



## **Controlled Acculturation: A Survival Technique of the Hutterites**

Joseph W. Eaton

*American Sociological Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Jun., 1952), 331-340.

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of their experience, that most of the "hillbillies" would work with Negroes if confronted by a firm policy was borne out by the actions of the southern whites themselves. In fact, some of the most violently anti-Negro southerners were among those who had worked with Negroes, such as a man who later returned to Tennessee because "he couldn't stand to send his children to school with Negroes," and a former member of the Ku Klux Klan.

To most of the "hillbillies," Chicago was not a place to live but merely a place to make a living. The South continued to be their principal reference group and they followed its practice of racial segregation and exclusion when it was conveniently possible. When confronted with situations in which these ways could not be adhered to without personal sacrifice, however, they tended to make the necessary behavioral adjustments even though changes in attitudes did not necessarily occur.

#### CONCLUSIONS

This study does not support the hypothesis that the southern white migrant, at least the working class migrant, is likely to change the northern interracial situation to conform to his "southern" prejudice. The southern whites studied here, a marginal group in industry themselves, were found to have little effect in deterring employers from hiring Negroes. Their principal effect in northern industry was to furnish an alternate pool of labor for employers who desired to continue an existing policy of exclusion. When confronted with a firm policy of non-discrimination, however, they tended to accept the situation as defined by management. Yet this did not indicate a radical change in the racial attitudes of the southern whites, but rather an accommodation to the exigencies of a specific situation. At the same time, the prevalence of policies of exclusion of Negroes in Chicago plants made such accommodation unnecessary for many of the "hillbillies."

### CONTROLLED ACCULTURATION: A SURVIVAL TECHNIQUE OF THE HUTTERITES\*

JOSEPH W. EATON

*Wayne University*

**W**HAT are some of the factors related to the survival of ethnic minorities in America? The question is usually posed indirectly because it is studied in cultures in the process of disorganization. The

\* Paper read at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Society in Chicago, September 5, 1951. This paper is a report of one phase of the study, "Cultural and Psychiatric Factors in the Mental Health of the Hutterites," financed by the National Institute of Mental Health of the United States Public Health Service, at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan. The writer is indebted to Rev. Peter Hofer, Elder Preacher of the Schmiedlenleut at James Valley Colony, Elie, Manitoba, who lent his complete record of Schmiedlenleut rules passed since 1877; also to Thomas Plaut, Harvard University, who collaborated in translating the Schmiedlenleut rules from German into English, and Jane Decker of Wayne University who helped in editing them. Harold Sheppard and Norman D. Humphrey read the completed manuscript and made several helpful suggestions for its improvement.

Hutterites offer an opportunity for a somewhat more direct study of this problem. In-group cohesion and cultural autonomy are preserved in this American minority to a high degree. When the Hutterites were studied some twenty years ago by Lee Emerson Deets, he was not unmindful of areas of conflict and change.<sup>1</sup> But his study differed from similar ones of other ethnic minorities in its finding of a high degree of cohesion and social organization. By contrast to Indian, Italian, or Polish immigrants, who in the 1930's were engaged in a seemingly hopeless struggle for ethnic survival, Deets reported the Hutterites to:

. . . exhibit a degree of peacefulness, social harmony, and cohesion which by contrast with

<sup>1</sup> Lee Emerson Deets, "The Origin of Conflict in the Hutterische Communities," in *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, 25 (May, 1931), pp. 125-135.

our society is very striking. Within their order they have collective security. . . . Crime, either against our society or their own, is very rare. Divorce is unknown. Almost all members of Hutterite society have extraordinary mental health and freedom from mental conflicts and tensions. Family quarreling does not exist. They assert that quarreling of any kind is extremely rare. Suicide has never occurred. Insanity is almost non-existent. . . . Lonesomeness and friendlessness are practically unknown. Even death is quite universally viewed with an equanimity born of assurance that it is but a transition into an eternal future life. Few Hutterites have intellectual problems which are a source of mental conflict. Truths are held as absolutes and a sufficient number have been established as such to provide satisfying answers to individual problems. As compared with our society, the Hutterite community is an island of certainty and security in a river of change.<sup>2</sup>

For the last two years, this Hutterite reputation for social cohesion and peace of mind has been the object of an investigation of a multi-professional research team under the direction of the writer.<sup>3</sup> Unlike Deets in the 1930's, we find that the Hutterites in 1950 show some scars from the battle with their own impulses and conflicting American values.

Overt family conflicts are rare. We know of only one divorce and two separations. The aged, the ill, and the infirm are generally well protected and cared for. We did not find any case of major crime, psychopathy, severe physical assault, or other forms of severely anti-social behavior, but the group is not free from neurosis and psychosis. The picture of the Hutterite community as an unspoiled rural Utopia, which led us to study them, is impaired. Our study shows them to be unusual at least with respect to their effectiveness in maintaining a social system relatively free of individuals who are neglected or who engage in severely anti-social acts, against their own group or the larger American society. The question arises: How is it done?

Before proceeding to the body of our data it may be helpful to sketch a few facets of

the Hutterite folk culture. For at least seventy-six years, covering the lives of four or five successive generations in America, Hutterites have been subject to only moderate population selectivity through desertion of members born into the society or through the conversion of outsiders. The about 8700 Hutterites living in the summer of 1951 in 93 communal hamlets in the western United States and Canada, were largely natural descendants from about fifty Hutterite families who settled in three villages between 1874 and 1877, with the exception of 108 converts and the children of convert marriages. About five per cent of the males now living 15 and over and about .04 per cent of the females are known to have left their communities permanently.

The variations in belief and practice between individuals, families, and colonies are not great. This low degree of variability is nurtured by a common historical process of more than four centuries, which began in Switzerland in 1528 and produced the contemporary Hutterite society in North America. Their forebears were severely persecuted by both Protestant and Catholic rulers. Several times they came close to becoming exterminated. In 1770, a remnant of the sect found refuge in southern Russia and a promise of religious toleration. The Hutterites left Russia a little more than a century later to escape enforced Russification and military service.<sup>4</sup>

Religion is a major cohesive force in this folk culture. The Hutterites consider themselves to be a people chosen by God to live the only true form of Christianity. Like the Mennonites, and other Anabaptist sects which have similarities with the Hutterites, they believe in adult baptism. They are vigilant pacifists and emphasize simplicity in every aspect of living. Had Thorstein Veblen studied them, he would not have found, then or now, much evidence of conspicuous consumption.

The homogeneity is further enhanced by the high rate of in-group marriage which has

<sup>2</sup> Lee Emerson Deets, *The Hutterites: A Study in Social Cohesion*, Gettysburg, Pa.: Times and News Publishing Company, 1939.

<sup>3</sup> For a brief description of the research project, see Joseph W. Eaton and Robert J. Weil, "The Hutterite Mental Health Study," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, January 1951.

<sup>4</sup> A. J. F. Ziegleschmid, *Die Alteste Chronik der Hutterischen Bruder*, 1943; *Das Klein Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Bruder*, 1947, Philadelphia: Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation. Also see an English condensation by John Horsch, *The Hutterian Brethren, 1528-1931*, Goshen, Indiana: Mennonite Historical Society, 1931.

been practiced by these people for over a century. Their voluntary isolation from outside social influences has been all the more effective because their way of life is well integrated around a strong value system. Hutterites indoctrinate their children in a generally well planned educational process. We do not wish to run the risk of overstating the degree of homogeneity. Hutterites are not made out of one mold—the degree of variation is currently increasing. But by comparison with American or western European cultures, they can be characterized as relatively uniform.

While they differ in many important respects from their American neighbors, they are sufficiently Euro-American to make cross-cultural comparisons with predominant patterns in the United States and Canada somewhat more directly relevant than are the studies of American Indians, or African "primitives." Hutterite children attend separate schools staffed by licensed American teachers. They employ up-to-date machinery and trucks in their farm work. Their welders, tractor engineers, carpenters, livestock experts, and the department heads of diversified farms, have established many business contacts in the nearby villages and large towns.

In their social life and value system they are much more resistant to change. In these respects they are, in a limited sense, a mirror of the America of a few generations ago. They are trying to preserve many of its rural reformation-period values, and yet become part of the 20th century. The Hutterites also show us telescopically how much we have changed, and reveal some of the possible consequences of these changes for personality.

The Hutterites have unusual features, some of which are of considerable current scientific and political interest:

- (1) A family with little more than procreative and affectional functions. Economic support, preparation of food, and much of the education after the age of about three are community responsibilities.
- (2) A communal system of sharing property and products of labor.
- (3) A high degree of security, both economic and spiritual.
- (4) A predominance of the primary-group type

of social relationships. Colonies generally stay about 100 in size.

- (5) Fertility is high. It comes closer to the theoretical level of fecundity than in any other observed society. The median completed family in 1951 had ten children.
- (6) There is a narrow range of prestige variations, leaving virtually a "classless society."
- (7) Integration around an absolute value system. The culture is "totalitarian," if this term is used without its contemporary political and anti-humanistic connotations. Hutterites abhor all use of physical force and are fanatically devoted to the humanistic principles of an Anabaptist type of Christianity. They are totalitarian only in these respects: no major deviations from central beliefs and socially approved practices are tolerated; each generation is indoctrinated systematically to grow up to believe and act close to what their traditions believe; considerable subordination of the individual to the needs of the group is expected.

#### PROCESSES OF CHANGE

The Hutterites have maintained such a social system for many generations in Europe and for over three-quarters of a century in the United States. At present, however, the pressure for change and assimilation is strong, and growing all the time. It comes from two interrelated sources.

First, there is pressure from the outside. The colonies are visited almost daily by such persons as salesmen, government officials, teachers, and doctors. The women, who used to get out of the colonies only when they had to go to a doctor, now often accompany the men. Although most of the colonies enjoy a degree of geographical isolation, the "outside," as the Hutterites call it, has broken down the barriers of isolation which their forefathers hoped to maintain when they left Russia. Few colonies are now more than an hour or two from a good size city such as Winnipeg, Manitoba; Lethbridge, Alberta; Lewistown, Montana; or Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Second, there also is pressure from the "inside." Hutterites, particularly those in the younger age groups, are internalizing some of the values and expectations of their American neighbors. They want more individual initiative and choice and they consider things regarded as luxuries by their elders, to be necessities. There is no area of

living in which concepts of right and wrong are not being influenced by the experiences of life in America.

What is somewhat distinctive about social change in this culture is its gradual nature and the institutionalized techniques that have been developed to deal with pressure for change in an organized fashion. Hutterites tend to accept cultural innovations before the pressure for them becomes so great as to threaten the basic cohesiveness of the social system. We shall illustrate this process of change, (which will be defined later as *controlled acculturation*) primarily by reference to the written rules of the Schmiedenleut Hutterites, one of three cliques of colonies which constitute administrative and social sub-units of the larger ethnic group.

These written rules constitute no systematic guide to living, as does the *Schulchan Aruch* of Orthodox Jews.<sup>5</sup> Most problems of behavior among the Hutterites are dealt with on the basis of ancient traditions, which are transmitted to succeeding generations through example and oral communications. When people are sure of one another, no written laws are needed. Families, friendships, cliques, and other primary groups order their affairs on the basis of mores, supported by common consensus. Rules tend to be written down only when this common consensus starts to break down.

A study of cultural changes through an examination of such written rules has several advantages. They are what Durkheim calls, the "visible symbols of social solidarity."<sup>6</sup> The written rules are objective evidence that a change has occurred. They do not vary with the biases of the researcher, but express a deliberate intent on the part of those who wrote them.

New rules, among the Schmiedenleut Hutterites, are usually proposed at an inter-colony meeting of elected lay preachers, and are intended to combat a specific innovation in personal behavior of some members, which some of the preachers regard as a

violation of the unwritten mores. The new practice must be more than an isolated deviation of the sort which is controlled effectively through the normal processes of community discipline—punishment of the offender by admonition, standing up in church, and temporary ritual excommunication. Only when a deviation becomes widespread in one or more colonies are the leaders likely to appeal for a formal statement of the unwritten community code.

If such a formal rule is adopted by the preachers, it is read to the governing assembly of male members in every colony. Adoption or rejection is by majority vote of all baptized males. Hutterite leaders have their ears to the ground. Their grass-root consciousness is indicated by the fact that in the entire history of the Schmiedenleut colonies, no formal ruling of the preacher-assembly has ever been voted down.

The Schmiedenleut do not usually repeal a rule. When the pressure for change becomes strong enough among the members to threaten harmony and unity, the rule ceases to be enforced. In time a new rule will be passed to give formal recognition that a new practice is now authorized. What started as a violation becomes the law. The Hutterites are not fanatic. In this they differ from most groups which have established colonies involving communal ownership of property or unusual religious principles. They do not expel a member for deviating a little from the narrow path of custom. Disagreements, new ideas, and personal idiosyncracies are not completely repressed, although they are not encouraged. Taking their cue from the dogma that man is born to sin, they do not expect perfection from anyone.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF COMMUNAL PROPERTY

The Hutterites have had difficulty in living up to this part of their religious doctrine even before their migration to America. Around 1686 most Hutterite communities, which were then established in Hungary and Transylvania, abandoned the community of goods because of what Horsch believes to have been a widespread decline in their spiritual value cohesion.<sup>7</sup> All but those most deeply attached

<sup>5</sup> Salmon Ganzfried, *Code of Jewish Law (Kitzur Schulchan-Aruch)*, translated from Hebrew by Hyman E. Goldin, New York: The Star Hebrew Book Company, 54-58 Canal Street, 1928.

<sup>6</sup> See Georges Gurvitch, *Sociology of Law*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1942, pp. 106-122, for a detailed treatment of Durkheim's contributions to the sociology of law.

<sup>7</sup> John Horsch, *The Hutterian Brethren, 1528-1931*, Goshen, Indiana: The Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen College, 1931, pp. 75-78.

to the Hutterite religion made a permanent break with the sect during that period of crisis and the many decades of persecution by Jesuit priests which were to follow. In 1770, when the remnants of the sect found refuge in south Russia, they were so few in number that all could "live under one roof and eat at one table."<sup>8</sup> In 1819, the principle of communal ownership was completely abandoned by even this small colony of faithful. Not until 1859-60, less than two decades before the migration of Hutterites to the United States, did a remnant of a few dozen families reestablish an association of families with joint ownership of property.<sup>9</sup>

Evasion of the principle of communal property can be observed today in every colony. There are few young men of this generation who have not "earned a little pocket money on the side" by trapping animals for bounty or fur, by working for neighbors, and, in rarer cases, by selling for their private gain produce which belongs to the community. Leaders tend to tolerate these practices if they are not carried on too openly and to excess. They believe that these violations are a temporary phase of adolescent protest. By the time the boys become baptized, marry, and assume some administrative responsibility in the community, they "usually grow out of this foolishness." Most of them actually do, but some ambivalence towards the principle of communal ownership of everything is present even in most adult Hutterites.

Much more vigilance is shown in combating the earning of private income by adults. There is a rule requiring that money received for work done outside the colony has to be given to the elected manager. Efforts at selling colony articles to obtain money were widespread enough to require blocking by rules, such as the one in 1933 which declared that: "Taking wool to make socks or blankets and then selling these for profit does not belong to our life and shall not be permitted." Five years later a more detailed regulation also prohibited the selling of feathers, wool, soap, socks, gloves, and specific foodstuffs. Down feathers were apparently the most easy to sell. Regulations for-

bidding their private sale appear again in 1941.

American business men at times give presents in cash or kind to individual Hutterites who have done favors for them or whose goodwill they are anxious to secure. Such gifts create a problem in a community where there is supposed to be an equitable sharing of all material goods. There is a 1926 regulation which provides that presents of clothing received by members be subtracted at the time of distribution of clothing by the colony. "Other presents must be looked over by the preacher and manager, who decide what disposition is to be made of them." Money received as a present was to be turned over to the manager according to a 1891 decree, although twenty-five cents of it could be retained for spending money.

In recent years, colonies are trying to combat private earning through distributing monthly cash allowances to each member, with which they can purchase food, candy, or other articles not considered taboo. In 1941 the Schmiedenleut colonies adopted a uniform standard for this practice; "All people over 15 years of age shall receive two dollars and forty cents spending money a year. It shall be distributed in monthly portions to the father in each family. It shall be spent only for edibles. Children under fifteen years and over six months shall get five cents per month. For unbaptized children, the allowance shall be given to the parents." In some colonies the allowance has been recently raised. The leaders also purchase for general distribution, quantities of fresh fruit, candy, toys, and canned fruit. Formerly these items had to be purchased by each person with his allowance.

Adjustments to the impact of individualistic values are being made, but these controlled concessions to the demand for change also serve to underline that there is still considerable strength in the belief of contemporary Hutterites in the community of goods.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF AUSTERE SIMPLICITY

The pressure for assimilation is equally strong on the Hutterite principle of austerity in consumption. The sect lives in a country in which the encouragement of fashion and conspicuous consumption is a major concern

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>9</sup> Zieglschmid, *op. cit.*, pp. 422-435.

of a billion-dollar advertising industry. As early as 1883 it was necessary to combat fashion in the form of a rule to forbid "ivory rings or red ribbons on the harnesses of horses." An 1886 rule stated that "four-wheeled baby carriages are not permitted." In 1926 another rule reaffirmed that "baby cribs shall remain as always, namely simple wagons with a pole," to ensure that the Hutterites "keep to the old way."

The Schmiedenleut Hutterites have several regulations designed to keep personal consumption on the basis of need and equality within each level of need. For instance, a family of six or more may have seven chairs; one with four or five may have four; one with three or less members may have three chairs.

The zeal for austerity in consumption has limits. It appears that the Hutterites are careful not to be excessively severe in restraining strong drives. They reduce the temptation to violate rules by not forbidding all enjoyment of food, drink, sex, and adornment. Hutterites enjoy eating. They are encouraged to get married. "Simple" decorations and colors in clothing are authorized. Wine, beer, and occasional hard liquor are distributed in moderate quantities. The rules are only directed at what the culture considers excesses. This principle of moderation is well illustrated by a 1925 rule to put an end to what are considered excesses at weddings, when the community provides quantities of alcoholic beverages for the celebration of festivities:

When there is a wedding, nobody shall take the liberty of carrying home drinks or taking away from the wedding that which he could not drink. This because human natures are different. And everyone shall drink only so much that his conscience remains clear, because all excess and misuse are sinful. Only if somebody, because of his need to work, cannot be present when drinks are poured, can he come later to the person charged with pouring and ask for his share. But he must not take it home. If somebody is sick however, and cannot attend the wedding, the manager shall give him his share in all fairness.

The largest number of austerity rules are concerned with clothing. Hutterite clothing is the visible symbol of their autonomy. The forces of assimilation are most easily brought

to bear against this form of symbolic segregation. It is external to the person, and its change seems to be just a trivial matter. Changes in dress often symbolize the beginning of a major break with the past.<sup>10</sup>

One Hutterite regulation exhorts members that they should ". . . start no new styles. . . ." But the style urge is strong and one can expect many rules on this subject to be issued to keep up with the genius of younger Hutterites for expressing themselves. Hutterites needed to be reminded in 1909 that they must not make "rolled caps" for children, nor add colored strings or bands. Black hats were the only kind permitted by a 1936 rule which added that "recently purchased white or grey hats should be worn out this year," indicating that they were contrary to the unwritten tradition. Two years later, another regulation was necessary to include pith helmets in this prohibition, since some Hutterite youngsters had begun to purchase them because "there is nothing in the regulations against them."

Schmiedenleut tradition required the use of hooks and eyes to fasten clothes until 1926, when it was decided that buttons on winter clothes "could be retained." The ex post facto regulation acknowledging this change in fashion also sets clear limits: "Only black buttons could be used, except on white garments, where there should be white buttons." But the tendency to use buttons in colors contrasting to the cloth persisted, and twelve years later the 1926 regulation had to be virtually repeated. Em-

<sup>10</sup> Pauline V. Young, *The Pilgrims of Russian Town*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932. The author found this to be the tendency among the Molokans, a Russian religious sect with strong community ties, which disintegrated rapidly in urban Los Angeles, where the pressures for assimilation proved to be too strong for the internal forces of cohesion. Her account of the significance of a Molokan girl's struggle with fashion would not have to be changed to apply in full to the Hutterites.

"Once I mustered up courage to buy a hat for one dollar and ninety-eight cents. When my mother heard about the hat, she cried and carried on something terrible. 'A hat, what next!' To avoid trouble, I left my hat at a girl friend's house and called for it every morning, ditching my shawl" (p. 163).

Hutterites experience similar conflicts, but very few girls have "ditched their shawls."

phasizing that buttons should be of the same color as the garment, the preachers added: "Let everyone be warned of the dangers of misfortune and eternal damnation."

A strict rule in 1933 demanded that "sweaters . . . (be) summarily gotten rid of, since they do not belong to our world and only lead to improper dealings. . . . He who does not obey shall have his taken away and burned, and the violator shall be punished." The unusual vehemence with which it is worded may pertain to the fact that sweaters are clinging garments which reveal the human form quite faithfully. Other rules require that dresses be kept within five or six inches, and trousers within three or four inches of the ground. This vehemence of opposition is not applied to all efforts to substitute factory for home-made products. As early as 1911, a regulation authorized that, "A suit (tailored in colony style) shall be bought for all brothers . . . worth about five to six dollars." And in 1917, fur linings for winter clothes were authorized for purchase. After 1921, some "high shoes" (for Sunday) could be purchased in place of home-made ones. In 1938, mattresses "costing no more than fifteen dollars" could be distributed to families which would then have to forego their quota of feathers, which traditionally had been the material used in home-made mattresses. By 1944, the purchase of all types of shoes was authorized, but only in styles approved by the preacher, the manager, and the shoemaker.

Concessions are being made. When the pressure for change becomes too great, we find here as previously a willingness to change a little. In the long view of history, these changes may accumulate into a lot.

#### PRINCIPLES OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Farmers generally tend toward greater self-sufficiency than city folks. In frontier days they had no choice but to be self-sufficient. Specialized services were not available to them. Their cash income also was usually too low to pay for haircuts in a barbershop, meals in a restaurant, or canned goods from a store. For Hutterites, the preference for self-sufficiency has always had more than an economic motivation. It functions to keep down the frequency of business

contacts between members of the colony and outsiders. It also reflects the religious emphasis on austere simplicity.

The effective system of communication throughout America, with its modern roads, its radio, and its press, as well as the economic pressure for the use of technological improvements, made it impossible for the Hutterites to maintain the degree of isolation that had been possible when they lived among Russian peasants. The group is now adjusting itself to these technological and social forces. Very much unlike the anti-machine-age Amish people, Hutterites have no religious taboos against new inventions as such. Their basic attitude is to be tolerant of the use of technology in production, but to be more insistent upon home-made products in consumer goods.

For a long time, Hutterites resisted the use of motor vehicles, which could take members to the "temptations" of towns "too easily." The first formal decision concerning trucks was made in 1928. It called for their complete disposal ". . . in view of the misuse and annoyance associated with them." But the pressures for their use proved to be too great, and two years later, permission was given for each colony to rent up to 25 times a year. The following year the rental limit was extended to 30 times a year, although preachers and unbaptized males under 25 years of age were prohibited from driving. In 1933, the rule was changed to permit the use of trucks without any numerical limit, but "they could not be owned, nor rented for more than half a year and they were not to be kept on colony property." In 1940 came a most significant concession: "Preachers may drive trucks like other brothers."

Passenger cars are still forbidden. They are defined as luxuries. In 1941, two Schmied-enieut colonies which had purchased station wagons, were ordered to dispose of these too "up-to-date" vehicles. The importance attached to this decision is underlined by the fact that for the first time the preachers decided to accompany this regulation with a definition of what is a station-wagon, copied from the American College Dictionary!

The gradual acceptance of factory-made devices is important largely because of the



recent acceleration of this trend. Imperceptibly to many Hutterites, their concept of what constitutes luxury is changing. Both barn and kitchen are now equipped with modern refrigeration systems. There is even talk of a dishwashing machine to lighten the burden of the women-folk, to whom a hair ribbon or silk stockings still are tabooed objects. Here is a partial list of "luxury" items found in the home of a prominent leader:

- A painted photograph of a son in army uniform.
- A set of enamelled grocery cannisters, all empty since no cooking is done at home.
- A small night light.
- A venetian blind in one of the two living-room windows.
- A rayon souvenir pillow.
- A cigarette stub in an ashtray. (Hutterites consider smoking to be sinful.)
- A Remington shaving machine.
- A silk handkerchief from the New York World Fair.
- Artificial flowers in a decorative flower pot.
- Two pin-buttons pinned on a wall decoration over the bed of the colony's most attractive adolescent girl. The respective texts of these buttons were: "I am thin, but oh my!" and "Oh baby, you do it so nice!" These were gifts of one of her Hutterite beaux.

The occasional sales-representative or idle traveller who visits the colonies will notice little of this. The uniformity of polka-dotted black and white kerchiefs worn by all women, the majestic beards of the married men, and the pastoral scene of ducks and geese in the community courtyard, may hide the fact that behind this apparently unchanging facade, old and new values are waging a silent struggle within the heart of every Hutterite.

In all this, we must not overlook that relative self-sufficiency remains a potent weapon in the Hutterite battle for cultural cohesion. Among the farm enterprises in most colonies are dairying, beef cattle, sheep, swine, poultry, ducks, and occasionally turkeys for the "outside" Thanksgiving market. Nearly all colonies grow their feed, except for protein concentrates. They make their own bread from grain. Butter, honey, pota-

toes, vegetables, fruits, meat and nearly all the things which come to the dinner-table are home products. Most clothes, furniture and bedding are still home-made.

#### THE PROCESS OF CONTROLLED ACCULTURATION

The Schmiedenleut regulations illustrate the persistent efforts of the Hutterite people to control rates of social change by defining the areas in which it is to be approved. When the pressure for change becomes too strong and the rules are violated widely enough to threaten respect for law and order, the Hutterite leaders push for formal change of the written law before it makes too many lawbreakers. By bending with the wind, Hutterites have kept themselves from breaking. This policy was explained by one of their outstanding leaders as follows:

I belong to the conservative faction that believes in making changes as slowly as possible. We Hutterites certainly have changed radically, even during the last decade. Sometimes I get the feeling we will not survive because we go too much with the world. But my father used to think the same thing when I was young, and we are still going strong. We must progress slowly. We should be conservative, although the Apostle Paul said, 'Make use of the things of this world, but do not abuse them.' You can make changes as long as you do not sacrifice principle. There is conservatism that is right and one that is foolish. We look for the happy medium.

This process of change might be designated as *controlled acculturation*. It is the process by which one culture accepts a practice from another culture, but integrates the new practice into its own existing value system. It does not surrender its autonomy or separate identity, although the change may involve a modification of the degree of autonomy.

Controlled acculturation can only be practiced by a well organized social structure. There must be recognized sources of authority. The presence of this practice is evidence that the culture has considerable vitality for growth and continuity, despite the pressures for change to which it is making an adjustment. In the controlled acculturation of Hutterites, there is rarely any fundamental negation of the group's own value system. When they adopt American ways

they do not become personally identified with the mainstream of the American culture. They remain Hutterites, loyal to their autonomous way of life.

The process of controlled acculturation cannot be continued indefinitely without ultimately resulting in more assimilation. The concessions made by the Hutterites to their American environment are not only affecting their practices, but their value system as well. In time, the changes may accumulate to bring about a major shift in values, which could destroy the group's existence as a separate ethnic entity.<sup>11</sup>

The controlled acculturation of Hutterites has been criticized by some of their neighbors. There have been unsuccessful efforts to penalize them for their slow rate of Americanization through special discriminatory legislation in Manitoba, Montana, and South Dakota. In Alberta, pressure groups of self-styled patriots were successful in pushing the Social Credit Party leadership to enact a land law which is offensive to many Canadians who treasure their country's strong traditions of civil and religious liberty. The law<sup>12</sup> singles out Hutterites to prohibit their lease or purchase of land within forty miles of any existing colony. It was hoped that the forty mile provision would help to reduce the group cohesiveness by keeping colonies more isolated from each

other. The opposite is taking place. Hutterites are in the process of establishing a formal church structure including all of their colonies,<sup>13</sup> which would make it more difficult for any single community to make major innovations of social practice. Many leaders see in this discriminatory law an act of God to warn "His People." It has strengthened the resolve of many younger Hutterites to be wary of "outsiders who hate us." It functions to increase their in-group orientation.

#### CONTROLLED ACCULTURATION AND PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT

The strong communal organization which enables the Hutterites to make a planned retreat in the direction of assimilation in the form of controlled acculturation, probably contributes to the good adjustment of individuals. Unlike the natives in the Pacific Islands or the Poles of America's ghettos, Hutterite individuals are not being forced, almost overnight, to make a transition from the security support of their *Gemeinschaft* with primitive peasant values, to an unfamiliar *Gesellschaft* society with 20th century American values. They make the change slowly enough to enjoy community support in the process.

Many members of American minority groups have become marginal and disorganized when caught in a culture conflict. Immigrants lose confidence in their ancestral culture. Their children tend to reject the old-fashioned practices in which their parents no longer believe, but to which they adhere for lack of alternative. They become what Stonequist calls *marginal men*—people without secure roots or values.<sup>14</sup> The high rates of crime, delinquency, prostitution, venereal disease, and other indices of social disorganization commonly found in this marginal second generation of immigrant groups, can be viewed as a social price of their

<sup>11</sup> This concept of acculturation is similar to that defined by the Social Science Research Council Sub-Committee on Acculturation. See: Melville J. Herskovitz, *Acculturation*, New York: J. J. Augustin, 1938, pp. 10-15; Ralph Linton, editor, *Acculturation in Seven Indian Tribes*, New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940, pp. 463-464. The Subcommittee also makes a distinction between acculturation and assimilation. They point out that no clear line can be drawn between the two processes. In this discussion, we reserve the concept of assimilation to denote the end-product of a process of acculturation, in which an individual has changed so much as to become dissociated from the value system of his group, or in which the entire group disappears as an autonomously functioning social system. Acculturation, on the other hand, is reserved for those changes in practice or beliefs which can be incorporated in the value structure of the society, without destruction of its functional autonomy.

<sup>12</sup> "An Act Respecting Lands in the Province Held as Communal Property," Revised in 1947, Chapter 16, Assented to March 31, 1947, Government of Alberta. See also, Joseph W. Eaton, "Canada's Scapegoats," *The Nation*, 169, No. 11 (1949), pp. 253-254.

<sup>13</sup> Bill B, The Senate of Canada, *An Act to Incorporate the Hutterian Church*, passed by the Senate, 14th February 1951, Fourth Session, Twenty-First Parliament, 15 George VI, 1951, 5 pp. Also: *Constitution of Hutterian Brethren Church and Rules as to Community Property*, published by E. A. Fletcher, Barrister-Solicitor, 412 Paris Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 14 pp.

<sup>14</sup> E. V. Stonequist, *The Marginal Man*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937.

rapid assimilation, without much in-group support.

No such pronounced tendency of individual demoralization was observed among the Hutterites. Hutterites are generally self-confident about their group membership. There are few signs of self-hatred and the sense of deep personal inferiority commonly found among assimilationist Jews, who feel ambivalent about their relationship to the Jewish group.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Kurt Lewin, "Psycho-Sociological Problems of a Minority Group," *Resolving Social Conflicts*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948, pp. 145-158.

The factors responsible for this phenomenon are no doubt numerous and are beyond the scope of this paper, but controlled acculturation is one of them. This controlled process of adjustment to social change gives group support to the Hutterite individual who must adjust his way of life within the conflict of his own 16th century Anabaptist peasant traditions and the twentieth century American values of his environment. Hutterites are making the adjustment, both as a total culture and as individuals, while maintaining a considerable measure of functional adequacy and self-respect.