

Abstract

This dissertation examines sports fandom through the lens of sociology of community. The aim of the thesis is to verify the functionality of the concept of community in contemporary Czech individualized society and to propose a possible grasp of the concept for analytical research. Thus, the theoretical part focuses on aspects that can be helpful to define, explore and compare communities in today's society. The empirical part is based on a qualitative case study combined with an ethnographic approach, where the focus is on one particular community, the community of hockey fans. The findings show that the fan community has undergone two generational changes in the period under study and that social relationships are a very important element for all processes in the community to ensure a sense of belonging to the community and the very survival of the community over time. Community is still a functional term that dynamically changes in response to social change and should certainly not be neglected by sociological research, for example because of its unclear conceptualisation. That is, it is possible to think of individuation and community as parallel processes that form a dialectical relationship with each other, rather than as mutually exclusive.

Key words: community, individualization, fandom, sport socialization, ethnography, case study