1981

An oral history study of the religiosity of fifty Czech-American elderly

Christopher Jay Johnson

Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd

Part of the Family, Life Course, and Society Commons

Recommended Citation


https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/7433

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Retrospective Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This was produced from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure you of complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark it is an indication that the film inspector noticed either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, or duplicate copy. Unless we meant to delete copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed, you will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame. If copyrighted materials were deleted you will find a target note listing the pages in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed the photographer has followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For any illustrations that cannot be reproduced satisfactorily by xerography, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and tipped into your xerographic copy. Requests can be made to our Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases we have filmed the best available copy.
An oral history study of the religiosity of fifty Czech-American elderly

by

Christopher Jay Johnson

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Sociology and Anthropology
Major: Sociology

Approved:

Signature was redacted for privacy.

In Charge of Major Work

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Department

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Graduate College

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1981

Copyright © Christopher Jay Johnson, 1981. All rights reserved.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

Statement of purpose 1
Problems with past research 1
Linkages between four research papers 2
Unique features of the present religiosity research 3

PART I. ASSESSING RELIGIOSITY RESEARCH: THE ORAL HISTORY ALTERNATIVE 4

ABSTRACT 5

INTRODUCTION 6

Statement of purpose 6
Assumptions of this study 6

LIMITATIONS OF PAST RESEARCH 8

Limitations of research 8

THE ORAL HISTORY ALTERNATIVE 17

Why this approach? 17
An oral history approach 19
Drawing the sample 21
Preliminaries to the interview 24
The interview 25
Data analysis: transcription and interpretation 25
Presentation of data patterns 30
A final option for ethnic group studies 31

SUMMARY 33
## PART II. ETHNICITY AND RELIGIOSITY AMONG CZECH-AMERICAN ELDERLY: THE EVOLUTION OF ECUMENICALISM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHODS</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative methodology</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The oral history guide</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interview</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis: transcription and interpretation</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions on religiosity</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESULTS</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate concerns</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How were ultimate concerns served?</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecumenical or sectarian?</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART III. A SOCIO-HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERALISM IN CZECH CULTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous research</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of purpose</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERALISM IN FOURTEENTH-CENTURY BOHEMIA</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background data</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural conduciveness</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural strain</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precipitating events</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic authority and mobilization of followers for action</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE HISTORICAL PERSISTENCE OF LIBERALISM</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routinization of charisma</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other factors keeping liberalism alive</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONCLUSION</strong></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART IV. LIBERALISM: ITS INFLUENCE ON THE ECUMENISM AND HUMANISM OF FIFTY CZECH-AMERICAN ELDERLY</strong></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ABSTRACT</strong></td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>METHODS AND SAMPLE</strong></td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sample</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interview</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis: primary and secondary data</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary data</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESULTS</strong></td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanism and ecumenism</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberalism</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secularism</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONCLUSION</strong></td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Statement of purpose
The purpose of this dissertation is to employ an oral history approach to describe and analyze the religiosity of fifty Czech-American elderly in Iowa.

Problems with past research
Sociological research on religiosity contains the following limitations. First, samples tend to exclude the elderly (Mindel and Vaughan, 1978) and ethnic groups (Kenny et al., 1977). Second, ahistorical approaches are typically used, which fail to account for possible influences of a person's family and ethnic heritage upon his or her present religiosity. Third, most survey scales suffer from problems of construct validity. That is to say, the common religiosity items used disclose an unmistakable Protestant, church-oriented operationalization. This practice is problematic, considering the diversity of belief systems within hundreds of Christian sects, differing as to what constitutes a religious person today. Fourth, the closed-ended surveys incorrectly assume that questionnaire items contain indicators valid across age, income, occupational, ethnicity and sex categories. Finally, surveys tend to assume that the subjective states referred to in the instrument have near universal meaning.
Linkages between four research papers

In the first part entitled, "Assessing Religiosity Research: The Oral History Alternative," weaknesses of survey approaches is analyzed, and the oral history method is defended. The oral-history approach is chosen, because it helps the researcher to acquire a more holistic understanding of religiosity among members of a select ethnic group over time.

The second part entitled, "Ethnicity and Religiosity Among Czech-American Elderly: The Evolution of Ecumenism," is a study which attempts to carry out the suggestions in part one. This paper empirically investigates the religiosity of fifty Czech-American elderly, using an oral-history (with an oral history guide) methodology. The purpose of this study is threefold: to employ oral histories to study the religiosity of fifty Czech-American elderly; to conduct a religiosity study of a specific age and ethnic group; and to test the thesis of Dean Kelley, who maintains that elderly gravitate toward sectarianism.

The third part entitled, "A Socio-Historical Study of the Development of Liberalism in Czech Culture," is linked to both the first and second papers (parts). The first paper called for the collection of literature on Czech culture in Europe to more fully understand the present religiosity of the fifty Czech-American elderly. The second paper argues that Czech-Americans inherited a liberal tradition. This paper traces the evolution of liberalism in Czech culture. An explanation for liberalism in Czech culture is offered, employing Neil Smelser's work on social movements and Max Weber's theory of charismatic authority.
Part four investigates why these fifty Czech-American elderly are humanistic and ecumenical at the present time, and how their liberal heritage was changed over generations in the United States. Evidence is presented to show that Czech-Americans became more secular and inclusive in their voluntary associations. Through this process, the liberal heritage of Czech people is linked to the present ecumenism and humanism of these fifty Czech-American elderly.

Unique features of the present religiosity research

The distinctiveness and contributions of this research to the sociology literature may be summarized:

1. This study offers one of the most comprehensive reviews of limitations to survey research on religiosity that has been given in the literature;

2. This study emphasizes the use of oral histories in studying religiosity, a qualitative method that sociologists have ignored in religiosity research;

3. This study emphasizes both the research and therapeutic value of conducting oral history research among elderly people;

4. This study is the first to conduct sociological research into the religiosity of Czech-American elderly;

5. This study effectively employs a combination of oral history materials with secondary historical documents;

6. The study is the first to research the unique history of an ethnic group and its impact on religiosity.
PART I. ASSESSING RELIGIOSITY RESEARCH:

THE ORAL HISTORY ALTERNATIVE
ABSTRACT

People's commitment to a spiritual life, their religiosity occupies a central place in the sociology of religion. In this study individual religiosity is assumed to be the result of a combination of free will and past or present social influences. Thus, in line with this assumption, a unique interpretive approach is outlined which employs a combination of oral histories and personal documents. Oral histories and personal documents are powerful tools for understanding religiosity for the following reasons: (1) they account for the factor of time by showing how religiosity evolves over the life cycle; (2) they account for the social and historical influences of family and/or ethnicity upon religiosity; (3) they account for the operation of free will by describing an individual's attitudes and belief system; and (4) they account for social change, with the use of an open-ended oral history interview guide, which is flexible enough to allow for any type of answer. It is recommended that future researchers sample different age, income, and ethnic groups, so that comparisons between various oral history accounts can be made.
INTRODUCTION

Statement of purpose
The thesis of this paper is that oral histories (with interview guide), and personal documents are powerful and productive tools for understanding religiosity in societies (e.g., the United States) that are experiencing rapid social change. Moreover, it is argued that oral histories have an additional therapeutic value for the individuals being studied.

The first part of the paper will focus on some limitations of past religiosity work, and how the oral history alternative will help reduce bias. The second part of the paper will outline the over-all strengths and usefulness of oral histories, and will show how they can be used to help researchers understand modern paradigms of religious expression.

Assumptions of this study
This study assumes that America has undergone rapid social change over the past hundred years, and religion has felt the effects of this "modernization" process. But rather than say, as some do, that religiosity has simply declined or risen in intensity, this paper maintains that religious expression has experienced evolutionary changes. Indicative of this process, a priest recently said that if he had to, he did not think he could clearly define just what a Catholic is today, a sentiment shared by leaders of other religions as well. Essentially, what he means is that the essence of his religion has changed. Catholicism, like other religions, is in a state of flux, such that from one period to the
next it is impossible to identify a belief or value that all Catholics presumably cherish. Even what might be considered more broadly "Christian" or "Jewish" expressions of religiosity are often subject to serious argument or debate among contemporary theologians. Hence, if religious leaders have difficulty defining what set of beliefs or behaviors constitute a Catholic, Protestant or Jew, how can behavioral scientists use a closed-ended survey, with a limited set of categories, to measure the religiosity of people from these religions? This point is raised to show that, for the most part, positivistic approaches to the study of religiosity are not always fruitful, for the expression of religiosity changes over time. Therefore, studies of such phenomena should be open-ended and account for temporal factors, along with variance in definitions.
LIMITATIONS OF PAST RESEARCH

Limitations of research

This paper will interpret religiosity from different assumptions than those of closed-ended questionnaires. Up to the present time, oral histories have been relatively ignored in religiosity research. Instead, surveys have been used, with samples which have tended to exclude certain age (Mindel and Vaughan, 1978), income, and ethnic minority groups (Kenney et al., 1977). Survey research, to be sure, contributed to some understanding of salient social issues like prejudice (Allport, 1954, 1959, 1966), anomie (Fischer, 1974; Carr and Hauser, 1976), and forms of social action (Batson, 1976; Broughton, 1978). However, there are important problems with surveys, limitations the present study is designed to overcome. Some of the past limitations of survey research in religiosity will be inspected, and then it will be indicated how some of these deficiencies could be eliminated through the methodology prescribed in this paper.

The first problem with surveys is that they tend to be ahistorical, failing to account for: (1) historical influences of the family and/or ethnic group upon a person's religiosity; and (2) the evolution of religiosity over a person's life cycle.

A second problem with surveys is that most scales suffer from numerous biases and problems of construct validity. "Construct validity is evaluated by investigating what qualities a test measures, that is, by determining the degree to which certain explanatory concepts or constructs account for performance on a test (scale)" (American Psychological Association, 1966:13). From an examination of some of the most
widely used and well-known religiosity surveys, it is found that the common religiosity items used disclose an unmistakable Protestant, church-oriented operationalization. Even if this bias was the intention of the researchers, it is problematic, because there are serious differences in definitions, dogmas, and rituals between and within the hundreds of Protestant churches. On the other hand, if the researchers intended to generalize to wider populations, even greater validity problems become apparent. For in the past, social scientists have employed the same construct name (religiosity), but each with different meanings and operationalizations. Consequently, generalizations involving religiosity are impossible, due to the different types of constructs. For example, some scholars have found that: (1) twelve percent or more of the United States population has participated in religious groups of "Eastern" origin (Campbell, 1978); (2) there are, according to George Gallop's 1980 poll, sixty-one million "unchurched" (i.e., "one who is not a member of a church or synagogue or who has not attended church or synagogue in the last six months, apart from weddings, funerals, or special holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Yom Kippur") adults in the United States (Flood, 1980: 23); (3) some see a trend away from traditional beliefs and practices, and increased interest in Eastern, and mystical religions (Glock, 1962; Wuthnow, 1978:234; Campbell, 1978:99); and (4) of those samples over the

1Indeed, respondents may acquiesce to the frame of reference assumed to the explicit bias of the scale items rather than to risk being viewed as "irreligious." More work is needed to construct more objective questions or approaches, in order to achieve less bias, and less socially desirable answers.
years 1971 to 1974 (even perhaps to the present), the only form of belief which increased for one research group, was the "other" category (Wuthnow, 1978:242). If these figures are even partially accurate, it becomes apparent that present religiosity surveys are deficient in that: (1) they fail to tap the diversity of definitions, beliefs, and practices within and among the various faiths in this country; and (2) they inadequately measure the religiosity of both neo-Christian and non-Christian forms of religious expression.

One might infer that these drawbacks of Judeo-Christian and institutional biases, are due, in part, to narrow, restricted samples which ignore the young, the elderly, and low-income ethnic minority groups. Nevertheless, from conventional religiosity scales, conclusions can be drawn that key population segments are "irreligious." Such conclusions, which take on such terminal and frozen form, can lead scholars to assert that the question of religiosity is answered when in fact the surface has not been scratched. Addressing the issue of social change, Colin Campbell (1978:99) asserts that "mystical religiosity is more dominant because it appeals to educated intelligentsia and it is compatible with highly differentiated, complex society, with secular, cosmopolitan, pluralistic, and relativistic culture." Were Campbell even partially accurate, students of social change, using conventional religiosity scales as their sole measurement, would never know.

Not all research on religiosity, of course, contains items biased toward the Judeo-Christian tradition or the institutional sphere. Keene (1967) studied members of the Baha'i Faith in addition to Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and nonaffiliates using items purged of Judeo-Christian
bias. Trying to avoid problematic issues stemming from a definition of religion which incorporates collective or institutional biases, Machalek and Martin (1976) developed open-ended questions to tap respondent's ultimate concerns of life and their coping strategies to handle the issue(s) they named.

While exceptional in their attempts to avoid biased measurement, neither of these studies is without problems. For example, some scholars contend (Schroeder, 1977) that Keene's use of interview items and present response categories and his treatment of the data as interval level is inappropriate for linguistic symbols which refer to the Divine and which evoke differences in the intensity of feeling and in interpretative frameworks. Successful where Keene is not, Machalek and Martin (1976) employ a sampling design which may have skewed, however, their a posteriori coding of the responses to their open-ended interview. The sample was a simple random sample of an "old, middle to working class, white neighborhood" in Baton Rouge. They treat ultimate concerns which are "immanent" as separate from ultimate concerns which are "transcendent." As others have pointed out (Moberg, 1967), imposing a Western dichotomization of this kind might distort our understanding of the Weltanschauung of a person who views his/her relationship to God as at once transcendent and immanent.

---

2 The problems of surveys, according to Schroeder (1977), consist of: 1) the relation of the causal past to the emerging present; 2) the relation of a whole to its constituent parts; 3) the role of creative minorities in human societies; 4) the method of difference in data analysis and interpretation.
Three representative, widely used religiosity scales such as: (1) Individuals "Orientations and Involvement" (Lenski, 1961), (2) "Dimensions of Religious Commitment" (Glock and Stark, 1966), and (3) the "Dimensions of Religiosity" (King and Hunt, 1972), serve as illustrations of the problem construct validity.

In Lenski's (1961) work, one can see that: (1) the scales lack construct validity. Questions like, "Do you believe that Jesus was God's only Son sent into the world by God to save sinful men, or do you believe that he was simply a very good man and teacher, or do you have some other belief?" do little to tap the religiosity of liberal Christians, who might believe Jesus was one of many Sons of God, or of Muslims who believe in Christ and Muhammad as Manifestations of God, not merely good men or good teachers; (2) this work implicitly assumes that the Bible is the only true indicator of religious literature. Hence, a person may read the Book of Mormon, the works of Luther, or other religious books, but may be considered "irreligious" because he/she fails to indicate the Bible; (3) the scales were dichotomous rather than continuous -- often seeming arbitrarily divided; (4) the sample failed to control for ethnicity (i.e., Detroit Catholics and heavily Polish, thus they were probably more conservative, ethnic, and less socialized to American value patterns) (Demerath and Hammond, 1969:146-147). However, even with these and other shortcomings, this work contributed to the uplifting of religion as an important variable in sociology research.

Glock and Stark (1966) went beyond Lenski's four-dimensional scale to a five-dimensional scale. However, the problem of construct validity can be detected in their 1966 and 1968 studies. For instance, in the
widely used 1966 scale, they employed questions that dealt with "church-going habits," "receiving Holy Communion," "Confirmation," knowledge of the Bible, beliefs about Jesus, and so forth. This line of questioning is beset with bias toward white, traditionally (main-line) church-going Christians. As a result, these questions inadequately indicate the religiosity of certain liberal and conservative Christians, or non-Christians, whose ideologies emphasize different practices and beliefs (Moberg, 1967).

Referring to Glock's (1962) dimensions, Moberg (1967:26) addresses the general problem by stating that:

measuring each of the five dimensions of religiosity and all of their conceivable sub-dimensions hence is not fully equivalent to measuring man's ultimate concern, religious faith, or existential commitment. The scientific study of these dimensions can lead to the invalid implication that the totality of religion has been analyzed, if the researcher fails to recognize the limitations of empirical study in this area of religious research.

Although the later work of Glock and Stark (i.e., the nine dimensions contained in their 1968 scale) attempted to deal with the logical or conceptual problems of earlier dimensions they had constructed (i.e., the omission of the consequential), the validity problems remained.

Unlike Glock and Stark's (1966) work, King and Hunt (1972) constructed their indices according to an a priori analytic schema, in which they explored the multi-dimensionality of religiosity using factor analysis. Unfortunately, this scale suffers from the validity problems of the two previously evaluated studies. For example, the authors employ such biased items as: belief in Christ as a "living reality" (Creedal Assent); praying at other places than "church" (Devotionalism);
frequency of taking "Holy Communion" (Congregational Involvement);
"leaders of the Protestant Reformation" (Religious Knowledge); and so on. These dimensions are biased because they could not be operationalized for a Baha'i, a Quaker, or Buddhist. Moreover, the dimensions would be problematic for many mainline churchgoers including most Catholics, who probably have little knowledge of the Bible, who seldom "witness," and may have little understanding of Protestantism.

In regard to the aged, Mindel and Vaughan (1978) report that despite the elderly's frequent disengagement from formal organizational activity they often hold onto meaningful relations with these institutions. They also found that the subjective dimensions of one's relationships with organizations has largely been ignored in past research with religiosity scales and religious behavior (1978:107). Hence, studies have tended to ignore the nonorganizational and nonbelief dimensions of religious behavior. Machalek and Martin (1976:312) concur with the contention that past measures of religiosity have strong organizational bias and a strong Judeo-Christian bias. Kenney, Cromwell, and Vaughan's (1977:239) data suggest that traditional measures of religiosity are insufficient for ethnic minorities in America. They state:

In particular, research with low-income, multi-ethnic samples has need for measures which are sensitive to the religiosity among the urban poor who may be susceptible to being tagged as "nonreligious" by available instruments (Kenney et al., 1977:239).

In reviewing the three representative scales of Lenski, Glock and Stark, and King and Hunt, as well as the variability of past scale dimensions, and the problems of construct validity of most measures, one would conclude that there is a need to determine what the recent,
emergent heterogeneous forms of religious commitment are, instead of what they are not. Moreover, if the authors want to generalize to a large population, the samples should be more representative of a wide range of income, ethnic, age, and social backgrounds.

A third problem with most surveys lies in the paradoxical condition that is created when the instrument designed to clarify a subject, instead distorts it. That is, the goal of the closed-ended survey is to measure religiosity by employing a limited number of dimensions and categories, yet the general field of religiosity research yields an unlimited number of dimensions and categories of religiosity. Hence, like the priest's problem with defining Catholicism, researchers from the same religious persuasion cannot agree on what dimensions constitute a religious person.

The fourth problem of surveys in religiosity is the frequent assumption that the subjective states (e.g., the inner feelings of being "saved") referred to in the instrument items have near-universal meaning. After observing the wide range of dimensions in religiosity literature, and after seeing the disagreements between leaders and scholars from the same religious backgrounds, the only conclusion one can reach is that the subjective states referred to in survey instrument items have exclusive, particularistic meaning. Therefore, the above assumption is misleading, due to the broad range of differences in linguistic and symbolic interpretations of meaning. Surely, this suggests the need for a more open-ended, objective approach.

One might ask how open-ended approaches avoid these problems. Are not responses coded into exclusive categories, which may or may not
correspond with the true meaning of the responses? This might be answered by saying that although there are problems with the researcher's interpretation of responses, this bias can be reduced by having more than one person analyze the responses. Moreover, social change in responses is still allowed for, by the researcher leaving the response options open.
THE ORAL HISTORY ALTERNATIVE

Why this approach?

In order to correct the above deficiencies, an approach has been chosen which fits the previously stated notion that America is undergoing a modernization process, with the additional assumption that individual religiosity is the result of a combination of both free will and past or present socialization. Thus, oral histories (with open-ended interview guides), and personal documents will be presented as one of the most effective means of understanding religiosity. Furthermore, it will be recommended that when ethnic groups are studied, researchers should collect and analyze historical documents on the religious and cultural heritage of the group. In order to avoid premature or preconceived ideas of what one will see in the data, this procedure should be conducted after the analysis of the oral history data.

The oral history method allows the respondents to speak their religion, to show how their religiosity evolved over time (i.e., it is historical), and who or what influenced their value system. Even with the partial structure of the interview guide, the respondents still have the freedom to choose the response they feel, rather than to be limited to one of the researcher's selected (closed-ended) answers. The oral history method could be important to use during times of social change, i.e., people who live in countries with mixed value systems, along with different religions and sects. It is precisely under such conditions that researchers could expect people's attitudes, more importantly their answers, to be unpredictable and diverse. This makes the oral history
an important methodology for religiosity research because it allows for unrestricted, open answers, responses which could indicate either conventionality or social change. Considering the fact that religious leaders and scholars from the same faith have difficulty agreeing on what definition or dimensions constitute a "religious person," letting the respondent speak their religiosity through oral histories, may reduce biased responses.

Granted, both surveys and oral histories must contend with bias, both in the construction of either the questionnaire or interview guide and in the analysis of responses. However, a difference lies in the fact that surveys supply answers for the respondent to select, whereas the oral history approach leaves the answers open for the respondent.

Not until recently have sociologists extended Weber's verstehen approach to a more concrete methodological program for forming concepts. Cultural anthropologists and ethnographers have been developing tools of ethnoscience to tap inductively the subjective meanings of subjects within their own milieu (Saliba, 1978; Spradley, 1980; and Watson, Franke, and Watson, 1975). Called "controlled eliciting" (Sabila, 1978:148), or topic-oriented, focused, in-depth ethography (Spradley, 1980), the recently developed techniques of cultural anthropologists require fieldwork for the self-conscious, authentic reporting of the natives' point of view.

---

Joining ethnoscience with the task of concept formation is the work of applied phenomenology such as comparative lifeworld phenomenology (Hall, 1978). Thus, descriptive accounts, by subjects, of meaning and action within social contexts can be related to conceptual accounts of social life.

An oral history approach

The following methodological program was previously developed to study the religiosity of a host of elderly people from different ethnic backgrounds in the Midwest. The first age and ethnic group was Czech-American elderly in Iowa. By delineating this approach, we hope that bias can be reduced, social change tapped, and religiosity more effectively understood than through surveys.

The development of an open-ended oral history interview guide allows researchers to attain a middle ground between the analytic bias of inferring structure from free-association data and the conceptual bias of imposing structure, which may or may not be valid for the life under study. The instrument constructed for the Czech-American elderly study consisted of a modification of Bruce M. Stave's Oral History Interview Guide used in "The Peoples of Connecticut Oral History Project: A Study of the State's Ethnic Groups," with the addition of open-ended

---

4 Neither Weber nor Schutz actually met face to face with a subject's perspective in the field. Weber worked primarily from secondary sources and Schutz never applied his subjectivist perspective to understand "the diverse historically embedded social situations wherein subjective meaning is studied in a non-anonymous way" (Hall, 1978:15).
religiosity questions, phrased as objectively as possible. The idea was to use the revised guide to examine religiosity developmentally, at two levels of abstraction. The first level is the social-psychological level, which studies a person's present belief system. For example, the author asked, "Do you believe in God or some primary force in the universe? How strongly do you believe?" For another example, the author inquired about the respondent's ultimate concerns by asking, "In your most reflective moments, when you are thinking beyond the immediate problems of the day -- however important -- beyond the headlines, beyond the temporary, what do you consider to be the most important concern or concerns of life? What is/are the basic permanent concerns of life?" If the respondent's ultimate concerns were spiritual, a religious answer usually emerged.

The second level was structural and historical, examining the effects of ethnicity, ancestry (kinship socialization through generations), and social organizations upon the individual. In this approach, ethnic and kinship factors were tapped with questions which required respondents to reminisce about past events through the accounts that have been handed down to them through previous generations of their family. For instance, the author inquired, "What role did religion play in the community? How close was the nearest church or synagogue to the place of residence? Did any children become clergymen? Did other ethnic groups attend the same church? Did children go to Sunday School? How did religion differ from religion of the old country?" In another section of the guide, respondents were asked, "What was their (past generations) religious experience like? How closely tied were they to the church?" Again, the
answers to these questions were based upon the respondent's ability to recall past experiences or conversations with the first and second generations of his or her family. These questions were mixed with other topical areas, in order to balance the "religious" with the nonreligious, and to reduce anxiety or tensions which often result from asking questions on religion.

The effects of social organizations are examined by asking such questions as, "Do you belong or participate in any groups or organizations which help you cope or deal with the concern or concerns you previously mentioned? Which groups or organizations are these? And which are the concerns to which they relate?" There were other questions in the guide which related to earlier generations and their involvement in social organizations. With these relatively neutral questions, if the organizations were religious or quasi-religious, the respondents could say so without being forced to give a "religious answer." Finally, a copy of this instrument was available for inspection.

Drawing the sample

As stated earlier, there is a need to carry out religiosity research among elderly and ethnic groups. Therefore, the selection of Czech-American elderly (defined as age fifty-five or older) followed research goals, i.e., the study of elderly and of ethnic groups. Older people are an excellent group for oral history research for numerous reasons. First, elderly have lived with previous generations, and would probably be able to reconstruct more effectively the belief systems of earlier generations than would other age groups. Second, older people share,
to some degree, a biological, economic and social present. Hence, they can explicate their belief systems, as well as their offspring's. Finally, observations of common elements in the oral histories of these people may reveal some age-related or ethnic-related facts about their lives, which could contribute to scientific knowledge, and influence future policy or service delivery for this group.

Oral histories are useful in studying all age groups, not just the elderly. However, they are particularly valuable for use with older people because although some elderly may tend to disengage from many physical activities with age, their ability to converse does not considerably decrease. As Davida Earlix (1977:3) appropriately puts it:

The content of this talk has much information value if Lewin's (1951) "Life Space" concept has even limited validity. Lewin, in developing Field Theory, believed the mind held in potential awareness, a psychological past, present and anticipated future, encompassing internal and external stimuli from biological material, social and cultural sources. At any given moment behavior was selected, he believed, as a tension-relieving response to the interaction between the individual and his psychological environment.

Thus, the connection of oral history (e.g., reminiscence) to a larger body of thought suggests that talking about the past has therapeutic value in that a "life review" allows a person to move from "despair" to "integrity." Methodologists should consider not only the scientific value of research, but also the value an approach has for the people studied. Earlix (1977) devoted her dissertation to outlining the scientific (e.g., the validity), as well as therapeutic value of "life histories" for studying social gerontology.
In randomly drawing a quota sample of Czech elderly, the following means and sources were used: (1) white and blue collar Czech elderly located in Cedar Rapids (eastern Iowa), a key city of Czech immigration, and Fort Dodge (western Iowa) were drawn from a list provided by a Czech-based insurance and fraternal association; (2) mostly middle class and lower class persons were taken from a list of Czech-American blue collar retirees from a large industry in Cedar Rapids; and (3) rural samples were extracted from lists of Czech-American farmers residing in five counties in eastern, central, and western Iowa. Names of the farmers were provided by County Extension Directors in those areas.

From the above sampling frame, fifty cases were randomly drawn. This sample consisted of seventeen rural and thirty-three urban dwellers, of which twenty were female and thirty male, with mean age of 68.7 years. The occupational mix was fifteen farmers, seven white collar self-employed, nine white collar employed, fourteen blue collar, four housewives, and one unknown occupation. In regard to education, eight had a grade school education, five had a grade school and business college education, eighteen had a high school degree, eleven had a high school and business college degree, four had a college degree, two had a master's degree and two failed to report their education. Most were church members; there were twenty-two mainline Protestants (including four Lutherans, seven Methodists, ten Presbyterians, and one "Protestant"), seventeen Catholics and eleven Free-thinkers.\footnote{A Freethinker is a person who believes in free or autonomous thought, research, science and philosophy unfettered by dogmas and principles of religion.}
Preliminaries to the interview

The interview process involved the three steps of contact, interview, and follow-up. A phone script was formulated to call the selected cases. Prospective participants were encouraged to "get involved" on the grounds that they would be contributing to knowledge of Czech heritage and to the author's dissertation, and that the taped interviews would be given to the Iowa State Library "Ethnic Heritage Collection." The respondents were told that an introductory letter would precede the author's visitation to their home or office. This letter, with university insignia, explained and legitimated the project, and requested personal documents (e.g., diaries, letters, newspaper clippings, etc.) that would help in reconstructing the past. Older people are very cautious of strangers. This letter reduced fear, according to the testimonies of these people.

Selection of participants began with telephone contact. The project was explained by using a phone script, and participation was requested. The rejection rate was close to fifty percent. Most of the forty people who were eliminated, were either non-Czechs, or were not home after repeated calls. A few of these refusals were based on a lack of knowledge of ancestry, lack of interest in the project, or unwillingness to take time to prepare for and participate in the interview. All refusals were replaced by another random drawing (using a table of random numbers) from the sampling frame. Fifty respondents were selected.

The project was approved by the Iowa State University Human Subjects Committee.
A "Consent Form" was designed to protect the respondent from being taken advantage of by behavioral scientists. Intended to be administered to the respondents before or after the interview, the form stated the title, purpose, procedure, benefits, and confidentiality of this project. After reading the statement, the respondent was asked to sign his or her consent to the interview.

The interview

Interviews took place in the homes or offices of the participants throughout the year 1979. Each oral history ranged in time from forty to one hundred and twenty minutes, and was recorded on audio cassette tape. Most interviews were conducted by the author, with five carried out with a colleague.

After introductions, friendly conversation was carried on to establish the rapport necessary for an open and spontaneous interview. The interview guide was presented informally, allowing people, within limits, to express themselves on their own terms. On the one hand, it was important for interviewers to encourage subjects to relax, but at the same time to discourage the less valuable digressions.

A follow-up "thank you" letter was sent, not only for reasons of courtesy but also for solicitation of more personal documents and/or other materials that would assist the project.

Data analysis: transcription and interpretation

Although the tapes were transcribed verbatim, some repetition and side conversations were edited. To reduce expense, the oral histories were typed in rough copy form. Some typographical errors were not
corrected, but this had little, if any, effect upon data analysis, since the author could go back to the tapes to make corrections or rely on recall should any ambiguities arise. To reduce bias from only one person transcribing, three secretaries were hired to type thirty tapes, while the author transcribed the remaining twenty. All fifty of the transcribed cases were lumped together, with the 322 pages number sequentially for indexing. One of the transcribers was lacking in accuracy, her work was corrected by the author.

The goal of data analysis for this project is to understand elements of perception. In this context, understanding means a perspective shared with the oral history giver. "This is the verstehen of Weber, the definition of the situation of W. I. Thomas, the I, Thou Relationship of Schutz, and the accurate empathy of a good clinician" (Earlix, 1977:26).

The process of interpretation involved data analysis via individual and general indices, which consolidated ideas from three sources: (1) a chapter on indexing found in Cullom Davis et al's. (1977), book entitled, Oral History: From Tape to Type; (2) a chapter on indexing in A Manual of Style; and (3) two chapters in Kurt Wolff's Trying Sociology (1974). Chapter twenty in Wolff is titled, "A Methodological Note on the Empirical Establishment of Patterns," and chapter twenty-three is "Collection and Organization of Field Materials: A Research Report (1952, 1960)."

The indexing of oral history transcripts is both difficult and time consuming. Transcripts cover a host of subjects, and even respondents who discuss the same subject, often do so from different angles, at various lengths, and with variance in emphasis (Davis et al., 1977:}
Cullom Davis and associates (1977:81) address the problem by saying:

Given such a wide range, it would seem a difficult task to develop a system of descriptions which would bring continuity to an entire collection. It is probably only through the perspective to be gained by one person working with all the transcripts that the necessarily relative judgments can be made and a cohesive indexing system implemented. Though these are some general guidelines real expertise comes through practice.


In view of the complexity of oral history work, it was decided to make the index easier to follow by allowing for the use of subentries via an "indented" style of indexing, i.e., each subentry begins a new line, indented from the left, usually one line (See, *A Manual of Style*, 1969:403).

In order to allow for either individual analysis or for generalizations to be made to all fifty cases, it was necessary to index the fifty transcripts separately, and then consolidate them into a main index.

The indexing process began with reading all transcripts for perspective. The author's experience in conducting all but one of the oral histories, and in transcribing almost half of the tapes was helpful in gaining a "feel" for the data.

Next, it was necessary to carefully re-read the first transcript and select indexable entries (such subjects as proper names, persons and things), starting with page one and working forward through all
transcripts. The researcher used 3 x 5 index cards for the entries, placing them in a card file alphabetically, by topic, for each case. In the early stages, only one card was used for each subject heading, with one page reference per card. Each card recorded four facts: (1) a key term or "subject" was used (this usually was a heading for a main entry); (2) a statement about the key term, or predicate, was used (in the main index, some of these statements either became subentries or were dropped, as cards were combined and page references grouped under main entries); (3) a page reference (if the passage indexed covered more than a single page, beginning and ending pages were given); and (4) initials of the narrator were placed in the lower left corner of the card. Figure 1 depicts a typical card:

![Card Example](image)

Figure 1. Example of an entry

After the general index which is similar to that of a book was constructed, it was found that some further method of structuring patterns was imperative. Thus, the main index was used to break down
the transcript by topics. One copy of the transcript was used to cut up for clippings. The names of the topics had already been written on the transcript margins when indexing began. Therefore, all that was needed was to clip the various responses, identified on the margins of the transcript, and place the clippings in envelopes, each bearing the name of the topic under which particular passages were classified (indexed). For example, an envelope would be labeled "Ultimate Concerns." This envelope would include the total number of responses to the open-ended question on ultimate concerns found in the oral history interview guide.

It was necessary to use an additional system for analysis. In this option, each envelope that contained clippings relevant to a particular topic would carry, in addition to the name of that topic, two lists of others: (1) those for which some of the clippings contained in the envelope also were relevant (Also list); and (2) those under which additional clippings relevant to the topic could also be found (Also under list). This is the reverse of the Also, in that it lists topics under which transcript passages relevant to the topic may also be found. For purposes of quick retrieval, coded initials of each person (case) whose passage is related to those headings, would be placed in the Also and Also under lists. For example, some parts of transcript passages classified under "Ultimate Concerns" are Also relevant to "Economics," and some parts of transcript passages classified under "Politics" also contain or are Also under material relevant to "Economics."
Presentation of data patterns

It is impossible to begin a sociological study without any preconceived ideas about what may or may not appear in the data. However, although the value "neutrality" advocated by Max Weber is too idealistic to be practiced, sociologists should strive for questions which are as objective or neutral as possible. Hence, when interviewing, the sociologist must hold as many of the preconceptions as possible in abeyance (e.g., "bracketing"). and expect the organization and presentation of materials to emerge from the study. The open-ended interview of the oral history approach allows for this methodological goal, because answers are not confined to a, b, or c. Open answers effectively tap unexpected responses and fluctuating values.

Most sociological inquiry requires a search for regularities or patterns in samples. This study employed Kurt Wolff's (1974:30) definition of a pattern as a "uniformity of emotion, attitude, thoughtway or knowledge." Referring to this definition Wolff states:

In this definition it is implied that a pattern may be characteristic of an individual, a group, or all members of the culture under study. Therefore, to find out to which of the three categories the pattern applies is a statistical proposition. Theoretically this is all that has to be said in answer to the question how patterns are established empirically -- by statistics (1974:360).

With the above description in mind, data patterns are established in this study through the following procedures: (1) a description of the people. Background characteristics of the sample are outlined (e.g., gender, location of residence, etc.); (2) a description of the people's attitudes. The search was for patterns and their interpretation
(e.g., Belief in Prayer, Belief in God, etc.). For example, the researcher might describe and interpret the meaning a person or group gives (their symbol system) to feeling calm about discussing death (emotion), to liking or hating organized religion (attitudes), and so forth; and (3) a description and interpretation of the relationship between the background characteristics of the respondents and what they report (i.e., their attitudes). It should be noted, however, the procedure listed above does not guarantee an understanding of religiosity.

After analysis of the oral histories, it is necessary to review any additional materials which may or may not support the researcher's findings (e.g., other personal documents). It is also necessary to compare oral histories, to search for negative cases, and employ an imaginative testing of varieties of other explanations and pattern combinations in the analysis. "Here again his (the researcher's) sensitivity, disciplined by theoretical thinking, is essentially important" (Wolff, 1974:63). The total procedure just described can culminate in the conceptual development of either a grounded theory on or a typology of the religiosity of the social or ethnic group under study.

A final option for ethnic group studies

In studying the total religiosity of Czech-American elderly, it was necessary to review historical documents and journal articles which reflected upon the past religious values and expressions of the group. Therefore, a collection of literature and ethnic heritage materials on Czech culture, both in America and Europe, was important in fully comprehending their religiosity. It was also necessary to travel to
depositories of Czech heritage materials in Minnesota, Nebraska, and Iowa. The analysis of these materials will be suspended until all primary data (i.e., oral histories) has been collected and interpreted. This procedure reduces the possibility of premature expectations and bias influencing the emergence of new hypotheses.
SUMMARY

In religiosity research, perhaps more than any area, we need to call upon oral histories to uncover religiosity without imposing closed-ended questions and "dimensions" upon the data. This paper maintains that the content of items and the sampling designs of past approaches tend to prevent theoretical coherence of generalizability. Thus, the young, the old, the ethnic group, the low-income person, the conservative or liberal Christian, the non-Christian person may fall outside boundary definitions of religion if only past religiosity scales were used. It may be that if we employ the actor's own configurations of meaning to study religiosity within the context of a wide range of areas (i.e., economics, social participation, etc.), the construct of religiosity may become less diffused and more useful. For the small price of rigor and time, the oral historian gains an in-depth understanding of the data, knowledge which is useful for the theoretical advancement of the study of religiosity.
PART II. ETHNICITY AND RELIGIOSITY AMONG CZECH-AMERICAN ELDERLY: THE EVOLUTION OF ECUMENICALISM
This study employs in-depth oral histories, personal documents, and is a socio-historical study of the religiosity of fifty Czech-American elderly in Iowa. The religiosity of these people was indicated through their expressed ultimate concerns in life. Among these Czech-Americans there is a trend toward ecumenism and humanism, rather than sectarianism. These findings contradict the theme of Dean Kelley, who maintains that rural elderly gravitate toward sectarianism for an ultimate meaning of life. These results are integrated in the context of Czech religious heritage.
INTRODUCTION

The recent influence of the "New Right" in the 1980 political elections, and the increased membership roles of conservative churches, indicate to some scholars that the American public might be gravitating toward conservatism. Dean Kelley, in his well-known book, Why Conservative Churches Are Growing (1972/1977) and in a later essay (1978), advises churches to be cautious of ecumenism. While liberal churches are in decline, conservative churches made strong and strict by their sectarianism are growing in this country. Liberal Protestant denominations steadily lost members in the 1960s while conservative churches have gained in membership since 1940. Calling conservative churches exclusivist and liberal churches ecumenical, Kelley arrays many of the nation's religions on this continuum and proposes that "...religious organizations with a low score on the exclusiveness scale will also be less vigorous, less resilient, less growing than those with a high one" (1977:90). Vigor and growth are measured primarily with membership statistics by Kelley.

One major reason for the growth of conservative churches is the meaning they convey to members. The following points are from Kelley. First, he maintains that religion has an indispensable function in human evolution, for it explains the meaning of life in ultimate terms.

Human beings cannot live without trying to make sense of their experience, to find the meaning in it. When they discover a broad explanation that satisfies them, they are shielded by it from dejection and dread . . . . Most such explanations originate with a religious group . . . (Kelley, 1977:174).
Kelley identifies ultimate meaning with salvation and proposes that conservative churches serve the search for it better than do liberal ones. He posits that mainline churches offer only services available from secular associations, e.g., humanitarian interests, fellowship and entertainment. "Conservative churches, on the other hand, offer an incentive . . . that is not widely available - salvation - and offer it persistently" (Kelley, 1977:92). Conservative churches do not compete for members with secular associations because they offer salvation, which is something that a secular association cannot provide. Kelley holds that this is the indispensable function of religion, and it accounts for the current growth of conservative churches. The implications for ecumenism are:

To the person who is concerned about the future of the ecumenical churches, this theory can offer little encouragement . . . ecumenical endeavors may be conducive to brotherhood, peace, justice, freedom, and compassion, but they are not conducive to conserving or increasing the social strength of the religious groups involved or--more important--the efficacy of the ultimate meanings which they bear (p. 175).

The quest for salvation is pronounced in certain sub-populations, according to Kelley. He turns to Eric Hoffer's observations on true believers and suggests that the poor, the bored, misfits, minorities, sinners, among others, will be especially attracted to conservative churches. With LaNoue's observations in mind, Kelley adds that "... conservative churches are appealing to ... older, rural and small-town people who are responsive to traditional assurances of supernatural salvation" (1977:93).
Kelley offers no evidence that people—any kind of people—search for salvation or meaning and join conservative churches because of it. It is only conjecture that salvation is an ultimate concern of people like the elderly. The purpose of this paper is to investigate empirically the applicability of Kelley's argument for fifty Czech-American elderly using oral histories. The oral history method is selected because the author believes it allows people to speak their religiosity with less chance of selecting socially desirable answers from typical religiosity surveys.

The key concepts in the study are ecumenism, sectarianism, humanism, and transcendentalism. Non-religious ecumenism is operationally defined as a concern for the welfare of all world citizens, and religious ecumenism is open-mindedness or the acceptance of the validity of other religions (i.e., other Christian and non-Christian religions). Sectarianism is operationally defined as civic ethnocentrism and religious closed-mindedness as a rejection of the validity of other religions. Humanism is a doctrine which stresses human concerns and worldly interests. Religious humanism accepts religious doctrine as necessary, but not sufficient, for understanding oneself and the human race. Secular humanism stresses pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, regardless of the source. Both religious and secular humanism tend to be nontheological. On the other hand, transcendentalism stresses other worldly concerns and tends to reject the world as evil or sinful. Its main emphasis is on salvation, with a stress on personal piety as a means for salvation. Finally it tends to stress faith over reason.
METHODS

Qualitative methodology

Dean Kelley concludes that conservative churches are growing because people are searching for salvation. He imputes the existence of this search from church membership statistics. This is a variant of the ecological fallacy, drawing conclusions about psychological states from observations of aggregates (cf., Robinson, 1950). In effect, Kelley's explanation for the growth of conservative churches is simply assumed from the fact of that growth.

This research examines the religiosity of individuals directly, by asking them in an open-ended way about their ultimate concerns in life and how these concerns are served. Specifically, qualitative methods were employed in the forms of an oral history (with an oral history guide) and collection of personal documents. Such qualitative methods allow for empathy in the research process. "By taking the role of his subjects he (researcher) recreates in his own imagination and experience the thoughts and feelings which are in the minds of those he studies" (Bruyn, 1966:12). Hopefully, this can help fill the gap between church membership statistics and the imputed psychology of individuals. E. W. Burgess (Shaw, 1966:4) observed:

In the life history is revealed as in no other way the inner life of the person, his moral struggles, his successes and failures in securing his destiny.

This advocacy for life history is a long tradition in sociology, and it applies to research on religion (cf., Johnson and Aigner, 1979; Machalek and Martin, 1976; Moberg, 1967; Schroeder, 1977; Yinger, 1969 and 1970).
Sample

Lists of Czech-American senior citizens (age fifty-five or over) were obtained from a Czech-American insurance and fraternal association; a large industrial firm in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and from County Extension Directors in five Iowa counties. From this sampling frame, a randomly selected quota sample of fifty cases was drawn.

The demographic characteristics of the sample were they had an age range of fifty-five to ninety-five, with thirty males and twenty females. In this sample, twenty-nine respondents resided in the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area, six in the city of Fort Dodge, four in the rural Fort Dodge area, and eleven were settled on farms located in five counties in northeastern Iowa. Thus, there were thirty-three urban and seventeen rural people. The occupational mix was fifteen farmers, seven white collar self-employed, nine white collar employed, fourteen blue collar, four housewives, and one unknown occupation. In regard to education, eight had a grade school education, five had a grade school and business college education, eighteen had a high school degree, eleven had a high school and business college degree, four had a college degree, two had a masters degree and two failed to report their education. Most (thirty-nine of fifty) were church members: there were twenty-two mainline Protestants (including four Lutherans, seven Methodists, ten Presbyterians, and one "Protestant"), seventeen Catholics and eleven Freethinkers.  

---

1 A Freethinker is a person who believes in free or autonomous thought, research, science and philosophy unfettered by dogmas and principles of religion. Freethought recognizes no restriction but that imposed upon its progress by the rules of logic, scientific methodology, and epistemology. A Freethinker is usually not a member of a church.
The oral history guide

The instrument constructed for the Czech-American elderly study consisted of a modification of Bruce M. Stave's Oral History Interview Guide used in "The People of Connecticut Oral History Project: A Study of the States' Ethnic Groups," with the addition of some open-ended religiosity questions which were phrased as objectively as possible, and mixed in with questions in other topical areas within the guide. The idea was to use the revised guide to examine religiosity developmentally, at two levels of abstraction. The first level--relevant to this paper--is the social psychological level, which studies a person's present attitudes and belief system. The second level, to be used in future work, is structural and historical. It examines the effects of ethnicity, ancestry (kinship socialization through generations), and social organizations upon the individual.

This research is part of an oral-history project on ethnic heritage in the Midwest. The history of Czech settlers in Iowa is the current phase of this project. Czech immigration into Iowa began around 1850, precipitated by the Revolution of 1848 in Czechoslovakia, and continued into the twentieth century. Most of these immigrants are Bohemian or Moravian. The first Czech settlers came through cities in western Wisconsin to take up residence along the Iowa River at Iowa City (Griffith, 1944). Over time Czech settlements expanded to the North and West, reaching into central Iowa. The city of Cedar Rapids is the hub of this settlement and is among the important cities for Czech heritage in the country.
The interview

First, the project was approved by the Iowa State University Human Subjects Committee. The interview process involved the three steps of contact, interview, and follow-up. Participants in the study were first contacted by telephone. The research project was explained, using a phone script, and participation was requested. Approximately fifty percent of all people called were eliminated due to ineligibility. These names were replaced by another random drawing from the sampling frame. The interviews took place in the homes or offices of the participants throughout the year of 1979, and lasted from ninety minutes to two hours. Each interview was recorded on audio tape. Post interview letters of appreciation were mailed to all participants in the study.

Data analysis: transcription and interpretation

Although the tapes were transcribed verbatim, some repetition and side conversations were edited. To reduce expense, the oral histories were typed in rough copy form. Some typographical errors were not corrected, but this had little, if any, effect upon data analysis, since it was possible to go back to the tapes to make corrections or rely on recall should any ambiguities arise. To reduce bias from only one person

---

2 The lists provided by the insurance company, industrial firm, and County Extension Directors, contained the names of a number of people who were either under age fifty-five, deceased, or not of Czech origins. After repeated calls, there was a number of people who were not home during the different hours the sample was drawn. Of those few who were eligible and still refused, the main reasons given were: they were too busy (e.g., harvesting crops), had little knowledge of Czech heritage, or simply did not want to participate.
transcribing, four people transcribed the fifty tapes. All fifty of the transcribed cases were put together, with the 322 pages numbered sequentially for indexing.

The goal of this data analysis is to understand elements of perception or psychological states. In this context, understanding means a perspective shared with the oral history giver. "This is the verstehen of Weber, the definition of the situation of W. I. Thomas, the I, Thou Relationship of Schutz, and the accurate empathy of a good clinician" (Earlix, 1977:26).

The process of interpretation involved data analysis via individual and general indices, which consolidate ideas from three sources: (1) a chapter on indexing found in Cullom Davis et al., book entitled, Oral History: From Tape to Type (1977); (2) a chapter on indexing in A Manual of Style (1969); and (3) two chapters in Kurt Wolff's Trying Sociology (1974). Chapter 20 in Wolff is entitled, "A Methodological Note on the Empirical Establishment of Patterns," and chapter 23 is entitled, "Collection and Organization of Field Materials: A Research Report (1952, 1960)."

The indexing of oral history transcripts is both difficult and time consuming. Transcripts cover a host of subjects, and even respondents who discuss the same subject, often do so from different angles, at various lengths, and with variance in emphasis (Davis et al., 1977:81). Cullom Davis and associates (1977:81) address the problem by saying:

Given such a wide range, it would seem a difficult task to develop a system of descriptions which would bring continuity to an entire collection. It is probably only through the perspective to be gained by one person working with all the transcripts that
the necessarily relative judgments can be made and a cohesive indexing system implemented. Though these are some general guidelines real expertise comes through practice.

In order to allow for the latitude of individual analysis or for generalizations to be made to all fifty cases, it was necessary to index the fifty transcripts separately, and then consolidate them into a main index.

The indexing process began with reading all transcripts for perspective. The author's experience in conducting all but one of the oral histories, and in transcribing almost half of the tapes was helpful in gaining a "feel" for the data.

Next, it was necessary to carefully re-read the first transcript and select indexable entries (such subjects as proper names, persons and things), starting with page one and working forward through all transcripts. The researcher used 3 x 5 index cards for the entries, placing them in a card file alphabetically by topic for each case. In the early stages, only one card was used for each subject heading, with one page reference per card. Each card recorded four facts: (1) a key term or "subject" was used (this usually was a heading for a main entry); (2) a statement about the key term or "predicate" was used (in the main index, some of these statements either became subentries or were dropped, as cards were combined and page references grouped under main entries); (3) a page reference (if the passage indexed covered more than a single page, beginning and ending pages were given); and (4) initials of the narrator were placed in the lower left corner of the card. Figure 1 depicts a typical card:
After the general index (similar to that of a book) was constructed, it was found that some further method of structuring patterns was imperative. Thus, the main index was used to break down the transcript by topics, i.e., these topics were the topics of questions asked in the guide. One copy of the transcript was used to cut up for clippings. The names of the topics had already been written on the transcript margins when indexing began. Therefore, all that was needed was to clip the various responses, identified on the margins of the transcript, and place the clippings in envelopes, each bearing the name of the topic under which particular passages were classified (indexed). For example, an envelope would be labeled "Ultimate Concerns." This envelope would include the total number of responses to the open-ended question on ultimate concerns found in the oral history interview guide (cf., Wolff, 1974).

The general (main) index was used in this study to calculate the percentages of various types of responses to questions contained in the
guide. Also, the general index was useful in discovering themes that emerged in these oral histories.\footnote{The researchers in the project made independent interpretations of the answers, with disagreements being resolved by called respondents about the correct interpretation.}

Questions on religiosity

Kelley assumes that the elderly are concerned with salvation. The respondents were asked to reflect on their ultimate concerns in life as well as their thoughts about death. If the respondent's ultimate concerns were sectarian, that type of answer would tend to emerge through this or other questions in the oral history guide. The questions were:

In your most reflective moments, when you are thinking beyond the immediate problems of the day—however important—beyond headlines; beyond the temporary, what do you consider to be the most important concern or concerns of life? What is/are the basic permanent concern(s) of life? (Yinger, 1970).

Death is a topic which is being openly and freely discussed today. What are your feelings about death?

Next, the following conventional questions about religiosity were also asked:

Do you believe in God or some primary force in the universe? How strongly do you believe?

How important is religion to you? Do you feel that there is a need for religion in society?

What person, object or entity do you have the strongest faith or trust in?

Some people pray for things and other people do not pray. What are your feelings about prayer?
Kelley argues that conservative churches serve ultimate concerns. The respondents were asked how they served their ultimate concerns. The questions are:

Do you belong or participate in any groups or organizations which help you to cope or deal with the concern or concerns you previously mentioned? Which groups or organizations are these? And which are the concerns to which they relate?

If respondents listed groups or organizations then they were asked:

What are the other ways in which you relate to your concerns of life?

If respondents listed no organizations or groups then they were asked:

How do you deal or cope with these concerns?

Kelley reasons that because of their concern for salvation the elderly find sectarian religion appealing. These fifty people were asked to respond in either a sectarian or ecumenical way to the following questions on religious and civic affairs:

Do you feel there is one true religion within Christianity? If so, what would that be?

Do you think Christianity is the only true religion? (Only asked if the respondent answers no to the above question.)

Whose welfare is more important to you: The welfare of Americans only or the welfare of all world citizens (including Americans)?
RESULTS

Religiosity

Nearly all of these fifty people are, in a sense, conventionally religious. All but one respondent believed in God, and fifty-eight percent expressed a strong belief in God. One white-collar retiree answered the question, "How strongly do you believe in God?" by saying, "strong enough to depend upon Him everyday." This is indicative of many responses. The respondents were also asked about the object or entity in which they had the strongest faith. Forty-four percent of them named a religious figure, most frequently God. The other respondents mentioned most frequently either themselves or family members in this regard. Reference to God, Jesus Christ, and other religious figures was often made in responses to questions on the topic of religion. Some of these people had gone on religious pilgrimages, and most attended church regularly and read religious literature often.

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents felt religion was important to themselves, and sixty-eight percent stated religion was important for society. Typical of many responses were such statements as, "Religion is very important to me. If we had more religion in the world we would have less of other problems." Many underscored the importance of religion in bringing up children, and a majority of the sample (thirty-five respondents) believed in prayer. Service to God or "the Lord" was also emphasized by many. These people expressed deep and active religious convictions, but these convictions were neither other-worldly nor sectarian. For them religion was serving God through service (deeds) to humanity—a love for family and friends.
Ultimate concerns

The use of oral histories to tap a person's religiosity was very effective in this research. By investigating a person's ultimate concerns, he or she was not forced to respond to specified answers. For instance, there were ninety-two responses (out of fifty elderly) to the question about ultimate concerns, and only three indicated concerns for "salvation" or "inner peace." Instead, the ultimate concerns of these people centered on humanism—concern for family, friends, personal health, and other things of this world. Typical responses were:

"My ultimate concern is with my family. We're quite family oriented." (a Freethinker)

"My family. That they progress as well as their parents." (a Protestant)

"To make yourself a good home, and raise a family of character." (a Catholic)

Twenty-three percent of the ninety-two responses dealt with the family. Other responses were, in the order of their frequency: the well-being of humanity (twenty-one percent); "personal health" (twenty percent), i.e., physical health, personal happiness, and a need for independence; a concern for moral behavior (seven percent); maintenance of friendships (seven percent), and the remaining answers were divided among work, the problem of inflation and other such concerns, none of which have anything to do with transcendentalism.

Forty-six of the forty-nine respondents expressed no fear of death, saying that death is inevitable and that dying is part of living. Three respondents indicated some concern over death, expressing the hope that they would not fear it when it comes. No evidence for Kelley's
implication that elderly tend to be concerned about salvation or anxious about death.

**How were ultimate concerns served?**

There were seventy-two responses to the question about groups that help respondents cope with ultimate concerns. No conservative church was ever mentioned in this context. Most frequently mentioned were main-line churches (nineteen percent), secular or quasi-religious voluntary associations (fifty percent), business organizations (eleven percent), with nineteen percent saying no organization met their concerns (the latter included ethnic organizations, Elks, Eagles, labor unions, the Masonic order, etc.). Family activities, talking with friends, and making oneself useful were frequently indicated as ways ultimate concerns are served by informal and formal organizations. Since the concerns of these people lie with this world, not with individual salvation, these results were not surprising.

**Ecumenical or sectarian?**

These ethnic senior citizens were neither concerned with salvation nor found sectarian religion appealing. Both findings are contrary to Kelley's hypothesis on the reasons for the growth of conservative churches. As a further indication of their opinions about sectarianism or ecumenism, the respondents were asked, "Do you feel that there is one true religion within Christianity? If so, what would that be?" If they answered no to this question, then they were asked about inter-religious ethnocentrism by inquiring, "Do you think Christianity is the only true
religion?" In regard to the first question, 4 seventy-eight percent of forty-one people stated there is "no one true religion within Christianity." Two people were unsure, with the other twenty percent saying the one true religion was their own church, none of which was Kelley's conservative type. 5 When asked the second question, forty-seven percent (fifteen of thirty-two) felt that Christianity was not the only true religion of God. Seven people (twenty-two percent) thought Christianity was the only true religion, with three not responding and five answering they did not know.

The following are typical responses to the above questions:

"No! No! No! From what I've read, the Islamic faith is basically the same as Christian. I was really surprised in reading Time magazine's article on Islam. What's the difference?" (a Catholic farmer)

"I don't care what your religion is, if you're a good man, you're a good man, regardless!" (a Freethinker)

"There is no one true religion. I have a friend who is a strong Christian. She quotes the Bible where it says only Christians will be saved. I tell her, 'But Marie, how can you say that? There are almost a billion Chinese, they are not going to hell because they aren't Christians.' That's ridiculous!" (a Unitarian)

"The one true religion is love of Jesus Christ. I don't believe in denominations. I think someday there will be one religion." (a Presbyterian Church-activist)

4 These questions emerged after nine oral histories had already been taken, hence the N = forty-one.

5 For example, Kelley lists conservative churches as organizations like Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, churches of Christ, Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), and Seventh-Day Adventists.
"We have the Catholic mass in the morning and Dr. Schuller (a Protestant clergyman) at 11:00 on the television." (a Methodist)

These responses indicate ecumenism among these people and the perception of a common denominator to religious diversity. At least there is a tolerance for religious diversity. Kelley labeled such tolerance as leniency and believes it results in anomie. However, we found no unsolicited or implied indication of anomie among these respondents.

Civic ethnocentrism was identified by responses to the question, "whose welfare is more important to you: the welfare of Americans only or the welfare of all world citizens (including Americans)?" The majority of the responses (twenty-seven of forty-six responses) indicated a commitment to the welfare of all world citizens. The remaining responses were split, with six saying "Americans only," and thirteen answering "Americans first and other people next." Some representative responses were:

"I think we should think of the people of the world, they are suffering. I hope we will once learn that all humans will live together. We've got to start peace somewhere." (a Presbyterian Choir Leader)

"Americans should be taken care of first but we have an obligation to other people of the world." (a Catholic)

"I think the whole world. Mostly the children. I just don't like to see children suffer, that's bad! I like to see them taken care of." (a 59 year old Methodist woman)

These questions may appear as if they would lend themselves well to socially desirable responses, but they were asked during a time of immigration of Cuban refugees when American sentiment was nationalistic.
None of these fifty people belonged to a "conservative church."
Moreover, the outlook of these people did not, and possibly never would, fit into the philosophy of a conservative church. They expressed their ultimate concerns for humanity, not for salvation. Accordingly, they joined with others in organizations concerned with human affairs. Their ecumenism was tethered to their immediate environment, to be sure, but it is also expressed in a far reaching acceptance of religious diversity and concern for the world's citizens. Hence, these people were ecumenical as well as humanitarian.
DISCUSSION

Kelley asserts that people join conservative churches to have life explained in ultimate terms. It is also argued that the concern for salvation is pronounced among the elderly. These conclusions are drawn from church membership statistics. That is, inferences about qualitative individual states are drawn from quantitative data on aggregates. Does Kelley engage in what Blumer (1969:86) called "the worst kind of subjectivism" whereby a researcher fills "... in the process of interpretation with his own surmises in place of catching the process as it occurs in the experience of the acting unit which uses it?" The experiences of these fifty people suggest that he does. They expressed in their own words that ultimate meaning is found in this life—in humanism, and that it is more ecumenical than sectarian.

The abstract relation between meaning and religion forms a four-celled table. Figure 2 indicates that meaning and the lack of it are tabulated with conservative and liberal religion. Kelley examines only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Orientation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Meaningfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecumenicalism</td>
<td>A. Johnson Thesis</td>
<td>B. Kelley Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Kelley Thesis</td>
<td>D. Johnson Thesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Kelley thesis and Johnson thesis
two cells, however, conservative religion and meaning (B), and ecumenism and lack of meaning (C). This paper argues that the two other cells (A, D) are overlooked. The first is the possibility that sectarianism can result in alienation, not only meaning, and the second is seen through these fifty life histories, that ecumenism can and does bring meaning to life. The ecumenical person finds meaning through a form of belief which sees a oneness of religions and an essential oneness of humanity. Hence, this religiosity suggests an enlarged meaning system, one that transcends parochial boundaries. The implication for the liberal church is that ecumenism can not only be humanistic, which Kelley concedes, but its humanism can also provide ultimate meaning.

Meaning or lack of it in modern life is one of the great themes in social commentary. Kelley adds to this lore that meaning can come from a commitment to a high-demand conservative church. He fails to see a paradox in such a commitment. Although integrating one with a set of insiders and their views, sectarianism necessarily alienates one from outsiders and their views. Meaning is lost as well as gained. The stronger and more strict the sect, the more the paradox applies. Dogmatism not only represents ideational alienation, but it can also alienate one from others in daily, practical affairs. If the conservative church brings meaning, it also excludes one from many other meanings.

This study is not a definitive test of Kelley's hypothesis. Its strength is its depth, using qualitative methods, but its weakness is its lack of breadth. The sample size is small and the respondents are homogenous with respect to region and ethnicity. Czechs are a liberal people shaped by a particular history. Their religious history includes
a Hussite past; the tradition of Freethinking in Bohemia and the United States; a past which reflects religious tolerance; an inclination for religious dissent; and the adoption of rationalism, the perspective that religion should be consistent with secular learning and science (Rosicky, 1929; Capek, 1969). Czech-Americans are less likely to find sectarianism attractive. However, if other studies produce similar results, it would suggest turning to other hypotheses on the growth of conservative churches.
PART III. A SOCIO-HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERALISM IN CZECH CULTURE
A previous study found that Czech immigrants brought a liberal religious and philosophical heritage to America. This research traces the evolution of liberalism in Czech culture. An explanation for liberalism in Czech culture is offered, employing Neil Smelser's work on social movements and Max Weber's theory of charismatic authority.
INTRODUCTION

Previous research

Research on the religiosity of fifty Czech-American elderly in Iowa found that they are humanistic and ecumenical rather than other-worldly and sectarian (Johnson and Hraba, 1981a). It was argued that this humanism and ecumenism is rooted in a Czech liberal heritage.¹ This paper will examine that liberal tradition in the history of the Czech people.

Statement of purpose

This research analyzes the development of liberalism in Czech culture. A sociological analysis of historical materials on Czech culture is employed to account for the development of liberalism. C. Wright Mills mandates socio-historical research and the "full use of historical materials" in sociology in stating that:

We cannot adequately understand 'man' as an isolated biological nature, as a bundle of reflexes or a set of instincts, as an intelligible field or a system

¹Liberalism is conceptually separated into two parts, religious liberalism and philosophical liberalism. Religious liberalism involves beliefs in and/or practices of religious tolerance, free expression, and when free expression is suppressed, religious dissent. Among Catholics it is a to adopt "more democratic forms of religious expression than those prescribed by Rome" (Miller, 1922:32). Liberal philosophy maintains that people are moral beings and that morality is the rational control of emotion. Reason is the spark of the divine in people, and is the basis of individual rights, equality, and brotherhood. Since all people are rational, they are all equals. Moreover, according to liberalism, people are motivated by the desire for economic opportunity and financial independence. Lastly, the universe is rational and divine, according to liberalism, and conforms to immutable laws (cf., Beck, 1979: 47-65).
in and of itself. Whatever else he may be, man is a social and an historical actor who must be understood, if at all, in close and intricate interplay with social and historical structures (1959:158).

A review of the literature has indicated that the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are critical eras in the development of liberalism. Thus, this analysis is confined to social developments in fourteenth and fifteenth century Bohemia. Two sociological theories are combined to explain the development of liberalism during this time.

First, Smelser's (1963) theory of "value-oriented movements" is used to analyze the development of liberalism and its routinization into religious sects. Smelser defines a value-oriented movement as:

A collective attempt to restore, protect, modify, or create values in the name of a generalized belief. Such a belief necessarily involves all the components of action; that is, it envisions a reconstitution of values, a redefinition of norms, a reorganization of the motivation of individuals, and a redefinition of situational facilities (1963:313).

The above definition encompasses the institutionalization of generalized, liberal-oriented beliefs into "millenarian movements," "sects," and "religious revolts" in Czech culture. Smelser's "value-added" model is used to explain how "structural conduciveness" and "strain" are antecedent variables influencing the development of the liberalism that permeated Protestant movements in fifteenth century Bohemia.

Structural conduciveness is used to refer to what structural characteristics (i.e., of social organizations, social groups, economic conditions, etc.) more than others, permit or encourage collective behavior and the organization of social movements. To illustrate this condition of structural conduciveness, we inspect, among other things, the
relationship between the social structure of the Catholic Church (the assumed spiritual leader of society) and the public in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Bohemia. The authority of the Catholic Church went for long periods without being questioned. Hence, within the scope of a conducive structure (the Catholic Church), many possible kinds of behavior toward Catholicism other than revolt remain. We must narrow the range of possible behaviors during this time. In order to do so, we add several more determinants (e.g., the simony and avarice of monks and priests) of structural conduciveness. In this way we make more probable the occurrence of those events (e.g., religious protest or revolution) which are possible within the scope of this conduciveness.

Next, structural strain is seen as an "impairment of the relations among and consequently inadequate functioning of the components of action" (Smelser, 1969:47). For instance, strain is a contradictory condition which exists when moral leaders (Church leaders) behave immorally. In explaining any case of collective behavior (religious protest, for instance), we must consider the structural strain (the condition of economic deprivation among poor people, for instance) as falling within the scope established by the condition of conduciveness (e.g., Catholic priests charging money for any religious function). The condition of the malintegration of poor people with an autocratic Church can lead to the development of generalized attitudes or feelings among these people. A number of the Reform Movement leaders would influence the development of these beliefs among the poor people by sermons, in which they would contrast the morality, simplicity and democracy of the Apostolic Era with the fifteenth century immorality of an autocratic Church.
The identification of the sources of strain (e.g., the monks and priests), the attributions of evil or immorality to these sources, and the public response (e.g., hatred or dislike) to strains make for the growth and dissemination of "generalized beliefs" (the need for a simpler, more democratic faith). The growth of generalized (liberal) beliefs is linked to events or "precipitating factors" which tend to sharpen or exaggerate conditions of strain or conduciveness. A precipitating event (e.g., the unjust execution of three youths by the Church) provides adherents of religious liberalism with more evidence of the workings of evil forces, couched in terms of an orthodox Church. A precipitating event, then, links the generalized belief to concrete situations, and thus brings the movement closer to actualization.

The rise of charismatic authority is often connected with a precipitating event (e.g., the martyrdom of Hus), and it can affect the public's awareness of strain and conduciveness, and their adoption of a social movement. Weber defines charisma as:

A certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as divine in origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual is treated as a leader (1964:358-359).

An added element to the effectiveness of a charismatic authority in mobilizing followers for action is the responses of social control agencies, i.e., the traditional authorities (e.g., Catholic leaders and feudal lords) who respond to the movement once it has arisen. Finally, it is argued that it was the routinization of charisma into Hussite sects which...
served to preserve liberalism through Czech history—from the re-emergence of Catholic orthodoxy in the Counter Reformation, to the re-establishment of liberalism in the eighteenth century.
Background data

Bohemia first received Christian teaching from the East by two Slavonic missionaries, Cyril and Methodius, in the ninth century. They came from Salonica and were under the influence of the Eastern Wing of the Church. Over time, Bohemia acknowledged the rule of Rome—forming at first, part of the archdiocese of Mainzy in Germany and being since the era of Charles IV under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Prague. However, it is certain that many of the rules and rituals enforced by Rome were accepted much later in Bohemia than other European countries (Miller, 1922; Macek, 1965; Masaryk, 1974; Lutzow, 1909). For instance, at the beginning of the thirteenth century the power of the Roman Church incessantly increased with the Church introducing obligatory celibacy among the clergy—a caste apart from the laity. This demand seemed particularly arbitrary to the Bohemians, whose priests, due to Eastern influences, had hitherto almost all been married men, and were attached by family ties to other members of the community (Lutzow, 1909). Also, the receiving of communion in bread and wine form or two kinds—a key issue in the Hussite revolution—"continued to be customary up to the fourteenth century," although "it probably died out before the time of Hus" (Lutzow, 1909:10).

Structural conduciveness

The cowsheds on the church estates are more imposing than the lords' castles or the churches. Rain does not wet the prelates, mud does not get
into the monasteries, hunger and thirst have been held at bay by their wealth. The Church is the receiver of gifts, the Church buys while the poor are everywhere in need (Master John Hus quoted in Macek, 1965:14).

The condition of structural conduciveness during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was the domination of life by a corrupt structure, the Roman Catholic Church (Macek, 1965). The bulwark of the old social order consisted of the Pope, prelates, barons, and in the towns, a small section of German patriciate (old burgher families engaged in trade and owning land worked by serfs). The Church not only held sway over the education, philosophy and the judicial system of medieval society, but also owned one-third of all agricultural land (Brock, 1957). Moreover, it had its share of political clout, i.e., the prelates were members of the King’s council, of the royal offices and of the diets. Powerful castles and monasteries were built on church estates. Furthermore, the Church and feudal social order were relatively undifferentiated. Catholicism was the defender of feudalism and vice versa. Any anti-feudalism became anti-Catholicism, and any anti-Catholic movement became an anti-feudal movement (e.g., religious "heretics" were punished by secular feudal nobility).

Although there was a power struggle among three popes during these centuries, there was an increase in papal authority and power, with decreases in the power of priests and laymen (Lutzow, 1909:3). This tendency for an incrementation of papal power was aided by the papal prescription to study Church (Canon) law, a doctrine which maintained the absolute and unlimited power of the emperor, and strongly favored the claims of the popes to similar unrestricted authority (Macek, 1965; Brock, 1957).
The most salient issue for the Reform Movement in Bohemia was the pervasive immorality of clergy who were part of the structure of Catholicism. For example, clergy treated all religious ceremonies as commodities which they sold to the faithful (Spinka, 1966; Maurice, 1896; Macek, 1965; Bradley, 1971; Maurice, 1922). In fact, the common people complained that Catholic priests "refused to perform any function" without economic rewards (Lutzow, 1909:14). Almost all the priests were accused of simony and avarice—an offense that became so general that John Hus devoted one of his best known treatises to it.

Further evidence of immorality within the structure of the Church included charges that priests frequented taverns, bought inns and brothels, hunted, wore laymen's clothes, gambled and carried arms. Count Lutzow's account of the archdeacon's inspection held in Prague in 1379 and 1380, stated that "of the thirty-two parish priests of Prague sixteen were notorious because of their evil life," with a large number living in "open concubinage" (1909:14). Moreover, the rector of the Church of St. John of Landstein complained that the porter and portress gave shelter to "disorderly women," for "the provost and his brothers," and that "monks, married men, and people of all sorts were admitted there" (Lutzow, 1909: 15-16).

Within the ranks of the common people there developed a generalized belief that things would not be well as long as an autocratic and immoral Church continued to reign. It was the common people (poor) who paid for the luxury of their prelates and upkeep of the lavish papal court. It was the prelates who charged high taxes and rents, with gold payments delivered
The Catholic Church was associated with German (colonial) domination. Most of the secular emperors during this time were German (e.g., Jan of Luxemburg and King Charles who the Germans considered to be one of themselves). During the thirteenth century, a time of unemployment and famine among Bohemians, the people were required to pay King Charles a ransom of 35,000 marks, as compensation for what he called his care and expense in guarding the young Bohemian King, Wenceslaus.

There was an historical struggle between Germans and Bohemians regarding the supremacy of their respective languages. During the fourteenth century, the German language had gained much ground in town councils of Bohemia—symbolic of the high status and clout of Germans in that country. It was also during this time that the German party, generally orthodox Catholic scholars, controlled the University of Prague (Maurice, 1922).

The changing economic structural conditions of fourteenth and fifteenth century Bohemia was conducive to other changes. During this period, there was a rapid growth of towns. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, town crafts developed. Trade relations also expanded and the urban treasuries and burghers (merchants') profited. Burghers thus gradually rid themselves of their dependence on the feudal lords. Money marked the coming into play of new social forces: it was splitting previous economic links between lords and bondsmen and heralding a crisis in their relations. Before changes toward mercantilism, the social order (feudalism) was ascribed by the baron class through its
claims to ancient noble lineage, its "holding sway over dozens of bonded
villages and castles," and its "glorying in squads of armed retainers"
(Macek, 1965:10). But now a rising class of burghers could enjoy their
upward mobility by simply buying things: they outdid the barons because
they always had money in hand.

It also was during this time that all over Europe there was a general
crisis in feudalism—there was structural conduciveness toward ideological
changes and class struggles. First, there were class conflicts between
the extreme poor (country and urban) and extreme wealthy (i.e., prelates
and higher nobility). The extreme poor were the most radical forces in
Czech society who were intent on fighting the Church. Second, the people
between these two extremes were the lesser nobility and the burghers,
craftsmen and tradesmen. These groups bore a grudge against the prelates,
higher nobility, and German patriciate, but they did not intend to erad­
cate them by force. As Macek states:

They preferred rather to win from them more rights
and more power. But the burgher opposition, the
name given to the alliance between the lesser nobility
and burghers, in fact represented the real economic
and political support of the growing revolutionary
movement, since the town crafts were able to supply
the armies with weapons, goods and fortifications,
and the lesser nobility were all trained and cou­
rageous military men (1965:17).

However, there is little doubt that the Czech reformation was above
all a religious one. Some claim that it was a primarily economic or
nationalistic reformation. But, as Masaryk suggests, if the issue had
simply been a nationalistic or economic one, the struggle would have
taken a "political rather than religious guise" (1974:9). Masaryk states
further that there was among Czech people a striving for a "higher moral
level, for a purer, more intense piety—this is the hallmark of our Czech
Reformation (1974:9). Above all else, the Catholic Church became the
object of hatred and attack due to the misuse of its power, wealth and
status. The growth of popular (generalized) discontent was quickened by
strain among the ruling class (e.g., higher nobility and prelates were
at loggerheads).

Other fourteenth-century structural arrangements which permitted or
encouraged liberal-oriented movements were: (1) the relative over-popula-
tion of towns (Macek, 1965; McNeill et al., 1939); (2) fairly large unem-
ployment (Macek, 1965; Maurice, 1922); and (3) low wages coupled with an
inflationary recession (Macek, 1965; Wallerstein, 1974). Although these
social conditions are conducive to social change, they are still peri-
pheral to the central issue of the pernicious immorality of a religious
power structure (Masaryk, 1974).

Gillin (1910-1911) observed that religious sects usually arise when
religion is the dominant interest in society. When political interest
predominates, political parties develop. As stated earlier, the Catholic
orthodox value system was undifferentiated from the feudal structure--
a fusion of religious values and secular norms. As Bellah states, this
fusion is:

characterized by the comprehensiveness and
specificity of...value commitments and by...
consequent lack of flexibility. Motivation is
frozen, so to speak, through commitment to a
vast range of relatively specific norms
governing almost every situation in life. Most
of these specific norms, usually including those
governing social institutions, are thoroughly
integrated with a religious system which in-
volves ultimate sanctions for every infraction
(1958:1).
Hence, when the world-view of a culture is religious, then, protests against the world invariably become defined in religious terms.

Structural strain

Another condition of conduciveness behind liberalism was the reaction of the powerful to the growing protest movements in Bohemia. Protest was initially consensus-bounded, a Church-Reform Movement at the University of Prague eventually headed by John Hus. This Movement was a key agency for expressing the evil of the times and communicating needed reforms to the common people. However, it became apparent to the masses that their discontent was not being heard and that leaders of the Reform Movement were being suppressed, exiled and killed. It was these strains that led to consensus-projecting conflict and the schismatic development of religious sects (e.g., the Calixtines and Taborites), which embodied ideas of philosophical and religious liberalism.

It was the suppression of protest that led to the spread of religious liberalism. For example, Pope John XXIII suppressed John Hus's preaching, forbidding free preaching in Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. Hus was opposed to the papal sale of indulgences to finance the Pope's war against the

---

2"Any instance of social conflict may be viewed as consensus-bounded when the conflict by and large remains within the prescribed institutional framework for conflict of the society and within the norms embodied in those institutions" (Newman, 1973:119).

3"Consensus-projecting conflicts transcend the routine channels for conflict in society" (Newman, 1973:119). This type of conflict is an organized attempt to reorder society, to reach a new, changed social consensus.
King of Naples. Also, Pope John and Archbishop Zbynek strongly opposed Hus's exposure of clerical immorality.

This type of suppression of even limited religious freedoms led to strain among the diverse people that came to hear Hus's famous sermons, including Queen Sophia and other dignitaries. This suppression tended to strengthen nascent generalized beliefs of free expression, religious dissent, individual choice, rational explanation of Scripture, and the elevation of the individual over the institution. In fact, the eventual development of millinarian sects such as the Taborites and later the Bohemian Brethren abolished priesthood and thus undermined the power of theocracy. Masaryk outlines the liberal ideas behind the development of these sects in saying:

They destroyed religious aristocracy in the conviction that from a religious point of view no man could be placed above any other. They understood that there could be no double morality--a higher morality for the clergy and a lower morality for ordinary men. Thus, in place of spiritual and religious elitism they established a religious democracy. This attitude is also apparent from the Taborites' egalitarian acceptance of women as preachers and soldiers. And it was in the same spirit that the Taborites rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation (1974:8).

Another major source of strain was the decision of Archbishop Zbynek to burn all books written by the English reformer, John Wycliffe. These books had served as major sources of reference for the expression of grievances by the Reform Movement. Now this vehicle for the expression of grievances was cut off. Hus told his congregation that he would continue to preach freely, and that he would appeal Zbynek's ruling to the new pope, to which all present in the congregation rose crying: "We will
support you" (Lutzow, 1909:124). It has been said that Zbynek burned many other books besides Wycliffe's, and that the "people became enraged" and took to riot and disorder (Lutzow, 1909:126).

Social historians (Troeltsch, 1949; Spinka, 1966; Masaryk, 1974; Lutzow, 1909; and Macek, 1965) present further evidence of growing anti-orthodox or anti-Catholic strains among the public. For example, four incidences causing strain were: (1) the forced closing of Bethlehem Chapel, the Reform Movement's main building where grievances could be expressed; (2) the censorship and forced exile of Hus; (3) the gross papal misuse of the power of excommunication for the purpose of crushing political adversaries; and (4) the general lack of responsiveness of social control agencies to calls for reform.

In summary, the main condition of structural conduciveness among many factors was the immorality of representatives (e.g., prelates) of the Catholic Church, the spiritual leader of fifteenth century Bohemian society. Concomitantly, there was widespread corruption among the higher nobility, the secular arm of that society. These factors, combined with economic hardships and changing class relations formed a structural conduciveness for change. These conditions of structural conduciveness combined with the suppression of the means for protest and reform to create structural strain.

Precipitating events

There were four salient precipitating events that exaggerate the strain among members of the Reform Movement. The first was the execution of three youths who were said to have created a disturbance in a church.
Hus interceded in their behalf and was assured by authorities that their lives would be spared. However, the three youths were executed without trial. This event stirred up many hostile outbursts among angered crowds (Lutzow, 1909; Macek, 1965; Masaryk, 1974).

The second was the Decree of Kutna Hora, which overthrew German supremacy at the University of Prague. Maurice (1896:188) states that this decision was considered by both Germans and Bohemians as a "great crisis in the history of Bohemia." The equalitarian and democratic components of liberalism were apparent in this Decree, which made for a more equitable representation of votes effecting university policies and operations. Votes were based upon the proportion of scholars from the various countries.

The third important event was the restriction by papal decree of communion in two kinds to the priests, with the laymen receiving bread only. Later, the Hussite revolutions were based upon such issues as the rights of laymen to receive communion in two kinds.

The fourth and most important event was the trial and martyrdom of Hus. As Lutzow states, "Few events in history have given rise to more controversy than the trial and execution of Hus" (1909:286). This event was proceeded by open revolt and the development of Hussite Sects, groups which based their beliefs on principles of liberalism. Troeltsch points to the "revolutionary effect" of Hus's death upon the "whole of Eastern Europe" in saying that it produced the:

Complete sect-type, and the revolutionary sense of the need for an absolute Christian social order, both these elements had a deep and enduring influence, which can be traced, possibly, right down to the Anabaptist movement of the Reformation period, and into the radical programmes of the Peasant Wars (1949:363).
Charismatic authority and mobilization of followers for action

Hus alone possessed the qualities of a great popular leader. His absolute self-renouncement, the indomitable courage with which he met moral and physical pain of every description for the cause which he firmly believed to be that of God, his enthusiastic devotion to the Slavic and particularly to the Bohemian race, his striking and popular eloquence—all combined to make him the idol of the Bohemian people, whose greatest representative in the world's story he remains (Lutzow, 1909:63).

John Hus's emergence as a central figure in Bohemian history, influenced the adoption and diffusion of liberalism among the common people. Table 1 delineates the salient forerunners of Hus. Certainly this discussion is not to undermine the importance of the three charismatic predecessors of Hus, the English reformer John Wycliffe, John Milic of Kromeriz, and Hus's teacher Adalbert Ranco. All of these men were famous preachers and writers, whose liberal reform ideas influenced Hus.

Table 1. Forerunners of Hus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Stitney</td>
<td>(1360-1439)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristan of Prachatice</td>
<td>(1439)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adalbert Ranco</td>
<td>(7-1414)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen of Znojmo</td>
<td>(1374-1415)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hus</td>
<td>(1374-1415)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew of Janov</td>
<td>(1350-1394)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome of Prague</td>
<td>(1380-1416)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: ——— Teachers ——— Influences . . . . Colleague
Macek (1965:22) points to the "innate ability" of Hus to "bring the most complicated problems close to the ordinary listener, and his understanding of the needs of the petty craftsman and day laborer," and to turn the Bethlehem Chapel into a "refuge and assembly place for the broadest section of people of Prague." Hus's sermons would constantly compare the primitive church--its relative equalitarianism, simplicity and morality--with the wealthy, autocratic church of his day. He gave the common people self-confidence and courage to work for reform within the church, and for those who went beyond his teachings—the independence to form new sects.

There is disagreement among Catholic and Protestant scholars as to whether Hus was ever a heretic (Masaryk, 1974). Regardless of his alleged heresy, most scholars would agree that he remained firm in his conviction that he had not committed heresy and that reform should occur within the structure of the church (Lutzow, 1909; Macek, 1965).

The sociological significance of Hus's charisma lies in his preaching (i.e., his ability to communicate in Czech about reform to the common people); his elevation of the Bible over Canon Law; his scholarship (ability to communicate to the intelligensia); and his spirituality.

First, Hus's ability to communicate reform can be explained because he, like the masses, came from a poor peasant upbringing. He was one of them. His emphasis on preaching, singing, and writing (e.g., his translation of the Bible into Czech) in Czech language instead of the traditional Latin probably came from being raised in southern Bohemia (Husinec) near the German border, where strains toward national identities were greatest. Yet serious study of Hus finds that his sentiments were sometimes broader than national. For instance, while traveling through
Constance, Hus's liberal ideology came out when he said, "He (Christ) knows that I love a good German better than a bad Bohemian, even if he be my own brother" (Lutzow, 1909:148). Although he had German enemies, he made many friends in that country, his literature was widely read, and the main German figure (Luther) of the Protestant Reformation called himself a Hussite (Masaryk, 1974; Durant, 1957). Hus also had strong ties with the country of England, which he once called a "blessed country" (Lutzow, 1909:304). The influence of the English reformer Wycliffe upon Hus is well known. Additionally, Hus had close ties with King Václav of Poland. As is seen when he acted as a peace-maker by entreating the King to "live on good terms with King Sigismund of Hungary," and when he promoted his Reform Movement in Poland (Lutzow, 1909:305-306). The ambassadors of King Václav at the Council of Constance, endeavored, as far as their diplomatic position allowed them, to save Hus from martyrdom (Lutzow, 1909:309).

Second, Hus's references to Christ and the Bible as his main frame of reference, rather than that of the Pope and Canon Law, undermined the orthodox authority of the Catholic hierarchy. Liberalism is apparent in Hus's stress on free debate at the University, the free use of controversial theological works, the free preaching of Christ's Word at Bethlehem Chapel, and attempts, however meager, to bridge status gaps between laity and clergy.

Third, Hus's fame as a writer and learned theologian was known all through Europe. Luther published a translation of his letters. The charisma which allowed Hus to communicate so effectively from the pulpit to the common person, was also apparent in his parsimonious, clear and
simple writing style. Hus's works, written in Latin and in Czech, relied heavily upon the Church Fathers, and his reformist teachings were entirely in accordance with the Roman Church of his time. Hus's letters were read in the pulpit by friends of Hus and his followers maintained his charismatic ties while he was in exile.

Fourth, Weber (1964) points out that the qualities of the charismatic authority tend to stand in sharp contrast with those of the public, as well as other lesser leaders. As Czech sociologist Tomas Masaryk maintains, there were some socially induced flaws in the Czech character during the fifteenth century. Czechs tended "to suffer from vagueness of thought; a peculiar vacillation" (Masaryk, 1974:12). As examples, Masaryk points to Matthew of Janov's recantation, Jerome of Prague's recanting under pressure—before finally giving up his life, and "Mikulas Pelkrimovský's capitulation in the end to the weak Rokycana" (Masaryk, 1974:12). Although Masaryk alluded to some vacillation even on the part of Hus at the beginning, most historians describe the courage and steadfastness of Hus (Macek, 1965; Miller, 1922; Lutzow, 1909; Maurice, 1896; Spinka, 1966; McNeill et al., 1939).

It was Hus's courage to remain steadfast when confronted by opponents that inspired many of his followers to break away from Catholicism and form more liberal-oriented sects after his death.

Hus was a key figure in planting the seeds of religious and philosophical liberalism among Czech people. As a charismatic intellectual, his interpersonal communication skills and peasant background allowed him to bridge the social distance between the intelligensia and the common people. Macek describes Hus's abilities in the following manner:
The innate ability of the modest preacher (Hus) to bring the most complicated problems close to the ordinary listener, and his understanding of the needs of the petty craftsman and day laborer, turned the Bethlehem Chapel into a refuge and assembly place for the broadest section of the peoples of Prague (1965:22).

As a reformer, Hus's charismatic authority rested upon his persuasive abilities, personal piety and other qualities. It was his charisma combined with his liberalism which contributed to the routinization of his charisma into liberal-oriented sects.

The first liberal element of Hus's thinking is his emphasis on reason over tradition and superstition. He stressed following one's conscience rather than blindly obeying ecclesiastics, as evidenced in his insistence on the irrationality of the Archbishop burning all of Wycliffe's books; his rejection of the notion that the priest "makes God" (Spinka, 1966:57); his exposure of fraud in the alleged "bleeding wafer miracle" of Wilsnack, miraculous claims that were indicative of the irrationality and "superstition" of the Middle Ages (Lutzow, 1909:82-84); his rejection of the idea that buying an indulgence absolves a person of sins (Macek, 1965); and his argument that the Council had to prove all accusations via the Bible.

Liberalism suggests a de-emphasis on autocratic and elite leadership, and a move toward more equality for laity. Likewise, Hus stressed increased power for laity and the concomitant importance of the Bible over the Pope, thus undermining the Pope's authority. For instance, there is an individualistic biblicism of Hus, especially when he stated that no authority if it be in conflict with God's command (found in the Bible) was to be obeyed (Spinka, 1966). Later, the Hussite sects known as the
Taborites and the Unity of Czech Brethren acknowledged the Bible as their sole rule of faith. This stress on conformity to Scripture is in line with the Taborite idea of the priesthood of all believers. Moreover, Hus's definition of the Church as the totality of the predestinate ran contrary to the doctrine of papal infallibility. Again, the Taborites, Unity of Czech Brethren, and later developing Protestant churches adopted this tenet. Rights and power for laity was emphasized through Hus's stress on the frequency of communion for laity, and the idea that if an ecclesiastical superior sins, he may be reprimanded by his inferiors, even laity (Spinka, 1966).

Third, Hus's predestinarian tenets led to the undermining of sacramental and sacralotal systems. The Czech Brethren maintained that salvation rested upon God's will via divine predestination and thus the visible church was no longer central in salvation.

Fourth, Hus's stress on individualism and personal freedom led to the radical individualism of the Taborites and Czech Brethren. Hus was devoted to an independent search for truth. He insisted upon personal responsibility in matters of religion. For instance, his position on excommunication stated that it is impossible to excommunicate a man justly, unless he first and primarily excommunicates himself by sinning mortally. By implication, Hus held that external authority has no place in the realm of truth, the life of the spirit is essentially free. Finally, Hus's emphasis on freedom to preach the word of God, to freely debate at the university, and to freely question his superiors reflects the individualism of historic liberalism.
THE HISTORICAL PERSISTENCE OF LIBERALISM

Routinization of charisma

The maintenance of Hus's value orientations and of his pristine character became a crucial problem encountered by the sects which developed after his death. The Taborite, Calixtine, and Unity of Czech Brethren sects promulgated elements of liberalism. However, when faced with strong opposition from Catholicism, these sects reacted differently. The Taborite sect broke away from Catholicism, and formed a militant, communist sect, whose program was based upon chiliasm and adherence to the norms of the Primitive Church. The Calixtines were a moderate sect, whose programs represented a compromise within Catholicism. They employed the Primitive Church as a norm for devaluing Romanist practices that seemed unwholesome, i.e., Rome's practice of lay communion in bread form only. This group was led by Queen Sophia and Bohemian nobles. They developed the Four Articles of Prague which advocated, besides clerical reform, more equality for laity via communion in both kinds.

After the gradual demise of the Taborites and Calixtines, several little groups of Waldensians, Beghards, and other heretical sects, had developed a third sect. Peter Chelcicky, a charismatic Bohemian peasant who turned philosopher, influenced the development of the Church of the Brotherhood or Moravian Brethren. By 1500, it claimed 100,000 members. These Brethren were almost exterminated in the fury of the Thirty Years War. They survived through the charismatic leadership of John Komensky, and as an underground Church in Czechoslovakia after the Counter Reformation. Many of these people fled to countries which border Czechoslovakia and returned
in the late eighteenth century after Joseph II's Decree of Toleration. The Brethren stressed liberalism via a communistic form of Christianity, a "higher form of religion through reason and education" (Masaryk, 1974: 11). This group was opposed to mysticism and world rejection. Instead, they stressed moral behavior in this world via fraternism. This fraternal philosophy emerged again among Czechs in America.

Other factors keeping liberalism alive

Table 2 graphically depicts the thesis of this paper. The central theme of this paper is that conditions of structural conduciveness and strain created liberal generalized beliefs among the Bohemian people of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Through the courageous, charismatic leadership of Hus, and precipitating events (including the death of Hus), there was the development of three significant liberal-oriented sects.

There were a number of factors which operated to keep liberalism alive in the Czech culture during the suppressive Counter Reformation period up to the edict of toleration issued by Joseph II in the later part of the eighteenth century. First, there is evidence that liberalism—in the form of an underground church—survived among the rural peasantry (Troeltsch, 1949; Masaryk, 1974). For example, in a previous study, Johnson and Hraba (1981a) interviewed a person who had inherited a Protestant Bible written in Czech that had been preserved in a loaf of bread during this period.

Second, liberalism survived through the writings of John Komensky (1592-1670), a charismatic innovator and writer. Although in exile most
Table 2. The development and preservation of liberalism among Czech people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Dominant Religious Ideology</th>
<th>Precipitating Events</th>
<th>Liberal Charismatic Leaders and Sects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1300s)</td>
<td>Catholic Sectarianism</td>
<td>The Great Schism (Three Popes)</td>
<td>Wycliffe, John Milic of Kromeriz, Conrad Waldhauser, Adalbert Ranco, Small sects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1400s to 1500s)</td>
<td>Liberalism (Catholic and Protestant)</td>
<td>Restriction on Communion, Death of three youths, Decree of Kutna Hora, Hus’s Death</td>
<td>John Hus, Peter Chelicky, Hussite sects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1600-1780)</td>
<td>Catholic Sectarianism Re-emerges, Lutheranism and Underground Protestantism</td>
<td>Counter Reformation, 1700 Toleration of Joseph II</td>
<td>Komensky; Baohuslav, Balbin, and Pesina of Cechorod (Nationalistic Catholic writers); Luther (follower of Hus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1780 to 1850s)</td>
<td>Liberalism Re-emerges</td>
<td>War of Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czech Emigration to the United States</td>
<td>Kollar, Jungman, Palacky, Havlicik, Liberal Political Parties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of his career, his writings were circulated throughout Europe. Many works were written in the Czech vernacular and read by literate Czechs (Masaryk, 1974).
Third, the preservation of Hussitism in Germany during the Counter Reformation is well-known. After the Thirty Years War and the Counter Reformation, many Czech Hussites fled into Germany and other surrounding countries. A hundred years after Hus, Luther declared himself a Hussite (Troeltsch, 1949). Later, many Hussites from Germany moved back to Czechoslovakia.

Fourth, there is evidence that liberalism was kept alive within Catholicism during the Counter Reformation by the Patristic tradition, by Corpus Juris, by a religious theory of equality renewed by monasticism, and by the absorption of liberalism into nationalism (Troeltsch, 1949). For instance, the Catholic Church, in its effort to convert Hussites, published religious books for laymen written in the Czech language.

Fifth, after Joseph II declared religious tolerance, religious and philosophical liberalism was re-established among Czechs and Slovaks through a number of authors and statesmen. Kollar, Jungman, Palacky and Havlicek stand out as key figures in the re-emergence of liberalism. Jan Kollar (1793-1852), a Slovak Protestant clergyman, was a prominent poet and a scholar. He proclaimed ideas of nationalism, freedom, reason and individualism. Josef Jungman (1773-1847), a nationalist scholar, wrote a defense of Czech literature and language. He was Palacky's teacher. Frantisek Palacky (1779-1876) is a key figure in the diffusion of liberalism in the nineteenth century. Palacky is known as the father of Czech historiography, and was a great scholar and statesman. Palacky wrote and published a history of Bohemia, which he published in German and Czech. He was leader of the philosophically liberal, Old Czech Party. It was Palacky who helped preserve the memory of Hus. Finally,
Karel Havlíček is one of the leading political figures, editors, critics and writers in Czech history. He criticized Russian and Austrian absolutism, and promoted, in different forms, religious and philosophical liberalism. According to Havlíček, historic Romanticism and conservatism glorified death and violence. As Havlíček said:

In the past, men were ready to die for honor and for the good of their people; for these same goals, we are ready to die and work (Karel Havlíček quoted in Masaryk, 1974:142).
CONCLUSION

In summary, this research indicates that the religious and philosophical liberalism of nineteenth Czech-American emigrants can be traced back to the people and events of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This study found, among many factors, that the Hussite Revolution was a significant factor in the development and persistence of liberalism in Czech culture. Certain factors of structural conduciveness and strain created liberal generalized beliefs among the Bohemian people of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Through the courageous, charismatic leadership of Hus, and precipitating events, there was the development of three liberal-oriented sects. Only one sect, the Moravian Brethren survived the Counter Reformation. However, as the research shows, liberalism survived the Counter Reformation through diverse means, to re-emerge as a major philosophical and religious force during nineteenth and twentieth century Czech emigration to America.
PART IV. LIBERALISM: ITS INFLUENCE ON THE ECUMENISM
AND HUMANISM OF FIFTY CZECH-AMERICAN ELDERLY
ABSTRACT

It was found in an earlier study that the religiosity of fifty Czech-American elderly is humanistic and ecumenical. Czech immigrants brought a liberal religious and philosophical heritage to America, which was reinforced by American liberalism. This research investigates trends which developed among Czech-Americans over the past century which were a result of a liberal heritage, a tradition tracing back to the old country. Over the past century, Czech-Americans became more secular and ethnically inclusive in their voluntary associations. The humanism and ecumenism of Czech-American elderly today is rooted in this history.
INTRODUCTION

Dean Kelley (1977) argues that the elderly are gravitating toward sectarian and transcendental religion, which provides ultimate meaning in life (i.e., promises of salvation). However, this assertion is questioned in a recent study of the religiosity of fifty Czech-American elderly (Johnson and Hraba, 1981a). These fifty people are humanitarian and ecumenical, finding ultimate meaning in worldly associations, main-line churches, and showing a worldmindedness.

The religiosity of these Czech-American elderly is a product of a liberal heritage. This study is concerned with the problem of how this liberal tradition was maintained among Czechs over several generations in America. Moreover, this study is interested in indicating how this heritage links to present humanism and ecumenism of Czech-American elderly.

The notion of Czech liberalism came from historical sources. Liberalism involves both religious and philosophical liberalism. Religious liberalism refers to beliefs and practices of religious tolerance, freedom of religious expression, and when those are suppressed, it can result in religious dissent. Liberal philosophy maintains that people are moral beings, and that morality is the rational control of emotion. Since all people are rational, they are all equals. In a broader sense, individualism is endorsed in liberalism. Individuals are motivated by the desire for economic opportunity and political independence. Through these motivations, one's ethnic identity is converted into an expression of
individuality. This version of individuality is a current expression of historic liberalism:

... which put its full emphasis on the free individual, finding in man's liberation from political and military bonds, even those of religion and local community... the essence of progress... Individual autonomy is the transcending goal of historic liberalism (Nisbit, 1975:47).

The French, British, and German conservative schools were opposed to the ideas of liberalism, such as religious dissent and equalitarianism. Conservatives argued that individualism and dissent was indicative of a breakdown in social cohesion, ultimately resulting in social alienation (O'Sullivan, 1976). Conservatives rejected the saliency of individual rights, and stressed the authority of institutions over individuals. Conservatism has also been hostile to the implied commercialism and impersonality of economic liberalism (O'Sullivan, 1976).

Secularization can be seen as an extension of liberalism, derived from religious dissent and the exercise of individual choice. Secularism refers to the primary identification with and participation in worldly organizations vis-a-vis churches. Secularization implies individual choice, and thus the decrementation of the institutional churches. Secularization implies a greater involvement in and commitment to worldly affairs. Czech-Americans have been part of this historical process, and this is evident in the humanism of these fifty people.

A process associated with secularization is a trend toward inclusiveness. Inclusiveness involves the move to an ethnic group toward more ethnically heterogeneous social relationships and into the opportunity structure of the larger society. Also, inclusiveness is seen in the
evolution of ethnic organizations toward more ethnically mixed membership. Hence, this trend reflects the gradual inclusion of an ethnic group into the broader society. Czech-Americans have been part of this historical process, too and this is evident in the ecumenism of these fifty people.

The humanism of Czech-American elderly today flows from historic liberalism, secularization, and the increasing ethnic inclusiveness of Czechs in America. Humanism is a doctrine which stresses human concerns and this-worldly interests. Humanism tends to be nontheological, that is, humans may perfect their own nature without the aid of a church. The ecumenism of these Czech-American elderly also flows from liberalism, secularization and inclusiveness. Ecumenism means the belief in cooperation, understanding, and acceptance among diverse groups. The provincial notion of brotherhood in liberalism becomes universalistic with ecumenism. Ecumenism is defined as civic worldmindedness, or the concern for the welfare of all world citizens, and religious open-mindedness or acceptance of the validity of other religions (i.e., other Christian and non-Christian religions).

Table 1 graphically depicts the thesis that emerges in this paper. A liberal heritage led to secular developments among the Czech people in the United States, and as Czech-Americans became more secular and inclusive over time, the religiosity of Czech-American elderly became humanistic and ecumenical.
Table 1. The religiosity of Czech-American elderly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past generations of Czech people</th>
<th>Czech-American elderly today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Religious liberalism</td>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secularization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecumenism and humanism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
METHODS AND SAMPLE

The present study is based on fifty oral histories from Czech-American elderly in Iowa. The interview guide was a modified version of Stave's (1975) ethnic oral history guide. This qualitative method allows for empathy in the research process. E. W. Burgess (Shaw, 1966:4) observed:

In the life history is revealed as in no other way the inner life of the person, his moral struggles, his successes and failures in securing his destiny.

This advocacy for life history has a long tradition in sociology, and has been used in research on religion (cf., Johnson and Aigner, 1979; Machalek and Martin, 1976; Moberg, 1967; Schroeder, 1977; Yinger, 1969 and 1970).

In a previous section, a series of questions asked about the "ultimate concerns" of Czech-American elderly, and what organizations primarily met these concerns. The responses of these people were classified as either transcendental (i.e., concern for "salvation") or humanistic (i.e., concern for humanity). Other questions investigated ecumenism and sectarianism among these people. Sectarian responses were separated into the areas of religious sectarianism (i.e., the belief that one's religion is the "true one") and civic sectarianism (i.e., nationalism). The ecumenical responses were divided into the areas of religious ecumenism (i.e., the relativity of truth within and outside of Christianity) and civic ecumenism (i.e., worldmindedness).

Due to a liberal heritage, these Czech-American elderly are humanistic and ecumenical in their religiosity. In order to understand the historical meaning of their religiosity, the present study asks these
elderly about the past generations of their families. Through the oral history guide, they were asked to reminisce about the first and second generations of their families in Iowa.

Responses to this first set of questions taken from the oral history guide, are used as indicators of liberalism among Czech people:

**Religious Experience in Czechoslovakia**
What was their (first generation) religious experience like? How closely tied were they to the church?

**Reasons for Emigration**
What were their reasons for emigration?

**Religion in United States Compared to Czechoslovakia**
How did religion differ from the "old country?"

In addition to the above questions, data from ethnic heritage materials and commentary on Czech culture are employed for contextual understanding.

Secularism emerges from the following sets of questions:

**Religious Experience in Iowa (Past Generations)**
What role did religion play in the community? How close was the nearest church to the place of residence? Did children go to Sunday School? Did any children become clergymen?

**Voluntary Associations: Secular or Religious?**
What kinds of voluntary associations did they (first and second generations) join? Who organized these groups? Were they members of burial societies? Mutual benefit associations? Are they still members? Did their children join?

**Political Organizations**
What was the party of their choice and why? Did this change over time?
Responses to the above indicate the various sacred or secular organizations to which the first and second generations belonged, as seen through the recollections of the fifty elderly respondents. Besides the preceding questions, this research compares the perceived religious or secular organizational activity of earlier generations, with the types of organizations with which the fifty respondents affiliate. The following set of questions are used to tap the present organizational involvements of the fifty Czech-American elderly:

**Group-based Coping Strategy**

Do you belong or participate in any groups or organizations which help to cope or deal with the concern or concerns you previously mentioned? Which groups or organizations are these? And which are the concerns to which they relate?

Are there any means (organizationally or otherwise) in which you serve other people? Please explain briefly.

The above set of responses are later tabulated, not only to compare involvements in secular associations, but also to compare involvements in ethnically mixed organizations across generations. These questions are asked to see what types (religious or secular) of organizations dominate these peoples lives (i.e., help them cope with concerns). In conjunction with above data, unsolicited oral history accounts of negative experiences with churches among earlier generations is presented. Some field note information on negative experiences taken from off-the-tape conversations is also used. Moreover, secondary data from historians are employed to provide information on freethinking activity among Czechs during the early twentieth century.
Finally, data on the move of Czech-Americans toward inclusiveness over the generations are not only taken from questions on voluntary associations (above), but also those on the intergenerational educational and occupational mobility of these people and their present attitudes on intermarriage. Also, one letter of inquiry was sent to an insurance company in order to ascertain why they changed their name from Western "Bohemian" Fraternal Association to Western Fraternal Life—a more inclusive title.

The sample

Lists of Czech-American elderly (age fifty-five or over) were obtained from a Czech-American insurance and fraternal association; a large industrial firm in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and from County Extension Directors in five Iowa counties. From this sampling frame a randomly selected quota sample of fifty cases was drawn. Demographically, the subjects had an age range of fifty-five to ninety-five, with thirty males and twenty females. In this sample, twenty-nine respondents resided in the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area, six in the city of Fort Dodge, four in rural northwest Iowa areas, and eleven were settled on farms in five counties in northeastern Iowa. Thus, there were thirty-three urban and seventeen rural people. The occupational mix was fifteen farmers, seven white collar self-employed, nine white collar employed, fourteen blue collar, four housewives, and one unknown occupation. In regard to education, three had a grade school education, five had a grade school education and business college education, eighteen had a high school degree, eleven had a high school and business college degree, four had
a college degree, two a Master's degree, and the education of two people was unknown. With respect to religion, there were twenty-two Protestants, (including four Lutherans, seven Methodists, ten Presbyterians, and one "Protestant"), seventeen Catholics, and eleven Freethinkers.¹

The interview

The interview process involved the three steps of contact, interview, and follow-up. Participants in the study were first contacted by telephone. The research project was explained, using a phone script, and participation was requested. Approximately fifty percent did not participate, mostly for reasons of ineligibility. The lists provided by an insurance company, industrial firm, and County Extension Directors, contained names of a number of people who were either under age fifty-five, deceased, or not of Czech origins. There also was a number of people who were passed up because they were not home during the different hours the sample was drawn. Of those few who were eligible and still refused, the main reasons given were: they were too busy (e.g., harvesting crops), had little knowledge of Czech heritage, or simply did not want to participate. These names were replaced by another random drawing from the sampling frame. The interviews took place in the homes or offices of the participants throughout the year of 1979, and they lasted from ninety minutes to two hours. Each interview was recorded on audio

¹A Freethinker is a person who believes in free or autonomous thought research, science and philosophy unfettered by dogmas and principles of religion. Freethought recognizes no restriction but that imposed upon its progress by the rules of logic, scientific methodology, and epistemology.
tape. Post-interview letters of appreciation were mailed to all participants in the study.

Data analysis: primary and secondary data

Primary data The fifty oral histories were transcribed almost verbatim, with some repetition and side conversations edited. The indexing of these transcripts involved selecting indexable entries (i.e., such subjects as proper names, persons and things), starting with page one of the first transcript and working forward through an entire transcript. Subjects (indexable entries) were written on the transcript margins, and also placed on 3 x 5 index cards, with the card entries being filed alphabetically by subject for each case. Thus, the fifty oral histories were indexed individually. Then the fifty individual indices were consolidated into one main index for generalizations to be made about all fifty people. This indexing process is similar to that of a book, and follows advice from Davis et al., 1977 and A Manual of Style (1969).

After the individual and main indices were constructed, the subjects written on the margins of the transcripts were cut into clippings. The name of the narrator and the page number were written on the side of each clipping. These clippings were placed into envelopes by subject. For example, the envelope labeled "Ultimate Concerns" contained all fifty clippings (responses) to the open-ended question on ultimate concerns found in the oral history guide.

Each envelope carried two listings in addition to the name of the subject. One was for clippings that were also relevant to other subjects
and also contained in other envelopes (Also list). The second was for clippings found in other envelopes relevant to the subject (Also under list). For example, some passages classified under "Ultimate Concerns" are also relevant to "Economics." and some passages classified under "Politics" also contain material relevant to "Ultimate Concerns" (Wolff, 1974).

Secondary data

It is necessary to achieve a fuller understanding of the historical context of the religiosity of Czech-American elderly by referring to historical documents and journal articles on past religious values and expressions of Czech culture. The literature and ethnic heritage materials on Czech culture, both in America and Europe, was used to provide a broader context to the perceptions of these fifty elderly, and are considered important data in understanding the religiosity of these people and their ancestors. These data were retrieved from depositories of Czech heritage materials in Minnesota, Nebraska, and Iowa.
RESULTS

Humanism and ecumenism

"My concern is with my family. I got four grandsons and I want them to prosper" (a humanistic response).

"My ultimate concern is love for the Lord" (a transcendental response).

Results from previous study (cf., Chapter Three) indicate the ultimate concerns of the fifty Czech-American elderly are humanistic, centering on family (twenty-one of ninety-two responses), the well-being of humanity (nineteen of ninety-two), personal health (eighteen of ninety-two), and a diverse number (thirty) of other humanistic responses. Only three persons indicated transcendental concerns. Moreover, these elderly felt their ultimate concerns were met primarily by fraternal associations (fifty percent of seventy-two responses), with a lower percentage of these people citing churches (nineteen percent), business organizations (eleven percent), with nineteen percent saying no organization met their ultimate concerns.

These fifty people are also ecumenical. When asked if there is a "true religion within Christianity," seventy-eight percent (thirty-two of forty-one) stated there is "no one true religion." Moreover, forty-six percent of the thirty-two people who answered "no one true religion" maintained that Christianity was not the "only true religion of God." Twenty-two percent (seven) of these thirty-two felt Christianity was the

---

2 These questions were asked after nine oral histories had already been collected, hence the N = forty-one.
true religion, with three not responding and five answering they did not know. Finally, the majority of the elderly (twenty-seven of forty-six respondents) indicated a commitment to the welfare of "all world citizens." The remaining responses showed a continuum from six saying "Americans only," to thirteen being committed to "Americans first and other people next."

It is evident from these responses that these fifty senior citizens are humanistic, i.e., they are concerned with human needs and worldly interests over transcendental or other-worldly concerns. Moreover, these elderly indicate both religious and civic ecumenism, i.e., openness and acceptance of people from other backgrounds.

**Liberalism**

"In fact when we were in Holland, I think we were going to board the ship. We came on the New Amsterdam ship. And we passed a church. Mother said, 'let's stop in this church and ask the Lord to protect us along the way.' And I said, 'but mother it is not a Catholic church.' She said, 'that doesn't matter, it's the House of God. God will hear us wherever we go.' And so we walked into the church, knelt down and prayed."

The above is from one of the oral histories. This account suggests the kind of religious tolerance indicative of religious liberalism among Czech people. Although official Austrian statistics indicate ninety-six percent of the population of Bohemia during the 1850 to 1920 period (the major time of immigration) professed Catholicism, evidence similar to the testimony above suggest that these membership statistics do not show how close the people were to the church (Capek, 1969; Miller, 1922). In reference to the question regarding the ancestors' closeness to Catholicism,
thirty-one percent of these fifty people (N = sixteen) indicated these early generations were "closely tied" to the Catholic church. However, thirty-eight percent (nineteen) felt their ancestors were not close to the church but "were forced to attend," and thirty-one percent (fifteen) gave mixed responses, where one side was close and the other not.

Indications of liberalism are in oral history accounts of the respondents relatives who were "not closely tied to the Catholic church." There were reports of religious dissatisfaction and dissent, more specifically, they "broke away" from the church in the old country for numerous reasons, including its "favoritism toward the rich," and a negative association of Catholicism with the Austro-Hungarian empire. This elderly Czech-American woman accounts for her ancestors' dissatisfactions in the following excerpt:

Well, they were forced to be in the church there. The ones that didn't have the money were sort of pushed aside and they didn't have the rights the others did, and that's one thing they (great grandparents) did not like. The poor people didn't have the privileges that others did. The wealthy would get favors from the church. When the priest would come to see them, well it made a difference on their money.

Secondary data document the growth of religious and philosophical liberalism among Czechs, stemming from the influences of John Hus and his followers (Hussites). John Hus was a fourteenth century religious reformer, martyr, and national hero in Bohemia. The Czech's liberal tradition of an "inclination to dissent, to challenge, to dispute, is largely inherited from his Hussite forefathers" (Capek, 1969:122). Moreover, this liberalism has affected both Protestants and Catholics. Historians concur that there was a growth of resentment toward the
Catholic hierarchy among the Czech people, including those who emigrated to the United States (Capek, 1969; Miller, 1922; Balch, 1910; Masaryk, 1974; and Bradley, 1971).

For many Czechs, Hussitism kindled feelings of national consciousness, intellectual autonomy, and was an early symbol of democracy (Masaryk, 1974). Hussitism called for the freedom of men to determine for themselves their system of government, their religion, and their scheme of social relationships. The act of emigration for Czech people reflected Hussitism. It was a rejection of an aristocratic religion (Catholicism), an autocratic government (i.e., Austro-Hungarian Empire), and ethnic caste system, which were imposed on Czech people in Europe (Capek, 1969; Miller, 1922; Balch, 1910).

Miller (1922) argues that Czech Catholics lacked strong psychological identity with the Roman side of Catholicism. He attributes this notion to the idea that Christianity was introduced to Bohemia by two Slavonic (Cyril and Methodius) Eastern church missionaries. Hence, Czechs never fully identified with the Roman idea, as did the Poles. Instead, Czechs still retained their use of Slavonic liturgy, and "other more democratic forms of religious expression than those prescribed by Rome" (Miller, 1922:32).

Whether Miller's perception is totally valid or not, the data would agree with Kerner's statement that (1969:309):

"Few countries have been so unfortunate in their religious history as Bohemia. In few have more radical changes taken place in the religious and intellectual life of a people."
From the 14th century burning at the stake of John Hus, through five centuries of conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism, the Czech people have had a bloody religious and political history. This strife has resulted in two current conditions among Czech people: the weakening of religion, and the pervasiveness of religious and philosophical liberalism in these people's lives.

Finally, secondary data document the influences of nineteenth century rationalist, anti-clerical, anti-Austrian writings of Czech journalists and ex-clergymen. These intellectuals were thorough-going liberals, even radicals. This liberalism was not that different from the Enlightenment liberalism of the United States. For instance, the well-known Czech writer Vojta Naprstch was a follower of Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson (Capek, 1969).

Economic liberalism is a part of philosophical liberalism. In contrast to conservatism, philosophical liberalism stresses fairly unrestricted individual rights, and financial independence, these values can be more fully experienced in a free enterprise or capitalistic system where the individual is elevated over the state. Thus, oral history accounts when asked what were their (first generations') reasons for emigration were, the respondents indicated that economic liberalism (sixty-one percent of the responses) was the main reason for Czech emigration to America. Among the more minor reasons, those of political autonomy (twenty-two percent) and religious freedom (seventeen percent), also reflect liberalism. Secondary data cites the search for land and gold, and the need for higher wages as dominant motivations for immigration (Capek, 1969). Miller (1922:45) alludes to the poor "economic
conditions" of nineteenth-century Czechoslovakia in stating:

On the one hand, we have large estates in the hands of noblemen, mostly foreigners, with the peasantry pushed off into hilly and rocky sections of the country; a system of taxation which lays an especially heavy burden upon the small land owner; an average wage for an agricultural laborer of twenty-five cents a day, and for an industrial worker of sixty cents.

The political motivations behind emigration were brought on by centuries of suppression, the revolutionary disturbances of 1848, and the unwillingness of Czech nationalists to serve in the Austro-Hungarian Army. Capek describes the autocratic political conditions that led to a search (through emigration) for political freedom (1969:53-54):

For centuries the ruling class drummed into the head of the peasant its specious theories: obey the church, obey the Government, obey the lords. The archbishop claimed a prior lien on the peasant's soul; the emperor held a chattel mortgage on his body; the lord usurped the fruits of his labor. To the peasant little was left that was free and unencumbered.

Philosophical liberalism is the belief in free religious expression, the stress on rationality, the desire for individual autonomy, the need for opportunity, the felt importance of education, the need for financial betterment, and the adherence to the ideals of fraternalism. These fifty Czech-American elderly were asked to recall if the first generation of their families felt "religion in the United States differed from the old country." Fifty-six percent of these fifty elderly indicated that the emigrants of their families valued "religious freedom." Of the remaining elderly, twenty-eight percent said they are "unsure" how the immigrants felt, eleven percent felt the first generation saw "no difference," with five percent divided among mixed responses.
Historical documents indicate that the Czech immigrants stressed rationality by joining rationalist organizations (e.g., Czech Rationalist Federation), and by subscribing to mid-nineteenth century rationalist newspapers (Capek, 1969; Balch, 1910; and Miller, 1922).

With respect to economic liberalism, the desire for economic independence and financial betterment was manifested in the oral histories in these ways: (1) farming was held in high esteem as a "desirable" occupation, because "it meant independence"; (2) there were strong norms to own a home or property; (3) a norm of frugality and financial conservatism meant increased income, and ultimately, economic self-sufficiency; and (4) the need to stay "healthy" so as not to be a "burden" to their families.

In summary, it was found that Czech emigrants brought a liberal heritage to the United States, a tradition dating back to the times (fifteenth century) of John Hus. Many of these people had broken away from the church both in the old country and the United States. Others resented the Catholicism or religion in general. In short, Czechs acted out their liberalism by emigrating to this country. Findings show they emigrated primarily for economic and religious freedom. Finally, these liberal motivations in their occupations and family patterns.

Secularism

"Here (the United States) religion was their (the first generation) choice, whereas in Czechoslovakia they were expected to go. I don't know whether it was the families that expected them to go, but I remember them discussing that as a big thing" (Czech-American elderly woman).
Czech immigrants brought a liberal heritage to America, one that became coupled with their secularization and inclusion into the larger American society. This is the historical context of the humanistic and ecumenical religiosity of Czech-American elderly today.

The following data support the thesis that Czech-Americans have become secular in the United States. Secularism means the primary identification with worldly voluntary associations over churches, the relative weakening of the influence of churches upon people's lives, the displacement of religion into worldly associations (i.e., freethinking and quasi-religious groups), and the growth of this-worldly philosophy among Czechs. Secularization is a process.

Secularization is indicated in the responses of these fifty elderly to the question on the "role religion played" in early Czech communities in Iowa. First, although oral history accounts discuss the important role some churches played among early Czech-American communities in Iowa, the import of these churches varies according to region. For example, secularization is apparent in northwestern Iowa where the majority of Czech-Americans have historically been inactive in churches. Early prairie and swamp conditions were severe, and churches were seldom built. Even today the Czechs have shown relatively little interest in local churches.

The following statement refers to the general disengagement from religion in this rural area of northwest Iowa:

When they(Czechs) came over most fell away from the church. Only about ten percent of my family remained in the church. So many of them have stated they didn't like religion forcing them to do things they didn't want to do. Most of the family didn't
participate in church. I don't know if its like the slaves, when they got away from it (their masters) they were free.

On the other hand, there are certain urban and rural Czech enclaves in northeastern Iowa where churches played major roles in early community life, and are frequently attended today. Capek (1969:119) indicates a national secularizing trend of fifty percent defection of Czech-Americans from their old country faith. He maintains that these defectors were usually not farmers, but were the intelligensia and workers from urban centers.

Second, thirty-two oral histories reported negative experiences with the Catholic church—both in Czechoslovakia and the United States. Some ancestors carried over resentments toward the Czech Catholic church for previously stated reasons. In the United States, some ancestors reported negative experiences with priests (e.g., alcoholism), burial refusals, resentments of the churches wealth, problems with churches not legitimating inter-faith marriages, etc. These negative experiences led to a loss of respect for the churches, and in many cases, disengagement from churches. A second-generation Czech-American woman discusses a negative incident which led to her parents and family leaving the Catholic church:

My father's family was a very strict Catholic family and his father became ill, he had hardening of the arteries. So for ten years he was unable to attend church because he had to have shots and was bedridden. And his family always paid for his pew, cause in those days they had to pay for pews to sit in one place in the church and pray. So upon my grandfather's death, when they wanted to bury my grandfather, the church refused because he had not been in attendance at church during the ten years of his illness before his death—regardless of the pew being paid for. So, for this reason my father broke away from the Catholic church, and, consequently his three daughters who had
been baptized Catholic and my mother—-they did not
attend church either, although my brother was
baptized before us. So none of us were raised
Catholic and had to pick our own religion when we
grew up.

An elderly Czech male states:

Dad had a very unpleasant experience. After his
parents died, his older brother put him in St. Joseph's
Catholic school for boys. He was so badly mistreated
he turned against all types of religion.

Third, secularization is apparent in the proliferation of free-
thinking organizations (e.g., C.S.A., the Czech Rationalist Federation,
etc.), journals, newspapers, and schools among Czech-Americans of the
nineteenth century—reaching their peak in 1920—with some surviving to
the present time. The following oral history account of an elderly
Czech farmer describes the activity of freethinking Czechs in a heavily
Catholic rural area of north central Iowa:

They had a movement in 1927 or so, who had very hard
workers, but they didn't believe in God. They called
themselves freethinkers.

Later, he states:

Quite a few people (Czechs) fell away from the
church at that time.

Brown and Stein (1978:98) write that the "Czechs had the largest ethnic
freethought movement in America, both in terms of total membership and
amount of property owned." Moreover, Czechs published a secular

---

Miller (1922:126) outlines the Czechoslovakian "anti-clerical"
influences of the great Czech liberal Karel Havlicek, and the impact he
had on immigrants who eventually came to America. Some of the main
leaders of and newspapers on freethinking in the late nineteenth century
America (e.g., Naprstek, Klacel, and Ždrubeck) were affected by this
man.
"Free-Thinker's Bible," with Robert Ingersoll serving as the surrogate priest of the freethinking movement, and the works of Voltaire, Paine and others quoted at meetings of freethinking groups (Miller, 1922). Freethought is the epitome of secularism and humanism, a philosophy which is anti-clerical, stressing man's humanity to man--independent of religion. As Thomas Paine put it, "My mind is my church."

Fourth, the vast majority of Czech-Americans attend church, and this sample of fifty elderly and their ancestors is no exception. However, this does not detract from the secularization thesis of this paper. Oral histories discussed church attendance in terms of custom, social support, or a "socializing agent for children." As McGuire puts it (1981:117):

The social acceptability of denominational membership, together with this individualism, make the characteristic orientation of denominationalism somewhat resemble commitment to other voluntary organizations such as Kiwanis, Junior League, Elks, or League of Women Voters.

This does not mean churches are not important to Czech people. The question is why are they important, and how important are they compared to other voluntary associations? The data from Johnson and Hraba (1981a) show that the fifty Czech-American elderly chose secular organizations over churches as associations which primarily met their ultimate concerns. Moreover, Table 1 (below) indicates an increase in activity among secular organizations over three generations of the families of respondents.

---

4 Miller points out that Freethought was more than a "protest" (dissent) against Rome such as Luther and Hus before him had made. It was a popular reaction against all churches (secularism) which had "vexed and tried them, and which seemed to them to hinder their full and free development of their life as Czechs now living in a land of freedom where they were no longer under any compulsion to accept its yoke" (1922:128).
Oral histories state that some grandparents or parents of respondents were heavily involved in the founding of local chapters of a number of Czech voluntary associations. However, in reference to the question on what dues these people paid, little information could be found. Regarding the question on the benefits received from these voluntary associations,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>(N = 49) Parents</th>
<th>(N = 50) Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular only</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church-related only</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both secular and church-related</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No associations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation unapplicable</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/no recall</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These figures do not include church membership. Also, membership in Western Fraternal Life is not counted for the respondents or parents since many of the sample is selected from this organization. The "Generation unapplicable" category refers to generations being excluded because they were not in the United States. There was insufficient data on grandparents, so they were excluded.

Responses indicate the benefits were of three varieties: (1) economic; (2) social; and (3) quasi-religious. In terms of economics, the Czech
people needed loans for purchasing homes and property. Thus, Czechs banded together to form ethnic subeconomies in the form of fraternal insurance companies and banks. Set off from their mother country and living on farms, many Czech immigrants were socially isolated. Many combined into fraternal as well as insurance societies.

Finally, since many of the Czechs had left the church once they arrived in America, these associations provided a number of quasi-religious functions. A few oral histories reported that the first and second generations found their religion through lodges (e.g., Western Fraternal Life), or chose to practice religion in the home, rather than attending churches. The following oral history describes the Western Fraternal Life (Z.C.B.J.) lodge as a surrogate religion:

"They (the first generation) talked about how strict they were over there (Czechoslovakia), how much difference there was here. Now we had religious reading in our lodge on Sunday, cause as a kid I can remember Mr. Korsel. They would have baptism and all that, I was baptized there."

(Czech-American male)

Taggart (1948) argues that "good Czech Catholics" did not support the fraternal lodge movement because lodges often conducted "religious ceremonies" that were felt to be the domain of the church. However, a number of Catholics in this sample belonged to Z.C.B.J., and did not express such sentiments.

In summary, there is substantial evidence of secularization occurring among the Czech people since their arrival to the United States. Data from the sample of fifty Czech-American elderly indicate that there is strong evidence of secularization occurring among them and good evidence that it was part of their ancestors religiosity. Previous research
(cf., Chapter Two) showed that the fifty elderly chose secular over religious organizations as associations which primarily met their ultimate concerns. Reminiscences from the sample suggest an increase of involvements over the generations in secular associations. Even for the vast majority who attend church, organized religion is not a main influence in their lives. In regard to defection from churches, data from the sample indicate that there are some areas of Iowa where Czechs have defected from churches or remained inactive in organized religion. Thirty-two oral histories discussed "negative experiences" between earlier generations and Catholicism. Oral histories point to the popularity of freethinking (anti-church) movements among Czechs in Iowa up to the nineteen thirties. Secondary data estimate that fifty percent of all Czech emigrants defected from their old country faith after arrival to the United States. Moreover, secondary research also maintains Czechs had the largest freethinking movement in the United States. Thus, there is evidence of past and present secularization among Czechs.

Inclusiveness

The notion of brotherhood found in the liberalism of Czech immigrants has evolved over the generations of Czech families into the ecumenical beliefs of Czech-American elderly today. As Czech-Americans became more ethnically inclusive, most showed signs of increased ecumenism.

Further analysis of the types of associations (not including churches) Czech-Americans join indicates inclusive trends in voluntary associational involvement across generations. For instance, Table 2 (below) shows that the number of non-Czech and mixed associations has steadily increased
over two generations. For instance, although not indicated in a table, all grandparents (or first generation Americans) in the sample either belonged exclusively to Czech organizations or were not involved in organizations. However, the next two generations increasingly joined more inclusive, inter-ethnic organizations (e.g., Odd Fellows, American Legion, etc.).

Table 2. Percentage of exogamous voluntary associations among Czech-Americans across two generations^a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associations</th>
<th>Parents N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Respondent N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech only</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Czech only</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Czech and non-Czech</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No associations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generations unapplicable</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/no recall</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aThere is a slight error (1 percent or less) in the percentages due to rounding. The figures do not include church membership. Also, membership in Z.C.B.J. is not counted for respondents or parents since many of the sample are selected from this organization.

An investigation into contemporary Czech-American organizations indicates that their nomenclatures, policies, and membership roles reflect an evolution toward more inclusiveness. A letter from the president of
a Czech-based insurance company describes this process:

Our former name was Western Bohemian Fraternal Association. Our name was changed mainly on the request of sales people. It did hurt sales in some areas, but we did not feel it was a detriment in the state of Iowa. Yes, we are definitely encouraging non-Czechs to join our organization. Czechs are no longer immigrating to this country and those with Czech backgrounds are intermarrying and no longer have as much loyalty to ethnic organizations such as ours.

Martha Griffith (1944) addresses these trends toward inclusiveness, with the following evidence of a "melting pot" process: (1) Czech language: "this effort to preserve the Czech language among the young people of the city has not been successful and the use of the Czech language is rapidly disappearing from local institutions" (1944:310-311); (2) Czech lodges: have changed to English rituals and language; (3) Czech literature: "an attempt on the part of some of the Czech people to preserve their literature has met the same fate" (1944:311); (4) Czech newspapers: the importance of the "Czech newspaper is also diminishing" (1944:113); (5) Czech plays and drama are in sharp decline; and (6) social participation is becoming more inclusive. "Gradually and naturally" writes Griffith, "the Czech people have been assimilated into the life of the community and have become Americans" (1944:313-314).

After twenty-six oral histories had been collected, an "emergent" question was developed to tap the attitudes of the remaining twenty-four Czech-American elderly toward intermarriage. The findings indicate attitudes of inclusiveness, with seven elderly accepting "all types" of marriages, fifteen elderly accepting "all types but black-white marriages," and only two people rejecting inter-ethnic and interfaith marriages.
Although no systematic measure of intermarriages among the respondents or their offspring was taken, a number of unsolicited comments revealed that intermarriage is common among the respondents' generation and has become more prevalent among their offspring. Even as early as 1900, second generation Czech-Americans were indicating trends toward inclusiveness via widespread intermarriages, especially to Germans (Capek, 1969).

As Czechs became integrated into the opportunity structure of America, they became more ethnically inclusive in the breadth of their social participation, but in the beginning, early generations faced conflicts. For instance, during the 1920s there were numerous Czech cemeteries, many developing as a result of blatant discrimination. The following oral history account describes the development of one Czech cemetery in Cedar Rapids:

You know I was just thinking about this stuff. You know the colored people are often discriminated against. Years ago, you know the Czechs were discriminated against in one of the cemeteries here. They had a fence and no Czechs could be buried on the other side of that fence. That's why we started up our own cemetery here in town. (How long did this last?) Oh, I don't know how long.

In 1922, there were twenty-two Catholic and thirteen Protestant Czech-American churches in Iowa (Miller, 1922). In a few areas of Iowa, mixed Bohemian and Irish congregations were reported, in which there was conflict between the two groups over cultural and language barriers. An oral history describes the conflicts:

With travel the way it was, they (the first generation) didn't go to church. My parents were Bohemian and the church was being bothered by Irish. That didn't go too good. The Irish made fun of the Bohemians. They (Irish) worked in the brick yards. The owner
provided homes for them. The Irish looked down on Bohemians. (Czech-American female)

The oral histories indicate, however, that inter-ethnic conflict subsided over the generations, as Czechs experienced job mobility, broader social associations, and intermarried. Czech churches became more inclusive, switching to the English language, having more ethnically diverse congregations, and the phasing out of strictly Czech pastors (Capek, 1969; Griffith, 1944).

A measure of trends toward increasing inclusiveness is the oral history data on educational attainments across generations. For example, eighteen of the respondents had a high school or less education, with twenty having some college education. However, roughly forty-five of the parents and grandparents had only a grade school or less education. Moreover, although only nine elderly reported the education of their children, eighty-nine percent of their children had a college degree or higher.

Education is highly valued among Czechs because it means the possibility of economic betterment over the generations. Universal and compulsory education had been the law in Bohemia, even when early settlers were coming to Iowa. The literacy rate among Czech immigrants was very nearly the highest among all ethnic groups that have entered the United States.\(^5\) The generations of these people passed through a

\(^5\)Due to language barriers, Bohemian immigrants were often stereotyped as "slow" and "illiterate." However, Balch states that in "taking the American immigration figures for 1900, we find that of all immigrants of fourteen years and over, those not able to both read and write were 24.2 percent; among Germans 5.8 percent; among Bohemians and Moravians only 3.0 percent" (1969:78).
cycle. The pioneers arrived in Iowa with a fairly good European education and an emphasis on education. Their children went somewhat unschooled, because of labor demands on the land. Later generations came back to formal education, with each additional generation increasing its educational attainment. Despite a lack of formal education among many of the second generation, literacy remained. As one 74 year-old woman (who had immigrated to America in 1913) put it:

My family was literate all the way back to the 15th century. My brother read about America from books he borrowed from a teacher. The teachers there (pause) . . . you had to study and learn so much more there.

It is mainly through mass education that ethnic groups are enculturated into the mainstream of the larger national culture. Of course, the occupational structure and educational system of a culture are related to each other. America's occupational structure has seen the growth of industrial work in the past, the rise of white-collar jobs in this century, with the continual decline of agriculture. This growth of white-collar jobs and the concomitant need for educated labor has provided a greater potential for the social mixing of ethnic groups in American society.

Public education has been a means to economic betterment and a force for perpetuating worldly interests among Czech-Americans. Education operates across generations as a social springboard for these people. Through subsequent occupational mobility, these people moved off the
land, out of ethnic enclaves, and into new and broader opportunity networks. For instance, almost all of the fifty Czech-American elderly came from farm backgrounds and have, in many cases, given up farming to work in the city. Moreover, oral histories report most of the children of Czech-American farmers are not staying on the farms. Consequently many rural elderly voiced their concerns about the maintenance of the family farm.

The following oral history excerpt exemplifies a crude measure of the breadth of occupational mobility among Czech people:

I have a boy in California . . . (what's he doing?) he's a dentist. He has been practicing now for 27 years. He settled in Sunnydale near San Francisco. He practiced there two years, but that was kind of a factory worker location. There was a lot of business but he moved to Palo Alto near San Francisco. It had a very high caliber area, see, where there are more wealthy people to patronize him. So, now he is taking it kind of easy, he only works four days a week. I have a daughter in Kansas City . . . . She has eleven children. One is an architect, one is in merchandizing. (Have they graduated from college?) Oh, yes. (How about your daughter, did she go to college?) Oh, yes.

The narrator is a retired bookkeeper, whose parents ran a grocery store in a Czech neighborhood, and whose grandparents had been farmers in Iowa.

The following excerpts—indicative of most Czech-American families in the study—are taken from an elderly Czech-American small-farmer (160

---

6 In 1900, forty-three percent of all male breadwinners of Bohemian parentage (parents born in Bohemia), first and second generations, were engaged in "agricultural pursuits" (Capek, 1969:81). These are the most recent statistics.
acres), who discusses trends toward educational, occupational, and geographic mobility--inclusiveness--among his family:

Dad went to sixth grade. As far as the grandparents, I don't know. I went through eighth grade. All of my children have college degrees. The oldest daughter graduated from the University of Iowa as a Registered Nurse. Dennis graduated from Iowa State, majoring in Zoology. Then he went to Omaha to work for Richman Gordman stores. He was with them for about three or four years. Now he's moved from Omaha to Minneapolis to work as a buyer for Target stores. He has to buy for sixty stores. The other daughter graduated from the University of Northern Iowa, majoring in Clothing and Textiles. She managed one of the big shops in Minneapolis. She was managing that until Carnation approached her about two or three years ago. She worked for them for awhile. Then the Heinz people called her, and finally hired her away from Carnation. She likes it better with Heinz because she doesn't have to fly all of the time.

The children of these elderly are moving off the farms and into the flow of American life. The farmer quoted above has never lived in any other place than where he presently resides. Yet his children have gotten better education and jobs, and have done the necessary traveling in order to accomplish their goals.

In summary, Czech-Americans have become more inclusive over the generations, showing signs of ecumenism among the fifty Czech-American elderly. For instance, there has been a steady increase of Czech-Americans joining mixed and non-Czech associations. Inclusiveness can be seen through the opening up of membership policies among previously exclusive Czech organizations. Further evidence of inclusiveness is in the declining interest in preserving Czech language, lodges, literature, newspapers, and plays. More importantly, Czechs' social participation is becoming more inclusive, with inter-ethnic marriages becoming more
prevalent. Although some Czech churches still exist, they are becoming more diverse and fewer in number. Finally, the educational and occupational mobility of second and third generation Czechs not only represents an achievement of the wishes of their liberal ancestors, but also symbolizes the move of these people into broader social networks.
CONCLUSION

In summary, the results of this study help to explain the religiosity of Czech-American elderly. The humanism and ecumenism of these fifty senior citizens is largely a result of their ethnic heritage, a liberal legacy that has been reinforced in a setting (America) which encourage its development in the direction of increasing secularization and inclusiveness. As the data indicate, philosophical liberalism is still manifest in the Czech culture. Liberalism links to humanism through its equalitarian and democratic philosophy. Liberalism is concerned and involved in human problems of irrationality, superstition, poverty, lack of opportunity, discrimination, and prejudicial provincialism. Liberalism is necessarily in philosophical conflict with conservative, aristocratic, and autocratic religious or governmental systems. Moreover, liberalism flows into ecumenism, i.e., acceptance of the major religions and universal brotherhood, by its belief in religious tolerance, equality, and more regional notions of brotherhood.

The hypothesis that Czech-Americans have become secular and inclusive over the generations suggests that new doctrines have evolved among these fifty elderly—humanism and ecumenism. Although most Czech-American elderly attend church, traditional churches are failing to meet ultimate concerns, therefore showing a loss of strength. These people pragmatically look to worldly humanistic organizations, instead of churches, to serve themselves, their families, and humanity.

Hence, as an ethnic group with a liberal religious past move from an authoritarian (Czechoslovakia) to a democratic (America) setting,
they began to participate in this nation's social and economic life, and change occurred in their religiosity. Their religiosity became diffused from a central institution (the Catholic church) into many secular institutions, whose activities are humanitarian, and whose philosophy is liberal and ecumenical.
SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation has four major parts. The first part is devoted to a current assessment of religiosity research. An argument is made for the usefulness of oral-history research in the study of the religiosity of Czech-American elderly. The second part is devoted to the description and interpretation of the religiosity of fifty Czech-American elderly. The third and fourth parts are devoted to studying the religiosity of these elderly. Each of these parts is designed as separate works that could be read independently.

Even though each paper is independent of the others, the papers are also highly interrelated. The purpose of this concluding section of the dissertation is to summarize the four major parts, to discuss some major limitations of this research, and to discuss the implications of this research.
SUMMARY

The clearest starting point is the observation of E. W. Burgess who said:

In the life history is revealed as in no other way the inner life of the person, his moral struggles, his successes and failures in securing his destiny.

The life or oral history has a long tradition in sociology. Frazier (1978:139) maintains that the oral history method "is a unique and proven way to obtain social scientific data." Unfortunately, this costly and time consuming method has been ignored by sociologists who have conducted religiosity research. The present dissertation is an attempt to make a contribution toward future oral history research on religiosity.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to use the oral-history method, in conjunction with socio-historical materials, to understand and describe the religiosity of a sample of fifty Czech-American elderly. The objectives of this study have been accomplished in a number of ways. First, this research began with the assumption that a person's religiosity is a result of a combination of personal choice (we make our own spiritual decisions) and past or present social influences (i.e., family, ethnicity, etc.). Thus, in line with this assumption, oral histories (with an oral history guide), a few personal documents (letters, newspaper clippings, etc.), and a larger array of historical materials have been retrieved to understand the religiosity of these elderly.
Second, in the religiosity paper (part two), Dean Kelley's thesis is tested by directly examining the religiosity of these senior citizens within the more complete context of their lives. That is to say, an open-ended oral history guide was used to elicit straightforward responses. Numerous topical areas are covered in the guide, including social participation, economics, politics, education and religion. The major indicator of religiosity was a lengthy open-ended question on these elderly's ultimate concerns in life, and how these concerns were served, organizationally or otherwise. Yinger (1970) proposed the "ultimate concern" line of questioning because it tends to avoid the denominational sets. For instance, a person's concerns may or may not center on his or her spiritual life, hence they may or may not give a religious answer. This study contends that the ultimate-concern indicator and the others used in this study are more fruitful than closed-ended questions in standard surveys. The interspersing of religiosity indicators with other topic areas not only helped to show how these other areas (e.g., social participation, education, etc.) relate to religiosity, but also help to reduce the anxiety or sensitivity one often has in discussing religion or personal feelings (e.g., feelings about prayer, death and so forth). The indicators showed that these senior citizens are humanistic and ecumenical.

The goal of this study (part three) was to use historical data to understand more fully the roots and context of an ethnic group's present religiosity. This goal was accomplished by applying a sociological analysis to historical documents on the charisma and the routinization of liberalism in Czech history.
Fourth, the goal of this research (part four) was to explain why this sample of fifty Czech-American elderly are humanistic and ecumenical. It was found that the liberal heritage of Czech immigrants was buttressed by American liberalism. Czech-Americans became more secular and ethnically inclusive over time. The humanism and ecumenism of Czech-American elderly today is rooted in that history.

In conclusion, the Czech-American forefathers of these fifty brought a liberal religious tradition to America, a legacy buttressed by American Enlightenment liberalism. Over time, this liberalism flowed in the direction of increased secularization and inclusiveness. The present humanism and ecumenism of these fifty senior adults can be explained through their heritage.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of a study must be made explicit. The limitations associated with each of the four papers will be discussed.

Part one:

Oral history research is time consuming under modern production demands and is expensive to carry out. The interest in oral history research has declined over the years with increased emphasis on statistical methods.

The use of an oral-history guide suggests that there is some imposition of the researcher's values upon the sample. The fact that certain questions were selected for this study and others discarded suggests that the researcher was interested in religion and that the biases of the researcher were involved in the construction of the guide. The
oral history researcher is often confronted with the problem of correctly interpreting the meaning of what people say or of words stated. Sometimes a calculated guess is necessary, but there is an effort not to misinterpret what people say. The fact that the researcher in this study is interested in religiosity research may have led to an overemphasis on religion at the expense of other topics. Social science is not and never will be value free. The most that can be expected in sociological research is for the social scientist to attempt to render, as objectively as possible, a portrait of the sample not a photograph.

Part two:

When a small data set from a limited population is utilized, the major issue to be addressed is the generalizability of the findings. Clearly, the findings in this study are not generalizable beyond Czech-American elderly in Iowa or a smaller area. With oral history we have only the remembered in a specific time, place and situation. The problem is that subjective and selective recollections cannot be assumed an accurate representation of actual experience. Also, some of the questions contained in the oral history guide, although open-ended, might be structured enough to elicit socially desirable responses.

The interpretation of oral history data involves the imposition of the researcher's biases. As previously stated, the researcher must not only interpret the meaning of the words but also interpret the various nuances with regard to the strength of the respondent's belief or attitude.
Part three:

The main drawback of any historical research is that no accurate records are kept among the common people. Hence, it is usually the intelligensia who write about them, making attributions about them as outside observers. This kind of research can lack validity because many middle-class writers were not close enough to the common people to understand them. This is a problem in trying to establish with certainty, that liberalism was preserved among the common people. Also, it is apparent that interpretations differ considerably between Protestant or Catholic historians, especially when discussing religious topics.

Part four:

This paper had to rely upon the inaccurate, sometimes selective perceptions of elderly people who attempted to recollect the past. Some of these people cannot remember details about past generations or take "educated guesses."

Implications of the Study

In attempting to tap a person's religiosity, researchers need to use oral histories to uncover subjective states without imposing their own preconceptions on respondents. If a person's own configurations of meaning (ultimate concerns, for instance) is used to study his or her religiosity, then more accuracy is achieved. The preceding is true especially if religiosity questions are mixed with others. The implication is that we need to continue new and innovative oral history studies into the religiosity of various age and ethnic groups.
The implication of this study is that oral histories are therapeutic. Many of the elderly interviewed commented on how the oral history rekindled their interests in their heritage and themselves. Many of these people enthusiastically shared their family albums and other memorabilia with the interviewers. The multiple benefits of reminiscence for the elderly is discussed in Earlix's (1977) research.

The implication from part two is that social scientists need to employ qualitative approaches to understanding religiosity, rather than inputting psychological states to aggregate statistics. The implication of parts three and four is that we need to do what C. Wright Mills suggested, i.e., employ the full use of historical materials in sociological research. As was stated, survey religiosity research has been traditionally ahistorical.

Finally, it would be interesting to compare these trends (i.e., toward secularization and inclusiveness) among this sample of Czech-American elderly with samples of other age and ethnic groups. The broader question is whether American society as a whole is moving in a direction similar to that of these Czech-Americans.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allport, Gordon

American Psychological Association

Balch, Emily Greene

Baston, D. Daniel

Beck, Robert N.

Bellah, R. N.

Bradley, J. F.

Brock, Peter

Broughton, Walter

Brown, Marshall G. and Gordon Stein

Bruyn, S. T.


Glock, Charles Y.

Glock, Charles Y. and Rodney Stark

Griffith, Martha

Hall, John R.

Johnson, Chris and Stephen M. Aigner

Johnson, Christopher Jay and Joseph Hraba

Keene, James J.
1968 "Unsuspected effects of religion on your personality." World Order 2:2.

Kelley, Dean M.

Kenny, Branford P., Ronald E. Cromwell and C. Edwin Vaughan
Kerner, Robert Joseph

King, Morton B. and Richard A. Hunt

Lenski, Gerhard

Lutzow, The Count

Macek, Josef

Machalek, Richard

Machalek, Richard and Michael Martin

Masaryk, Tomas

Maurice, C. Edward

McGuire, Meredith B.

McNeill, John Thomas, Matthew Spinka, and Harold R. Willoughby
Miller, Kenneth D.  

Mills, C. Wright  

Mindel, Charles H. and C. Edwin Vaughan  

Moberg, David O.  

Newman, William M.  

Nisbet, Robert  

O'Sullivan, N. K.  

Robinson, W. S.  

Rosicky, Rose  
1929 A History of Czechs (Bohemians) in Nebraska. Omaha, Nebraska: National Printing Company.

Saliba, John A.  

Schroeder, W. Widick  

Shaw, Clifford  

Smelser, Neil J.  
Spinka, Matthew  

Spradley, James P.  

Stark, Rodney and Charles Glock  

Stave, Bruce M.  

Taggart, Glen Laird  

Troeltsch, Ernst  

University of Chicago  

Wallerstein, Immanuel  

Watson, Franke, Maria Barbara and Laurence Watson  

Weber, Max  

Wolff, Kurt H.  

Wuthnow, Robert  

Yinger, Milton J.  

APPENDIX: CZECH-AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY GUIDE
As explained in our telephone conversation, we are studying ethnic groups in the state. Our current interest is the Czechs of Iowa. We wish to reconstruct the history of the Czechs and think you play an important part in this study.

We wish to interview you on about your recollections of the Czech community. Our interview will be recorded on tape and will become part of a special collection at Iowa State University on Midwestern heritage. Your insights will add much value to our study and your cooperation is deeply appreciated.

Before the interview, would you think about your own family, back to your grandparents and ahead to your own children, and how the family has changed over the years? Please refer to and have ready any personal documents, such as diaries, letters, photo albums, newspaper clippings, etc., that would help you recollect the past.

If you have any questions, please call me at 515-294-7263 or 515-232-7563 (home).

Sincerely,

Joseph Hraba
Associate Professor

Christopher Jay Johnson
Ph.D. Student
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: Ethnic Heritage in the Midwest

Purpose: To reconstruct the heritage of ethnic groups in the Midwest with the help of oral histories.

Procedure: Social scientists from Iowa State University will interview you in your home about your recollections of the Czechs of Iowa.

Benefits: This study will help establish a historical record of the Czechs in Iowa.

Confidentiality: Your interview will remain confidential, and you will not be identified by name in any publication or presentation. Audiotapes and other records of our interview will become part of a special collection of the Czech heritage in Iowa.

YOU MAY WITHDRAW CONSENT AND DISCONTINUE PARTICIPATION AT ANY TIME. ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE REGARDING THESE PROCEDURES WILL BE ANSWERED.

I have read the above statements and voluntarily agree to participate.

Name: ___________________ Signature: ___________________

Please Print

Date: _________/_________/__________

Month Day Year
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Name: ____________________

Time and Location Data

1. Date
2. Place
3. Time

Background Data on Participants

4. Age, date of birth, and place of birth
5. Gender
6. Work history
7. History of residence
8. Education
9. Religion
10. Ethnic self-identification

Frame of Reference

Mention the phases of American history. Place the Czechs of Iowa in that history: early settlement around Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, and eventual settlement to the North and West. Industrialization and the recent changes in work and education.

Let us talk about your family across the generations, and how the larger changes (above) have affected them.

1st Generation

A. The "Old Country"*

1. Province of Czechoslovakia: Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia

2. What was the social and economic standing of the individual and his or her family in the "old country?" What kind of work did they do?

3. Did they exercise political rights?

4. What was their religious experience like? How closely tied were they to the church?

5. What was their formal educational experience like? How much emphasis was there on formal education?
B. Immigration:

1. When did they emigrate?

2. Did they leave alone, as a family, or with a group from their "old country" community?

3. Why did they leave? What were their reasons for emigration?

4. Did they know anyone in the U.S.? How much information did they have about America?

5. How much did it cost to come to the U.S.? How did they raise enough money for the fare?

6. For how long did they remain in their first destination in America? Did they come immediately to Iowa? If not, where and in how many places did they live previously? Why did they come to Iowa? Was there a promise of a job? Did family or friends already live here?

7. What were their expectations for America and were they met upon arrival?

C. America and Iowa

C. I. Residence, Neighborhood, and Society

1. Upon arrival in Iowa, what were living conditions like?

2. Who were the neighbors? Did many of the same family live in the community? In what proximity.

3. What role did religion play in the community? How close was the nearest church or synagogue to the place of residence? Did any children become clergymen? Did other ethnic groups attend the same church? Did children go to Sunday School? How did religion differ from the "old country?"

4. Did they vote? Did they actively campaign at election time? Did anyone in the family hold political office? Did they have much contact with local politicians? What was the party of their choice and why? Did this change over time? Was anyone in the family ever a recipient of material assistance or patronage from the local political organization?

6. How long did they live in their first residence? Did the children stay or move? Why and where to? What is the neighborhood like today? Where does most of the family live? Is it spread throughout the community, the state, the nation? How does present housing differ from earliest housing?

C.II. Work: City

1. What kind of work did they do? How was the first job found? What skills, if any, were involved?

2. Who were co-workers? Who were supervisors and management?

3. How long did the interviewee stay in the same job? What was his or her job history? Was there a change in skill level? Was there a change in employer? When did these changes occur and how did they come about?

4. How was work organized? Did they work in factories? In small businesses? Were members of their ethnic group generally in the same occupation?

5. Did other generations in the same family pursue similar work patterns or move into entirely different skill levels and occupations? If there was a change, how long did it take?

6. How did working differ from working in the "old country?"

7. Was there ever any discrimination in hiring or in advancing on the job?

8. Did women in the family work? If so, in what kind of work; at home or away from home? What was the attitude toward their working? In which generation did they start to work? What was the effect on the family?

9. At what age did children start to work? At what kind of jobs? Who controlled their salaries? How did child labor change over the generations? Did children continue going to school while working?

C.III. Work: Rural

1. How was land purchased initially and later?

2. Growth (if any) in acreage?

3. Crops raised?

4. Any livestock?

5. Use of animal and mechanical power (adoption of farm implements)?
D. Property Ownership (urban only)

1. How was home financed?

2. If owned more property or business, how was it financed?

3. Who managed the business, who were the helpers and who were the customers?

2nd and 3rd Generations

Repeat C.I through D (mention three phases again)

Plus:

1. Levels of education attained for 2nd and 3rd generations.

2. Change in ambitions or values over the generations?

Religiosity

I. ULTIMATE CONCERNS

A. BASIC

1. In your most reflective moments, when you are thinking beyond the immediate problems of the day—however important—beyond headlines; beyond the temporary, what do you consider to be the most important concern or concerns of life? What is/are the basic permanent concern(s) of life?

B. GROUP-BASED COPING STRATEGY (ORGANIZATION)

2. Do you belong or participate in any groups or organizations which help to cope or deal with the concerns or concerns you previously mentioned? Which groups or organizations are these? And which are the concerns to which they relate?

C. NON GROUP-BASED COPING STRATEGY (NONORG.)

3. If respondent lists groups or organizations then ask: What are the other ways in which you relate to your concerns of life? If respondent lists no organizations or groups then ask: How do you deal or cope with these concerns?

II. SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

4. Some people have a philosophy or purpose in life, other people tend to plan their experiences on a day-to-day basis. Which would you tend to do?
5. Are there any means (organizationally or otherwise) in which you serve other people? Please explain briefly.

6. Death is a topic which is being openly and freely discussed today. What are your feelings about death?

III. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS-PRACTICES

7. Do you believe in a God or some primary force in the universe? How strongly do you believe?

8. How important is religion to you? Do you feel that there is a need for religion in society?

9. Whose welfare is more important to you: the welfare of Americans only or the welfare of all world citizens (including Americans)?

10. What person, object or entity do you have the strongest faith or trust in?

11. Do you feel that there is one true religion? If so what would that be?

12. Some people pray for things and other people do not pray. What are your feelings about prayer?

13. What are your views on intermarriage?

Field Notes

1. Characteristics of respondents
   A. SES — living room scale
   B. Openness
      Cooperativeness
      Interest
      Physical ability
      Rememberance of details

2. Evaluation of interviewer
   Sensitivity
   Hostility
   Uneasiness
   Leading questions, biasing effects of interviewer content, style
FARMING: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. How long has the farm been in the family?
2. Any additions to the original farm (i.e., land)?
3. Why did the family decide to farm rather than another line of work?
4. Would you like to see your future generations stay in farming?
5. What does farming mean to them?
6. How many of the family remained in farming? How many left farming? Reasons?
7. Do you have contact with other Czechs?
8. Do you market grain through a Coop?
9. Where do you bank and trade? Czech or not?
10. What are your feelings about changes in agriculture?
11. Do spouses jointly decide in business decisions?

Notations on house, out building, machinery, weeds; is house better than out buildings and machinery?

Farm: size of operation (i.e., acreage)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my appreciation to my major professors, Dr. Joseph Hraba and Dr. Edward Powers. I would like to thank you both for the long hours spent in assisting me in my work. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Dwight Dean, Dr. Charles Cole, Dr. Mary Cloyd, Dr. Charles Mulford, Dr. Harry Cohen and Dr. Robert Hollinger for serving on my committee. Moreover, I would like to thank Dr. Steve Aigner for his collaboration on the first paper in the dissertation. Also, a special thanks to Dr. Joseph Hraba for his assistance on the other papers.

I would like to express a very special thanks to my wife, Marsha, whose love and understanding, patience and constructive criticism made it possible for me to study sociology and complete my dissertation.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Dee Wright, Dr. Harry Cohen and Dr. Robert Hollinger for believing in me and generally being positive sources of energy in frequent times of discouragement.

I would also like to thank my fellow graduate students and friends for their assistance, in particular, Dr. Dennis Kaldenberg, Dr. Fred Lorenz, Mr. Brad Stewart, Mr. James Whyte, Mr. Tom Ward, Dr. Geetha Solomon, Ms. Kathy Waggoner and Ms. Marynell Hollenbeck for their helpful comments on parts of my dissertation.

A word of thanks is also extended to Dr. Richard Wright (Department of English), Dr. James Wolfe (Department of Philosophy), Dr. Robert Richards (Department of Sociology) and Dr. A. Plakins (Department of History) for their help in my dissertation.
A special word of appreciation is extended to my professional typists, Ms. Linda Arends, Ms. Gayle Abramsohn and Ms. Maxine Bogue.

A very special thanks is extended to the Czech community of Iowa, in particular, Dr. Charles Vyskocil and to my friend Mrs. Norma Field for their assistance in this research. Also, a thanks is extended to the Iowa State University Research Foundation and the Administration on Aging for financial assistance.

Finally, a special thanks is deserved by my parents, Robert and Dorothy Johnson, for their love, encouragement, and financial assistance, and to my Aunt Sally, for her confidence in me, and her financial assistance. Also, a thank you is extended to my two beautiful children, Matthew and Jessica, who gave me energy to finish my degree.