultural diffusion and social network theory. A social network is the overall structure formed by the cumulative ties among individuals. It is visualized through a connect-the-
dots type map of actors and their relations. In the second study, I apply the network approach to understanding assimilation by analyzing cultural deviance and social network structure within a closed network of just under 100 Beachy Amish-Mennonite adolescents. I hypothesize that deviants are the most powerful actors in Beachy social networks, thus triggering assimilation by redefining norms. However, the results suggest a middle type of actor, which I call the revisionists, are empowered by simultaneously making small changes while affirming the group’s heritage of practices.

While assimilation implies a singular direction toward the mainstream, numerous individuals have attempted to swim against the current and join the plain Anabaptists from the outside. This phenomenon appears counterintuitive, given the individualistic Western system into which outsiders are socialized and the numerous cultural and religious restrictions plain Anabaptists impose on members. Even more counterintuitive is the apparent positive correlation between American individualism and the number of outsiders interested in joining the plain Anabaptists. I explore this phenomenon by analyzing the survey responses received on a Beachy Amish-Mennonite website (www.BeachyAM.org) from outsiders interested in visiting a Beachy or other plain Anabaptist church, out of interest in possibly joining. Is so doing, I pinpoint what outsiders find so attractive in the plain Anabaptists and what this says about processes of secularization and modernization.
Chapter 2: Religiously Motivated Migration

Abstract

Rational choice theory is the dominant perspective in understanding migration causation: actors migrate to achieve personal ends at as low a cost as possible. Some migration may be motivated by values, such as religiously based migration. This study proposes a theory of religiously motivated migration. Inasmuch as values are derived from groups, religions with strong membership cohesion must maintain this cohesion in the face of emigration so members continue acting on value-based demands. Religious cohesion is maintained through community-level migration and affiliation-level networks, which both provide members with unbroken religious systemic integration after emigration. Three religious reasons for migration are identified: sacred command, context conducive for religious practice, and awareness of potential membership losses from religious competition. This theory is demonstrated through the case of domestic and international Amish-Mennonite migration.

Introduction

Religion has been a cause in migration decision-making, in the past (Anderson 1985; Beiler 1997; Dann 1976; Reinhard 1992) and present; internationally (Cavalcanti 2005; Dietz 2000; Good Gingrich and Preibisch 2010) and internally (Stump 1984; Toney 1973; Toney, Stinner and Kan 1983); and among Christians (Anderson 2013a;
Connor 2012; Toney 1973), Jews (Dashefsky and Lazerwitz 1983; Palmer 2012),
Muslims (Al-Faruqi 1976; Masud 1990; Thorp 1990), and others (Carter 1992). Despite
religion’s diffuse role in triggering migration—apparent in these cases but seemingly
incidental in inclusion—religiously-motivated migration has been under-theorized.

On the one hand, there is a wide sociology of religion literature addressing
migration, but it does not topitalize religion as a motivation. Religious migration scholars
instead discuss migration’s effect on religiosity (Connor 2008; Koser Akcapar 2006;
Nelsen and Whitt 1972; Stump 1984; Voas and Fleischmann 2012; Warner 1998),
religion’s effect on the migration experience (Hagan and Ebaugh 2003; Levitt 2003), local
religious community interaction with new immigrants (Andrews 2011; Hondagneu-Sotelo
2008; Menjívar 2003; Nyíri 2003), and religion’s impact on relations between immigrants
and the host society (Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Connor and Koenig 2013; Hirschman 2004;
Mourao Permoser, Rosenberger, and Stoeckl 2010). In these studies, migration motivation
is assumed to be no different than that which motivates everyone else. The nearest kin to
theorizing religiously motivated migration are occasional articles that identify religion as a
selection factor in migration decisions (Connor 2012; Myers 2000; Toney 1973; Warner
2000). However, these studies do not propose theoretical explanations for observed
differences.

On the other hand, migration research, both international and domestic, has been
dominated by rational choice-based theories in explaining migration causation, arguing
that migration is motivated by utility driven means-end calculations (Boswell 2008;
Individuals seek to maximize utility/income and reduce costs and risks by relocating to places of greater opportunity (Sjaastad 1962). Even meso- and macro-level theorizing use this micro-level assumption when analyzing systemic forces that account for migration variation, suggesting structures reweight and/or constrain actors’ rational agency (Brown 2002; Hooghe et al. 2008; Massey et al. 1993; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). For example, households may direct the migration of individuals to maximize benefits to the household (Harbison 1981). Meso structures nudge individuals towards certain migration patterns and destinations, as with existing migration networks, chain migration, and herd effects (Brown 2002; Epstein 2008; Haug 2008), yet all still use the assumption that actors operate on instrumental rationality and that the systemic role is in changing the costs and benefits. At a global scale, states create migration policies and compete for instrumentally rational actors in an unequal global marketplace (Zolberg 1989).

In the shadow of economic migration theory are more recent discussions about non-economically driven migration that, nevertheless, are still a product of actors’ means-end rational calculations to achieve a goal of improved lifestyle quality. Most non-economic research has focused on internal migration. In the 1970s, because of societal changes that improved urbanites’ impressions of rural areas, repelled them from the city, and enabled emigration through infrastructure, a stream of metro to non-metro migration began (Campbell and Garkovich 1984). Because wealthy migrants are willing to exchange a portion of their high wage to improve quality of life (Gilchrist and Wardwell 1992), non-metropolitan counties with natural and built amenities attracted urban emigrants (Adamchak 1987; Nord and Cromartie 2000), creating a path-dependent
process of migration to amenity-rich destinations (Brown et al. 2011). Migrants may also
be attracted to stable and impoverished places alike by other forms of location-specific
capital, including friends, family, and location of previous residence (Beale and Fuguitt
2011; Williams and McMillen 1983). In these cases, non-economic interests are pursued
when basic economic needs are met.

Despite the dominance of economic and, especially, rationalized migration
theorizing, recognition exists that migration causation is a broader phenomenon with non-
rational and non-economic forms (Halfacree 2004; Jobes, Stinner and Wardwell 1992a;
Nunn 2004; Stone 2004). Because no single meta-theory will explain all migration (Portes
1997), theorizing must therefore be honed to specific categories (Petersen 1958; Reisman
2011). The focus of this present article will not be on negating the dominate migration
theories to date, but rather developing a theory that conceptualizes a heretofore overlooked
phenomenon: migration caused by religion. This research is premised on the same
observation drawn by Jobes, Stinner, and Wardwell (1992b) in their volume’s introduction
to noneconomic migration: “The effectiveness of the economic model may have masked the
presence of other motivations for migration even in circumstances where it seemed to make
complete sense” (2) (emphasis added).

Further, while many differences exist between domestic and international
migration, such as the presence of political and cultural borders, both hold the fundamental
assumption of means-end rationality. Because this article addresses motivation, and
means-end rationality is an assumed motivation regardless of whether or not international
boundaries are considered, this study therefore does not begin with the assumption that
there is a relevant difference between the two, leaving the burden of proof on future theorizing to distinguish them.

In addition to a paucity of theorization, why should migration scholars care about religiously motivated migration? First, it undermines assumptions that all migration is based solely on means-end rationality. Scholars should probe into the motives of migration when seeking to explain migration systems and patterns. Second, a theory of religiously motivated migration may partially explain the diffusion of religions, cultures, and belief systems across the globe and into seemingly counterintuitive places, such as migration from the developed into the developing world or to new destinations without previous linkages. Third, while religiously motivated migration may ultimately constitute a minority of cases, its organizationally-based emergence may explain sudden spurts of migration, entire groups of people moving together. Finally, inasmuch as there exists other types of migration beside that driven by economic and self interests, there will continue to be imbalances between work and employees, created not by systemic constraints on individual rationality, but by movement motivated by other concerns.

A Theory of Religiously Motivated Migration

A theory of religiously motivated migration must first assess how religious motivation is different from other motivations, notably economically-driven means-end migration. Discussion of religion does not negate instrumental rationality, as rational choice theory is widely utilized in the sociology of religion. The theory of religious economy, for example, argues that religious diversity prompts competition for members among religious organizations, and that potential members consider the costs and rewards
of each in making their selection (Finke and Stark 1988; Iannaccone 1995; Warner 1993). However, the rational choice theories of religion de-emphasize core elements of what makes religion different from other social organizations. Religion goes beyond organizational theory in its claim to include elements other than the rational and scientific, and more than what can be empirically deduced. This claim—interaction with the supernatural—is a powerful motivator for social action. Religious adherents, driven by the accepted veracity of a supernatural architecture, may be motivated thereby in seemingly irrational ways. This view is not new; Max Weber was an early proponent of the view that values shape social action, even economic action, to which his *Protestant Ethic* (1930[1904-1905]) was a testament.

Though religion’s merit as a subfield of study is in the claim of supernatural interaction, religion is not exclusively about the mystical. “Religion” includes elements of both the rational and “irrational.” Weber’s (1968[1922]) four ideal types of social action provides a basic but useful frame through which to proceed. Each social action type could be conceivably responsible for a migration form: value-rational (*Wertrational*), instrumentally rational (*Zweckrational*), affectual, and traditional. The first two, value and instrumental rationality, he considers the most intentional, calculated types of actions—sharing in common deliberateness (Swidler 1973)—and are of primary interest here.\(^9\) Values are here defined as trans-situational ideals originating primarily from group socialization, and are central to personhood, govern societal evaluations, and guide social action (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004). Value rational behavior includes a

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\(^9\) Weber notes that social action may not be limited to these four types, and that affectual and traditional types may stretch the definition of meaningful action (being impulsive or habitual, respectively).
conscious identification of the important values governing social action, a realization that these values are obligatory (in this case necessitated by supernatural dictate), and a calculating action to meet value-based demands, even at personal cost. Among Weber’s examples of the value rational—including a sense of duty, honor, loyalty, sentiment, and beauty—is religious calling. Instrumentally-rational action is an actor’s identification of a personally desirable objective (like money, power, or comfort), consideration of various means to that end, and selection of the least exacting means. Rational choice theory aligns closely with Weber’s instrumental rationality; an assumption of each is that the goals of instrumentally rational actors are often self-interests.

Some contemporary theorists have argued that an overemphasis on rational choice theory limits when value-driven social action is identified (Hechter 1994; Little 1991; McIntosh, Thomas and Albrecht 1990; Peifer 2010; Sharot 2002). This problem may be partially attributable to Weber not predicting when value-driven action may overtake instrumental considerations. Inasmuch as religious values are often derived from and accented most strongly within reference groups (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; Martin 2002), where socializing and supporting mechanisms are strongest and are aimed at guiding members into beliefs and practices differing from predominant proximate norms, religiously valued rational decision making should be present to the extent that an actor is socialized into a religious system (Berger 1967), the extent to which actors are embedded in a subgroup with a reinforcing feedback loop between structures and social action (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]). Indeed, long-established religions have grown through identity-rich, group-based socialization of offspring more so than an overwhelmingly successful
conversion program (Evans 2003; Hout, Greeley and Wilde 2001; Scheitle, Kane and Van Hook 2011).

Here, Durkheim’s (1948[1912]) theorization of religion may inform Weber’s. Religion is necessarily societal, group-based. Inasmuch as actors are embedded within religious organizations and societies, they reflect to some extent the value-driven outlooks of those entities. For example, the supernatural and community-based constitution of religion is evident in rituals, through which Durkheim argued actors experience something larger than themselves (society) in these sacred acts. Religious practice and organization tend to integrate members around a set of core religious values and beliefs. The awe and wonder afforded the supernatural through group acts becomes a powerful shaper of individual values. Thus, social action like religiously motivated migration will occur to the extent that the actor’s identity and autonomy is surrendered to the group. This is not merely association with a religious body on one’s own terms, as is so prevalent in modern America (Bellah et al. 2008; Madsen 2009), but release of autonomy in areas that membership necessitates group-based socialization.

Thus, the instrumental rationality approach emphasizes actors achieving ends of personal advancement while working within social structures (including religions) that direct and limit agents’ ability to achieve these ends (Alba and Nee 2003). The value rationality approach emphasizes actors as socialized products of structures that direct members’ social actions toward objectives containing little to no immediate promise of self-advancement, likely even imposing an individual cost. These tend to be ideological and moralistic ends. As well, though value and instrumental rationality emphasize
deliberate social action, worth noting is the cross-over of both conscious and unconscious, or latent and manifest, motivations that lead up to a calculating decision. Just as structures and cultures can constrain purely instrumentally rational decision making, so can the persistent agency of instrumental rationality restrain the extent to which actors are willing to achieve group-based ends. That is, if structures can constrain means-end rational agency, so may means-end rationality constrain collective direction, such as from religions. This tension is alive not just in religiously motivated migration, but other forms of social action, a tension between the integrating tendencies of group-promoted values and the self-advancement of the individual. Actors are therefore responding, more or less, to both forces. To increase the likelihood actors will pursue value rational behavior in accordance to religious dictate, religious groups will minimize the impact of instrumental goals unattended to and increase therefore the likelihood actors will pursue value rational behavior in accordance to religious dictate, in essence capping individual costs at a tolerable level and outcompeting a self-interest mode of thought. Where that threshold between value-based collective action and self-interested individual action varies among individuals (Granovetter 1978) to the extent that some may be largely driven by self-interest considerations while others are intensely value rational with little need for reduction of instrumental costs. The group’s success at socializing members has an impact on which way the scale tips, as with soldiers deciding whether to individually defect or collectively face a difficult battle.

When migration is theorized at the community or meso level, value-driven motivation among individuals may be more apparent. The actor must still sacrifice, is
committed to sacrifice as part of a value-rational socialized orientation, but the sacrifice is manageable and desirable because of group involvement. In one of a few studies about religiously motivated migration, Myers (2000) predicted that devout religious adherents in Utah would be less likely to migrate because they possess much place-specific religious capital that cannot be transferred. That is, the most religious do not emigrate. Religious capital is the emotional attachment to, mastery of, and networks in a religious culture (Iannaccone 1990; Stark and Finke 2000). Myers found that the correlations between religious devotion and emigration are generally positive. He concludes that, for whatever reason, devout religiousness spurs rather than deters migration. Here, rational choice theory, in capturing only one aspect of behavior, may have missed alternative explanations (Chaves 1995). High emigration levels among religiously devout may not be just an instance of “irrationality” or excluded variables otherwise pointing to instrumentally rational motives, but a case of value-rational behavior, whereby actors pay some personal cost to follow religious dictates.

Religions with a strong identity guide members’ ties inward, increasing cohesion and further strengthening identity (Olson and Perl 2011). These tend to be the religions with values in contradiction to mainstream norms. Cohesion is therefore a prerequisite to value-motivated action lacking a secularly justifiable equivalent. While immigration to a common destination is social action that reinforces cohesion and identity, and therefore requires little additional discussion, emigration would create fragmentation, weakening value-based priorities among members for want of integration. Groups encouraging emigration as a value-based end must thereby provide cohesion-reinforcing mechanisms
so as to continually socialize members into the religious group and direct them towards value rational action. Otherwise, separate from the group, members may capitulate to prevailing societal norms. Religious networks can reinforce members’ group identity despite emigration, just as networks enable migration for the rational wage-seeker by reducing costs (Brown 2002; Massey et al. 1993; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Winters, de Janvry and Sadoulet 2001). This happens in at least two ways.

First, when religiously-based emigration is emphasized, it will occur in greater frequency when adherents migrate as communities. Though important in religious migration, community-level migration is generally under-studied, as migration literature focuses on the household unit (Brown 2002; Harbison 1981; Massey 1990). Should several households move together, they would constitute a new religious enclave, reproducing local networks and systems that integrate members into the religion. In his Utah study, Myers (2000) assumed religious capital was non-transferable because households individually relocate, leaving the local religious system. Those with the most to lose would not leave. Yet, simultaneous community migration would preserve not just religious capital, but also religious structures that socialize members. Those most devoted to the religion would leave, if there is a religious reason, because the very system that supports their value-based decision making moves with them.

Second, when religiously-based emigration is emphasized, it will occur in greater frequency when place specific aspects of the religious system are overcome by affiliation-level long distance communication networks. If members relocate far from co-religionists, they may be inclined to form primary ties with locals, resulting in pressure
for members to conform to societal norms. Long distance networks reinforce group identity through primary ties across spatial disparities. Members regularly interact across these networks since association with co-religionists beyond the immediate enclave is essential to integration. Thereby, a macro-level religious structure emerges, transcending place. If a religion’s identity is weak and their values approximate prevailing societal norms, group boundaries become porous and members are more inclined to form external ties after emigrating (especially if for instrumental reasons), taking less interest in establishing homophilous ties with like-others in geographically distant places. Higher defection would be the consequence.

Given the increasing long-distance communication and transportation technologies today, affiliation-level networks may be a stronger force today than in the distant past, when community-level migration was more visible. When one or both of these prerequisites are in place, religious adherents are able to migrate while retaining systemic integration that reinforces value-based decision making and dulls the impact of individual instrumental costs that may prompt the actor to choose means-end rational decision making over the value rational. For what reasons, then, might a religion have interest in member emigration? At least three reasons are plausible, accompanied here with brief illustrations and more cases further below.

The first religiously based impetus for migration is religious doctrine. Doctrine, defined as an ideology believed universally true because of its supernatural origins, shapes actors’ values. Values in turn guide actors’ social action. Thus, religious doctrine
produces value rational action (Ozorak 2003; Stadler 2002; Wellman and Keyes 2007). 10 A sacred command to proselytize or extend influence can generate migratory action, as in the case of Christianity. New Testament passages offer support to a doctrine of missions, such as in Jesus’ words, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you…” This precept has triggered one of the most extensive migration movements in history. Early Christian missionaries reached from China and India to Spain and Britain. For over 1,000 years, the Papal influence extended across Europe and eventually into the Americas, Africa, and East Asia. Today, transnational missionary efforts continue across a spectrum of Christian denominations. Modern globalization has enabled missionaries to migrate practically anywhere there are people (Wuthnow and Offutt 2008) and embed religious value systems within regional cultures (Wellman and Keyes 2007). Sacred commands to emigrate are neither limited to proselytizing nor Christianity. African Americans viewed their Great Migration to the U.S. North as a final pilgrimage out of the wilderness and into the “Holy Land,” a parallel to ancient Jewish emigration from Egypt (Sernett 1997). In a case of negative causality, Hindu beliefs about purity and pollution have long discouraged emigration, which exposes members to impurities (Parekh 1994).

A second cause of religious migration is the search for a context conducive to religious practice, inasmuch as the context enables or constrains a value system’s

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10 Granted, religious doctrine does not necessarily result in the same type of action. Actors may encounter structural constraints on action, varying interpretations of the doctrines, or a manifest or latent decision to ignore the command. What is important, though, is that religious doctrine can and often does produce value-rational action.
realization, much as context enables or constrains wage-seeking actors’ instrumentally rational action. For instance, pilgrimage sites like Mecca or Jerusalem encourage growth of certain religions there, while Pentecostals believe demon worship in Haiti has hindered conversions (McAlister 2005). Religions may view regions as “moral geographies,” the place itself possessing a sacred or demonic trait that can bless or hinder a religion’s growth (Shapiro 1994).

Context may be political. As European powers colonized the globe, they inadvertently created a context conducive to the spread of some Christian branches (Cavalcanti 2002; Glenna 2003), this in spite of these denominations’ values conflicting with instrumentally-rational state objectives, as with the British opium trade of the Far East (Gascoigne 2008; Miller and Stanczak 2009). States that deliberately entertain policies hostile towards particular religions—as an end in itself—may prompt religious adherents to flee (Fox and Tabory 2008), such as Christians emigrating from communist states (Warner 2000).

Context may also be economic, cultural, or social. Modern states’ various stages of regional economic growth, capitalism, and cultural attributes is correlated with certain religions’ success based on their value system’s compatibility with the country’s system, as with the growth of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists, and evangelical Christians in certain countries (Cragun and Lawson 2010; Rosson and Fields 2008). U.S. regions cultivate nuances favorable to certain religions: Catholicism in the Northeast, Evangelicalism in the Southeast, and non-affiliation in the Northwest (Iannaccone and Makowsky 2007; Stump 1984; Toney 1973). On a local scale,
contemporary shifts in urban neighborhood character have forced churches to re-evaluate their programs and emphases or move to a compatible environment like the suburbs (Form and Dubrow 2005; Wedam 2003).

A third cause of religious migration is in response to religious competition. This is not just the effects of religious pluralism but an ideologically compact pluralism in a given region. Adherents form a disproportionately greater number of ties with people in their religion (Scheitle and Smith 2011). Yet, when their social niche space overlaps with other groups, then membership competition occurs. Members at the niche space’s edge are most likely to switch to neighboring groups as they form external ties, seek to incur minimal costs when shifting religious capital, and find an instrumentally rational reason to switch (McPherson 1992; Popielarz and McPherson 1995; Stark and Finke 2000). The threat is especially intense when groups overlap because of similarity (Stark and Bainbridge 1980). Even groups that have high bonding capital and strong network closure—usually churches that are conservative or have high participation rates (Scheitle and Adamczyk 2009; Smith 2003)—are susceptible to losses when the neighboring groups have similar attributes. One group may offer more benefits than another, and instrumentally rational objectives rise above value rational. Such competition jeopardizes the religion’s existence as membership sentiments deplete. Therefore, congregations may migrate to locations where their ideology is removed from this religious marketplace. Migration in this classically rational choice theory-framed case is partially value-rational to the extent that a core group of members are devoted to the ideology at a high personal
cost and that their goal is to preserve the value system against competing forces as an end in itself.

Depending on pluralism’s content, some religions may be advantaged in ideologically dense regions and others disadvantaged. Take, for example, the case of liberal Protestants. While they may grow where neighbors are conservative, they struggle for survival when they are the most conservative (Evans 2003). A congregation that is losing members in an ideologically dense region may move to where there are fewer ideological neighbors. In the new area, they may potentially gain new members from the region’s dominant group (Olson 2008). Or, if no members are gained through switching, ideological isolation provides a stronger boundary so adherents have no close defection destinations (Scheitle, Kane and Van Hook 2011). Conversely, a denomination advantaged by locating near ideological neighbors may experience in-migration among adherents, as with the early Holiness movement. Originating in the North, it spread to the Midwest and South, flourishing among Methodists, the parent denomination (Dann 1976). Thus, the actual ideological contents of a given location’s pluralism may be advantageous for certain denominations and disadvantageous for others. An advantage may attract immigrants from a group; a disadvantage may prompt others to emigrate, in allegiance to their ideology.

A Contemporary Case of Religiously Motivated Migration: Background and Methods

In the following section, I illustrate the above theory with a contemporary American case: the Amish-Mennonites. The Amish consist of two broad streams: the Old Order Amish, identified most readily by their horse and buggy lifestyle, and the progressive
Amish-Mennonites, who own automobiles. From 1910 to 1960, the largest contemporary group of Amish-Mennonites (Beachy) broke gradually from the Old Order. Early tensions focused on automobiles and telephones. Later issues included evangelical theology and programs, including Sunday schools, missions, meetinghouses, and denominational bureaucracy, innovations the Old Orders rejected (Anderson 2011; Nolt 2001). Symbolic boundaries have been partially lowered: Amish-Mennonites’ dress is less distinctive and uniform, social avoidance of impenitent transgressors is not practiced, and interaction with nonmembers is more frequent (Schwieder and Schwieder 1977). Whereas the Old Orders have autonomous, high context, local churches lacking modern rationalization, compartmentalization, and bureaucracy (Enninger 1988; Olshan 1990), the Amish-Mennonites have established denominational mission committees and agencies like their evangelical Protestant counterparts. Still, value-rational behaviors penetrate their intensely integrated community life. Amish-Mennonites continue the Old Order community-focus by emphasizing dense, intimate, and primary local networks. Members abide by distinctive practices touching areas of dress, technology, home decor, automobile styles, and wedding practices, among others (Camden and Gaetz Duarte 2006; Smith 2013). Amish-Mennonites are thus a hybrid of Old Order Amish and evangelical thought and practice, retaining some sense of intense community but integrating select religious changes. In 2012, there were 201 Amish-Mennonite churches, seven sub-affiliations, 22,464 adherents, and 12,960 members in North America, with around another 2,200 members in 15 other countries (Anderson 2012a).
Despite their small population and obscurity, the Amish-Mennonites are an ideal case for demonstrating religious migration motivations. First, their history has been one of migration. Their brief century-long existence is replete with cases. Second, the religious causes of Amish-Mennonite migration are clearly discernible from instrumentally-rational motivations, whereas religious reasons may be more difficult to isolate for other groups (Kontuly, Smith and Heaton 1995). Finally, Amish-Mennonites migrate not only between developing and developed countries, but also within the United States, demonstrating the ongoing force of not just religion in general in modern societies (Glenna 2003; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Stark 1999), but cohesive religious groups amidst the growth of individualized religion (Bellah et al. 2008; Madsen 2009). Pieces of the Amish-Mennonite case may well apply to many other closely related affiliations, here referred to broadly as “plain Anabaptists,” including Amish (Luthy 1986), conservative Mennonites, Hutterites, German Baptists, and others (Anderson 2013b).

Data came from two sources, both attained in a broader Amish-Mennonite oral and archival history research project. The first includes nearly 200 open-ended, in-depth interviews among a broad demographic of Amish-Mennonite key-informants in North and Central America. These interviews produced a wealth of migration decision-making data. Appropriate respondents were identified by visiting nearly all church communities, seeking key-informants, and then using snowball sampling. It was common to learn about several migration occurrences in some interviews. Where an informant seemed knowledgeable about information documented from previous interviews, questions were posed to verify past data; accounts were consistent on key points. Interviews were conducted with cultural
sensitivity; plain Anabaptists prefer low key, conversational-style interviews, so an open-ended interview structure was used, audio equipment was omitted, and bureaucratic jargon was eliminated (Adkins 2011; Savells and Foster 1987). Data were recorded as a conversational summary immediately after each interview. Second, primary source print materials were collected over several years, including church histories, scrapbooks, family histories, directories, and autobiographies. From interviews and archival sources, a brief narrative for each community was created, focusing on origins, reasons for establishment, and relationship to other churches. Any quotes below are from archival sources, as direct quotes were not available from interviews due to the methods employed.

Second, diverse written primary source materials were collected over several years, including church histories, scrapbooks, family histories, directories, and autobiographies. From these interviews and archival sources, a brief narrative for each community was created, focusing on origins, reasons for establishment, and relationship to other churches. Any quotes below are from archival sources, as direct quotes were not available from interviews due to the methods employed.

Amish-Mennonite networks consist of highly nested, compactly embedded ties, where all stages of life, rites of passage, occupations, friendships, marriage partners, kin, religious activities, schooling, recreation, systems of meaningful symbols, and mutual aid occur within the same network (Anderson 2012b). Their religion demands a high sense of group identity and integration, and to be a member requires living among other Amish-Mennonites. Thus, the group guides migration decisions, as only defecting households

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11 Short summaries of these data are presented in the author’s book *Amish-Mennonites of North America: A Portrait of Our People.*
emigrate to regions with no Amish-Mennonites. When an emigration need is identified, several households together investigate areas and discuss options until a consensus develops. For example, a minister at a Virginia-based church preferred moving to Kentucky over Georgia, but “submitted without complaint to the decision of the group” when most favored Georgia. Typically, five to eight households constitute the original group while at least twice that remain behind.

Because migration is community-level, group-level socializing mechanisms that instill values in members and enable them to act on those values remains intact. Frequent travel between the two churches characterize the first years, the origin community sharing social, financial, and labor support. Consistent with Myers’ (2000) findings in Utah, those under 50 with children are most likely to emigrate. While he suggests emigrants seek occupational and educational improvement (instrumental motivation), here young Amish-Mennonite families emigrate because they already possess transferable resources necessary to build a new community, not because they lack resources. Middle-aged couples are crucial to the community’s economy, education system, and religious structure. Married men are successful entrepreneurs, establishing new businesses like small grocery stores, carpentry shops, mobile labor crews, and farms, which build the community economy by employing the elderly, young adults, and later migrants. Families typically have four to seven children; thus, all households together easily provide enough pupils to set up a small church school, as public schools are anathema (Waite and Crockett 1997). Middle-aged men and women also fill most formal and informal leadership roles. Thus, when Amish-Mennonites move as a community (clusters of households) they use existing resources to
re-establish the multiple systemic functions in a new enclave, preserving the religious order that supports value-based ends.

Amish-Mennonites travel extensively among enclaves, reinforcing affiliation-level cohesion. Face-to-face interaction occurs through family get-togethers, organizational meetings, hobby gatherings, reunions, and nurture programs. Young adults from a cross-section of churches may attend several weeks of Bible school in Arkansas or volunteer time at an Amish-Mennonite care home where they establish lifelong friendships. Media further facilitates macro-level religious capital, giving dispersed enclaves a sense of groupness. Local church news, such as weddings, funerals, weather, activities, unusual happenings, and even who is visiting whom is regularly reported in monthly publications like The Connector and Calvary Messenger (underlines added). The Budget weekly newspaper is filled with hundreds of chatty columns by community-appointed “scribes,” giving readers a sense of broader religious community (Adkins 2009; Galindo 1994). Less strict churches use technology like email, cell phones, and social networking websites to maintain distant ties, while strict churches use home telephones and stamped mail, such as for circle letters, pen pals, and family letters. The result of this interaction is that Amish-Mennonites tend to know Amish-Mennonites from distant churches better than non-co-adherent neighbors.

Thus, the Amish-Mennonites possess two group-based prerequisites for religiously motivated migration: community migration and inter-enclave networks. But for what reasons would they want to emigrate? The three motivations—doctrine, context, and competition—apply well in the Amish-Mennonite case.
Table 1 tallies the motivation that brought about a new church in a previously unsettled region of North America. Tallies were developed from brief historic descriptions of new churches established upon completion of community migration; these historic descriptions were developed from interviews. These historic summaries are printed in Anderson (2012a). The majority of cases were because of religious doctrine, with a little under half as many cases the result of religious competition. Though context constituted the fewest number of instances, these cases nevertheless underscore contextual factors that impact the survival of Amish-Mennonite churches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migration reason</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious doctrine</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducive context</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership competition</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/uncertain</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total incidents of migration</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some new churches had more than one reason to migrate; thus, the total number of reasons listed here, 126, is higher than the total number of migration incidents.

Table 1. Amish-Mennonite Migration Motivation

The Amish-Mennonites follow the mission tradition of Christianity and explicitly justify migration through Bible texts such as the Great Commission (Matthews 2001). Amish-Mennonites have historically emigrated from regions with high densities of other Amish-Mennonites and similar plain Anabaptist churches. The effort has been labeled “outreach” and “evangelization by colonization,” implying proselytizing by establishing the religious system in previously unsettled frontiers. The emigrant community joins the
destination region’s economic, social, and spatial fabric, yet maintains a distinctive, moderately separatist religious lifestyle among their new neighbors, following Jesus’ metaphor, “Ye are the salt of the earth; … ye are the light of the world… let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:13-16). A significant objective is to offer a strict church to interested people. Often a destination is selected because either interest has already been expressed from people there or the people seem curious enough.

A central Virginian outreach established in 1957 was “driven by a concern for those less fortunate… especially the unsaved, who… may never really have had the opportunity to hear the message of Jesus.” Several families also moved into the nearby Blue Ridge Mountains, starting two churches among the impoverished and establishing a care home for mentally handicapped children. Similar mission activity occurred simultaneously in Arkansas’ Ozarks, where Amish-Mennonites started a mission church, nursing home, and Bible school. The new destinations are as much worth mentioning as the origin. Amish-Mennonites were moving out of major Mennonite/Amish settlements in mid-latitude eastern and Midwestern states for places with no existing plain churches at that time, such as western New York, Tennessee, Texas, Missouri, and northwestern Ontario. Yet, emigration has an exacting toll on actors’ utility. One recent migrant estimated he and others that moved with him on a new outreach lost two year’s worth of income between moving and establishing a new business. A second frequently mentioned cost of emigration is being separated from extended family, whereas prior they had all been in the same church.
The value of outreach took Amish-Mennonites internationally as well. In the 1960s, groups of Amish-Mennonites moved to Belize, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Paraguay. Later destinations included Ukraine, Kenya, and elsewhere. In a newspaper article, two leaders of the Costa Rica migration indicated their disillusionment with America: militarism, socialism, riots, hostility toward conscientious objectors, the “sad apostasy raging throughout the churches,” and the pressures of “television, movies, [and] immodesty.”12 These expressed points, and these alone, propelled their exodus from America, despite stable employment and comfortable homes. These leaders and those across several states that joined them relocated to Costa Rica, learning a new language, establishing a home in an unfamiliar culture, finding a way to make a living, and fighting mud holes, re-infected mosquito bites, rudimentary transportation, and high temperatures: one writer stated, “… of course it is not a ‘Garden of Eden’ nor did we expect it to be.”13

Since the first churches were established in these countries, the original churches have established new domestic churches. Taken with related outreach-focused plain Anabaptists like Mennonites, there is a plain presence in around 50 countries, a testament to the veracity of these community-intensive religious separatists’ “evangelization by colonization” program. Thus, the migration incentive in these cases was not financial, social, or cultural capital accruement, but religious beliefs that mandate living amongst non-plain Anabaptists.

Amish-Mennonites, like the Amish, believe their religion thrives in rural areas. Indeed, rural dwellers in general have more traditional values than urbanites (Albrecht

13 From Miller, Mrs. Amos (Elva) (ed.). 1970. “God’s Call to Costa Rica.”
The Amish have practiced agriculture from their European origins (Kollmorgen 1943). They have viewed themselves as stewards and caretakers of the land (Huntington 1993), and see the farm as the ideal setting in which to raise a family. Changes in modern agricultural structuring that has endangered family farms (Lobao and Meyer 2001), but as the Amish move from agriculture to other rural-based occupations, their religion remains viable (Hawley and Hamilton 1996; Kreps, Donnermeyer and Kreps 1994). Rurality itself, however, is nonnegotiable. Rural settings permit members to acquire land near one another (Hostetler 1955), keep the religion as one’s fundamental identity (Meyers 1994), and offer a rewarding social structure for oncoming generations (Stoltzfus 1977). Thus, the Amish settle some of America’s poorest, most rural counties (Donnermeyer and Cooksey 2010).

In 1900, Old Order Amish settlers moved to present-day Virginia Beach because of produce and dairy farming opportunities (Luthy 1986). However, military growth during the Second World War triggered sprawl, overtaking the settlement. Some Old Orders emigrated. Those staying adopted automobiles, becoming Amish-Mennonite, but the Amish-Mennonites remained unsettled by urbanization. One Amish-Mennonite wrote that “with the military installations springing up around us and much farming land being used as housing projects, there is little chance for our young people to secure farms and start up themselves.” Said another, “[Virginia Beach] got too citified. Every other corner had a bank on it.” One emigrant wrote that Amish-Mennonite farmers “saw little future for their lifestyle” in Virginia Beach and wanted to “relocate to another community, where they
could better live out their ideals,” where—for example—neighbors “were interested enough to wave as you passed by” and “grocery stores closed at 5:30pm.”

Responding to urbanization, the Virginia Beach church spawned five settlements. Through the 1950s, nearly 30 households sold their farms and established a new settlement in south-central Georgia, where clusters of farms were for sale. In the 1960s, church scouting parties identified additional homes: South Carolina’s Piedmont, western Kentucky, and the forests of south-central Virginia, all decidedly rural places. Many continued farming in the new communities; others pursued labor-based, family-focused occupations like carpentry or home-based welding shops. Households migrated in clusters. Those remaining grew successful in their businesses, but gradually moved their residences south, mile by mile, retreating from the encroaching suburbs, eventually crossing into North Carolina. The original meetinghouse was abandoned for a more rural location, but within several years of construction, the second meetinghouse was surrounded by subdivisions.

The impetus to leave Virginia Beach was not a financially-driven interest in farming or a desire to improve personal quality of life by seeking rural-based amenities, but by the religious belief that a rural setting is necessary for religious vitality. They left an economically thriving area where otherwise their businesses would have done well and settled in economically depressed regions. Other stories are similar. As the suburbs of Sarasota, Florida overran an Amish-Mennonite church, members moved beyond the growth boundaries. One group started a church in Charlottesville, Virginia, as an urban mission, but all members commuted in from surrounding rural areas. Urban outreach in
Washington, D.C. and Cumberland, Maryland, later disassociated with the Amish-Mennonites in favor of less strictness.

International churches are largely in small villages and rural areas as well, locations of limited access, limited infrastructure, and limited economic opportunities. Yet, many have made a living in these places. They have also established rural schools and clinics aimed at development and relief. The twelve El Salvadoran churches, for example, have operated a deaf children’s school, a special care home for children, an orphanage, two community schools, and a birthing clinic, all outside major cities and towns. A sizeable percentage of Salvadoran converts first had contact through these institutions. At other rural Central American churches, the perceived lawlessness is greater than in urban areas, and the isolation makes state response often inadequate. In Nicaragua, routine nocturnal home robberies nudged one Amish-Mennonite family into the nearby town, where a town church was started. Yet, in the several years after, the original rural church started two new congregations farther back in a remote mountain range, where robberies continued. The nonresistant position of the Amish-Mennonites means that they do not fight robbers or reject their demands, and several families have faced financial difficulties as a result, yet remain. Rural context is an important value orientation for Amish-Mennonites, even at an instrumental cost.

Membership competition is the third reason for emigration. Within historic plain Anabaptists settlements, denominational diversity has created a continuum of assimilation, from very distinct Amish to mainstream Mennonites and a variety of Amish-Mennonites.

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14 The nonresistant position of the Amish-Mennonites means that they do not fight robbers’ demands. While this may make Amish-Mennonites particularly vulnerable, it has also minimized the confrontational nature of robberies.
and plain Mennonites between. With such variation, each church’s distinctive practices may become arbitrary to members. Members of structurally strong churches may switch to more permissive settings incrementally, yet still be “Amish” or “Mennonite” (Baehr 1942; Hurst and McConnell 2010), acquiring psychological comfort for greater conformity to modern culture without betraying lifelong religiosity. To legitimize an expression of “Amish” or “Mennonite” and reinforce boundaries, churches losing members may retreat from competition through emigration, to destinations with greater potential for offspring retention. This entails leaving secure employment and established work networks and starting new businesses in destination locations.

To illustrate this value-based motive, consider again the Old Order Amish who first settled Virginia Beach. In 1942, they migrated to the Shenandoah Valley to escape both urbanization and the allurement of the new Amish-Mennonite splinter group. However, in 1954, Mt. Zion Amish-Mennonite church emerged from the Old Orders; most Old Orders migrated to western Kentucky and those remaining gradually defected to the Amish-Mennonites. Mt. Zion divided in 1968; the minority established a less restrictive Amish-Mennonite congregation—Pilgrim—nearby. In response, most Mt. Zion members migrated to western Tennessee; those remaining gradually defected to Pilgrim. Pilgrim divided in 2002; the permissive minority emigrated and Pilgrim retained most members. Meanwhile, among the Amish-Mennonites in western Tennessee, a permissive faction established a new church; in response, the remaining 100-some households vacated the region, dispersing into five settlements in Kentucky and Illinois. These churches are the strictest of all Amish-Mennonites (the most committed to separatist ideology against mainstream
norms) and all exist in single-church enclaves. Comparably strict Amish-Mennonite
churches used to exist in major Amish/Mennonite settlements in Ohio, Indiana, and
Pennsylvania but gradually lost all members to more permissive local churches. Those
households committed to strictness emigrated to the Kentucky and Illinois churches.

Table 2 shows the outcomes of divisions among Amish-Mennonite churches. These
were derived from data available in Anderson (2012a), which briefly summarizes the
history and spatial location of every Amish-Mennonite church. They also include cases of
division where a group withdraws from an Amish-Mennonite church, but joins another
group. After a division, when one party emigrates, it is much more likely to be the strict
party. In addition, strict churches emigrate more often than remain (19 to eleven). Lenient
churches, however, frequently stay in the vicinity when they withdraw (60 cases of staying
to eight of emigrating); evidently, the strict church’s presence is of little concern. When
strict churches withdraw and stay in the community, around half have eventually closed.
Thus, emigration is a motivating solution when neighbors appeal to would-be defectors
with the suggestion that they can retain their religious capital, still be “Amish-Mennonite,”
and have fewer restrictions. Migration for strict Amish-Mennonites is a group-based act of
value-rational boundary maintenance willingly undertaken at the same instrumental costs
as the other two religious motivations.

Discussion and Conclusion

I have argued that migration causation may not be purely a case of instrumental
rationality, but may contain elements of or be dominated by value-rational social action, as
with religion. Cohesive religious groups enable members to emigrate when communities
Table 2. After a Church Division, Migration and Non-Migration Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Description</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strict faction remains; lenient faction emigrates</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict faction emigrates; lenient faction remains</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difference in strictness, one emigrates</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both strict and lenient factions remain</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenient faction starts new church nearby</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict faction starts new church nearby</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difference in strictness, no emigration</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cases of division</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

migrate together and when macro-level networks interconnect enclaves, permitting members to retain the religious group as their primary reference and to thereby act on the religion’s value-based demands. Religious reasons to migrate include doctrine, context, and competition for members. This has been illustrated through the case of the Amish-Mennonites. But how generalizable is this theory? Do other intensely community-based religious groups exemplify the three major reasons to emigrate? While space does not permit equally deep treatment, five other cases of religions will be very briefly treated: Judaism, Islam, Puritanism, Mormonism, and Low German/Russian Mennonitism.

For Jewish people, the re-establishment of Israel triggered a perpetual migration. Zionists present migration to Israel in sacred terms, as God restoring the Promised Land according to Scriptures (doctrine). Further, Israel is rich with religious landmarks and connotations, and the majority-Jewish society facilitates observance of strict Jewish practices (context). This attracts Jewish people in America who are dissatisfied with the liberalizing tendencies of other Jewish people, whose entry into Gentile culture has made Jewish group membership ambiguous. These two poles of Judaism consequently vie for
members, where in Israel, boundaries may be more firmly maintained (competition) (Alba 2006; Dashefsky and Lazerwitz 1983; Palmer 2012).

In Islam, the *hijra* doctrine suggests emigration from unbelief, specifically hostile states (Masud 1990). For example, as the Ottoman Empire receded in the early 1900s, many Muslims migrated to Turkey, fleeing persecution and proselytizing of expanding European states (doctrine/context) (Akgündüz 1998). Yet, *hijra* and *da‘wa* (to call or invite) suggests Muslims should religiously engage non-Muslims, necessitating some presence in peaceful non-Muslim states (doctrine) (Al-Faruqi 1976; Kerr 2000).

Anderson’s (1985) study of early Puritan migration to New England argues that religious commitment superseded other migration motivations, and all three motivations are present in her study. First, Puritans believed in propagating Christianity in new places: reaching indigenous people and establishing faithful communities where none existed (doctrine). Second, in England, the political context was unfavorable, whereas New England provided the opportunity to develop new political systems favoring Puritanism (context). Third, Anglicans competed with Puritans for members; emigration permitted Puritans to legitimize their religion against competition through isolation (competition).

Mormons move to Utah for a mixture of instrumentally-rational (job and family ties) and religious reasons. The Mormon migration doctrine—the “gathering principle”—encouraged the existence of a majority-Mormon setting where their beliefs may thrive; its historical momentum, if not the doctrine itself, continues to attract Mormons to Utah (doctrine/context). Yet, Mormons also dwell among non-adherents to make conversions, and most Mormons have engaged in extended missionary work. Young adults are
encouraged to move to the mission field for a period (doctrine) (Kan and Yun 1981; Kontuly, Smith and Heaton 1995; Toney, Stinner and Kan 1983). Conservative Mormon factions have established enclaves in the rural West a moderate distance from urban Mormon populations, legitimizing their expressions of Mormonism against a mother body that denounces their authenticity (competition).

For Russian Mennonites (a group theologically similar to Amish-Mennonites but with a separate history), being a transnational people is a necessity to protect their religious identity against consumerism, assimilation, and governmental interference. They have migrated as colonies to remote destinations throughout rural Canada and Latin America, seeking to preserve their European-style village church-community against the encroachment of external forces (Driedger 1973; Plasil and Roessingh 2009). As Loewen (2008) states, “sacrifice through migration was necessary to rediscover spiritual health” (doctrine/context). Yet, instrumentally rational motivations mingle with value rational in these examples. In any given migration, one type may dominate, but does not exclude the other. A recent study (Good Gingrich and Preibisch 2010) highlights the instrumentally-rational nature of contemporary Russian Mennonite household-level migration. The surprising emphasis here is the authors’ argument that, yes, instrumentally-rational motives for migration can and do exist when value-driven motives seem to dominate, an ironic reversal of this article’s emphasis. Because of macro-level agricultural restructuring in Mexico, many Mennonite families have difficulty making a living in the colonies. Some have opted to engage in transnational migration, working as farmhands on non-Mennonite farms in Canada. Their goal, like many other contemporary transnational migrants, is to
make enough money to support living at home, in this case, the Mexican colonies. Inasmuch as the colony system is a religiously justified lifestyle, and financial security is the means to perpetuating this religion, contemporary Mennonite migration is a blend of instrumentally and value rational pursuits.

The Russian Mennonite case raises questions about the relation between instrumental and value rational motives. In that this study was not trying to negate instrumentally-driven motives, what, then, can be made of value influenced considerations in otherwise means-end rational scenarios? For example, much has been written about migrants seeking wage improvement in developed countries and sending remittances home, all as an instrumentally-rational process, e.g. Sana (2008). But are there value-rational motives also built into this system? Do households engage in this circular migration in pursuit of financial stability only as an end (Stark 1991; Taylor 1987), or is financial stability partially a means to achieving some value-based end? Would circular migrants decline new citizenship opportunities because of a value orientation? Would Muslim Turks in Germany or Mexicans in the United States have an allegiance to their national identity or religion that makes a citizenship transfer anathema? Do some households decline migration opportunities because they believe the developed world undermines transmission of strict cultural values to offspring (Foner and Dreby 2011)? Such questions can contribute to further conceptualizing theories of migration motives.

The difficulty in extracting and dichotomizing instrumental-rationality and value-rationality is apparent for several reasons. First, the ultimate end-goal of migrants may be elusive. Is it wealth and personal advancement, or are these only a means to achieve a
value-oriented end? Or are both means and ends? Second, and related, motivation is difficult to ascertain from migrants, as “actors involved in a given process may not be aware of the broader issues at play or may have a different opinion of them” (Portes 1997). Third, arguing a social action is exclusively one type and no other is untenable; as Weber (1968[1922]) states, “It would be very unusual to find concrete cases of action, especially of social action, which were oriented only in one or another of these ways.” Finally, Weber identifies two additional types of social action—affectual and traditional—which have not been explored here as migration causes. These motives may further overlap with the two rational migration types. For instance, the theories that explain migration pattern perpetuation—including network, institutional, and cumulative causation theories (Massey et al. 1993)—bear some resemblance to Weber’s description of traditional social action, “a matter of almost automatic reaction to habitual stimuli which guide behavior in a course which has been repeatedly followed.”

This study opens several research directions. Foremost is the call for scholars to be alert for characteristically value rational motives, even if they are not the major impetus. A second direction is to focus on other forms of value-rational migration. While religiously motivated migration has been discussed here, migration may potentially arise from Weber’s other examples of value-rationality: duty, honor, loyalty, sentiment, or beauty. Other research has observed personal affect and attachment to an area as a migration motivator (Hedberg and Kepsu 2003; Herting, Grusky and Van Rompaey 1997). A third direction is to further nuance this mid-range theory of religious migration causation by testing the propositions and theoretical framework in this article on other religions, perhaps
adding common dichotomous dimensions of migration variables, such as international versus domestic and push versus pull factors.

In conclusion, this study has identified gaps in migration motivation literature, specifically the absence of research about religiously-motivated migration and migration based on motivation other than the purely instrumentally rational. A theory of religiously motivated migration was laid out, drawing on the case of the Amish-Mennonites. In doing so, this article has opened a new dimension of migration motivation, religion, in hopes not just of bringing attention to this understudied phenomenon but accenting the diversity of migration motivations beyond the economic and the purely instrumentally rational.
Chapter 3: Adolescent Network Power and the Challenge of Subcultural Separatism

Abstract

While numerous ethnic groups have assimilated into the American mainstream, the Amish church has embraced cultural and structural separatism on religious grounds. Elements of their cultural system are not just demarcations of social identity but direct members’ social ties, values, and interests inward, permitting the perpetuation of group socialization. However, some members may perceive a level of assimilation desirable and so pursue structural power and mobilization of external cultural resources. Because structural and cultural assimilation reinforce one another, when one weakens, the other may follow and further weaken the first. Separatist-assimilationist conflicts have dotted Amish history, most notably when progressively-oriented Amish-Mennonites have withdrawn from the Old Order Amish. While two past Amish-Mennonite movements assimilated over several generations, the most recent movement, the Beachy Amish-Mennonites, still retain a partially separate identity, though with some difficulty. Inasmuch as separatism must be maintained across generations, the orientation of Beachy young adults is of particular interest. This study investigates the social structure of a Beachy young adult network to determine what kinds of people occupy positions of power and its implications for assimilation of a third Amish-Mennonite movement. The results indicate that those who attempt to alter the content of, rather than replace and
negate, separatist practices occupy positions of power, suggesting a third actor type in the separatist-assimilation conflict: revisionists.

Introduction

The Old Order Amish (hereafter, “Amish”) are one of America’s most distinctive ethno-religious communities. Since their arrival around 300 years ago, they have maintained a highly durable social system (Enninger 1988a; Hostetler 1993[1963]; Smith 1958). At current rates, the population doubles every 21.25 years, a period that has actually narrowed, not widened (Donnermeyer, Anderson and Cooksey 2013). They offer a long-standing exception to the gradual assimilation of ethnic groups from America’s more distant past (Gordon 1964).

Yet, many Amish *have* assimilated on a large scale. From the mid-1800s to early 1900s, divisions among the Amish produced several sizeable so-called “Amish-Mennonite” denominations (Nolt 2003[1992]; Yoder 1991). In the founding years, policy and lifestyle changes appeared relatively minor but evidently triggered a path-dependent process; over several generations, Amish-Mennonites scrapped intentional separatism (Beachy 2011; Scott 1996). Their intergenerational transitions paralleled cultural transformations of European immigrants from this turn-of-the-century era, and most Amish-Mennonites fully assimilated in the decades following World War II. Unlike the Amish, the Amish-Mennonite case does align with a classic assimilation path.

Why do Old Order Amish persist as distinctive cultural enclaves while Amish-Mennonites assimilate? This study’s goal is to investigate the Amish-Mennonite assimilation process by looking at a late-comer to the Amish-Mennonite movement, the
Beachy Amish-Mennonite denomination. This study explores three components that prevent assimilation: separatist symbols, separatist social structures, and intergenerational continuity. These processes are explored among Amish-Mennonite young adults. What kinds of people occupy positions of network power? How do they orient themselves to religious symbols and intergenerational continuity within the separatist system? Do they use their network position to lever a given position? The overarching research question is: do the Amish-Mennonites assimilate because—in part—young adults are structurally empowered to challenge the status quo separatist practices of the church community? Of course, there are multiple processes in assimilation; this study focuses on just several substantive areas. Overall, this study is multifaceted, providing a rounded analysis of Beachy Amish-Mennonite assimilation. It links micro and meso levels (individual agency and a local network) with the macro level (denominational assimilation) (Coleman 1987). It also links domains of religion, culture, and structure (Vaisey 2007; Vaisey and Lizardo 2010).

The Role of Value Orientations and Social Structure in Resisting Assimilation

When societies experience contact, cultural domains like dress, language, and emotional expression must respond (Teske and Nelson 1974). Contact has several possible outcomes: separation, marginalization, domination, assimilation, or pluralism (Cuellar, Arnold and Maldonado 1995; Gans 1997; Spindler 1977). While a smaller subculture may change its host society, as with pluralism (Alba and Nee 2003; Gordon 1964; Orum 2005), this study focuses on the tension within a subculture in choosing between voluntary assimilation or separation. Assimilation is here defined as the

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15 The last name of an influential bishop.
processes whereby actors lose a social identity that had delineated separate membership categories (Alba and Nee 1997; Teske and Nelson 1974). This narrowed focus assumes the host society is making few formal demands, unlike cases of marginalization, domination, and forced assimilation (Alba 2005).

Gordon’s (1964) classic assimilation theory posited seven types of assimilation, two commanding the central argument: cultural/behavioral assimilation and structural assimilation. Gordon argues that culture may be the first domain to (partially) assimilate, but only upon structural separatism would other forms follow. When institutions and primary social networks blend with the host society, other assimilation forms, such as intermarriage, follow. Gordon states that assimilation has occurred among many American groups, but that they are rooted in several melting pot destinations rather than a single homogenous melting pot of all Americans. These melting pots were often based on religion—Catholic, Protestant, Jew—as both a cultural/behavioral orientation and structural system.16 Here, Gordon underscores the fundamental significance religion holds in shaping assimilation.

For the Amish, tangible separatism has long been a foundational religious value, invoking structural, cultural, and ethnic mechanisms. Amish ideology is imbued with separatist themes, emphasizing New Testament verses like, “…be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2), “Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers… come out from among them, and be ye separate” (2 Corinthians 6:14,17), and others. They deemphasize elaborate doctrinal statements in favor of stressing lived religion above the thought-over

16 If not religion, Gordon states that an assimilation melting pot may also based on ethnic/racial background—African, Latino, and Native American.
(Geiger 1986; Olshan 1988; Oyer 1996; Rumsey 2010). Consequently, they tangibly distinguish between “our world”—the contents of their immediate community—and anything beyond as “their world”—whether secular or religious (Schelbert 1985).

The weight given to this intentional subcultural separatism is apparent in their perennial fears of assimilation, which would not just be a loss of heritage and distinctive identity, but would be foremost a pernicious religious breach with eternal consequences (Enninger 1988b). On religious grounds, they resisted society-wide changes occurring in the first half of the twentieth century—consolidated public schooling, industrialization, and nationalistic patriotism during the world wars (Smith 1961)—while these same structural changes triggered a broader assimilation in other immigrant enclaves (Gordon 1964). The Amish have since continued resisting cultural and structural assimilation with success. If the Amish wanted to assimilate, they would have little objection from the American mainstream; they are white, English-proficient Protestant Germans with unusually low crime and poverty. Not for inability or absence of individual gain do the Amish reject assimilation. Inasmuch as religion is such a guiding force in Gordon’s assimilation theory, how much more for Amish when religion is not just a fundamental bridge to other ethnic groups, but, even deeper, a religious orientation that explicitly condemns assimilation and ecumenical melting pots.

To resist cultural assimilation and represent “our world,” the Amish developed codified symbols in dress, language, technology, the built environment, educational programs, and religious rites and ceremonies. These practices demonstrate separatist tendencies upon contact with a host society: their symbols consist mainly of American
icons reinterpreted to define the Amish against the host society and solicit empathy from co-religionists when symbols are recognized (Enninger 1979; Enninger and Scott 1985; Louden 1992). The horse-and-buggy, so broadly recognized as representative of the Amish, was not an Amish invention but borrowed from Victorian-era America (Scott 1998[1981]), as are many of their seemingly antiquated tools, machines, and contraptions (Scott and Pellman 1999[1990]). Their distinctive clothing originates from eighteenth century Swiss-German peasants’ garb and was modified partially under the influence of Victorian-era America (Bates 2008; Hostetler 1956). Today, they continue selectively borrowing from the American host society, creating hybrid symbols and objects insiders and outsiders identify as “Amish” (Kraybill 1994). Thus, in a surprising twist, Amish contact with a dominant host society helps them maintain separatism through borrowing.

Borrowing is selective, not random. Amish proscriptions are more than relativistic identifiers, but function to integrate members into the group’s cultural and structural systems, deterring external socialization forms that alienate members from the religious practices that contain separatist values (Enninger 1988b). For example, rejection of personally-owned automobiles and acceptance of the horse and buggy (among other slower modes) supports enclave-style settlements by limiting mobility, thus reinforcing social cohesion in informal and organizational networks (Loomis 1960; Scott 1998[1981]). Telecommunication and audiovisual devices can shape users’ values to a prevailing culture (Blumer 1933; Mander 1987; Middleton 2007; Postman 1986); therefore, Amish rejection of television, radio, and movies as well as limitations on the
Internet and telecommunications\(^{17}\) deter members from consuming stimulating presentations of mainstream values (Foster 1997; Hawley 1999; Kraybill 1998).

Regarding clothing, in that mainline fashion represents collective decisions driven by contemporary values (Blumer 1969), distinct Amish garb reinforces a separatist social identification, discouraging members from patronizing incongruent venues, limiting loitering outside the enclave (Hamilton and Hawley 1999; Hostetler 1955), and reminding members of the empathy solicited by similarly dressed co-adherents (Enninger 1982). Mobility limitations, media restrictions, and distinctive clothing function to turn primary ties inward. This dense social structure in turn reinforces status quo (separatist) values so members make future decisions that reinforce separatism (Olshan 1981). This feedback loop creates a particularly resilient group, reinforced by the symbiosis of a religiously-based moral order, culture, and structure (Vaisey 2007). Thus, when separatism is contested, those community proscriptions most visibly precluding assimilation are the foci; mainstream replacements are sought. Cases of Amish conflict on issues of technology, clothes, and media are well documented (Cong 1992; Hamilton and Hawley 1999; Hurst and McConnell 2010; Scott 1997[1986]; Scott and Pellman 1999[1990]; Yoder 1991).

Why would conflict even occur? For varying utilitarian or ideological reasons arising through actors’ lives, individuals may vary in support of separatism. In response to contact with the host society, certain actors may perceive individual or group benefits in some measure of assimilation. Alba and Nee’s (2003) assimilation theory uses resource mobilization theory to highlight such agency. Assimilation outcomes are the

\(^{17}\)Some Amish groups condone Internet use in the workplace and at public connections like the library.
product of actors’ rationalized actions, capital possessed, and constraints or opportunities
delivered by institutions. The theory explains how actors’ actions and mobilized
resources produce varying outcomes, such as individual assimilation or collective
competition with other external entities. However, they neglect internal conflict over
assimilation. Kniss (1997), though not employing assimilation theory, also uses resource
mobilization theory to understand individualized action, specifically conflict within the
Mennonite Church. For a century beginning around 1870, Mennonite innovationists and
traditionalists vied for structural (institutional) and cultural resources, many of which
were externally imported. Conflicts focused on separatism, religious innovations, and the
legitimacy of authority. Melding these two works’ contributions adds a piece to classic
assimilation theory: resource mobilization in internal conflict over assimilation and
separatism. Separatist resources are those group-defining symbols and practices that
orient actors towards separatism; some may be externally borrowed, but nevertheless
have come to define the group. Assimilationist resources are those symbols and practices,
usually borrowed from and associated with mainstream society, that tend to break
separatism.

Actors are never entirely rational, but are also partially the product of culturally-
based socialization. Thus, the social structure can be used to diffuse both separatist and
assimilationist practices and values, socializing those more easily influenced one way or
another (Crenshaw and Robison 2006; Reagans and McEvily 2003). For group-level
assimilation, the power structure must favor personalities desiring assimilation. As
external cultural practices disseminate and orient actors toward assimilation, the social
structure’s ability to combat further importations is weakened (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Lizardo 2006). For example, if Amish leaders permit cars, individual mobility is increased and group cohesiveness declines as members interact less with the local community. Individual autonomy as a value increases, placing pressure on other group-oriented separatist mechanisms. Inversely, where leaders ban automobile ownership, members tend to value the local community, thus selecting leaders that will preserve the community. Where external forces weaken separatist culture and structure, the feedback loop causes each variable to reshape the other towards the external, like two twisted ropes unraveling. This path-dependent process ends in a forfeited group identity, and hence, assimilation into the host society. This proposition raises the importance of cultural assimilation, when including religious values, to the level Gordon affords structural assimilation, making the two interdependent. Amish decisions about technology, media, and clothing function culturally and structurally to reinforce group values.

Actors vary in their response to collective pressure (Granovetter 1978; Rogers 2003). Some tend to be more easily shaped by the dominating socialization patterns while others hold more firmly to a given orientation. As separatist symbols partially weaken, members who rely on them will increasingly reject separatism, creating heightened tension between lingering separatist symbols and the pressures of an assimilation-oriented ideology (Spindler 1977). Those more individually committed to separatism may withdraw from the weakened system and recreate the old symbols in a new group, preserving those in the next generation who rely on mediating buffers. Contrariwise, those actors more committed to assimilation may defect if they fail to mobilize
assimilationist resources and occupy positions of power. Amish and Mennonite history carries numerous examples of both separatist-oriented groups withdrawing when the larger bodies assimilate and assimilationist-oriented groups withdrawing when they fail to instigate change (Anderson 2011b; Kniss 1997; Scott 1996; Yoder 1991).

Group assimilation occurs over generations (Foner and Dreby 2011; Nahirny and Fishman 1965). Thus, intergenerational continuity is necessary for subgroup resistance to assimilation. The nucleus of the Amish separatist system has been transferred across generations. Their society rejects a linear progressive view of time (each generation changes for the better) in favor of a cyclical view of lifecycles that emphasizes rich ethno-religious inheritance and intense lifelong community-oriented socialization (Bryer 1979; Enninger 1988b; Roth 1997). Offspring adopt similar occupations, gain similar technical knowledge, and carry on similar interests and ideas about church as their parents (Coleman 1962). Their intimate and cohesive social structures help preserve their moral order through successful socialization and intergenerational transmission of values.

The Amish community provides some latitude for late teens and young adults to engage in activities and behaviors unacceptable after baptism. Amish emphasize that church membership is voluntary, so until the young adults decide to join, they do not exist within the church’s jurisdiction. The range of adolescent behavior during this period ranges from absolute conformity, as if they are already members, to cultural defiance on numerous fronts. Defection is concentrated in young adulthood (though remains low). The Amish community offers the fewest social rewards to young adults and the most for the elderly (Stoltzfus 1977); those seeking more immediate achievement-based rewards
in their younger years may pursue assimilation to access mainstream opportunities. Yet, the vast majority still chooses to join (Hurst and McConnell 2010). Even in their youth years when cultural norms are flipped, structural and cultural separatism remains largely intact. Amish youth break cultural norms, but with other Amish youth, rarely fraternizing intimately with outsiders. Further, their deviance is culturally prescribed, presenting adolescents with a narrow range of deviant activities—for example, beer parties but not fraternities or open sexuality; volleyball and softball but not rugby, ballet, or marching band; and country music but not classical, rap, or jazz. Those who defect do so as isolated cases, not in a group (Mazie 2005; Meyers 1994; Reiling 2002; Stevick 2007). The adolescent period is thus structurally and culturally designed to absorb some of the impact of apparent assimilation-oriented deviance.

The structure of and leadership in Amish adolescent social networks is somewhat irrelevant to church perpetuity because this network exists outside the formal Amish church. When the majority of young adults decide to join, their social networks begin reconfiguration towards adult networks, where those who affirm the culture possess the most status and influence (Enninger and Wandt 1979). The community selects leaders based on their commitment to intergenerational continuity and exceptional conformity to community practices (Cong 1992; Enninger 1984; Smith 1961). Thus, Amish intergenerational continuity is structurally preserved, prompting new members to voluntarily conform in line with their baptism vows (Yoder 1949).
Assimilation of the Beachy Amish-Mennonites

What, then, is different about the Amish-Mennonites? Why have two past Amish-Mennonite movements assimilated? The remainder of this study investigates the culture and social structure of Amish-Mennonite youth among the third wave of Amish-Mennonites: the Beachys. The Beachy Amish-Mennonites emerged gradually from the Old Order Amish during the first half of the twentieth century; they were the Amish that chose to adopt automobiles and other technological innovations when such machinery first became a dividing line for the Old Order (Beachy 1955; Yoder 1987). During the 1950s and 1960s, a fresh wave of Amish joined the Beachy movement. They imported Protestant evangelical theology and forms (Nolt 2001), as had the Amish-Mennonites of the two preceding Amish-Mennonite movements. While Amish and evangelical theologies have some commonalities, they differ in their approach to broader society. Evangelicals attempt to change the larger society by working within it (such as in politics, proselytizing, and Christianization of mainstream culture practices). Thereby, they stress individual religious commitment over church commitment so the individual can maintain their evangelical commitment while working within society. Amish, on the other hand, emphasize faithfulness in a visibly strict lifestyle and make little attempt to change broader society. Thereby, they have created a separate system in which to uphold religious practices, practices too peculiar for evangelicals to demand of individual members living within mainstream society. Both evangelicals and the Amish justify their emphasis religiously, giving it legitimacy (Geiger 1986).
With major material and conceptual shifts towards the mainstream in place after mid-century, the Beachy Amish-Mennonites grappled with synthesizing elements of Amish and evangelical theology, separatism and assimilation to an evangelical melting pot. For example, they wanted to retain Amish-style dress but felt an evangelical compulsion to proselytize. They also struggled reconciling an Amish emphasis on community direction for individuals with the evangelical stress on intense personal religiosity (Anderson 2013). During periods of rapid change—perhaps generational shifts—small consortiums of churches withdrew from the Beachys and formed sub-affiliations aimed at halting further assimilation; five exist today (Anderson 2011b).

The Beachys have yet to lose a separatist identity, still retaining some community regulations (Camden and Gaetz Duarte 2006; Smith 2013). However, a handful of highly visible separatist regulations receive perennial attention. These regulations are codified in written documents particular to each church (though similarity occurs across churches). By recording these norms, Amish-Mennonites acknowledge codified regulations as priorities as well as areas of uncertainty in need of clarification. Written regulations are also subject to alteration; what is written can be rewritten. If leaders sense a critical mass within the church desiring revisions, they may call for meetings of church members to discuss proposed changes and attempt to forge consensus. While each church varies in regulations, the Beachy Amish-Mennonites do have a common history and set of symbols that define their affiliation, though these are becoming increasingly diverse (Anderson 2011a).
Written church standards give most attention to personal appearance, technology, media, recreation, and youth activities. Women are required to wear head coverings and full dresses, though the size is smaller than among Amish women. Men must always wear long pants and grow a beard after marriage, although the beard is more closely trimmed than those of Amish men. The more distinctive Beachy churches require men to have button-up shirts, short hair with a center part, and no brand labels on clothing. Women are to have loosely fitting solid-color dresses with specific details addressing pleats, gathers, lengths, and shapes to accomplish this end. Television and radio use is prohibited in Beachy churches, though increasingly contested (Anderson 2011a). Churches uniformly allow personal computers but with guidance on recreational/media usage, especially with Internet and DVDs. Recorded music is permitted although restricted by genre. The most restrictive position is prohibiting instrumental music, allowing sermons and a cappella Mennonite choirs. For recreation, Beachy adolescents are particularly drawn to hunting, volleyball, softball, church choirs, reading, scrapbooking, and photography. If regulations exist on these activities, it is on competitiveness and professionalism, but the less restrictive churches accept these attributes increasingly.

Amish-Mennonites have had lower tolerance for adolescent deviance than Amish, which has resulted in a lower baptism age (mid-teens). Most who start “going with the youth” at age 16 are almost or already church members. The extent, therefore, to which young adults among the Amish-Mennonites challenge cultural/religious separatist practices has far-reaching implications. While Amish young adults experiment with prohibited clothing, technology, media, and recreation outside church jurisdiction,
Amish-Mennonite youth, who may also experiment if only to a fraction of the degree, exist within church jurisdiction. If an Amish-Mennonite church disciplines too many deviant youth (who are members), they risk estranging the next generation. If no discipline is forthcoming, then the church must relax their separatism so young adults are no longer in violation. In so doing, the church sets an ideological precedent of continued leniency in response to the demands of subsequent generations. Thus, by becoming members at a younger age, and because of their comparatively large representation among all members (Beachys have high fertility), adolescents as a cohort wield more leverage than their Amish counterparts.

Amish-Mennonite young adult social networks shape the character of young adults’ relations with the whole church. Those who occupy positions of network power exercise influence in establishing norms and attitudes toward cultural symbols. They are able to diffuse personal orientations—be they cultural deviance or affirmation of separatism—and intercept the influence of competing ideas. Yet, just as among Amish young adults there is variation in conformity and deviance, so there are differences among the Amish-Mennonite young adults. Depending of what kinds of adolescents occupy positions of network power can set the church’s future path for assimilation or intergenerational separatism. If the assumption is used that the Beachys are assimilating like the two prior Amish-Mennonite movements, young adults who have the greatest assimilationist orientation…

1. …possess the greatest structural power, and thereby challenge separatist practices…
a. …by establishing and using out-group network ties as a source of assimilationist-oriented practices (borrowing assimilationist cultural resources from mainstream society).

b. …in openly disobeying church-proscribed regulations (negation of separatist cultural resources).

c. …by using in-group network channels to express dissatisfaction with regulations (mobilization of structural resources).

2. …would have lower levels of continuity with parents (intergenerational assimilation).

3. …are less likely to feel they fit the church ideal for members (subjective sense of integration).

Methods

What kinds of Beachy young adults leave the most impact on the social system? Separatists or assimilationists? While a self-reporting survey can probe beliefs, practices, and intergenerational continuity, social network theory permits social structure visualization and calculations of power. Network power consists of at least three forms (Freeman 1978/1979; Knoke and Yang 2008). First, actors with high betweenness are located along the geodesic (shortest) path between a given set of two actors. For information to diffuse to an actor who is not directly tied, the information must pass through others, who can decide whether or not information is transmitted. Second, actors with high closeness can reach all actors in the network at a relatively low path distance. With fewer actors between all other actors, information is more likely to arrive at those
most distant. Third, actors with high degree centrality have many ties to many others, thus giving them greater flexibility in social action since they are less dependent on any given actor. They also hold more prestige in the eyes of others, since many are looking to them.

To investigate the hypotheses, I sought a bounded network of Beachy Amish-Mennonite young adults. While a cluster sample of churches may seem logical, Beachy churches are small; their population of unmarried young adults over 16 rarely exceeds 30 people (several of whom at any given time are living elsewhere on voluntary service commitments). Instead, I solicited a cohort at the constituency’s Bible school for young adults. This Bible school is an institution with a small campus, including two dorms, staff housing, and a main structure with three classrooms, a library, chapel, offices, and dining hall. For twelve weeks each year, the school offers two three-week terms and one six-week term during which several religious classes are offered. Teachers, staff, and students come almost exclusively from Beachy churches (the remainder are plain Mennonites). The two three-week terms include around 100 students and the six-week term is about half that. I work with the assumption that the student network mirrors a typical formation of young adults as in local churches, only magnified.

Using a term of Bible school students has several advantages. First, the sheer quantity of young adults is more than any other conglomerate; they form many relationships, giving analytical results greater statistical force. Second, the institution’s geographical isolation and participants’ uninterrupted presence on the campus provides for an intense, albeit short, period of bounded social network formation, as is the case
with summer camps (Edwards 1990). Third, the majority of students have never met one another before, so each individual’s personal history, family status, and other context-specific variables are largely controlled. Young adults are forming new relationships based on pre-existing orientations. Fourth, the Bible school sample incorporates students from many churches, reducing error introduced by cluster sampling churches.

This approach is not without disadvantages. Removing the church context from relationship formation may overlook how networks form and power is distributed at the church level, the nucleus of change activity. Further, because of time constraints, I could not administer the test twice to see if students’ pre-existing orientations shifted during the three weeks at Bible school. I therefore proceed with the assumption that pre-existing orientations expressed did not change profoundly during these three weeks and that the emerging social network structure was a product of actors arranging themselves based on pre-existing orientations (Vaisey and Lizardo 2010). This assumption seems plausible since personality formation and interests are unlikely to change extensively in a three week period after years of development and home/community-based socialization. Finally, some students may have already been friends prior to attending Bible school, either coming from the same church or being cousins or other kin.

In this study, I surveyed the first three-week term of Bible school in January 2010. The first term did not have the student carry-over from an immediately prior term like later ones, which adds a complicating variable to relationship formation between carryovers and new enrollees. The survey instrument was revised after pretests on several
young adults at a Beachy church and then administered during an assembly in the final week. A school administrator provided actor age, gender, and congregational affiliation.

The survey included three sections. To assess orientation towards assimilation and separatism, one section asked respondents their interest level in 35 items ranked on a four-point Likert scale. Items pertained to musical tastes, recreational activities, hobbies, technology and media usage, and time spent with family, peer group, and the church. Interests were derived from items discussed in archival materials\textsuperscript{18} and activities Beachy churches discourage or disallow per written church standards. A factor analysis of the interests resulted in what can be thought of as several person types. Every interest receives a positive or negative score (loading) on a given person type (factor). Respondents then receive a score of their fit with each factor.\textsuperscript{19} The factors are composites of interests that typify familiar identities and cultural orientations. Actors accept or reject these identities and orientations by accepting or rejecting the associated activities. Because of possible association of an identity with a gender, gender was included in the factor analysis.

What kinds of actors have structural power? In another section, students identified up to six close friends, six because it avoids five as a natural stopping point but limits excessive friend citation so as to give meaning to named ties. These nominations

\textsuperscript{18} These archival materials were of two types. The first were newsletters from voluntary service units operated by the Beachys, in which a regular section features brief profiles of new staff. The second were scrapbooks compiled by young adult groups in a few churches; these scrapbooks also have profiles.

\textsuperscript{19} Following the score assignment, I performed a cluster analysis to see if the subjects generally matched just one of the factors, therefore allowing me to treat individuals as one factor or another (they did not).
provided the data from which betweenness, closeness, and centrality were calculated\textsuperscript{20} in UCINet (Borgatti, Everett and Freeman 2002).

Employing numerous power measures provides a rounded view of structural power. The “Freeman” measure assesses betweenness, assigning a high score to nodes often along the geodesic path between other nodes (Freeman 1978/1979). Two measures assessed closeness. “In-Farness” is the sum of the distances from one node to all others, traveling along paths of incoming ties. A lower score indicates greater influence. I restricted the measure to geodesic paths (opposed to all path lengths) and removed infinite values of a node inaccessible to another. In-farness was selected over out-farness—which follows paths of outgoing ties—because it better represents the flow of influence, that is, from a node to those who nominate that node as a friend. The second measure, “in-nearness,” is the reciprocal of “in-farness” standardized by the network size (Freeman 1978/1979).

Centrality is measured by “in-degree”—the sum of ties received—and “out-degree”—the sum of ties sent. The former assesses prestige, the latter sociability (the importance placed on having many friends). In this study, “out-degree” is limited to six. The hub and authority measures are variants of centrality based on tie direction and are mutually dependent measures (Kleinberg 1999). One is an authority when (s)he receives ties from those who send ties to many other authorities. To be a hub, one names the right people, the authorities. In scholarly citations, for example, certain papers may not be cited often, but they cite many of the right, highly-cited papers; these works are hubs.

\textsuperscript{20} Several other network measures were generated but dropped later because they had no impact on analytical calculations.
Those works cited often by hubs are authorities, which need not themselves cite many
other works to be an authority. All of these centrality measures analyze each ego’s
immediate network. In the Bonacich centrality measure (Bonacich 1987), an actor has
high centrality if (s)he is linked to actors with many ties (when a positive beta value is
used).  

21

How does each factor predict (1) use of ties to instigate change, (2)
intergenerational continuity, and (3) fit with church? A third section investigated these
questions. First, I constructed an interval scale index of deviance impact (that is,
deviating from cultural separatism) based on respondent willingness to openly disobey
church regulations, willingness to talk to friends if they desired change, and level of
strictness or leniency desired with church regulations [“Deviance Impact Index”]. To
further understand nuanced types of deviance, I created three binary indicators. To
receive a score of one on any three, a respondent must express a desire for fewer church
regulations and then also (1) openly display deviance beyond just one’s close friends
[“Petition Openly”], (2) engage in some level of deviant behavior and primarily use
friendship ties to discuss interest in regulation reduction [“Petition Internally”], and/or (3)
discuss interest in church regulation reductions with people outside the immediate church
[“Petition Externally”]. Second, to measure intergenerational continuity, I created an
interval scale index using ten items across four questions asking respondents to assess
similarities/differences and relationship quality with parents [“Intergenerational

21 A beta coefficient of 0.178 was used as the value matching the reciprocal, as calculated in Ucinet. When
a negative beta is used, the measure assesses the extent to which an actor monopolizes others’ ties, making
others dependent on the one. Since this study is about diffusion and not dependence, a positive beta was
used.
Third, as a catch-all measure, I presented a five-point Likert scale in the survey, asking respondents whether they “…fit the ideal model of what the church expects” [“Fit Ideal”].

The six factors, representing adolescent identities that are more or less present in each individual, served as independent variables in a series of multivariate regression or binary logistic analyses. The network measures, the intergenerational continuity index, the deviance index and the three binary deviance indices, and the scale of fitting church ideal served one by one as the dependent variables. This approach permits testing the hypotheses, analyzing what types of people occupy positions of power, represent intergenerational continuity, and fit the church ideal.

Results

The surveyed term included 97 students, 45 males and 52 females, 81% of which were age 18 or 19, the rest 20 to 22. Ninety-two students were from Beachy churches, the remainder from related affiliations. Students represented forty-nine churches. The church with greatest representation had five students. The response rate was high. Nevertheless, eight males and one female chose not to complete the survey. In reviewing the ties from alters to these nine egos, three were isolates and simply eliminated from this study. The absence of the other six is worth considering since they had in-degrees above zero and hence are part of the network despite nonparticipation. Simply ignoring these non-respondents, as is often done in survey research, may produce network calculations with greater error than attempting to model potential ties (Huisman 2009). Models to account

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22 The ten sets of responses were weighted to the same scale and then averaged to a single score ranging from one to four
for non-response are varied and must be fitted to the situation (Robins, Pattison and Woolcock 2004). In this case, I used a conservative model based on popularity nominations, in-degree, and configurations of reciprocity. The estimates produced 18 ties for the six actors (a mean of three ties per actor), a modest estimate given the mean stated ties of remaining respondents numbered 5.35.

After accounting for non-respondent ties and eliminating three isolates, the network contained 503 directed ties among 94 nodes (see Figure 2). Network density was 0.052 and 34% of ties were reciprocated, signifying a fairly integrated network. The network was highly gender segregated, typical of adolescent networks (Ennett and Bauman 1996; Poulin and Pedersen 2007) and expectedly pronounced all the more in a gender distinctive society (Olshan and Schmidt 1994). Around 31% of listed ties consisted of prior acquaintances, higher than hoped, but still low considering the closely integrated networks and extensive kin relations spanning churches.

On a scale from one to four, the mean score for interests ranged from 3.61 (spending time with family) to 1.45 (listening to rock / popular music) with an overall mean of 2.37. Those activities having a mean score above three included spending time with family and the youth group (3.50) and casual/intense volleyball (3.31/3.10).

Volleyball is the most prevalent recreational form among Beachy young adults and

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23 The rules are (1) If A and B are friends and both A and B name M (missing data) as a friend, then M is a friend of A and B. (2) Where A names M, M is a friend of A if A's in-degree is greater than M's (and at least six). (3) Where A and B are reciprocal friends, and A and B are both friends with M1 and M2, then M1 and M2 are reciprocal friends. (4) If B names M and B otherwise has over half of h is/her ties as reciprocal, then B and M are reciprocal friends since alter judges well who reciprocates. Tallies of rule application are (1):6, (2):1, (3):1, (4):4, (1&4):3, (2&4):2, and (3&4):1.

24 One actor had five of the 18 ties; I asked a teacher who observed this student’s interactions to estimate who his closest friends would have been. In consultation with two students, he named six likely ties, among which were the five ties predicted using this model. While this is not verification and uncertainty still persists, the model likely estimates the actual network configuration better than dropping these six students.
generally accepted by churches. Intense volleyball is competitive (socially hierarchical, demanding skill, and highly organized) and casual is cooperative recreation (informal and spontaneous).

In the factor analysis, the top six factors were chosen as meaningful personality types and labeled “cool,” “goody girl,” “redneck,” “introvert,” “singer,” and “get-along” (Table 3). The factor analysis should be interpreted not as if respondents are exclusively one type but rather respondents fit each factor more (positive) or less (negative). While some actors score high on a single factor and neutral or negative on the rest, other actors may score high on two or even three factors (one actor scored negatively on all six). Thus, the factors, as social identities defined by cultural fragments, will be examined, not the actual respondents themselves. Individuals are but the units that contain scores on the six factors. This is an important caveat to bear in mind.

The six factors predicted, in turn, a range of dependent variables, including social network power, use of networks (Table 4), intergenerational continuity, and fit with the church (Table 5). Of note, the Bonacich centrality calculation favored the female sub-network; thus, those factors with positive loadings on “female” tended to positively predict Bonacich centrality. I separately calculated the Bonacich centrality measure for each gender as well to see if certain factors predicted Bonacich centrality, controlling for the absolute differences in each gender sub-network.
Circles: Male  
Squares: Female  
Dark line: Reciprocal relationship.  
Thin line: Directed relationship

Figure 2. Graph of Adolescent Network
### Table 3. Factor Analysis of Ranked Interests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Cool</th>
<th>Goody Girl</th>
<th>Redneck</th>
<th>Introvert</th>
<th>Singer</th>
<th>Mean (1-4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singing in a Choir</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed choir (open to all)</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>0.105</td>
<td>0.192</td>
<td>0.692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intense choir (selective)</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>-0.098</td>
<td>0.788</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Listening to music</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A Cappella, old-style hymns</td>
<td>-0.225</td>
<td>-0.240</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>0.212</td>
<td>0.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Cappella, popular &amp; modern</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>-0.145</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>0.247</td>
<td>0.537</td>
<td>0.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choral, with instruments</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.176</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.615</td>
<td>0.185</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Chr. / Praise &amp; Worship</td>
<td>0.655</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td>-1.03</td>
<td>-1.71</td>
<td>0.237</td>
<td>0.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country / Folk</td>
<td>0.618</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>0.165</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
<td>-0.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock / Pop</td>
<td>0.573</td>
<td>-0.047</td>
<td>-0.271</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>-1.42</td>
<td>-1.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classical music</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.177</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intense Volleyball</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td>-0.337</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>-0.323</td>
<td>0.426</td>
<td>0.141</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casual Volleyball</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.237</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>0.441</td>
<td>0.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intense Hunting (long trips, good equipment)</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td>-0.315</td>
<td>0.765</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casual Hunting (just for relaxation)</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>-0.317</td>
<td>0.770</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.046</td>
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<td><strong>Other activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading books</td>
<td>-0.110</td>
<td>0.475</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.422</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
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<td>Reading magazines</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.199</td>
<td>0.415</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>-0.050</td>
<td>0.222</td>
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<td>Photography</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.506</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>0.266</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>0.301</td>
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<td>Sewing</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td>0.706</td>
<td>-0.337</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>-0.050</td>
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<td>Scrapbooking</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td>-0.206</td>
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<td>-0.168</td>
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<td>Cooking / baking</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>0.661</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drawing / painting / art</td>
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<td>-0.002</td>
<td>-0.387</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>0.490</td>
<td>-0.221</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanics (vehicles, tractors, etc.)</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>-0.393</td>
<td>0.593</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>-0.141</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeping up with sports teams</td>
<td>0.529</td>
<td>-0.434</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>-0.122</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
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<td>Shopping with friends</td>
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<td>0.405</td>
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<td>-0.544</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
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<td>Nice trucks or cars</td>
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<td>0.525</td>
<td>-0.228</td>
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<td>Gardening</td>
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<td>0.133</td>
<td>0.294</td>
<td>0.425</td>
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<td><strong>Computer and electronics</strong></td>
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<td>Watching DVDs / films</td>
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<td>YouTube</td>
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<td>0.045</td>
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<td>Facebook / blogs</td>
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<td>-0.121</td>
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<td>0.331</td>
<td>-0.479</td>
<td>0.007</td>
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<td>Gender (Female)</td>
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<td>0.754</td>
<td>-0.270</td>
<td>-1.117</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Goody girl</td>
<td>Redneck</td>
<td>Introvert</td>
<td>Singer</td>
<td>Get-along</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>BETWEENNESS</strong></td>
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<td>Freeman</td>
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<td>In-farness*</td>
<td>-5.97</td>
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<td>10.57</td>
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<td>In-degree</td>
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<td>Out-degree</td>
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<td>(.13)</td>
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<td>Bonacich ($\beta=.178$)</td>
<td>13.58</td>
<td>291.34</td>
<td>-37.10</td>
<td>-99.64</td>
<td>-52.00</td>
<td>64.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonacich ($\beta=.178$)</td>
<td>-22.03</td>
<td>182.36</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>-82.81</td>
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<td>Female only</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(42.95)</td>
<td>(61.77)</td>
<td>(51.44)</td>
<td>(41.12)</td>
<td>(43.63)</td>
<td>(44.49)</td>
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<td>B ($\beta=.178$)</td>
<td>66.50</td>
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<td>67.28</td>
<td>-58.85</td>
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<td>Male only</td>
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<td>(30.49)</td>
<td>(65.05)</td>
<td>(31.42)</td>
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<td>Hub</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>9.92</td>
<td>-6.86</td>
<td>-13.56</td>
<td>4.94</td>
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<td>(9.23)</td>
<td>(5.93)</td>
<td>(4.03)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>6.74</td>
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<td>-13.02</td>
<td>10.26</td>
<td>-3.21</td>
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<td>(5.93)</td>
<td>(7.03)</td>
<td>(5.93)</td>
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<td>(5.93)</td>
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<td>HBI1</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.24</td>
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<td>-.63</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>-.20</td>
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</table>

*A negative score denotes greater power.

Table 4. Regression Analyses, Six Factors Predicting Network Position
The “cool” factor had high positive loadings on most electronics/media (even the most explicitly deviant item, watching TV) and deviant music forms (rock, country, and contemporary Christian). It positively predicts deviance (p<.01), open defiance (p<.05), and use of internal networks to push for change (p<.05). “Cool” negatively predicts intergenerational continuity (p<.05) and fitting the church ideal (p<.01). This factor represents conspicuous misalignment with the status quo and a tendency to accept external innovations. Yet, contrary to my hypotheses, “cool” had but one positive prediction of network power—Bonacich centrality (p<.05)—and then only among males (who have an overall lower Bonacich score than females). This one measure of network power, taken alone, does not provide concrete evidence of consistent extensive influence.

### Table 5. Regression Analyses, Six Factors Predicting Deviance, Intergenerational Continuity, and Fit with Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cool</th>
<th>Goody girl</th>
<th>Redneck</th>
<th>Introvert</th>
<th>Singer</th>
<th>Get-along</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ANOVA Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deviance Impact Index</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.174</td>
<td>0.001</td>
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<td>Petition Openly (Binary test)</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petition Internally (Binary test)</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petition Externally (Binary test)</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>-0.67</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>ANOVA Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intergenerational Continuity Index</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.153</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fit Church Ideal</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p*.10 *p*.05 *p*.01
The “redneck” factor had high positive loadings on hunting, mechanics, and “nice cars and trucks,” which may be characterized by chrome, bright colors, tinted windows, altered exhaust systems, two door cars, and pricey pick-up trucks. The “redneck” factor makes little concrete impact on the social system aside from positively predicting Bonacich centrality among males only (much like “cool”). This factor significantly predicts in-farness (p<.05) and hub (p<.10) in the direction of less network power and also positively predicts fitting church ideal (p<.10). Overall, those with a high “redneck” score generally support the church, possess few assimilationist cultural resources, and have little influence on the peer network.

The “get-along” factor had high positive loadings on spending time with the church and peer group, as well as casual choir, suggesting a value orientation toward non-competitive integration of all people. Similarly, the “get-along” factor appears supportive of the church, but the network impact is negligible. While this factor positively predicts Bonacich power, the impact is not significant when either gender is analyzed separately, suggesting the significance is a product of this factor’s positive female loading (.17). “Get-along” negatively predicts internally-focused thrusts for change (p<.10) and positively predicts intergenerational continuity and fitting the church ideal. Get-alongs are oriented toward supporting the status quo and are of little influence in the network.

The “introvert” factor had high positive loadings on introspective activities like reading, gardening, and classical/hymn music; it had high negative loadings on social activities like shopping with friends, texting, intense volleyball, and spending time with the peer group. Consistent with the factor analysis characterization, the “introvert” factor
negatively predicts all but two of the network power measures. “Introvert” also negatively predicts two of the four deviance measures and positively predicts fitting the church ideal (p<.01). Much like “redneck” and “get-along,” this factor is characterized by support of the status quo, but has the least influence on the network.

The “goody girl” factor had a high positive loading on “female,” hence the given name. It also had high positive loadings in status quo activities characterizing the Amish/Beachy female identity—like sewing, cooking, and scrapbooking—and negative loadings on several deviant activities like computer games and competitive sports. “Goody girl” positively predicts a majority of power measures, especially those characterized by outgoing ties (e.g. hub and out-degree). Sociability is important to them; the local network is an intense reference point for those with a high “goody girl” score and their influence is insistent, if not also potent. Yet, while the factor analysis profile suggests conformity, “goody girl” positively predicts the deviance index and the use of internal networks to instigate change. Also worth noting is that “goody girl” did not significantly predict fitting the church ideal, which all other conformist factors predicted positively. Neither did they positively predict the intergenerational continuity index. Those scoring high on the “goody girl” factor desire some sort of change and use their networks to lobby for change, though this study does not capture the changes sought in cultural activities listed. The network-wide consequences of this finding are magnified given their high out-degree centrality and high rating as hubs. They, thus, affirm some traditional activities while simultaneously use their networks to petition for some changes.
The “singer” factor had high positive loadings on intense choir but the loading for casual choir was not far above zero. This captures a movement across Beachy and Mennonite churches of choral professionalism. Plain Anabaptists have a heritage of a cappella congregational singing, which is ritually symbolic of church unity, as all contribute in a single voice regardless of skill (Fishman 1988). The Beachy churches, like many other plain Mennonites, have accepted young adult choirs, combining modest performance orientation with an all-inclusive, congregational approach, without auditions and without performances during church services. Some young adults may seek greater precision in musical skill from select choirs that have auditions and pull members from a variety of churches; these likely fit the “singer” factor. Advocates of intense choir argue that precise, trained singing is vital to congregational health. They thus emphasize a traditional practice while altering its process and presentation through cultural borrowing from mainstream choral techniques and repertoires, such as those in university music departments. The “singer” factor also included high positive loadings in both casual and intense volleyball. They thus are involved in hierarchical activities that use performance as the basis of status.

“Singer” positively predicts network power on five measures; on a sixth, “singer” negatively predicts Bonacich centrality for the entire network (p<.05) but positively for just males (p<.01). The measures “singer” positively predicted are often those based on incoming ties (e.g. authority and in-degree). Thus, actors look to those with a high “singer” score. Yet, those scoring high on “singer” tend to look to those outside their
local church networks to lobby for change (p<.10); they tend towards open deviance within their local network (p<.10).

In summary, “cool” represents a clear break with church precedent—those who engage in culturally deviant activities, push for changes, do not fit the church ideal, and do not represent continuity with parents—but does not predict consistent network power. “Redneck,” “get-along,” and “introvert” generally represent conformity but either do not consistently predict network power or negatively predict it. “Goody girl” predicts network power, and while this factor demonstrates some conformity, it also represents use of networks to petition for some changes. Similarly, “singer” predicts network power and also represents a mix of conformity and push for change. The difference between “goody girl” and “singer” is that the former tend to derive power from outgoing ties in the immediate network while the latter derive power from incoming ties in the immediate network and the bridge connections to external sources.

Discussion

The Amish persist as a distinct subculture in America because of a separatist religious orientation reinforced by complementary social structures and cultural practices. However, two major Amish break away movements assimilated over several generations and the question now is whether the third movement, the Beachy Amish-Mennonites, will likewise follow their predecessors. Both assimilation and separatism is a decision Amish groups make internally, with little formal pressure from greater society one way or another. Actors within the Amish may have a diversity of opinions about the degree of separatism or assimilation desirable. Amish young adults have the most freedom to
explore assimilation alternatives because they are not church members. Should they choose to join the church, they will enter a social and cultural system that privileges a separatist orientation. Beachy young adults, however, join the church younger and therefore may be better positioned to leverage change as young adults since they are members. Their ability to leverage change depends on whether the social structure favors assimilationists or separatists. Young adults are also the target of intergenerational transmission, so an unreceptive generation could trigger assimilation.

What kinds of people occupy positions of network power? The hypotheses, based on an assumption that the Beachy Amish-Mennonites are assimilating like their predecessors, posited that assimilationist-oriented young adults would occupy positions of structural power, would use out-group network ties as a source of assimilationist cultural practices, would openly disobey church regulations, and would use in-group network channels to express dissatisfaction with regulations. The findings above only partially support these hypotheses. The adolescent identity defined most consistently by assimilationist interests and intergenerational discontinuity did not consistently hold network power, neither did they use out-group network ties to mobilize assimilationist resources. They did openly disobey church regulations and attempt to use internal network channels to express dissatisfaction. This personality type positively predicted all deviance indicators except external ties. In all, even though this group is the most immediate threat to separatism, their peers do not consistently award them with structural influence.
Young adults who defect from Beachy churches typically express personal conflict with the church regulations (Nisly 2006). Actors adopting the “cool” identity are most at odds with the established separatist system and may therefore be the most eligible Beachy adolescents for defection. Had they wielded consistent network power, their tendency toward defection may have created a mass defection or leverage for the church to meet their demands, but, as with Amish young adults (Reiling 2002), defectors likely leave in isolation. A later study following up on respondents could test this hypothesis.

Those identities that represent the greatest cultural conformity to separatism either do not consistently occupy positions of structural power or negatively predict power. So while Beachy young adults do not privilege the most visible assimilationists with structural influence, neither do they privilege the most visible separatists.

The two identities with the most structural power are in-betweeners: goody girls and singers. What makes these identities in-betweeners? On the one hand, these factors do not have high positive loadings on assimilationist-oriented activities, such as deviant music and electronics, but generally have high loadings on separatist-affirming activities (cooking and gardening) or competitive versions of otherwise acceptable activities (volleyball and choir). On the other hand, this identity nevertheless positively predicted several of the deviance indicators. Goody girls tend to use internal networks to petition for change, yet do not consistently defy regulations openly. This is consistent with their tendency toward sociability (as with out-degree and hub measures). Singers focus on external networks through which they import cultural resources; rather than use internal networks to petition for change, they show greater propensity to simply defy standards
openly. This is consistent with their tendency to be recipients of many in-coming ties (as with in-degree and authority measures). In addition, these identities did not significantly predict “fit church ideal,” whereas all others either positively or negatively predicted it. Both goody girl and singers exemplify high social capital, though the former have bonding capital and the latter bridging capital. Each capital type characterizes how they use internal networks to level critiques and social change.

What, then, do those identifying as goody girls and/or singers desire to change? While the interest list covered a variety of separatist and assimilationist activities, the survey seldom captured the ways actors want separatist practices reconfigured (versus replaced). The exception is found among the singers. They had high positive loadings on intense choir (but not relaxed choir), popular / modern a cappella music (but not old-style), and intense volleyball (casual had a similar score). While the singer identity affirms several widely accepted interests, it has greater devotion to the reformulated type, the type that creates a small activity-based subculture emphasizing increased skills, techniques to increase skill, wide knowledge of rules, names, and venues associated with the activity, and hierarchies related to who best masters all the above. Such a system relies on external cultural importation, such as from university-style choir and volleyball cultures. The importation is not an external cultural resource replacing a separatist resource, as favored among the “cool” identity, but revision of an accepted practice. While similarity in actual practice persists, the underlying content changes. While the separatist cultural configuration emphasizes equality, symbolic separatism, and a sense of us-ness (Enninger and Raith 1982), the intense choir configuration emphasizes hierarchy,
achievement, specialization, and boundary blurring. For example, traditional congregational singing and casual choir emphasize equality through the uniform blending of voices. Intense choir groups use repertoires that have section or individual solos emphasizing specialization. The one uses long-familiar and commonly known hymns, the other uses new, unfamiliar, and recently imported works. The one entails little to no practice and encourages participation from all regardless of ability, the other demands borrowing training techniques to improve skill for satisfactory performance. Thus, the “singers” identity accepts an historical separatist practice, but alters it so that the mean now accomplishes a new end. While a cappella singing still symbolically represents “our world,” and by implication a people different from “their world” (Schelbert 1985), the revisions made functionally weakens separatist structures and culture.

What of the “goody girls” identity; what changes do such people seek? The survey information provides no answer. Yet, by process of elimination, of the major religious proscriptions to which the culture gives attention (including technology, media, recreation, and young adult activities), this study did not address garb and grooming. Clothing is a significant domain of tension for Beachys, given its forthright symbolic marker of group identity and association with separatist values (Plancke 1984). Among the Beachys, men’s dress has more quickly assimilated to mainstream styles than women’s dress. This is because traditional Amish dress—button-up shirts and long pants—is more easily replicated with readymade store-bought alternatives to homemade versions. Women’s clothing, on the other hand, uses as its basic unit a full-piece dress and a head covering, artifacts with no store-bought parallels.
While dress can only be speculated as an issue here, evidence exists that women’s
dress is a controversial issue among the Beachys. For instance, many Beachy churches
have recently changed the head covering style from a uniformly designed bonnet shape to
an assortment of less group-specific, generic cloths and doilies (Anderson 2013[2010]).
Women’s dress is also the most extensively revised section from earlier to current church
standard editions. However, rather than entirely replacing women’s distinctive dress,
alterations may be sought so as to retain a sense of group identity, though diluting its
separatist functionality. Distinctive dress, a perennial issue of discussion among other
once-plain Amish-Mennonites, unravels over several iterations of standard revisions as it
decreases in ability to help create a communal separatist identity, which in turn demands
further relaxation of dress practices (Scott 1997[1986]; Yoder 1991). What results is, as
Scott (1997[1986], 41) writes, “…a form of clothing…that is either completely
fashionable [i.e. assimilated] or that is quite unique but no longer expresses the principle
it was originally intended to.” In the case of the latter, some sort of regulation exists,
providing members with a sense of continuity and internally valid identity, even though it
largely fails to functionally support separatism; discontinuity and identity loss is thereby
not sudden. Given the distinctiveness of women’s dress beyond men’s, women may seek
to close the gap, and the “goodly girl” use of internal networks to lobby for deregulation
would fit this particular issue well.

These in-betweeners could be called “revisionists,” those who want to retain the
separatist forms rather than replace them completely with externally imported cultural
fragments, but do want to revise the content of separatist cultural forms so that their
mechanical functionality as separatist practices is diluted. Revisionists desire some continuity with separatism, but more in relativistic theory than obligatory community-wide functionality. This contrasts with the classic three-generations-to-assimilation model, whereby the second generation still has their subculture, but references it by rejecting it and passing as a member of mainstream society (Nahirny and Fishman 1965). In that the Beachy young adults structurally privilege the revisionists, Beachys may still be on a path of assimilation, but not the assimilation marked by a sudden break between generations. Rather, while slowly revising separatist practices, they retain a sense of continuity by altering existing practices rather than supplanting them with external innovations. Change could very well be slow enough that the group never hits a given absorption point into the mainstream, but always lags behind (Ogburn 1922) or it could speed up enough to assimilate. Revisionists group are expected to be characterized than a higher defection rate than strict separatists, as individuals are more empowered over their fate and may hence find greater benefit in assimilating than adhering to a system with separatist markers tending toward relativism.

While this study does not argue that the Beachy Amish-Mennonites will eventually fully assimilate, it does shed light on change processes between generations in a religious group with theological elements that would purport both separatism and societal engagement. Those occupying positions of structural power in any given system can diffuse their cultural orientations, though they only come to influence as the cultural system changes to permit them. The Beachy religion extends the greatest influence to revisionists, that is, those committed to retaining the vestiges of a separatist identity but
willing to change the organization thereof away from separatism. That is, they reduce or remove the functional ability of separatist symbols, leaving them as relativistic demarcations. Depending on the speed of change (which varies from church to church), the Beachys may ultimately achieve assimilation, though not in the usual three generations, or else perpetually occupy an extent of separatism much less than the Amish, systemically nudging out both devout assimilationists and separatists, remaining never quite fully assimilated. The importance of this study is also in highlighting the varying internal orientations towards assimilation within and the competition thereby resulting, a process only alluded to in classic assimilation theory (Gordon 1964).
Chapter 4: Who Is Interested in the Plain Mennonite or Amish Faith? And Why?

Abstract

For all the liberties granted Westerners, a small but regular stream of people seek to join seemingly austere plain Anabaptist sects (Amish, Mennonites, etc.). What are these “outsiders” seeking? I developed a survey to explore this question and posted it on a prominent Anabaptist website, offering outside seekers information about nearby churches in exchange for their time. Usable responses numbered 1,074 over two years. Evangelicals, Baptists, females, people in the Midwest and South, and the young were overrepresented. Strongest attractions include devout Christianity, strong community, and modesty. A factor analysis of 17 sources of information suggests groupings by mediated and direct information sources. A factor analysis of 21 attractions suggests six types of seeker interest, characterized by emphases on family, femininity, religious conviction, primitivism, social support, and returning to the group. Relationships between the six attraction factors and information sources, age and gender, U.S. region, and religious background and explored through regression analyses.

Introduction

Who would consider joining the Old Order Amish, the Amish-Mennonites, the conservative Mennonites, the Old Order Mennonites, the German Baptists, or another plain Anabaptist group? As the western world enters an epoch that—as fraught with
challenges as it may be- promises unprecedented opportunity for individually customized lifestyles, individuals confront numerous decisions of personal taste and preference. Seemingly endless are the lines of shoes, music genres, ice cream flavors, burger toppings, automobile styles, sports teams, and must-read books. Religions are as diverse as ever too, joining this “market” of choices (Warner 1993).

With freedom, choice, and individualism at an apex, why would some seek a strict, distinctive religious group with a strong communal identity and high personal demands (Iannaccone 1994; Bouma 2008). While no sweeping relocation to plain Anabaptism has happened, the number entertaining this lifestyle, even joining, persists, occurring against a backdrop of increasing plain Anabaptist vitality, attributed to high birth rates and ever-increasing retention rates (Donnermeyer, Anderson, and Cooksey 2013; Greksa 2002; Pratt 1969; Nolt 1992).

This study investigates why some entertain a plain Anabaptist lifestyle, focusing on “seekers’” early attraction rather than who actually joins, which introduces additional variables like cultural acclimation and practical logistics of joining. I describe plain Anabaptist sects and then synthesize research about plain Anabaptists’ appeal to outsiders. Next I investigate 1,074 survey responses from seekers, exploring age and gender, religious background, information sources consulted, and primary attractions. From these data, I use basic descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and regression to explore the question: why are these seekers interested in plain Anabaptists?
The Plain Anabaptists: Identity and Appeal

“Plain Anabaptism” is an amalgamation of affiliations with roots in Reformation-era Germanic Europe. What coalesced into an enduring “Anabaptism” was religious membership as a voluntary decision (hence, adult baptism), high standards of moral behavior, political non-involvement, and nonresistance. Separatism was variously embraced over Anabaptism’s history. From Anabaptism came several traditions: the Swiss Brethren/Mennonites, the Dutch Mennonites (Snyder 1995), the Hutterites (Packull 1995), the Amish (Beachy 2011), and the German Baptist Brethren (Brumbaugh 1899). Given an almost 500-year history, the movement has diversely responded to challenges. Today, Anabaptist traditions have three expressions: mainline, Old Order (distinctive and communally focused), and conservative (a synthesis of individual and communal elements). The latter two are “plain” and of present interest. Historic paths and ideological nuances uniquely shaped each affiliation’s structural and symbolic subculture. Hutterites, for example, practice economic communalism but allow automobiles while Amish accept personal wealth but reject motor vehicle ownership. Both maintain distinctive dress for women and men, though dress details vary. Ultimately, both view their respective practices as supporting religious separatism. Separatism has produced and is supported by many details of religion, ethnicity, and social system, thereby placing plain Anabaptists in a conspicuous position within an increasingly homogenous host society (Anderson 2013b).

25 I recognize the persistence of ethnic diversity, stratification, etc. in the host society, but also suggest increasing cultural homogenization arising from governmental centralization, media, transportation, and education.
Plain Anabaptists attracted many new members centuries ago, but like many other religions, now rely on natural growth (Hout, Greeley, and Wilde 2001; Scheitle, Kane, and Van Hook 2011). Nevertheless, these separatists remain appealing, as several convert autobiographies attest (McGrath 1988; McGurrin 2011; Miller 2011; Walker 1998; Cohen 1998). Indeed, in recent decades, outsider interest has increased (Scott 2007). Research analyzing popular Anabaptist (particularly Amish) depictions may explain seekers’ attraction. Constructed images are widely available, including tourist venues and literatures; movies and documentaries like Witness and Amish Out of Order; reference books; websites; and the recent proliferation of Amish-themed novels. These mediated depictions have two major tropes. First, Amish preserve values lost to mainstream society, values worth cultivating (Trollinger 2012; Walbert 2002). Second, Amish harbor contradictions and suppress individual freedom (Eitzen 2008). Of these two depictions, the first holds promise in tapping seeker attraction.

The idea of rural nostalgia is that people construct rurality to serve psycho-social purposes (Creed and Ching 1997), especially oneness with nature and community solidarity, especially referencing a past era. Such nostalgia is a core idea in theories of alienation, anomie, Gesellschaft vs. Gemeinschaft, and bureaucratization and modernization, suggesting its omnipresence across time and place, its hold on the human mind. Americans have included Amish themes among other anecdotes to modernization’s throbbing psyche (Cong 1994; Downing 2008; Deeben 1992). Interest in rustic, indigenous depictions of Indians, blacks, and Shakers in pre-modern settings suggest Americans’ longings are neither exclusively Amish-focused (Boyer 2008) nor isolated to
today, for while Amish are today depicted as quant Victorians (Biesecker 2008), the Victorians depicted them as quant colonialists (Deeben 1992). Amish-themed constructs are compelling not because they are accurate but because they address broader anxieties (Zimmerman Umble and Weaver-Zercher 2008).

Producers “domesticate” select Amish-themed elements to an ideological or consumer-demanded end (Weaver-Zercher 2001). Amish-themed tourism emerged at mid-century, a time of technological modernization, societal conflict, global war, and racial tension. Just prior, Amish were portrayed as a hold-out subculture that would disappear, people needing modernity’s liberation. The tourist industry blossomed as the message flipped: it was modern Americans needing liberation and the Amish, still frozen in time, provide momentary escape from unnatural built environments, identity fragmentation, and busyness (Buck 1979; Reschly and Jellison 2008; Luthy 1994; Weaver-Zercher 2001). Concentrated commercial centers provided consumable rural fragments, discouraging tourists from seeking out the plain people themselves (Buck 1978a; Fagence 2001; Meyers 2003; Mitchell 1998). Venues were aesthetically outmoded, confirming what tourists expect: the Amish are desynchronized from modern life (Brandt and Gallagher 1994). In one Ohioan tourist town, turn-of-the-century Victorian era architecture and interior design suggests a bygone era of neighborly visits, gender role clarity, manual labor with a tangible product, and a day’s work rewarded at the supper table. Amish waitresses and buggy traffic visually fits this imagined past (Trollinger 2012; Biesecker 2008). The Amish-made quilt trade exists congruently, providing visitors with cultural fragments they can take home, ameliorating tensions of
modern life by symbolically reconnecting them to rurality (Smucker 2006; Boynton 1986; Hawley 2005). The Amish, symbolic of America’s inherent goodness, provides hope for resolving modernity’s challenges.

Amish-themed depictions suggest consumers can experience resolutions without becoming Amish (Buck 1978b), as illustrated in three examples. First, evangelical Christian authors hold the traditional, agrarian religious community in high esteem, yet condemn the myriad of seemingly arbitrary rules and authoritarian punishment of enlightened members. Thus, while Amish share evangelical values, fundamental defects preclude their use as a solution to societal challenges (Cordell 2013). Second, mainstream Mennonites share some doctrinal tenets with Amish but not purportedly traditionalist practices. Thus, materials about their plain cousins read like the their religious position, offering themselves as the less restrictive alternative (Eitzen 2008; Weaver-Zercher 1999; Louden 1991). Third, naturalists may portray the Amish as in touch with the land, seasons, and each other, a worthy model to emulate, yet only something that can be appreciated, even proactively protected from external threats, but not joined. Their practices may nevertheless be extracted and secularized for mainstream use (Lapping 1997; Foster 1981; Weaver-Zercher 2008).

Despite safety valves that redirect anti-modernistic sentiments, some may pursue joining as a total solution. If so, the above literature suggests two basic seeker types. First are those seeking resolve to modern stresses through a distinctively rural culture; their view of Amish aligns with nostalgic depictions. Second, because evangelical and mainstream Mennonite depictions accent Amish religiosity alongside the rural idyll, the
totality of Amish religiosity may attract others, likely evangelical Christians, who are religious literalists and consume much of Amish-themed media (Trollinger 2012; Weaver-Zercher 2013).

Methods

Given the low number seriously interested in plain Anabaptism, this population had to be targeted. In 2005, I developed an information-based website about the second largest automobile using subgroup, the Beachy Amish-Mennonites. The Beachy Amish-Mennonites actively proselytize and are from the horse-and-buggy Amish. Within two years, daily hits stabilized around 140 unique visitors, with most traffic from search engines. The website included a conspicuous notice offering church locations for prospective attendees. This offer incentivized serious inquirers to participate, matching an offered good with the population sought. Seekers are unfamiliar with the subtle distinctions among plain Anabaptists, so I interpreted requests broadly. Using inquirers’ home address, I located nearby churches with a spatial database including approximately 2,300 churches (Anderson and Donnermeyer 2013).

From December 2005 to November 2011, inquirers were asked for name, address, and comments. Some commented little; others wrote about themselves and their interest. In November 2011, I reviewed open responses from 1,683 qualifying requests, thematically coding comments. From these codes, I developed a formal questionnaire. In exchange for church location information, inquirers provided (1) interest level (Likert scale), (2) home address, (3) most recent religious affiliation (open response), (4) up to six important information sources consulted (from a list of 18 and ‘other,’ see Table 6),
(5) up to six attractions to plain Anabaptism (from a list of 21 and ‘other,’ see Table 7), and (6) age range and gender. An open-ended text box was again provided.

Personal contact with an Amish/Mennonite person

Other websites (besides discussion boards)
[websites, informational and theological, about the plain Anabaptists]

Reference books (nonfiction)
[informational books exist about the plain Anabaptists, especially the Amish]

Television or movies
[notably, the movie Witness, and the many recent documentaries / reality TV shows about the Amish]

Seen them where I live

Novels (fiction)
[Amish-themed novels largely targeting evangelical women]

Visited a tourist area
[like Lancaster County, PA; Holmes County, OH; Shipshewana, IN; and St. Jacobs, ON]

Home school materials from Mennonite publishers
[plain Anabaptist publishing companies maintain curriculum for church schools]

News stories

Grew up around them

Web discussion board
[several forums exist that discuss plain Anabaptists]

Genealogy / ancestors
[those researching their ancestry may have come across Anabaptists]

Recommendation from family or friend

A cappella music recordings
[plain Anabaptists emphasize a cappella singing; some form choirs and make recordings]

Had once been a member or regular attendee
[some outsiders may have once been with a plain church but left and are reconsidering joining]

Beside the Still Waters (devotional booklet)
[published by an Amish-Mennonite church, and has a circulation of nearly 200,000 bimonthly copies]

Saw them witnessing in public
[some outreach-minded groups may sing hymns on a city street corner]

ONLY this website
[mutually exclusive of all other categories]

Table 6. Information Sources about Plain Anabaptists (Survey Items)
Modesty
[Plain Anabaptists limit sexuality in dress and manners.]

Plain style clothing
[Distinctive garb identifies group membership and meets religious objectives like modesty, simplicity, and humility (Enninger 1980; Scott 1997[1986]).]

Testimony of an Amish/ Mennonite acquaintance
[Attraction through interpersonal contact.]

Serious about following the Bible / serious Christians
[Inquirers may interpret the many plain Anabaptist practices as extensively living out the New Testament; the plain Anabaptists claim this goal too (Olshan 1988).]

Strong community
[Suggestive of a cohesive social system (Loomis 1960).]

Nonresistance
[Jesus’ commands to “turn the other cheek” and “resist not evil” apply to war, litigation, etc.]

Against fads
[The rejection of American clothing fashion, new gadgets, etc.]

Crafts (sewing, quilting, etc.)
[Plain Anabaptists practice quilting, sewing clothes, gardening, cooking, etc. (Hawley 2005).]

Emphasis on church schools or homeschooling
[Plain Anabaptists established church schools to avoid public schools (Waite and Crockett 1997; Dewalt 2001).]

A church with standards & expectations
[Attraction to the apparent demands plain Anabaptists make on members in living a strict life.]

Gender roles
[Plain Anabaptists accent gender differentiation in roles and responsibilities.]

Amish/Mennonite ancestors
[Inquirers may have an ancestor who left the plain Anabaptists and want to learn more.]

Good environment for my children
[Parents and the community shield children from external influences, socialize children, and maintain intergenerational stability (Smucker 1988).]

Limits on technology
[Notably, limits on use or ownership of automobiles, cell phones, Internet, etc. to maintain solidarity and stave external influence.]

Strong family life
[Plain Anabaptists stress family stability to preserve their society; hence, divorce is rare.]

Want an Amish/ Mennonite spouse
[Whatever values seekers see in Anabaptism they may view as attractive spousal attributes.]

God’s calling in my life
[This item captures a personal sense of religious calling.]

Need help getting my life on track
[Inquirers may be seeking stability within and assistance from the plain Anabaptists.]

Traditional culture & simple lifestyle
[This item is intentionally vague to capture a popular image of plain Anabaptist culture.]

Similarity to early Christianity
[Inquirers may see Anabaptists as the essence of an imagined, pure “early church.”]

Woman’s head covering
[1 Corinthians 11:1-16 in the New Testament speaks to women wearing a head covering.]

Table 7. Inquirer Interests in the Plain Anabaptists (Survey Items)
Interest level determined respondent inclusion. Those selecting (1) “Just curious, don't even know if I will attend” were excluded. Included as suggestive of serious interest, from cautious to confident, were (2) “I want to attend, but am not sure yet if I'm totally interested,” (3) “I am interested in attending and maybe joining someday if things work out,” (4) “I am pretty sure I want to join someday,” (5a) “I know that this is what I want for my life,” and (5b) “I already have experience with the plain people and am looking again or elsewhere.” Those selecting (6) “Other” were evaluated based on open-ended comments. Nearly all were eliminated, including students with class assignments and plain Anabaptists switching affiliation. From all categories of response, I omitted duplicate, suspicious, seemingly insincere, off-topic, and non-United States submissions. Ideally, data ought to consist of a random U.S. population sample, comparing those expressing interest to the rest, but given that the seekers are so few, an enormous sample is demanded. Thus, a limitation is that the sampling frame only contains people interested in plain Anabaptists. Nevertheless, comparisons to the general population are drawn from the U.S. Census.

Internet surveys have advantages, including lower attrition and increased internal validity (Farrell and Petersen 2010). Disadvantages include coverage and self-selection respondent biases (Frippiat and Marquis 2010). Users may have limited or no internet access; spatial stratification in access and proficiency exists internationally (Crenshaw and Robison 2006) and between rural and urban areas (Whitaacre 2008). International stratification is eliminated by excluding non-U.S. requests. Rural/urban stratification is reduced by designing a dial-up accessible website. Nonetheless, rural/urban bias is
monitored in results. Coverage may miss those ideologically opposed to the computer. Yet, given the internet’s wide availability through friends, family, and public terminals, access is compelling given the offered good: a church location. Six respondents noted without prompting that their internet access is severely limited, suggesting the incentive attracts non-internet users. A further coverage issue is ease of locating the survey. Because the bulk of web users are pursuing specific information (Frippiat and Marquis 2010) and the survey is on an informative website, high site traffic resulted, with an average of 167 unique visitors daily through the study period.

Self-selection is another internet survey challenge but is here addressed. Church location information incentivizes survey takers, linking the population solicited to a sought compensation. The incentive defines the population: those wanting to visit a plain Anabaptist church. Additionally, alternative means to locating a plain Anabaptist church are few. Several organizations offer a similar service. Their church databases are smaller and inquiry traffic is lower. A major plain Mennonite publishing company reported 194 total website and phone inquiries during the study period.26 This study logged 1,522 before cleaning. Another option is direct contact with plain Anabaptists; yet, their separatism (Anderson 2013b) minimizes ties beyond the superficial (e.g. business transactions). Those invited to church likely have a lower interest level compared to those actively pursuing location information, as here. Categorically specific self-selection biases may also exist. Internet users and survey-takers tend to favor progressive ideas, embrace greater diversity, and promote religious innovation (Royle and Shellhammer 2007; Robinson and Martin 2009). Yet, plain sympathizers actively use the web as a

26 Figure from personal correspondence.
networking and business resources (Weise 2006); inquirers need not be regular internet users either. Finally, internet response is negatively correlated with age, a bias monitored in results. Overall, given the present survey’s ease of access, compensation that defines the sample, and comparatively high respondent total, sampling bias is reduced, thereby being a more reliable representation of the general seeker population.

For spatial variables, I matched inquirer addresses using Microsoft Streets and Trips. Unmatched addresses were located in the zip code centroid. GPS coordinates for addresses were generated and imported into ArcMap 10.x. Inquirers were matched by U.S. region. Regional concentrations were standardized against the 2010 U.S. Census population. Mean population centers for inquirers and the U.S. population were generated. Urban location was determined by overlaying seeker locations and built urban environments.

Open responses to religious background were categorized into two schemes: religious traditions, such as Baptist, Pentecostal, Lutheran, and non-denominational, and RELTRAD (Woodberry et al. 2012; Steensland et al. 2000). RELTRAD classifies denominations as evangelical, mainline, Catholic, and other affiliation (conservative or liberal).27 When inquirers did not provide an affiliation, I searched the open response box for definitively evangelical language like “born again” (Dougherty, Johnson, and Polson 2007). Residual categories included “Christian- unspecified” and “other / none / unspecified.”

27 Black Protestant is excluded as a major category, as only one denomination matched this grouping and the survey did not probe ethnicity. Due to small size, Jewish, Orthodox, and non-Christian religions were conflated as “other / none / unspecified.”
Factor analyses were calculated for the information sources and attractions. “Only this website” as an information source and “other” for both was omitted. Factors with the highest eigenvalues were used. Further, I used the information and attraction factors as independent variables in a series of regression equations, with age, gender, religion, and geographic regions serving as dependent variables, one by one.

Results

Data collected from November 2011 to November 2013 yielded 1,522 total submissions, of which 1,074 responses qualified for inclusion. Interest level tallies were (2) 247, (3) 441, (4) 119, (5a) 160, and (5b) 106, a non-linear trend. The high moderate interest is sensible, given the many unknowns accompanying a first, serious visit.

Gender and age distributions for the U.S. population and this study’s sample are significantly different. Females (Figure 3) and the young (Figure 4) are overrepresented, with younger inquirers overrepresented from 25 to 54 and underrepresented from 55 and up. In comparing seeker genders across six age ranges, females outnumber males except among the oldest. Given the bias of internet users towards the young, the age results must be interpreted with caution.

Seekers’ locations favor rural regions. Urban/suburban seekers include only 40% of respondents, under representing the U.S. urban population at over 80% (Mullin and O'Brien 2011). Rural bias in internet use is not a major factor. As well, the most conservative, traditionalist U.S. regions have the highest proportion of inquirers-the
Differences significant at the p<.001 level (Chi Square test)

Figure 3. United States and Inquirers/Seekers by Gender

Differences significant at the p<.05 level (Chi Square test)

Figure 4. United States and Inquirers by Age
Midwest and South (Figure 5). Comparing inquirers and the general population in the contiguous states, the mean geographic population centers favor an eastern concentration for inquirers (Figure 6). The mean U.S. population center is 180 miles closer to the west coast, where religious commitment is low (Stump 1984).

Figure 7 aggregates inquirers’ religious backgrounds by tradition. Baptists dwarfed all other religious traditions in sheer quantity; included were 18 Baptist subgroups. A second tier of inquirer religious backgrounds include non-denominational churches, Catholics, and unspecified “Christian.” Those labeling themselves as “just Christian” or an equivalent captures a growing trend (Smith and Seokho 2005). When comparing religious percentages of the present sample to the U.S. population, non-affiliated Christians, Baptists, Pentecostals, Holiness, and Church of Christ are overrepresented among inquirers while Catholics and non-Christian groups are underrepresented (Table 8). When employing RELTRAD categories, evangelicals exceed mainline and Catholic inquirers by five to six times (Figure 8). Christians-unspecified nearly equaled mainline Christian and Catholic, though the category’s vagueness precludes further analysis. Other Christian-conservative and other Christian-liberal constitute small shares. The “other / none / unspecified” category was one-tenth the size of evangelicals; 22 identified with a non-Christian religion.

How seekers gathered information may shape their expectations. Figure 9 lists the percent who consulted a given information source. 8.8% selected “other,” suggesting options matched inquirers’ answers. Around 45% selected personal contact. Over 30%
Figure 5. Map of Inquirer Population by Region, Standardized against U.S. Population

West includes Alaska and Hawaii. Colors from highest (red) to lowest (dark green)

Figure 6. Mean Population Centers for the Continental U.S.: U.S. Population and Inquirers
Figure 7. Total Number of Inquirers from a Given Religious Traditions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>INQ US (*1,000)</th>
<th>INQ %</th>
<th>US %</th>
<th>DIFFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>36,148</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>57,199</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-affiliated</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>32,207</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7,337</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11,366</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8,674</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvinist*</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5,665</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Christ</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1,921</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiness</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mormon</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3,158</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2,405</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42,965</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Remainder)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>18,785</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (no &quot;plain Anabaptist&quot;)</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>228,182</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi Square test: †p<0.1   ***p<0.001
*Includes Presbyterian, Reformed, and Congregationalist

Table 8. Proportions of Inquirers' Religion to U.S. Population (2008 estimates)

Figure 8. Total Number of Inquirers within a Given RELTRAD Classification
Figure 9. Percent of Inquirers Who Selected a Given Information Source about Plain Anabaptists
selected other websites and nonfiction reference books. Never did more than 10\% select the three most deliberate informational efforts plain Anabaptists conduct: choral music recordings, a widely circulating bi-monthly devotional booklet, and intentional public outreach.

From the information sources I conducted a factor analysis using principal components extraction and varimax rotation. Two factors had high eigenvalues, suggesting two basic types of information sources, that emanating directly from plain Anabaptists (e.g. homeschooling materials, personal contact, and plain publications) and that mediated through a third party (e.g. websites, books, and tourism) (Table 9). In a linear regression analysis (Table 10), mediated information predicts younger age, female, Baptist, New England, and Mountain states. The direct information factor predicts older age and female. Because the effect of evangelical is of particular interest but was not significantly predicted by either factor, all sources of information were included in a binary logistic regression analysis with evangelical as the dependent variable. Variables positively predicting evangelical include novels and home school materials (p<0.05); variables negatively predicting evangelical include web discussion boards and had once been a member (p<0.05).

Of attractions (Figure 10), three were selected by around two-thirds of respondents, serious about Christianity, strong community, and modesty; two were selected by around half, family life and traditional lifestyle. Using factor analysis on attractions, six factors had high eigenvalues (Table 11). Each factor can be thought of as a seeker type, with respondents being more or less each of the six. Factors are
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Source</th>
<th>Mediated</th>
<th>Direct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference books</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>.547</td>
<td>-.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV / movies</td>
<td>.538</td>
<td>-.252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novels</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>.427</td>
<td>-.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once had attended</td>
<td>-.403</td>
<td>.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grew up around them</td>
<td>-.377</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion board</td>
<td>.370</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>.301</td>
<td>-.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genealogy</td>
<td>-.201</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>-.126</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen local</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>-.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Beside the Still Waters</em></td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music recordings</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home school materials</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal contact</td>
<td>-.383</td>
<td>.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnessing in public</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>-.021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Table 9. Factor Analysis of Inquirers’ Information Sources
### Table 10

Linear and Binary Logistic Regression Equations, Six Attraction Factors Predicting Dependent Variables of Demographic, Religious, Geographical, and Information Source Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Linear</th>
<th>Binary</th>
<th>Mediated info factor</th>
<th>Direct info factor</th>
<th>IV. Set 1</th>
<th>Family control</th>
<th>Femininity</th>
<th>Personal conviction</th>
<th>Primitivism</th>
<th>Stability</th>
<th>Returness</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Adj. $R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age L</td>
<td>-0.110**</td>
<td>0.142***</td>
<td>-0.158***</td>
<td>-0.212***</td>
<td>-0.074†</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
<td>-0.202***</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female B</td>
<td>0.322***</td>
<td>0.248***</td>
<td>0.322***</td>
<td>0.339***</td>
<td>-0.181**</td>
<td>-0.046</td>
<td>-0.060</td>
<td>-0.130*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical B</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>0.163</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.146*</td>
<td>0.226***</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>-0.169**</td>
<td>-0.127*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist B</td>
<td>0.152*</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.188*</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.182*</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>-0.136†</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England B</td>
<td>0.372*</td>
<td>-0.247</td>
<td>-0.230</td>
<td>-0.296</td>
<td>-0.141</td>
<td>0.487**</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>-0.134</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic B</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>-0.052</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>-0.123</td>
<td>-0.124</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South B</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>-0.024</td>
<td>0.170**</td>
<td>-0.040</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest B</td>
<td>-0.248***</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>-0.088</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-0.167*</td>
<td>-0.100</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountains B</td>
<td>0.224†</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.299**</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td>-0.077</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West B</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>-0.045</td>
<td>-0.283*</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediated info factor L</td>
<td>-0.012</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>-0.063*</td>
<td>0.080**</td>
<td>0.088**</td>
<td>0.238***</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct info factor L</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.116***</td>
<td>0.050*</td>
<td>0.147***</td>
<td>0.105***</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$p<.10$ †  $p<.05$ *  $p<.01$ **  $p<.001$ ***

For mediated and direct information regression equation on age, $R^2=0.017$, Adjusted $R^2=0.015$
Figure 10. Percent of Inquirers Who Selected a Given Attraction to the Plain Anabaptists
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Family control</th>
<th>Femininity</th>
<th>Personal conviction</th>
<th>Primitivism</th>
<th>Stability</th>
<th>Returnees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good env. for children</td>
<td>0.677</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life</td>
<td>0.604</td>
<td>-0.176</td>
<td>-0.167</td>
<td>-0.156</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>-0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/home schooling</td>
<td>0.581</td>
<td>0.235</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td>-0.073</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesty</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td>0.599</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>-0.024</td>
<td>-0.085</td>
<td>-0.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head covering</td>
<td>-0.074</td>
<td>0.572</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
<td>0.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender roles</td>
<td>0.176</td>
<td>0.459</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.178</td>
<td>0.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain clothing</td>
<td>-0.273</td>
<td>0.398</td>
<td>-0.183</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.173</td>
<td>0.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious about Christianity</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.555</td>
<td>-0.072</td>
<td>-0.234</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards / expectations</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>-0.046</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Christianity</td>
<td>-0.211</td>
<td>-0.244</td>
<td>0.443</td>
<td>0.356</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong community</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td>-0.113</td>
<td>-0.409</td>
<td>-0.033</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against fads</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.608</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology limits</td>
<td>-0.022</td>
<td>0.112</td>
<td>-0.243</td>
<td>0.502</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts / sewing</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>-0.038</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td>0.421</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>-0.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonresistance</td>
<td>-0.275</td>
<td>-0.136</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td>-0.208</td>
<td>0.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need help</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>-0.173</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>0.725</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want a spouse</td>
<td>-0.103</td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.043</td>
<td>0.656</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancestors</td>
<td>-0.046</td>
<td>-0.056</td>
<td>-0.259</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
<td>0.576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testimony of acquaintance</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>-0.087</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>0.205</td>
<td>-0.049</td>
<td>0.518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God’s calling</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>-0.128</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional / simple life</td>
<td>-0.031</td>
<td>-0.261</td>
<td>-0.335</td>
<td>0.261</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>-0.338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Table 11. Factor Analysis of Inquirers’ Information Sources
characteristically labeled. “Family control” seekers see plain Anabaptists as valuing the family’s role in community interaction and offspring socialization. “Femininity” seekers value plain, gender-distinctive dress and roles. “Personal conviction” seekers want a high moral standard. It is “personal” in de-emphasizing any particular community practice and strong community itself. “Primitivism” seekers want technology limits, home and community production, and slow change. “Stability” seekers are largely defined by “need help getting my life on track,” which is realized primarily through marriage prospects. Finally, “returnees” seekers have plain Anabaptist relations, perhaps as a child or descendent of a defector, and feel called back.

Comment boxes offer additional insight not heretofore captured. The open comments from the 25 highest inquirer scores on each factor were thematically coded. Given that themes arise only from voluntary disclosure, incidents are likely underrepresented. These findings, along with regression analyses (Table 10), further characterize each factor.

*Family Control:* Four were single mothers and five involve children in a homesteading-type structure, as in homeschooling and/or a family farm. In regression equations, “family control” predicts lower age, female, Baptist, and the South.

*Femininity:* Eleven mentioned dissatisfaction with a recent church (which were already somewhat conservative) and eleven mentioned presently living out distinctive, modest dress (six were counted in both categories). Six were single girls in their teen years. In regression equations, “femininity” predicts lower age, female, and evangelical.
**Personal Conviction:** Eight referred to an abstract but intense awareness of personal religiosity, using key Christian phrases like “follow God,” “His servant,” “peace within,” or “my heart and convictions,” while six described some personal life difficulty like an ailment, psychological disorder, or abusive relationship. In regression equations, “personal conviction” predicts male, evangelical, Baptist, and direct information sources.

**Primitivism:** Eight specifically referenced the Amish. Nine identify a dualism between modern society and plain communities, the former being “fast paced,” having “distractions,” and being a “tether,” and the latter providing closeness to God, moral living, neighborly love, and cooperation. Two mentioned both. In regression equations, “primitivism” predicts New England and the Mountains (and negatively predicts the Midwest) and mediated information sources.

**Stability:** Five themes emerge in combinations among 19 of the 25 (the sheer number with substantial comments was unusual). Eleven mentioned relationship gaps, four explicitly discussing a failed relationship that bore children. Nine wrote with emotion-laden vocabulary: “sincerely,” “pulled on my heart,” “forever thankful,” “opened arms,” “broke down and … cried,” and several times “help.” Seven speak of a simple / old fashioned life, often in conjunction with religious commitment and in contrast to modern society. Four ask some specific question about visiting, for fear of offending (as with tattoos or broken family situations). In regression equations, “stability” predicts lower age and mediated information sources.

**Returnees:** Responses very. Two small themes exist: six mentioned having been in a plain Anabaptist church as a child and four mentioned Anabaptist ancestry. In
regression equations, “returnees” positively predicts male and direct information sources, and negatively predicts evangelical and Baptist.

Discussion

This study investigates characteristics of people interested in plain Anabaptism. Research about popular Amish perceptions suggest attractions are, one, a response to modern stresses, as the plain Anabaptists represent an intimate and fulfilling old style community, and two, an ultra-conservative Christian expression. Indeed, as attractions, “…serious Christians,” “strong community,” and “modesty” were each selected by around two thirds of inquirers. These three variables may further reflect inquirers’ desire for a moral order supported by a highly integrated social structure (Vaisey 2007) with distinctive practices. Factor analysis and regression results describe six major seeker types, expanding and nuancing the two attractions types, as discussed below, demonstrating complex ways seekers “domesticate” the plain people (Weaver-Zercher 2001).

Of note is the overrepresentation of the young. After all, what group better serves as an antithesis to contemporary youth culture than the plain Anabaptists? Should not a fast changing society push more elderly to join than young? While an internet survey may contribute to this result, the finding is strong and the result has face validity when unpacked. Young Americans lie in the crosshairs of popular culture and are facing the brunt of any backlash. They must respond to potentially stressful motifs of fashion, sex appeal, and public school peer cultures (Smith 2011), while elderly have greater security through lifelong accrued status in a given network. The “feminity” factor strongly
predicts lower age. “Femininity,” with a negative loading on “traditional culture / simple lifestyle” and positive loadings on plain, modest, gender-specific clothing and church / home schooling, suggests rejection of contemporary youth culture not based in nostalgia. Young women, living in a society of unprecedented status for those very two words, represent the largest demographic of inquirers, which at first seems counterintuitive given plain Anabaptist’s apparent patriarchy. Several female inquirers reached into the lower teens; one wrote:

…I have always wanted to become Amish and become apart of the Amish community since i was very young. I am a modest young lady I can cook and have many Amish cookbooks and hoping to soon have an Amish wardrobe […] I am a christian i don't like the way the [mainstream] teenagers live i have always treasured the simple life…

A woman in her upper teens, also scoring high on “femininity,” wrote:

… I have been interested in the Amish/Amish Mennonite for a long time, off and on. For the past 3/4 of a year or so I have been searching for a church that has beliefs that are based on the Bible and that I can agree with. I began thinking of the Amish again when I was considering starting to headcover all the time (as opposed to just in church). … right now I'm in a fairly good college […], and this would be a drastic change in my life. But I am trying to follow God's will and His Word, and I am open to changing my life if that is what God is calling me to do...

Yet another wrote:

I was not raised Christian, and since I converted at age 14, I have had such trouble finding a church that followed the basic beliefs I had. As I have grown and matured, I have realized what I want from a church. I want modesty and head covering to be mandatory. I want the LORD to be the one and only focus of the church, and of my life. I am looking forward to finding a church that truly puts God as number one, and expects its members to not be slaves to technology, or fashion.
Not uncommon was it for young ladies to note parental disapproval, so they are not necessarily responding to socialization. While, again, the absolute numbers of young female seekers is a speck of all young American women, and while young evangelicals increasingly tend towards liberalization (Farrell 2011) or continuity (Smith and Johnson 2010), this conservative trend merits greater attention, as it may be evident in other expressions.

Female characterized the two strongest factors, “family control” and “femininity,” as did conservative religions and regions (the South). Among conservative Protestant women, acceptance of traditional gender roles is associated with theological conservatism (Bartkowski and Hempel 2009), and, further, women more than men embrace Biblical literalism in gender differentiated religions than in mainline groups (Hoffmann and Bartkowski 2008). Women, more often than men, expressed attraction to gendered concepts like stable family life and the woman’s head covering. Both are also characteristics less common among Protestants, who, according to the most recent Barna Group survey, have a 26% to 34% divorce rate, far above the plain Anabaptist rate (nearly 0%). Some “family control” seekers were in broken families; others maintained highly integrated families. Both seek plain Anabaptists’ protection of familial functions, which have declined in the United States (Bumpass 1990; Ogburn and Nimkoff 1955).

A possible explanation of females’ attraction in both family situations is plain Anabaptists’ ideological foundation that supports women’s indispensible contribution to group survival and systemic stability. Women’s contributions are valued not through competing in a gender-level domain, achieved status, but through stable, consistent
ascribed statuses (Enninger 1980), realized especially through marital partnerships in
farm labor, home production (Ericksen and Klein 1981; Wright 1977), home businesses
(Hawley 1995; Huntington 1994), reproduction, and socialization of children into the
religious community (Anderson 2013a; Huntington 1981[1976]), as well as other
satisfying moral and social contributions (Olshan and Schmidt 1994). Indeed, women
defend their gender-proscribed role (Hurst and McConnell 2010; Graybill 1998), as they
exercise considerable influence: “…the public stance of the Amish family is one of
wifely submission and obedience; in private and in practice, the family functions
relatively democratically with important decisions … generally being made jointly …
and minor decisions allocated” (Huntington 1994, 116). Women’s crafts (sewing and
quilting) provide socially-based resolution to tensions experienced across life stages
(Cheek and Piercy 2008). Overall, women’s roles are distinct and rewarding, attracting
seekers for whom contemporary sexualization and gender equality do not provide
resolutions. The “feminity” factor includes elements of both nostalgia and strict
Christianity, though is not entirely either.

The “stability” and “primitivist” factors predicted mediated information sources.
In the most common mediated portrayals, Amish are romanticized as an American ideal,
a timeless utopian society, an unattainable ideal reminiscent of the nineteenth century,
when small agrarian communities supported stable family relations, and religious/social
customs provided the nation’s citizens with security and belonging (Cong 1994; Walbert
2002; Boyer 2008), in contrast to the present, so filled with political and social anxieties
(Trollinger 2012).
“Stability” seekers observe the close community. While comments from the 25 highest scoring inquirers indicate some religious interest and a dualism between Anabaptists and the mainstream, at the forefront are personal difficulties and a search for a nurturing group. Therein finding a loyal, supportive spouse is one possible means to personal stability. Though “want a spouse” and “crafts” each attracted less than 10% of inquirers, and less than 15% selected “need help getting my life on track,” the three all had high “stability” factor loadings. Characteristic “stability” inquirers may have little to lose socially against potential gains from a drastic life change (Iannaccone 1994).

“Primitivist” seekers observe plain Anabaptists’ self-sufficiency (e.g. home production like crafts and sewing) and resistance to cultural and technological change. They seek alternative lifestyles that address modernistic complexities. If modern society is fast, distracting, and overwhelming, Anabaptist society is slow, focused, and digestible, suggesting dependence on mediated depictions. The frequency with which highest scoring “primitivism” seekers mentioned “Amish” makes explicit the connection between primitivist seekers and popular images. They are interested in an “Old Order” Christianity, whose character is contained in specific lifestyle practices, not just an abstract “seriousness about Christianity” or a “church with standards.” Hence, their religious attraction is only as good as the religious practices. Primitivists inquirers also predicted direct information, though only at near significance (p<.10); direct contact may affirm what “primitivist” seekers observe in mediated depictions.

“Stability” and “primitivist” seekers may be consequences of what Berger, Berger, and Kellner (1973) refer to as demodernization, a reaction and rebellion to
modernization’s identity fragmentation, anonymity, decontextualization, abstraction, technological change, and bureaucratization. Whereas human diversity in dense areas generates fragmented networks characterized by personal interests (Wellman 1979; Fischer 1982), seekers here pursue a consolidated, overlapping, isolated network, a community providing order and premised on a uniting societal vision. These seekers want to restore authority to localized entities (Nisbet 2010 [1953]) through stunting social change and technology that undermines this solidarity, thereby creating greater community reliance and privileging group wisdom. The New England and Mountain regions, which ‘primitivist” predicts, fits regional visions of demodernization through responses like organic farming, alternative energy, and self-sufficiency, themes matching Amish portrayals (Hurst and McConnell 2010).

The “personal conviction” and “returnees” factors significantly predicted direct sources of information. This is not surprising for the latter, who are returning to that with which they have prior connection. While popular media may domesticate the plain Anabaptists (Weaver-Zercher 2001), plain Anabaptists may “domesticate” themselves, portraying an image to outsiders, whether through their own media or through religious decisions about clothing and other markers of identity that code messages about community values and structure (Enninger 1980; Hamilton and Hawley 1999; Scott 1997[1986]). Plain Anabaptists prioritize religious concerns when they consider the foundation of their community and do not speak self-consciously of their “traditions” or how society is structured to protect their beliefs (Olshan 1988; Rumsey 2010). “Personal conviction” seekers, a factor predicting direct information, likewise emphasizes moral /
religious order: seriousness about Christianity, standards and expectations, and similarity to early Christianity (an imagined earlier pure state), and predicts evangelical background. Less interest is evident in community symbols and structures supporting the moral order. With a strong Biblical emphasis, evangelicals are liable to interpret Anabaptists’ pervasive and mandatory symbols systems (Enninger 1980) as extra-Biblical.

Thus, to “personal conviction” seekers, plain Anabaptists may appear as religious fundamentalists. Fundamentalism theories state that religion grows as a response to secularization and modernization. Plain Anabaptists match most criteria as a “fundamentalist religion” in their selectivity of traditional and modern elements, dualistic worldview, view of the Bible as inspired and to be literally interpreted, view of members as set apart from society, distinctive boundaries, and behavioral demands on members (Emerson and Hartman 2006; Almond, Appleby, and Sivan 2003). Yet, contrary to the core tenet of fundamentalism, plain Anabaptists are not a religious defense against secularization. Rather, they maintain an internally-focused, ethno-religious social system stressing intergenerational maintenance as theologically mandatory. They believe they must keep this pure, redemptive community to direct offspring towards God (Cronk 1981). This redemptive community is preserved by rejecting “the world,” the world being anything beyond their group (Enninger 1988). Fundamentalists engage secular society and explicitly challenge it; plain Anabaptists have no hope of changing “the world” (Geiger 1986).

28 However, they do not fit authoritarian and charismatic leadership. Leaders are selected by lot to serve the local congregation, and the ministry is plural. Plain Anabaptists de-emphasize charismatic leadership and hierarchical authority.
Yet, plain Anabaptists’ strikingly conservative lifestyle may be misinterpreted as a fundamentalist Christian critique of society. Evangelicals’ militancy and religious politicism-notable among the Christian Right (Moen 1994)-is evident in nonresistance’s negative loading, a core Anabaptist belief, and negative loadings on strong community, technology limits, and traditional lifestyle, all detailed structural and cultural mechanisms supporting community stability. Perhaps “personal conviction” seekers see religious devotion in plain Anabaptists’ many practices but fail to interpret them as structural and cultural stabilizers. For example, while fundamentalists may conceptually appreciate modesty and gender distinction in dress, they may not appreciate many minute dress standards (e.g. covering styles, sleeve lengths, acceptable material styles, etc.). The myriad of seemingly arbitrary practices may strike “personal conviction” seekers as works-posing-as-religion, supplanting necessary personal convictions with rules, as happened in one now disbanded seeker-friendly, experimental Anabaptist community (Pride 2003).

If affiliations with the most inquirers are neighbors to plain Anabaptists, then the plain Anabaptists have two very different neighbors: Baptists/Pentecostals (conservative evangelicals) and Catholics. Proportionately, the Catholics are underrepresented, though not in absolute numbers. A certain type of Catholic is likely represented here. A separate binary logistic regression equation for geographic regions on Catholic identified only the Mid-Atlantic as predicting Catholic. Controls for Hispanic ethnicity and social liberalism may yield a nuanced Catholic. Baptists and Pentecostals would share Anabaptists’ bent toward gender roles, separation from public schooling, and conservative lifestyle. Their
outlook on charisma and intense personal religious experiences would differ. Notable is the minimal interest from conservative-other religions, including Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses, or other strict religions like Muslims, suggesting conservatism itself is not enough to attract other religions that have different ideological foundations.

This study’s six seeker types suggest a nuanced and expanded reading of the two potential attractions (nostalgia and religion) for seekers. Personal conviction and returnee seekers may bypass mediated information sources, primitivist seekers pursue intimate religious community and represent mixes of mediated and direct information, stability seekers represent both religious and nostalgic interest, femininity seekers turn to plain Anabaptists not finding fulfillment in gender equality, and family control seekers want the family unit to maintain high functionality. The forces each respond to are complex, but it is suggested they arise from various stresses and personal losses arising from secularization and modernization. Further, while some seekers clearly match one factor, many are combinations of factors. Nevertheless, this study provides insight into the lives of people seeking a dramatic alternative to the mainstream in a conservative Christian expression.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the multifaceted nature of inquirers to plain Anabaptism beyond the mediated depictions of a frozen-in-time Gemeinschaft society and overly strict religious group. This study is foundational for several further directions. Foremost, to what extent do these outsiders end up joining and staying in plain Anabaptist churches? What kind of person is likely to fit in and what kind leaves? The cultural gulf in joining a plain Anabaptist church from another background is often
extensive and unanticipated. Another direction is comparing findings here to seekers of 
other separatist religious groups. Saying nothing of plain Anabaptists, a *USA Today*
article described a small, growing movement of western Christian women pursuing 
traditional femininity and Christian head coverings (Weise 2006). A greater trend 
towards a traditionalist Christianity, distinctive from the larger Christian Right, may exist 
and persist in a contemporary society that, at face value, should produce anything but.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

Three studies have used the Beachy Amish-Mennonite case to offer insight and direction into sociological theory, suggesting their utility in honing, refining, expanding, and critiquing a range of other theories. The chapters addressed separatist group vitality, the ability of the group to direct member behavior, retain members in the face of social change, and attract new members. Broadly, all three studies address the persistence of an ethno-religious society in an ever increasingly pervious, pervasive host society.

In chapter two, the Beachy Amish-Mennonite case demonstrated a previously under theorized type of migration, that which is religiously motivated, or more broadly, value rational motivation, and coordinated not on the household or individual but community level. This critiques the overemphasis on means-end rational migration coordinated at the household level, opening a broader range of mechanisms behind migration.

The study opens up not only directions in researching religiously motivated migration, but brings to bear three major variables that, in different combinations, could describe other types of migration: means-end rational vs. value rational; the primary unit of analysis in which individuals are embedded, micro, meso, and macro; and economic vs. non-economic migration (Figure 11). Most studied migration is a combination of means-end rational behavior that is economically motivated and occurring primarily at the micro level (individual and household) (Massey 1990a; Radu 2008; Sjaastad 1962).
This same scheme can transform into a meso-level system when origin and destination communities become interlocked through repeated, almost habitual, migration. Known as “cumulative causation,” this migration system contextualizes actors as means-end rational and economically motivated, but embedded within meso-level systems (networks) that direct behavior (Massey 1990b; Sanderson and Kentor 2009). Going across the graph, actors embedded in macro level systems (states) migrating as an act of non-economically motivated value rational behavior include, on the one hand, military forces loyal to a given state, or on the other hand, individuals seeking escape from alienating systems. Taking a step up non-economically motivated, macro-level migration changes from patriotic migration to forced migration when it is characterized by means-end rationality instead of value rationality. Those “forced” to migrate from war displacement, human slavery, or deportation do have a choice, but the costs in staying are so high that it makes rational sense to migrate (Kunz 1973; Moore and Shellman 2004; Ruben, Houte and Davids 2009). Cultural migrants seek an environment in which they are psychologically comfortable and can succeed, and is thus means-end rational, but not necessarily economic, yet embedded in the meso level of cultural groups (Hedberg and Kepsu 2003; Kontuly, Smith and Heaton 1995). This whole theoretical draft framework arises in the first place because of cracking the walls built by means-end rational, economically motivated in the case of religiously motivated migration, which also highlights that embeddedness shapes the character of migration.
In chapter three, the Beachy Amish-Mennonite case demonstrated that ethnic group assimilation is contested within the ethnic group. Neither classic (Gordon 1964) nor new assimilation theory (Alba and Nee 2003) assumed assimilation was inevitable, but neither predicted the tension found in ethnic groups remaining unassimilated across three centuries. Because plain Anabaptists like the Beachy Amish-Mennonites are not
physically separated from “the world,” contact with “the world” is a constant struggle. As Olshan (1988) concludes from a study of an Old Order Amish publication, *Family Life*, while each decides at one point to become part of the group, membership must be reaffirmed every day. To stop struggling or to waver is to stop being Amish.

What evolves then, and is demonstrated in the *Family Life* letters as well as in face to face dealings with ‘worldly’ people, is a communal confidence that falls just short of self-righteousness. This communal certainty is often balanced, however, by individual self-doubt regarding one's own ability to live up to Amish standards” (156).

This struggle is hardly one-sided. As Nolt and Meyers (2007) theorize, Amish share a common identity not because they are homogenous, but because they have a “shared sense of what is worth arguing about” (182). And certainly the Amish have argued, over new technology (Beachy 1955; Cong 1992), Protestant innovations (Hostetler 1992), spiritual renewal (Cronk 1981; Kline and Beachy 1998; Petrovich 2013), and sources of community authority (Reschly 2000). Even after the Beachy Amish-Mennonites withdrew from the Old Order Amish, a century of change lay ahead of them, so that 100 years after the establishment of Weavertown Amish-Mennonite in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (the earliest congregation in this movement), the Amish-Mennonites consisted of six affiliations, one loosely organized network, and a handful of unaffiliated churches that did not fit into any of these groups; within the main “Beachy” denomination itself, several sub-networks are discernable (Anderson 2011). Individuals and subgroups within plain Anabaptist denominations see advantages in assimilating or not assimilating to certain degrees, but the tension is not just pitting assimilationists against separatists, but includes a powerful mediating group, who, deriving power and
recognition from each, stand to gain the most from keeping the polarized ends in a single
group and stand to lose the most when separation comes, having to pick between them,
and then being on the fringe of either. Assuming the mainstream exerts some sort of
pressure on separatist groups, this study advances theory by characterizing the nature of
in-group conflict over assimilation.

Chapter three discussed assimilation, that is, members of a subgroup losing their
distinctive identity and social structure to the host culture. Chapter four discusses an
inverse phenomenon, an inverse assimilation it could be called. Here, members of
mainstream society seek to join a distinctive subculture. This would have been odd,
indeed, for outsiders to join past or present unassimilated groups, such as eastern
Europeans, Orthodox Jews, African slaves, or contemporary Cubans. But its oddity is
based on the unbreachable barrier of ethnic boundaries, unbreachable because ethnicity is
a supposed birthright and in itself holds no particular sway in attracting other groups,
short of an occasional cross-marriage. The plain Anabaptists, while classifiable as an
ethnic group of Germanic extraction (Schreiber 1962), are also a religious group and a
social system distinct from society, even distinct from their ethnicity. While Catholicism
for the Pole, Buddhism for the Thai, and Islam for the Saudi may be inseparably fused,
even synonymous, plain Anabaptist ethnicity exists only because of distinctive religious
beliefs, which persist only because of a distinctive social structure (Anderson 2013).
Plain Anabaptists understand their religion as the core of who they are, the reason they
are together (Enninger 1988; Olshan 1988), and thus, view ethnicity as existing
separately from religion. Nevertheless, their ethnicity is still stressed. In addition, their
ethnicity is nearly invisible to outsiders, who interpret them as a white American group that maintains a peaceful utopian community, a model minority (Cong 1994); members, on the other hand, are well aware of their ethnicity, keeping meticulous records of genealogies and almost daily activating extended kinship ties (Hewner 2001).

The appeal of plain Anabaptists to outsiders signify a new age of subgroups, which in resisting mainstream assimilation represent ideological pockets, perhaps not so much out of opposition to mainstream society, as if a conservative or fundamentalist group (Blee and Creasap 2010; Emerson et al. 2006; Gross, Medvetz and Russell 2011), but a subsociety where the media, occupations, symbols, and religious beliefs purport a different normative, a world where the defining agendas of people’s passions are set less by the ever-more penetrating mediated frames of politicians, entertainers, sports heroes, academians, and interest groups (Inglehart and Baker 2000).

Is classic assimilation theory dead? From the 1890s through the 1950s, America digested one of its largest waves of immigrants. At that time, mobility limited people’s associations so that spatially-based ethnicity persisted. With the rise of rapid communication and travel, ethnicity means less and less as a binding force. Instead, those subgroups that persist do so as they cement their ideologies in unpermeable social structures and cultures (Vaisey 2007). What binds a subgroup together is less about genetic lineage and arbitrary cultural customs that develop in immobile societies and more about common outlooks, values, and ideals. With the latter configuration, individuals have options, can choose to join a group, since changing one’s mind is easier than changing one’s place in genealogy. In support of such change, the strict, distinctive
religions in America are the fastest growing, those sects that maintain tension with the mainstream while pursuing a constellation of seemingly off topic objectives. This is not to say that ethnic and racial differences have ceased, but that regionally specific cultural practices may decline while religious devotion and the practices and structures attached to it remain intact, if not more strongly emphasized, as with second generation Islamic immigrants (Voas and Fleischmann 2012).

In conclusion, the three studies in this dissertation show that a distinctive American subculture can persist and even grow today. Not only do they have the ability to amass resources to transfer and recreate new community structures elsewhere, but they can maintain continuity across generations while also filling a demanded niche in America’s religious/cultural milieu, attracting prospective converts from other backgrounds. If utilized by sociologists, the plain Anabaptist case may further inform theories and debates on secularization, modernization, fundamentalism, assimilation, group boundaries, and the interaction between social structure and culture.
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