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TITLE: Constructing and Reproducing Gender in a Changing Context: The Case of the Amish

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ABSTRACT OF PAPER

Using data from field observations, document analysis, and interviews with Amish women, parents, and teachers in Holmes County, Ohio, our paper focuses on continuity and change in gender relations among the Ohio Amish within the institutional contexts of religion, school and family. Gender relations are affected by broader economic and demographic pressures that impinge upon the Amish. Our paper maps out not only the areas in which there continue to be congruence in gender relations between institutions, but also areas of emerging disjuncture and points of tension. Of necessity, we examine the religious belief system as an overarching influence on the structure, roles, and relationships within the Amish family and educational system, especially as they bear on gender relations. Interconnections between family socialization and educational practices, between religious beliefs and educational contents, and between religious values and familial role relationships are examined. In doing all this, we analyze differences that appear to exist among different segments within the larger Amish community. As a practical consequence of the research, we evaluate how the integration of the learning process across institutional spheres among the Amish might suggest lessons for such integration in the non-Amish, English community.