

THE AMISH COMMUNITY AND ITS ENTREPRENEURS

Treball de Recerca:

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INTRODUCTION

My research project is about the Amish community and their entrepreneurs. The Amish are a group of communities distributed around the United States of America and some parts of Canada. They live in a primitive way, without technology and isolated from the rest of the world, and their lives are moved by religion.

I did not know anything about the Amish previously, but, when I looked for information about them, I was captivated by their lifestyle, traditions, the importance religion has in their lives, etc. and I was very excited to do this project, because I was very curious.

Initially I wanted to search for information about the Amish and to study and find the differences between their society and our modern society. Then, I started the project and I saw that I wanted to focus my project on their economy, because I found *Success Made Simple: An Inside Look at Why Amish Businesses Thrive*, a book that accounts for the stories of Amish entrepreneurs in our economy and their high rate of success.

So I decided to divide my project into two parts. The first part is a look inside the Community, which is meant to provide some information about the history, the religion or the lifestyle of the Amish¹. The religion is explained first of all, because there are some specific words explained in the religion part and without its definition it is difficult to understand the history of the community. All this information is vital for the second part of my project. The second part is focused on the book *Success made simple* written by Erik Wesner, a non-Amish person. This book gives information about Amish entrepreneurs, who have a very high rate of success in the corporate world. Because I am very interested in economy, I thought it was the perfect book to transmit the knowledge about Amish entrepreneurs from another point of view. There is also an interview with Erik Wesner and a review of the book to analyse all the information the book contains and extract some conclusions.

¹ It is important to know I have done my project about the *Old Order Amish*.

Before searching for all this information, I thought Amish people live this way because they love pacific life, they do not want modern technology, etc. in conclusion, because they do not like our society's lifestyle. But, while I was doing this project I discovered a lot of things about them. Apart from the research of information I have done, I had the opportunity to interview two ex members of the Amish community, one of whom has even written a book about his community. As former members of Amish communities, they can provide reliable information about the Amish and an opinion about the community. They brought me to discover further than traditions or lifestyle. I think it is important to have a subjective view about all the information that is reflected in my project. However, I did not have the chance to interview any Amish, because they are not communicated with our world and our technologies.

In conclusion, reading this project you are going to have another view about the Amish that is not on the internet or in any book, this point of view that I have been able to create is a set of different opinions, information and experiences about ex-Amish people, non-Amish people and experts of this community. Apart from that, I have analysed the economy of the Amish community that initially I thought it was non-existent.

PART I WHO ARE THE AMISH?

1. RELIGION

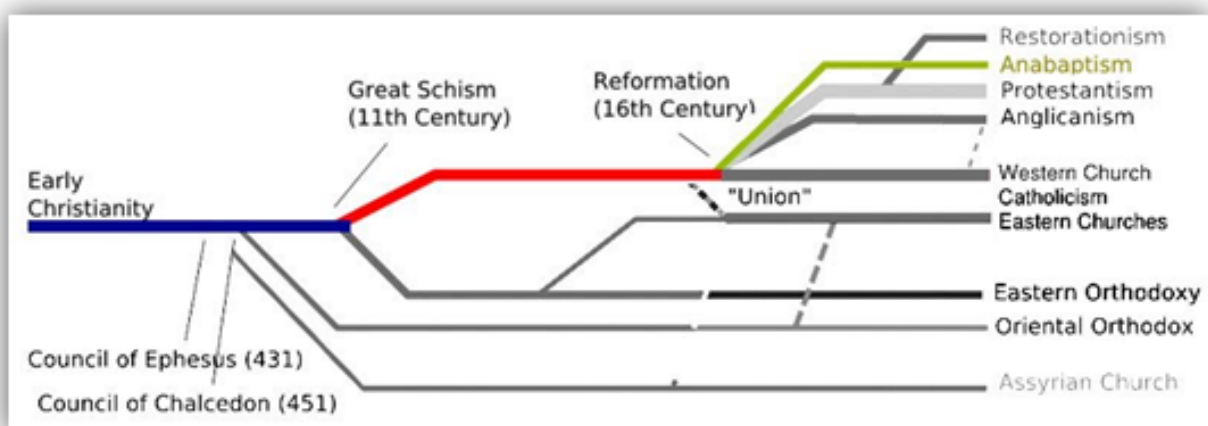
Amish way of life moves around religion. Their life is based on faith and God. So this is an important part of my research project. First of all, I situate the religious context of the Amish community because it is really different from the religion of our surroundings.

1.1. Anabaptism

Throughout history, Christianity has been divided into different branches that share the same base. Some of these divisions have been considered heresy for the principal base, but they all are Christians. The divisions have been made because of political causes, cultural causes or theological causes.

1.1.1 Anabaptism creation

The Anabaptism movement was created in the 16th century. Some people consider this branch Protestantism, but there are a few differences between Protestantism and Anabaptism. In the scheme, we can see the progress the Catholic Church has made.



Picture 1. Branches of the Christianity. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_denomination

In the 16th century there was the Radical Reformation. It began in Germany and Switzerland and it was the separation from the Roman Catholic Church. People who followed this movement did not agree with some decisions the Roman Catholic Church made and there was also corruption.

Nowadays Anabaptism includes these groups: Amish, Brethren, Hutterites, Mennonites and Bruderhof Communities.

1.1.2. Their beliefs

Their basic distinction is they believe people must be baptised when they are adults. The reason is that they think the person must be conscious of what they are doing and when you are an adult you know if you really believe in God or not.

Other beliefs are: to act in a pacific way, to have the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, priesthood of all believers, etc.

1.2. Jakob Ammann²

Jakob Ammann was born in 1656 in Bern, Switzerland. He was the son of Michael and Anna Rupp Ammann. He agreed with the idea of Anabaptism and he was a Mennonite. But he broke from the Mennonite church because he didn't agree with some practices of the Mennonite movement; there was a lack of discipline among the Mennonites. However, they do share the same beliefs concerning separation, baptism, and basic Bible doctrines. Then, he formed his own movement, the Amish. Some years later he tried to reunite these two groups again, but they both wanted to remain separate.

After a life of dedication to God and to family, he died in 1730 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, at the age of 74 years old.

² I had problems to find truthful information related with Jakob Ammann. I was not able to find books, only different web pages with different information.

1.2.1. Was Jakob Ammann the founder of the Amish?

There is an interview made by *The Historian*³ in 1994 to Leroy Beachy, an American writer. In that interview they talk about the extensive research Beachy had made about Amish origins in Europe.

In one answer he said: “The major discovery is that Jakob Ammann was not the founder of the Amish movement. He was involved with other men such as Christian Gingerich and Isaac Kauffman, who were co-ministers of Jakob. All of these were influential in the movement”.

He justified this with these words: “Jakob Ammann could never have done that –he was too sharp with his words and lacked the personal characteristics which the man who founded the movement must have had”.

With this information we are not able to know if Jakob Ammann was truly the founder of the Amish community or not. But, consulting all the sources that I have found we can consider Jakob Ammann the founder, because there is only this information by Leroy Beachy that refuses this idea.

1.3. Amish Bible and other books

The Amish use the German Martin Luther Bible in church. For an English version, they typically use the King James translation, though some Amish may use the New International Version (NIV).

1.3.1. Martin Luther Bible

The Luther Bible is a German language Bible translation from Hebrew and ancient Greek by Martin Luther, of which the New Testament was published in 1522 and the complete Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments and Apocrypha, in 1534. Luther made this work in his later years. It was probably his greatest legacy to the German people and Protestants around the world.

³ The Historian is a quarterly newsletter published by Casselman River Amish and Mennonite Historians. This article was published in July 1994 in volume 6.

1.3.2. Amish songbook

They use a special songbook known as the *Ausbund*. It is the longest-lived songbook in continuous use. The hymns it contains are hundreds of years old, and were composed by Anabaptist forefathers. Common themes include human suffering and faith in God. The *Ausbund* contains no musical notes, and tunes are passed down from one generation to the next. Amish people often get together in order to practice singing from the *Ausbund*.

1.3.3. Martyr's Mirror

The *Martyrs Mirror* or *Stage Blood* is a book of Thieleman J. van Braght, published in 1660 in Dutch, which documents the statements of faith, stories and testimonies of Christian martyrs, especially the pacifist Anabaptists.

The book's full title is *The bloody scene or mirror of the Christian martyrs helpless, baptized only upon confession of faith, who suffered and died for their witness to Jesus, their Savior, from the time of Christ until the year 1660*. The word "helpless" refers to the Anabaptist commitment to nonviolence.

1.4. Preaching services

Amish preaching services are curious because they are done at home. The families that live in the same district take turns having preaching services in their home. In summer they are frequently held on the barn. Each *Gemeinde* (congregation of Amish families) contains from fifteen to thirty families. There is one bishop for each district, two or three assisting preachers and a deacon. When there are too many people in one district it is divided and they become two different districts.

Families should be prepared for the preaching services. They must work hard and co-operate in many ways: stables must be cleaned and yards put in order; furniture must be moved, walls painted, and fences whitewashed. The meeting

benches must be placed in proper place. On Saturday before preaching some women arrive to bake bread and pies and to see if the supply of food is ready to be served after the worship service. It is very important to be ready for this ceremony when it is the turn to do it in your house.

Everybody attends the preaching services except persons that are sick or those who could not be there for a vital reason. When people arrive, everyone exchanges a handshake. Preachers greet each other with the holy kiss, an obligation from the Bible. The meeting starts at 9.00 am and lasts until 1.00 pm. They sing the slow tunes of the *Ausbund* book (see 1.3.2.). Two sermons are preached, silent and oral prayers read, and short testimonies are offered by all preachers present.

The children learn to sit through all this, although their preoccupation with handkerchiefs (making such objects as “mice” or a “cradle and baby”) helps to pass the time. Not only children, some adults fall asleep during the long chanted sermons.

After the service they have lunch. It is a very important part of the meeting. Everyone enjoys the period of visiting and good fellowship which follows. They discuss about different subjects and they have fun all together.

Preaching is held once every two weeks. On alternate Sundays the family dresses up to attend the service. Otherwise, they stay at home to rest. They also visit uncles, aunts, cousins or the rest of the family. They learn to know their families well by playing, reading, resting, hiking, or doing things together.

1.5. Life Ceremonies

Each religion has its ceremonies held during the lifetime of a person. Those ceremonies are basically the same in all religions, but everyone develops them in their own way according to their beliefs. The Amish three major rites of passage are birth, marriage and death. They are very important and done in a special way.

1.5.1. Birth

In some societies the ceremony associated with birth is extensive and complex, but in Amish society such activity is inexistent. With the exception of the first child, birth normally takes place at home and with the presence of the father. Birth is regarded as fortunate. No social ceremony is needed.

Rituals such as baby showers have no place in the Amish family. They are not lauded with fancy or expensive clothing or equipment.

In the Amish society there is a high level of reproduction. They place a positive value on having children and birth control is regarded as immoral by the religion in general.

The Amish are adult baptizers. Therefore, there is no need for infant baptism. The custom of assigning godparents to newly born children is nonexistent in the society. Only when the child has been raised to “a way of life”, is he brought into a formal relation to the religious community through baptism.

1.5.2. Marriage

A wedding in Amish life is an elaborate affair. It means a new home, another place to have preaching when the couple is located on the farm, and another family to raise children in the Amish way. Marriage also means that the young couple is ready to settle down, to keep the faith in a mature way. For the couple it is a rite of passage marking the pass from youth into the age of responsibility that adults may have.

The couple publish they are going to marry in the church, usually two Sundays before the wedding. Since there is nothing among the Amish that corresponds to the engagement, other signs of preparation become indicative of a potential marriage: an overabundance of celery in the garden of a home containing a potential bride is said to be one such sign, since large quantities are used at weddings. Another cue may be efforts

on the part of the father of the potential bridegroom to obtain an extra farm, or to remodel a vacant dwelling on one of his own farms.

Weddings are traditionally held in November and December, since this is a time when the work year allows community-wide participation. The great amount of preparation requires that wedding be held during the week, usually on a Thursday, or on Tuesday if there are conflicting dates with other marriages. Second marriages or those that involve older persons may be held anytime during the year and often do not involve such elaborate preparations.

Before a man wishes to be married he approaches the deacon or a minister of his choosing and makes his desire to obtain the consent of the bride's parents known. Then the deacon reports his findings to the bishop who announces the intent of the couple at the next preaching service. After the notice is published the bridegroom lives at the bride's home until the wedding day. During this time they prepare all the details of the wedding. The tasks are distributed into men tasks and women tasks. Men pick the chickens, ducks, and turkeys... Women prepare the dressing, stuff the fowl, and wash the dishes...

There is a preaching ceremony of four hours, from nine in the morning to one o'clock in the afternoon. This service is open to the public, but it is attended mainly by those who are invited to the wedding. At the end of this ceremony several close relatives cook for the wedding. When the service ends they are the first to leave the assembly. They walk briskly to the yard gate in couples where they are met by three hostlers each with a buggy ready to go. The couple then go to the bride's home for the wedding dinner. This dinner is more serious, each person has a special place to sit, depending on their relationship status. When the meal is finished they sing the typical songs and they finally return home.

The bride and bridegroom spend the night at the bride's home. There is no immediate honeymoon, but what might be its equivalent is the

practice of visiting uncles, aunts, and some cousins for a few weeks following the wedding.

In summary, marriage in Amish life is not simply a romantic affair. The dress of the bride and bridegroom are made in traditional styles. The expectations allow no room for divorce and separation is almost unknown.

1.5.3. Death

Death in the Amish home, as in the society at large, is a sober occasion. In some respects, however, it is taken as a matter of course, as the Amish person lives his or her life in the shadow of death and in conscious submission to the forces of nature.

News of a death spreads throughout the Amish community very fast. Such news along with other important community events is written on the village blackboard or conveyed by the milk-truck driver.

When death overtakes a family member, neighbours and non-relatives relieve the bereaved family of all work responsibility. The family is not confronted with the numerous decisions faced by the typical American family at such time.

Generally, funerals are held on the third day following death. The dead are dressed in white: for a man white shirt, trousers and socks; and woman white dress, cape and organdy cap.

Amish funerals are in most ways similar to regular church services, with attendants gathering in a home or other structure such as a shop or barn at the home place of the deceased. The deceased individual is placed in the casket, which is left open, in the center of the room, with the minister preaching just a few feet away.

As in a regular Amish church service, preachers give two sermons, one lasting approximately 20 minutes and the other around an hour. There

may or may not be singing at the standard times of a church service at the beginning and at the end. At the end of the service, attendants file past the open casket for a final look at the body, while the preacher recites the individual's name and a prayer. Parents may lift up children to get a closer look at the deceased. The casket is closed and carried out for its journey to the cemetery.

Death and the funeral mark the end of a Christian life.

2. HISTORY

We can read an overview of the Amish history: information about their origins in Europe, their location or the subgroups they had formed during these years. It is useful to introduce you into the Amish and to understand their way of life.

2.1. Amish origins in Europe

According to all the information I have found, the Amish movement was founded in Europe by Jakob Amman, a Swiss Anabaptist leader. It started as a reform group inside the Mennonite movement –a Protestant group based around the church communities of the Christian Anabaptist. The Amish beliefs were based on the writings of the Mennonite faith. In that epoch, the 17th century, they lived in Switzerland and some regions of Germany, near the Rhine River.

During the late 17th century, Jakob Amman felt that the church leaders were not holding to strict separation from the world and that spiritual renewal was needed. He proposed holding communion twice a year rather than once, as was the typical Swiss practice; also that Christians should wash one another's feet in the communion service.

To promote doctrinal purity and spiritual discipline, Ammann proposed wearing plain dresses, as we can see in the picture. He administered a strict discipline in his congregations. Appealing to New Testament teaching and the practice of Dutch Anabaptists, Ammann also advocated shunning⁴ excommunicated members. And this issue drove a divisive wedge between his followers and other Anabaptists living in Switzerland and Alsace. Then, Ammann followers became Amish and were separated from the Mennonite community.



Picture 2. Amish plain dresses.

Source: <http://gzmls.blogspot.com.es/>

⁴ The word shunning for Amish people means the exclusion people who are heretic suffer.



2.2. Migration to the United States

In that time, the Amish, as all the other Anabaptist groups, were persecuted by the Protestant state churches. They were hunted down, asked to recant, their children were taken, were threatened, exiled, tortured, sold into slavery, branded, burned at the stake, drowned or dismembered, only because they believed in Anabaptism. There is a book written in 1660 in Holland that preserves these stories. It is called *Martyrs Mirror* and is still found in many Amish homes nowadays (mentioned in point 1.3.3. Martyr's Mirror).

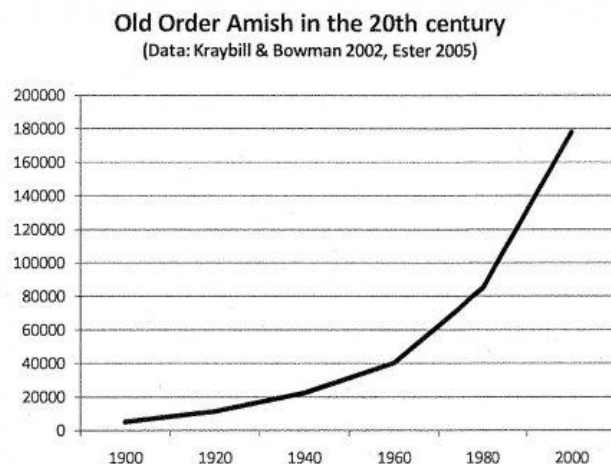
Some of the Amish migrated to Pennsylvania during the 18th century. They were about 500 people. The first families arrived in 1727 and the greatest period of immigration was between 1804 and 1860, when 3000 Amish arrived from Europe. The majority of them settled in Pennsylvania, concretely in Lancaster County, but some other states of the United States and Canada too.

Then there was a period of time, from 1900 to 1980 when the number rose to about 80000 people.

2.3. The Amish in the United States

At first Amish colonies settled in Berks, Chester, and Lancaster in southeastern Pennsylvania. Today Amish communities are found in twenty states and Ontario, Canada. The majority of the members are in Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania.

Their population can only be estimated and they are about 281,675 people. As we can see in picture 3 the population is still growing nowadays. Because of their high birth rate, the Amish have been one of the fastest growing religious groups in America.



Picture 3. Evolution of Amish population since 1900 to 2000.

Source: <http://www.scilog.eu/>

The Amish have disappeared from Europe and there are no Amish churches on the continent (except for the communities that support missionary work). Those members who stayed on the continent have been absorbed into other religious groups.

2.4. Location of Amish communities

As explained above, there are 281,675 Amish. They are distributed in the United States and Canada (picture 4). There are 18 states that have a significant number of populations. In 2012 a list was published by Elizabeth Cooksey, professor of sociology, and Cory Anderson, a student of rural sociology, and these were the results:

Ohio	59,103	Minnesota	2,765	West Virginia	217
Pennsylvania	58,009	Tennessee	1,948	Maine	203
Indiana	45,144	Maryland	1,512	Mississippi	175
Wisconsin	14,957	Delaware	1,424	Arkansas	130
New York	10,787	Kansas	940	North Carolina	127
Michigan	10,218	Virginia	547	Florida	125
Missouri	9,833	Oklahoma	523	Texas	52
Kentucky	8,172	Montana	363	South Dakota	31
Iowa	7,179	Colorado	330		
Illinois	6,267	Nebraska	275		

Picture 4. Population of the Amish communities of the United States of America

Source: www.amishamerica.com

2.5. Amish subgroups

The Amish churches have divided many times over doctrinal disputes, but in the 20th century the biggest subgroups appeared. They are the Beachy Amish, the New Order Amish and the Swartzentruber Amish.

Beachy Amish

The Beachy church appeared in 1927. There was a division from the Old Order Amish community in Pennsylvania. A Bishop called Moses M. Beachy was the person who made this separation of the Old Order Amish, and the name of Beachy Amish came from him. They separated, because they wanted less stringent rules from the members of the community.

Once the separation was made, some differences from the Old Order Amish appeared (all mentioned on page 24). They Beachy Amish support missionary work, they support Sunday school and Bible study, they can own cars, they can use internet, etc.

We know that in 2006 there were 11,487 members in this community distributed in 207 churches. The most populated communities are in Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio. There are international Beachy churches in countries like Ukraine, Australia, Kenya... and the mission work is supported by Amish Mennonite Aid (AMA), Mennonite Interests Committee (MIC) and individual churches.

New Order Amish

The New Order Amish split from the Old Order Amish in the mid-1960s. They live mostly in Ohio and Pennsylvania. They have the same religious doctrines, but the difference is they have a different way of life, they use electricity, telephones, they use modern tools for their farms like the tractor and they use a different type of dress for women. Apart from that, they believe in assurance of salvation and they promote meetings between young people.

Swartzentruber Amish

Swartzentruber Amish are a subgroup of the Amish community. They appeared in 1917 in Ohio. They are a very small population. They are a conservative community, they keep the same traditions and life style, they have not modernized their lives.

The differences between other Amish groups are technology, which is seldom used; the style of dress, which is heavier and plainer; a longer church service, and the relationship with non-Amish people is restricted.

There is a comparative scheme on page 31 which explains the differences between the Amish subgroups and the Old Order Amish. There is information about technology, the way of dressing, education and doctrines, beliefs and church organization.

3. LIFESTYLE

Lifestyle is what characterizes the Amish. They live like in the 17th century. There are a lot of differences between our ways of life and this chapter gives some information about food, technology, work, education, etc.

3.1. Living without technology

Amish communities do not live without technology; nowadays they use some simple technology like telephones or equipment for cooking, but what they use is a simple technology compared with the devices we use. The correct way to explain how Amish people use technology is that they use it in a selective way. For example, televisions, radios and computers are rejected, but they use gas grills, shop tools, camping equipment, and some farm equipment.

They use electricity from batteries because it is more controllable and independent from the world outside the community. Solar energy is sometimes used too, to charge batteries, operate electric fences...

3.1.1. Why do they live without technology?

They believe God has called His followers to separate themselves from the rest of the world and they do not want material things to move their lives. Amish people consider that technology can destroy traditions and change the society and what they want to do is to conserve a simple life. They think that Mass media introduce foreign values into their culture, that cars will pollute their community and the buggy transport has the community anchored in a geographical area. Amish churches regulate the use of technology through a set of oral guidelines, the *Ordnung*.

3.1.2. Electricity used in some businesses.

Generally, the Amish allow a greater degree of technology in places of business than at home. Some of them may have electric forms of lighting installed in shops, especially if working with flammable chemicals. As explained below (see 3.10.), Swartzentruber Amish will not permit these means of powering equipment, however.

3.1.3. The Amish and telephones.

In each community it is usual to find a public telephone. It was introduced in the 1950s when there were a lot of Amish people that had to go to business and hotels to call the doctor, food dealers, dentists... This phone is usually shared with some neighbours and placed at the end of the farm, outside the house. The objective of this concept was to allow access, but maintain distance. The phone number is unlisted, to be used essentially for necessary outgoing calls, not to socialize.

3.2. Work

Most of them lived on family farms until the 1960s. Some of them continue with the tradition, but the rest specialized their farms in an only product and mechanized this new farms a little bit. Although there are people that are still keeping this traditional job of farming, now most of the Amish do other jobs. Nowadays, fewer than 10 percent of families receive the major income from farming. There are families who combine a job with the farm, but considering the farm a hobby.

In recent years, hundreds of Amish have their own shops in their communities. They create fewer than ten jobs in the whole community. In these shops they usually produce wood products. There are also bakeries, greenhouses or quilt shops. Some men in Amish communities work in non-Amish people buildings construction. To avoid travelling long distances to construct these buildings, they work with English⁵ companies, but in rural places or small towns.

The people who own their farms sell their products in weekly markets of the town they have around their communities, and they get some money to pay for their outgoings. They produce products like milk, cheese, tobacco, peppers... People who own a shop or who have their business, put publicity on Amish webs known to themselves. Most of them are furniture producers.

Women in Amish communities tend not to work after the marriage and they are housewives, they take jobs in cabinet shops or they are teachers. Some Amish

⁵ Amish people call English to all those people who are non-Amish.

men work with their buggies, and in the Indiana community some people work on the RV industry creating recreational vehicles.

3.3. The Roles of Amish women.

The roles of men and women in Amish communities are concretely defined. Women are expected to marry, to have children and to take care of the house. There is no divorce, remarriage only takes place after a husband or a wife has died. Only 3 percent of women have a job outside the household. The husband is the head of the family. He sits at the head at the table in the meals. Major decisions are made jointly by husband and wife. Women can vote at the church, but they cannot have an authority position on it.

Amish families may have lots of children to help with the farm work. For this reason, the mother is responsible for taking care of all the children, and she does not have a lot of time to have another job. When the family grows, everyone has a role in it, so that they will be well organised. Most of these ideas are taken literally from the Bible. Women accept to have this role because it is what the Bible says. They think that "Christ is the head of every man, and man is the head of every woman". We can think women are oppressed, that we have to liberate them, but Amish women do not have this feeling, they take care of their obligations, and they receive respect from their husbands.

The man is the spiritual head of the family; he is responsible for introducing the children in the religion and to educate them in a Christian way. The woman is in charge of raising the children. When the man has a job and they cannot be at home, the woman stays at home and she does the house holding. If the woman has a job outside, the man has got a job in the house (farm, garden...) and the roles change, but this is not usual. Amish women can work as waitresses, teachers or hire household help when they are single. Once they are married, they remain at home. In recent years some Amish women have run their own business, but these women start working when the children are grown up. Amish women who are at home taking care of the children make economic contributions too. They sell products like eggs or milk from the farm.

3.4. Amish cooking

Amish cooking is an important part of their culture. Food is usually made of homemade and home-grown ingredients. Nowadays there are some products that the Amish buy at the supermarkets and, on special occasions, some of them eat out in restaurants. Amish meals are filling and fatty.

Amish women are the ones who prepare the meals and some of them have made cookbooks about the Pennsylvania-Dutch style foods like butter noodles, chicken corn soup, varieties of bologna, chow-chow (picture 5), chipped beef gravy, beets, and other hearty foods based on staples such as pork, potatoes, and cabbage. Scrapple, a meat product made from animal parts (typically pork),



Picture 5. Chow-chow. Source: www.yorkblog.com

corn meal and flour, is also popular, particularly for breakfast. The non-Amish food is also popular. They like Pizza and Mexican food. They like cooking in grills too. Making the bread at home is very common. They also prepare cookies, cakes, pies...

In the particular case of the Swartzenruber Amish community it is noticed that they have a poor nutrition. It is not usual to find a vegetarian Amish, because they eat a lot of meat. About the consumption of alcohol, it varies by the community, in some communities it has a great incidence and in some communities it is practically non-existent. What they usually drink when they eat is tea, milk, juice or water.



Picture 6. Snitz Pie. Source: www.thekitchencookie.blogspot.com

On Sundays they have a special meal after the church services. Foods are light and simple: bread, cheese, cold cuts, sliced pickles, pickled beets, pretzels and a special peanut butter spread, sweetened with molasses. Black coffee and water are

served. The Sunday meal varies depending on the community. Snitz pie (picture 6) is common in the Lancaster settlement, while Amish in the Midwest may serve different varieties of pie, or cookies, brownies and baked goods. Swartzentruber Amish traditionally eat bean soup from a common bowl, accompanied by beets, pickles, and bread.

As I mentioned above, they do not usually eat in restaurants, but recently they eat out on special occasions with the children, but going from one place to another is complicated for them.

3.5. The plain way of dressing

As we can see in all the photographs, Amish people use plain clothes. Traditionally Amish women wear blue long dresses and a cap in the head. They wear black shoes that cover all the foot. Make up and jewellery are avoided. The hair is always gathered. On the other hand, Amish men wear shirts, usually blue or white, and black trousers with suspenders. Black hats are very typical for Amish men. Anyway, the way of dressing depends on each subgroup and there is more information on page 31.

Children dress like adults, boys with shirts and girls with long dresses. Sometimes they do not wear shoes, they go barefooted. To go to church services or funerals they usually wear dark clothes, but only in weekends or special occasions.



Picture 7. Amish men. Source: www.cleveland.com



Picture 8. Amish women. Source: www.20minutos.es

They use this kind of clothing for several reasons: because the Bible supports plain clothes, because it is practical, it prevents people from feeling envious or greed and because it marks Amish identity, etc.

3.6. Amish Buggies

Buggies are very characteristic for the Amish community. The majority of the Amish do not use cars, they drive buggies. This type of vehicle has four wheels and it is moved by the power of a horse (picture 7). It is usually black or grey and they use it to move around the community.



Picture 7. An Amish buggy. Source : <http://www.welcome-to-lancaster-county.com/amish-buggy.html>

The Amish use buggies as these vehicles respect their pacific lifestyle and also because with them they cannot go far away from the community and they make sure that families are not fragmented. It is a way to keep a distance from our society and a tradition for Amish people.

Sometimes they must travel on the road and it is dangerous. Nowadays in the backside of the buggy there is a triangle, a badge that makes other people understand that it is a Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV). Some states of the United States of America have built an additional lane destined to buggies circulation and it is safer for Amish people to travel on the roads.

3.7. To stay or to leave the community (*Rumspringa*).

Rumspringa or “running around” is a rite of passage that teenagers do to know for certain that they want to remain at the community. Teenagers discover the world outside the community and they decide what to do with their lives from this moment. This period takes place at the age of 14 to 16 and finishes when the person decides to stay at the community and be baptised as an Amish Anabaptist member or to leave the community and build their life in the world outside. The majority of the Amish choose to stay at the community and remain in the church. This decision is taken between the ages of 18 to 22.

During this time that they have to discover they live at home, in the community. They attend the church and they participate in the same things as always.

Teenagers spend this time exploring the world outside, experimenting with party, drugs, etc. Studies reveal that most of the teenagers have the decisions made on their minds before the *Rumspringa* and this time is useful for them to reflect about other issues.

3.8. Interviews with ex-Amish

3.8.1. Ira Wagler



Ira Wagler is a former Amish born in Ontario, Canada. He is 52 and he is living in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, USA. He is the ninth of eleven children and his parents are inside the Amish community nowadays. He has got a blog where he writes frequently (<http://www.irawagler.com>). He also has written a book about his experience in the Amish, it is titled “Growing up Amish”. This book has been a New York Times bestseller.

I have been able to contact with him via email and he answered me some questions to have a point of view of a person that had been inside the Amish community. You can find this interview on page 2 from the Annex.

3.8.2. Joseph Slabaugh



Joseph Slabaugh is an ex-Amish from Loudonville, Ohio, USA. He is now 32 years old, he is married and he has finished his studies this year. He is the owner of a website (www.ex-amish.com) where ex-Amish can talk, write posts and contact with other people in the same situation and he has got another webpage (www.amishmemories.com) where he explains his life in the Amish community. He is now working for a company in the city where he lives and he expects to go to university in the future.

I could talk with him and ask him some questions about his life. I talked with him via Skype in two different days. You can found the interview on page 4 from the Annex.

After talking with them...

After talking with Mr. Wagler and Mr. Slabaugh I realize they were not well inside the community so they left or escape to have a new life outside. They have been able to adapt themselves to our society. They were sad to leave their families and their lives, but they do not regret their decision.

Relating these interviews with *Rumspringa* (see 3.7.), I think this period of time when they can discover the world outside it is not really truthful, because Joseph would not have escaped from home. We do not know certainly if it is true or not. What is sure is that if you are an Amish and you want to leave the community, with endeavour and perseverance you will have a good life outside.

3.9. Amish education

In Amish communities, children only study eight grades. They start at the age of 6 and they are taught how to read, write, and some history and arithmetic because they think that this is all they need to be an Amish. The lessons are in English and there are usually 30-35 children per class. Apart from the studies, they are taught to share with their siblings and each little Amish has a task in the class to create a good attitude. Children learn patience, obedience and cooperation. Children usually walk to school.

The teacher is usually a young girl who is chosen by the community. This girl must be serious, she has to be strong in the faith, and she must have the ability to teach. Usually new teachers practise with an experienced teacher for some days and when they are ready, they start teaching alone. Teachers from all the schools meet all together to discuss problems, solutions, methods...

Education for Amish communities is not essential because they won't use the knowledge as we use it in our society. Religious education is not taught at the school because they consider that this is a task for the parents and the church.

3.9.1 A day in the school

Classes begin at 8.30 in the morning. They read the Bible, they sing the hymn and they recite the Lord's Prayer. They spend the time reading or

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doing their tasks while the teacher is attending all the students one by one and they wait until the teacher assists them. Then they have lunch and they play games and they sometimes play Softball, which is very popular. Finally, at 3.30 pm the classes are finished and everybody returns home.

3.10. Comparing Amish Subgroups

	OLD ORDER AMISH	BEACHY AMISH	NEW ORDER AMISH	SWARTZENTRUBER AMISH
Technology	They use telephones and technology in their business. It is allowed in some situations.	They use cars and technology is not banned as in the other groups. They can use computers, but in a restrictive way.	Some of them use telephones and electricity, but it depends on the family, they can use technology or not.	They do not use any technology. It is very restricted. They only use cars when there is an emergency.
Dressing	They dress plainly: women with dresses and capes and men with shirts and hats. Their way of dressing reflects their humility.	Women usually wear black dresses and a white cape and men use white shirts and black trousers.	They wear more colourful clothes, but without leaving the plain dressing.	It tends to be heavier and plainer, especially in the case of women.
Education	They have schools in the communities and children study there until they are in 4 th grade.	They hold Sunday School and Bible study.	They use the same system as the Old Order Amish, but they support Sunday School and Bible study.	They have a lower level of education than the other Amish subgroups. They consider it is a secondary element.
Doctrines beliefs and church organization	The church service takes part at home, one week in a different house. They follow the Bible literally. They think God is the most important thing in their lives.	They do missionary work and they follow certain tenets of the Dordrecht Confession (a statement of religious beliefs related with the Mennonite church).	They have the same doctrines as the Old Order Amish, but they believe in the assurance of salvation, they think you can know the state of your soul in the "two worlds".	They are more conservative with traditions and way of life, they conserve the doctrines of the beginnings of the Amish church.



3.11. Amish Economy

Economy in Amish communities is not the economy that we are associated in our society. We can consider that we live to work. They have another philosophy, they work to live.

Amish people make the majority of their food, so they do not need to have supermarkets in the community to buy it. They repair the roof of their house, the pipelines... They are self sufficient. For this reason there is not a commercial place in the community and the economy which is based on buying and selling was non-existent until some years ago.

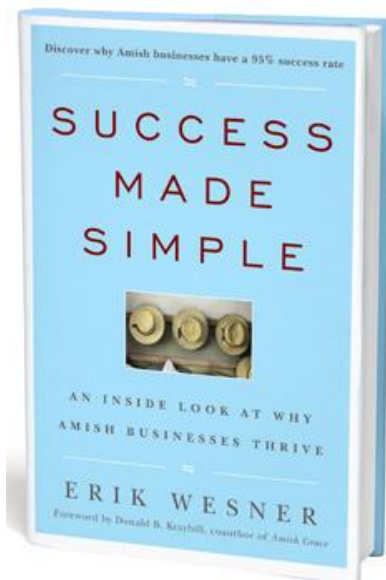
Nowadays the world is modernized and technology is everywhere, so they have been adapting their way of life to the modern life, not totally, but partially. Some Amish people have their own business and they work as carpenters and some others have little shops and they sell products from their farms. They sell these products to non-Amish people and they are helped by them to carry out the accounting, the carrying of goods, etc. Some of them have mechanized their works to produce more, because now there are communities that are progressing a lot in trade.

In recent times entrepreneurs have appeared in Amish communities. They do not have enough knowledge or studies to do it well, but it is demonstrated they are successful. *Success made simple: An Inside Look at Why Amish Businesses Thrive* is an interesting book that explains how they do it, why they are successful in our economy. It contains interviews with Amish entrepreneurs and the author explains the situation of some Amish entrepreneurs and the trajectory of their investments.

PART II SUCCESS MADE SIMPLE

1. Success Made Simple: An Inside Look at Why Amish Businesses Thrive

1.1. Introducing the book



Success made simple: An Inside Look at Why Amish Businesses Thrive is a recompilation of information about Amish entrepreneurs. It explains the factors that make the entrepreneurs of this community successful, people without knowledge of economy, but a great ability to manage their business. The objective of the book is to bring the way of managing a business of an Amish entrepreneur to our society.

The US Department of Labour informed a few years ago, that only a 44% of recent opened firms in the United States will be successful, but Amish firms

have a 95% of possibilities to be fruitful. The author of the book, Erik Wesner was able to discover the causes of this success: basically their philosophy of life. They are mostly patient people and their objective is not to have easy money, the objective is long-term: create a strong business with regular customers attracted by the quality of the products, the way of working, the relationship between customers and employers, etc.

To explain that way of carrying on a business, there are interviews with more than 50 Amish owners that live the experience of being entrepreneurs first-hand.

1.2. Review of the book

After reading the book, it is interesting to make a summary and extract the most important information related with Amish people and with people from our society. *Success made simple* has the finality to give advice to other entrepreneurs, and, for this reason, it is vital to extract a conclusion and let new

entrepreneurs know what to do to open a business and it allows comparing the two societies in terms of economy.

Why is the book written?

As I have said previously, *Success made simple: An Inside Look at Why Amish Businesses Thrive* is a description of the way of working of Amish entrepreneurs. The purpose of the author is to make clear everything that makes an Amish business be successful and give advice to let non-Amish people do it the same way.

For this reason, this philosophy of working is exposed in the book with examples of real Amish businessmen, telling about their experiences in the corporate world. Their personal stories help us to understand and see that it is true, that it is possible to carry on a business in a humble and modest way.

It seems to be impossible to start a business without the objective of becoming rich or having a lot of money, they actually want it, yes, but it is not their only purpose. What they really want is to bring their store on and keep working for as long as it is possible. They think that being the richest, the biggest or the most powerful is just ego.

How is the message transmitted?

The author of this book has written it to show that it is not necessary to be the smartest, to be successful in the corporate world. What he wants to explain is that only with persistence and enthusiasm and, of course, spending a lot of hours working, is it possible to go far with a business. He is not being critical with the entrepreneurs of our society, he is giving advice to other businessmen.

The book is totally descriptive, he does not incorporate his own opinion, he is writing what other people have said to him before, explaining experiences from other people without including invented stories to make it more attractive. His function is to be the messenger.

The book is written interchanging a formal and an informal way. The author wants it to be easy to understand, but when he talks about economy, he uses technical words. However it is pleasant to read it because it is schemed: every chapter has an introduction, some specific themes and their corresponding explanation, and finally an overview of the chapter with the most important ideas and the information you have to take into account to become a successful entrepreneur. It also includes short explanations about Amish lifestyle for people that are not familiar with this theme.

What does the book contain?

The way of managing an enterprise includes more than money or economy. Personality of the leader, the enthusiasm of the entire enterprise, competitors, employees, etc. all these facts are important for a business. So, for this reason, the book contains very different concepts, from money to humility.

The first two chapters of this book are focused on the *objectives* and the *personality that a manager must have*. They explain it is vital to have a vision, an objective, and to develop it because with this vision in mind, you are motivated to work in your own business. It also explains the importance of personal life. It is important to be working lots of hours, but if you are not happy with your family and friends you won't be happy at work. Related to people outside, it remarks that it is important to have *outside help* to carry on the business, obviously you cannot do it all yourself, and Amish people always help each other.

Chapters three and four explain basically the *relationship with the customer*. For Amish businessmen it is important to build a strong relationship with the client. They think that if the customer trusts them, all the selling process will be better for both and there won't be problems. Actually, they consider this relationship the most important thing because it creates a bonding with the customer and they become frequent clients. Chapter four also includes techniques to *solve problems with conflictive customers* without losing your temper.

Relationship between employees and the head of the enterprise is explained in chapters five and six. It talks about creating a good environment made of good and reliable people. Workers may be treated willingly, for example, they may be rewarded if they provide ideas and improvements to the business. These kinds of things give them motivation to continue working and to feel comfortable in the enterprise. Organization is vital to enterprises and with a good environment, things will go well. Apart from the relationship between the manager and the workers, in these chapters we can find an explanation about *how to connect business with personal life*.

Finally, in the last two chapters what is explained is *efficiency* and *success*. Efficiency is what makes the firm grow economically and chapter seven is focused on it. Chapter eight explains the high number of definitions the word success could have. Success is not measured by money, success means analysing if your initial vision has come true and depending on this initial objective, success will be one thing or another.

What is the conclusion we can extract?

First of all, we can discover the way of working of Amish entrepreneurs. We know that it is very different from ours. I think this part of discovering that there is a way of doing things completely distinct from our society, makes us realize that we are not doing things the best way.

To be different is a risk that you can decide to take or not, but Amish people are different and they are successful in their jobs. So, we must be conscious there is another manner to face our business and difference could mean success. Nevertheless, it is not easy to be different because this difference must be positive and must please consumers. To have this point of distinction is not just the desire to be different, you have to be a different person, you have to attract the attention of the customers for your way of working, the way to serve customers and the product you are able to create, because eventually it is what the client is looking for.

Another important conclusion is that humility makes us who we are and our business has the same features we have as a person. Amish people are humble and their businesses are humble too. They have not got the latest products or the best machinery whereas they build top quality products with rudimentary tools by spending a lot of hours working on the products, taking care of all the details.

Consequently we can keep two words in mind: difference and humility. These two words can change our business completely, because we do not usually relate difference and humility with economy or with entrepreneurs.

Why is the book interesting and useful for the entrepreneurs of our society?

I think this book can really be useful. In the economic situation we are living there are some entrepreneurs on the brink of disaster because they do not have regular customers, their sales have decreased and what they need is a shift, another way to run their business. Sometimes keeping the traditional and simple way is the solution. Nowadays everything in our society is modernized and people miss traditions.

Apart from this, Amish people can teach us this simple way of doing things and not to worry about things of low significance, to be positive and take every opportunity. They value endeavor a lot and they think that with perseverance we can reach our objectives. This way of life and this way of thinking can be implemented both in professional life and personal life.

1.3. About the author

1.3.1. Foreword by Donald B. Kraybill

Donald B. Kraybill is an expert of Anabaptism faiths and living. He has dedicated his life to studying the Anabaptist groups and the Amish community.

He has written a lot of books about the Amish and Amish economy and the most important of them is *Amish Enterprise: From Plows to Profits*.

He is a professor in the Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania and he is also Senior Fellow of Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. He is an expert of sociology and he has been recently awarded for a project called "Amish Diversity and Identity: Transformations in 20th Century America". He and the other Amish researchers will dedicate the prize to doing a study of different parts of the Amish community and they will compare them with those in our society.

He is totally involved in studying the Amish and, based upon his career, it is likely he is one of the most important connoisseurs about them.

1.3.2 Erik Wesner

Erik Wesner first visited the Amish in 2004. He has visited about twenty Amish communities in five different states and he has interacted with more than 5000 Amish families. He has the opportunity to visit them because he used to work selling books in Amish communities.

He was very impressed and he started reading books about the Amish. He read *Amish Enterprise: From Plows to Profits* by Donald Kraybill about the migration of Amish people from farms to business. With his experience with Amish people and the inspiration of this book he was driven to write *Success made simple*. But this is not his only publication, he has written other books like *Who are the Amish?* a view of Amish way of life. He has also collaborated in *Entrepreneur Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, etc.

Nowadays he has got a famous blog about the Amish (www.amishamerica.com) where you can find all the information and curiosities of this community.

1.3.2.1. Interview with Erik Wesner

I had the opportunity to interview Mr. Erik Wesner by writing an email to him. It was difficult to contact him because he did not answer me quickly so I had to insist a little. He told me about his interests, Amish people, economy, etc. This interview gives a view of this book in first person. The author explains his intention and the impact that it has in the entrepreneurs of our society. The entire interview is on page 5 from the Annex.

After interviewing Erik Wesner my project has another point of view about the Amish community and its people. He also explains the inspiration of writing *Success made simple* and his interest in economy. His book is really interesting for entrepreneurs from our society and it is also useful. I think he is an interesting person because he is involved and he has been studying the Amish for many years and he has a lot of knowledge about them.

1.5. An Amish enterprise

To bring the book to reality, here is an example of an Amish enterprise. I have chosen *Ohio Hardwood Furniture* because it is a business created a few decades ago and it is very popular in Ohio. With the information from the website (<http://www.ohiohardwoodfurniture.com>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Hardwood-Furniture>) I have gathered some information from this enterprise.

1.5.1. Ohio Hardwood Furniture

Ohio Hardwood Furniture is an enterprise located in Peninsula, Ohio. This enterprise is placed in an 1820's building, one of the oldest of the Western Reserve. They have their products exposed on the first floor. They offer plain furniture made of good quality wood. They create unique furniture especially for each client to make it more functional and to adapt the furniture to any place. They always respect the environment in the manufacturing process, they explain in the website that they use solar

power. They also respect forests using only some specific trees and allowing young trees to grow.

Nowadays they have incorporated a transportation service, if the customer wants they bring you your order home. They have also introduced card payment and they are continuously introducing new techniques to make it easy for the customers.

1.5.1.1. Their products

They offer you a top quality product: beautiful, handmade, with the best materials, etc.; they ensure the product can be repaired, restored and refinished; they introduce you in the elaboration of the product, you can meet the person who is elaborating the furniture and you can mediate in the design or in any moment; and they also offer a warranty and a confidence with the enterprise.

The most important thing is that you can create a customized product, a unique product. They offer different types of wood, concretely nine types to choose from according to the product you want. Then, you can choose the kind of product you want (a chair, a table, a sofa...) and after they have done a layout according to the measures and the style the customer wants, they draw up a budget. If you agree with the layout and the price they proceed to build the product. When the product is done they show it to you. If everything is correct the sales process ends at this point.

Here there are some examples of their products:



Dressing Table with Trifold Mirror made of Quarter Sawn White Oak. It consists of three mirrors and seven drawers. It is perfect for the bedroom.



Outdoor Table made of Hard Maple and designed for the garden or the terrace of the house.



Double bed made of Walnut wood. It has a rectangular front part.

All pictures from <http://www.ohiohardwoodfurniture.com>

1.5.1 Technology in Amish enterprises

Ohio Hardwood Furniture has got a website like other Amish enterprises. Without being introduced to computers, they probably would not have been as successful as they are.

They use Amish blogs or websites which explain things about the community to put some advertisements of their businesses (see



picture 7) and to make themselves known. Thus, a person who is interested in the Amish can know they have businesses. These advertisements

Picture 8. Ohio Hardwood Furniture add from www.amishamerica.com

help them a lot and enable them to be known by as many people as possible.

Apart from these advertisements they also use some equipment to construct the furniture because nowadays it is almost impossible to build quality furnishings without some specific machines. However, they want to keep traditions and they want to continue with handmade process even if the use of some equipment is necessary.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Once the project finished I am very happy with the result. In the first part of the project, the objective was to discover the most characteristic features of the Amish community, their History, their beliefs and their way of life. I have been able to collect all the information and to organize it to create a compilation of knowledge about Amish people. Apart from the information of the websites and books, the interviews with ex-Amish provide another point of view of the Amish community, a subjective standpoint.

What I have discovered is they live this way due to their beliefs. Their lives are moved by religion and they cherish life in a special way. God is everything for Amish people. They use technology in a modest way, because they do not want to be modernized. They think God appreciates pacific people and simple living. Nowadays, they have been introduced in our economy because they need some money to adapt to the conditions of the twenty-first century.

As a result of this introduction of Amish people in the corporate world, a lot of Amish businesses have been created. *Success made simple* connects our economy with Amish entrepreneurs. With this book I have also discovered that they are being successful in their businesses. And I focused the second part on extracting a general conclusion about the book and the facts that make Amish entrepreneurs successful without any knowledge of economics. With the review of the book, I have been able to extract all the important concepts of the book and the best advice for entrepreneurs from our society, apart from its objective, the way which it is written, etc. I have also been able to interview Erik Wesner, the author, and he has explained more than what is reflected in the book.

In conclusion, in the first part of the project I have been able to learn aspects about the Amish community that is not as I thought at first. Then, in the second part, I have learned their way of carrying on a business and Amish economy in depth. Aside, I have learnt a little about the personality of Amish people due to the fact that the book contains interviews with Amish businessmen.

All in all, this topic attracted my attention and I have become very interested in the project. I have constantly found new information about the Amish, because

there are a lot of websites about them. When I found the book, *Success made simple*, I was captivated, although it was really difficult for me to understand it and I spent a lot of hours reading. After reading it, I enjoyed doing the review and expressing my opinion of the book and I also value the fact that I had the opportunity to do an interview with the author. I am very interested in economy, so this project is very useful for me and I have also improved my English in terms of reading and writing. I have talked online with American people and with ex-Amish and it has been a fantastic experience for me.

Apart from learning from the Amish, their economy or English I learned how to do a serious project. I am grateful to my teacher and all the people who have given me ideas and motivation to keep working and to create a gratifying project.

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