

The subject of this thesis is the social and cultural life in three local communities in Eastern Bohemia (Velký Vřešťov, Dubenec, Hustířany). All three localities are situated about 20 km north of Hradec Králové. Their respective populations are 197, 659, and 174.

The thesis gives a brief description of the past and the present of these villages, with special focus on institutions (e. g. school) and local organizations. World Wars One and Two and the emergence of the communist regime were the most important events in terms of the impact on the structure of social relations within the communities.

The theoretical part of this thesis summarizes the methodological discussions within the Czech ethnography in the second half of the 20th century. The methodological problems of field research and the interpretation of the examined social reality were the primary objects of dispute between two groups of ethnologists.

Karel Fojtík and Olga Skalníková were part of the first one; their idea was to use sociological concepts and other methods of social sciences and to promote interdisciplinary studies. The second group is connected with the likes of Ladislav Holý and Milan Stuchlík. This group emphasised research into the residues of social systems of communities, which represent relicts of the old-style village life. This group was opposed to research into the social structure of towns and into the new manners of the social and cultural life in local communities.

Fojtík's perspective, as reflected in this thesis, was progressive. My analysis of the data uses sociological concepts, which can be fruitfully applied to village community research. I owe much to F. Tönnies and R. Redfield, who worked in the same field and on the same subject, namely the local community.