

DEPOPULATION OF THE SOUTH BOHEMIA RURAL AREAS

Jan Kubeš

*Department of Geography, Pedagogical Faculty, University of South Bohemia, České
Budějovice, Czech Republic*

Abstract: The population in rural settlements of the Czech Republic features high share of population living in very small villages. This specific settlement structure was affected by selective depopulation, especially in 1960-1990. The paper describes population development according to village types, as a result of different factors' influence.

Key words: rural settlements, rural population, rural depopulation

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of population in rural areas in the Czech Republic during the twentieth century could be characterised by a continual decrease in the number of permanent inhabitants. This phenomenon contributes to deterioration in the demographic structure of rural population. Although the development of rural population, which could be expressed by the degressive curve, was continual, there were a few amplitudes. They were caused by the direct and indirect forces such as displacement of the Germans, following resettlement of the border areas, migration into towns and other economic centres, changes in the urban housing development and direct influence of the settlement system (for example, formation of central places in settlement system). From the geographical point of view the described process is very differentiated, and so it is necessary to make a deeper analysis which would be based on exploration of the development of particular structures of rural settlement.

The detailed analysis of the rural population development is made in the districts of Písek, Tábor, and partly also in other neighbouring areas. This work is especially based

on the analysis of a group of rural settlements, on precise distinction between urban and rural settlements, and on description of the longest possible period of changes, including the latest trends after 1991.

The work is part of a large project, which concerns the problems of stabilisation of rural settlement. This survey is financially supported by the Czech Republic Grant Agency (Grant reg. number 205/97/0081).

2. METODOLOGY AND RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT FROM 1910 TO 1998

2.1. The development of rural population in the former Southern Bohemia county and in the region of "the Middle Bohemian hills"

The first decrease in the number of inhabitants of the Southern Bohemia county between 1910 and 1930 (Fig. 1) was caused by the departure of population to economic centres in Austria, Czech countries, as well as in the USA (Korčák, 1929, 1972, and Pohl, 1932). The later decrease was connected with the displacement of the Germans between 1945- 1947. In the 1950's and 1960's, the number of inhabitants of the county was despite the continual migration loss slightly growing. The figures for natality and natural growth of population were very high in the Southern Bohemia county during the 1970's. Although natural growth decreased in the 1980's, there was still an increase in the population number because of a new wave of migration into the county.

The numbers of urban and rural inhabitants of the Southern Bohemia county were the same, in the second half of the 1970's. At present (1998) 57,02 per cent of population live in towns (from the total number of region's population). This number is the lowest in the whole country. Such aspects as a very dense network of the rural settlements, the lowest number of population living in one rural settlement, but also in one municipal authority, make the Southern Bohemian county specific comparing to the rest of counties of the Czech Republic.

Fig. 1 shows the development of the region of the "Middle Bohemian hills" (districts Píbram, Benešov, Strakonice, Písek, Tábor and Pelhřimov). To compare the numbers for county and region is problematic due to the specific position of the city of České Budějovice in the survey. However, the development trends of county and region are similar, only the county development curve is more shaken. Since the 1980's, the number of region's population has been decreasing. The stabilization of the rural population number in region between 1950 and 1961 (similarly in districts Písek and Tábor, but not so obvious in the whole county), but also at present, is an interesting phenomenon. The facts such as the end of population out-migration in the settlement

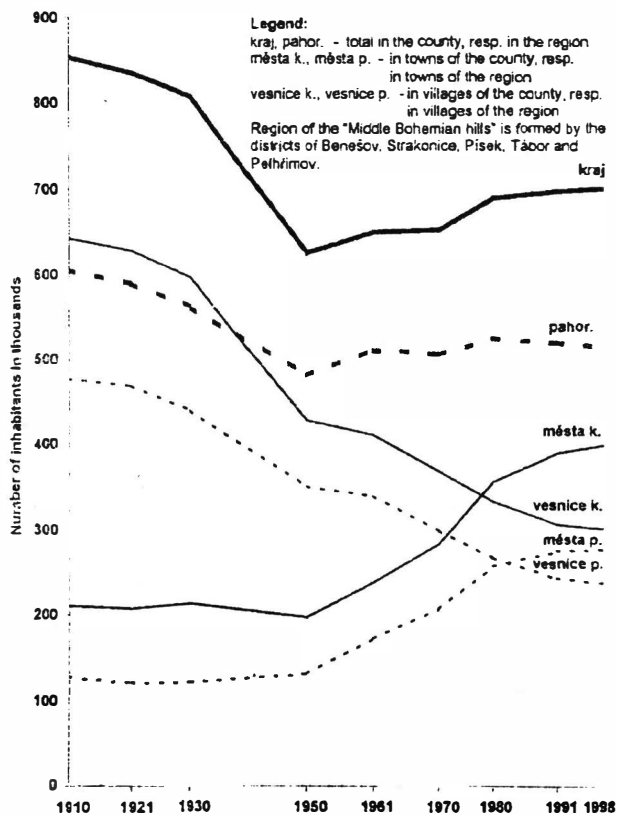


Fig. 1 The development of the number of inhabitants of urban and rural settlements in the former southern Bohemia county in the region of the "Middle Bohemian Hills"

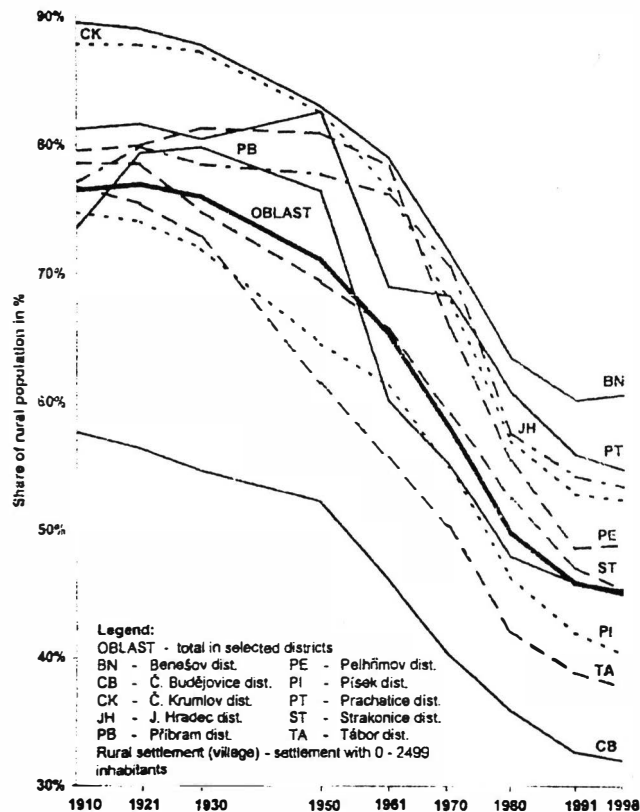


Fig. 2 The development of the shares of the inhabitants of rural settlements in the selected districts

process of the border areas, natural growth of rural population and later industrialization in this part of Bohemia, probably influenced the development between 1950 and 1961.

Fig. 2 shows the development of rural population share in ten districts. One 'smoothed' turned up logistic curve of the changes of shares for all ten observed districts ("OBLAST") include logistic curves for individual districts. The disproportion in the particular district curves could in some cases be influenced by the shift of particular settlements (in both directions) into either rural or urban settlement categories, defined by the number of inhabitants (urban settlement (town) - more than 2499 inhabitants).

The decreases in share of rural population were smaller in the 1980's. However, the most interesting change is going on now. The number of rural population in Benešov district increased between 1991- 1998 by more than 520 people. Urban population of the same district decreased by more than 194 people. While in the districts of České Budějovice and Český Krumlov the number of rural population is also growing, in the districts such as Prachatice and Pelhřimov it is either without change or slightly falling.

2.2. The development of rural population and settlements in terms of the settlement size categories - districts Písek and Tábor

Fig. 4 shows the development of the number of inhabitants in terms of the settlement size categories. Numbers of settlements in each category vary in different time periods. Settlement units usually move into categories with lower number of inhabitants. This process and its speed are the main cause for changes in curves at Fig. 4. The most affected is category with the number of inhabitants between 200 and 499, which used to be the most important category of rural settlements in Southern Bohemia. Settlements of such size in 1910 - 1930, we find today in categories with either 100 - 199 or 50 - 99 inhabitants. Similar development happened in category with population size between 100 and 199, under the condition that the gains caused by the move of settlements from higher category are taken away.

One of the results of this process are in both absolute and relative permanent increases in the number of inhabitants of category of the smallest settlements (their share in the number of rural population grew between 1910 and 1998 from 1 per cent to 9 per cent - Tab. 1). Till 1980, the development of the number of population in the category with 50 - 99 inhabitants was similar. Concerning the number of rural population, a village with 200 - 499 inhabitants stays the most important category. The second most important is a rural settlement type is with the number of inhabitants between 100 and 199. Today, settlements with less than 100 inhabitants are getting much more important than in 1910 or in 1950.

The process of moves of rural settlements among the size categories is well illustrated at Fig. 5. The number of settlements of the size category with 200 - 499 inhabitants dropped to one third of the initial number. The number of settlements in size category with 100 - 199 has been decreasing by falling down in the scale of size categories since the 1970's.

Settlements with the number of inhabitants between 0 - 49 experienced sharp increase (7.76 per cent in 1910, 44.41 per cent in 1998 - Tab.1). In some border areas the original settlements which was made of individual relatively autonomous villages with 100- 199 and 200 - 499 inhabitants, is changing into nearly dispersed settlement, centred around one bigger village. Today, settlements with the number of inhabitants up to 99 are the most frequent settlements in the model area.

For the new development of rural population as a whole, the process observable in categories with 500 - 999 and 1000 - 2499 inhabitants is getting more and more important. The numbers in these categories has stayed nearly the same for quite a long time (less than 3 per cent of rural settlements), important is, however, the increase of their inhabitants. In 1970, there lived 17,26 per cent and in 1998 already 24,78 per cent of population of rural settlements. The total growth of population in these categories between 1970 and 1998 was 18,12 per cent. It was 2,52 per cent in period between 1991 and 1998.

Table 2 gives even more detailed picture of the post-war development of rural settlements in terms of the size categories. Determination of the average annual percentage change of the number of inhabitants of the rural settlements in particular periods (periods are of different length, their length is rounded to months), and elaboration of the potential shares of the settlements from the group of rural settlements (or from the group of settlements of the particular size category), which have set development of inhabitants, allow comparison of the details from the table. It is possible to analyse the table in a graphic way, through a movement of 'spindles of share in per cent' - upwards (negative development) or downwards (positive development), and through spread of spindles (differentiation of the development trends in a group), or through their contraction (homogenization of the development trends in a group).

The following pieces of information are worth mentioning - relative immobility of category with 500-2499 inhabitants (with the exception of the less positive development in the 1960's, before the settlement system of central places was applied), the latest, more positive development of category with 200 - 499 inhabitants, as well as of the categories with smaller settlements (in them declines are still prevailing).

It is possible to document the change in the development of rural population during past few years by following information - in about 18 per cent of rural settlements (usually more in bigger ones) the number of inhabitants was growing during the last period. In 62 per cent of settlements, the number of inhabitants was diminishing and in 21 per cent, it was stagnating (change smaller than 0,50 per cent per a year). In the 1980's, the situation was less positive, analogous numbers are 10 per cent, 78 per cent and 13 per cent. During the 1980's, the annual average decrease in country was 750 inhabitants (districts Písek and Tábor), during the 1990's with smaller natality, it was only 350 inhabitants.

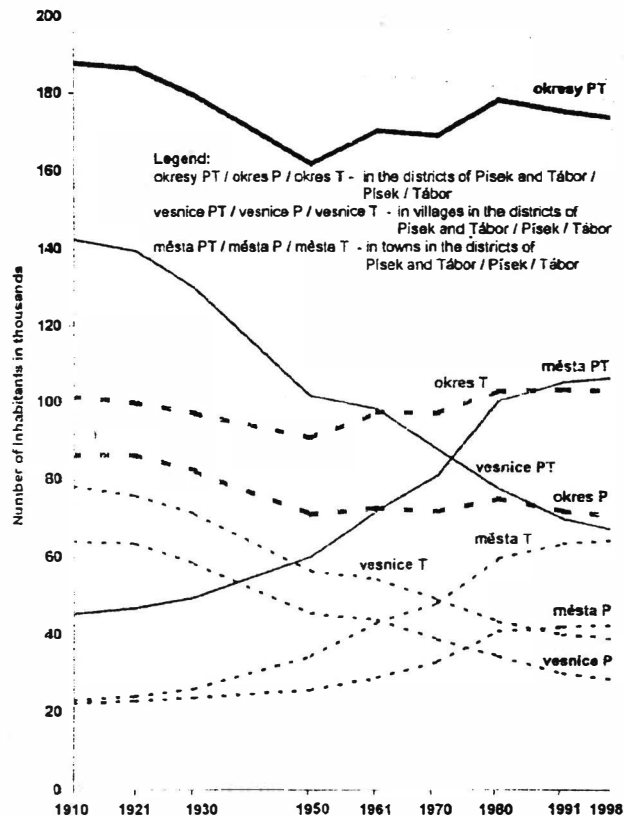


Fig. 3 The development of the number of inhabitants of settlements in the districts of Písek and Tábor

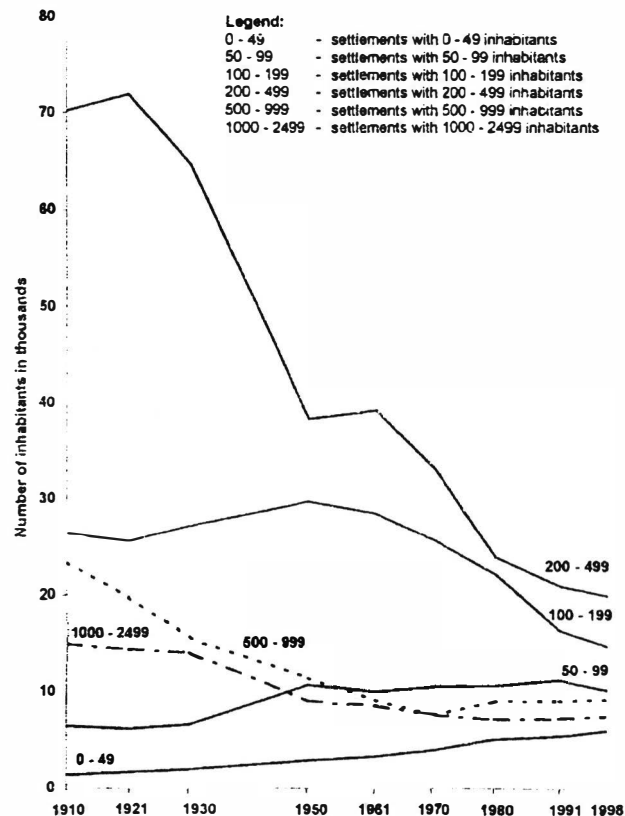


Fig. 4 The development of the number of inhabitants of rural settlements in the districts of Písek and Tábor, in terms of the settlement size

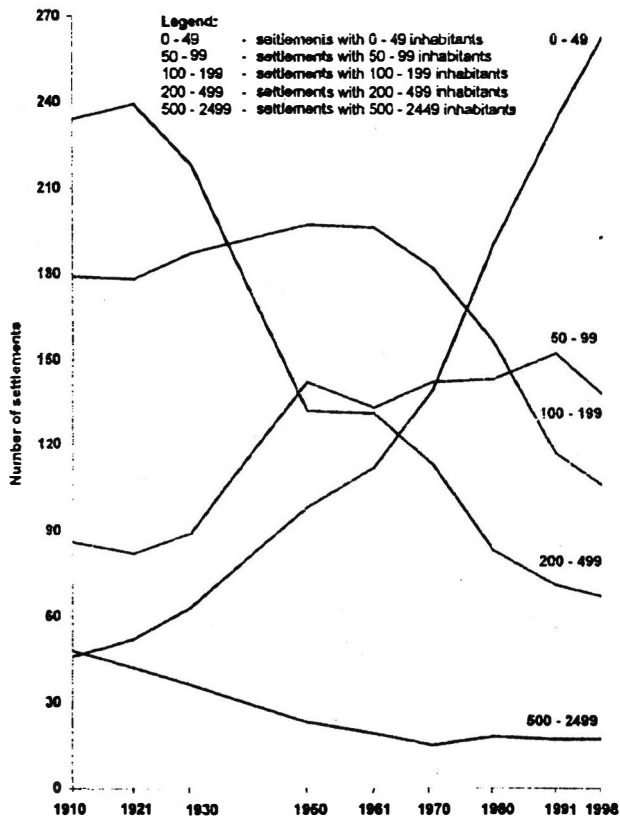


Fig. 5 The development of the number of rural settlements in the districts of Písek and Tábor, in terms of the settlement size categories

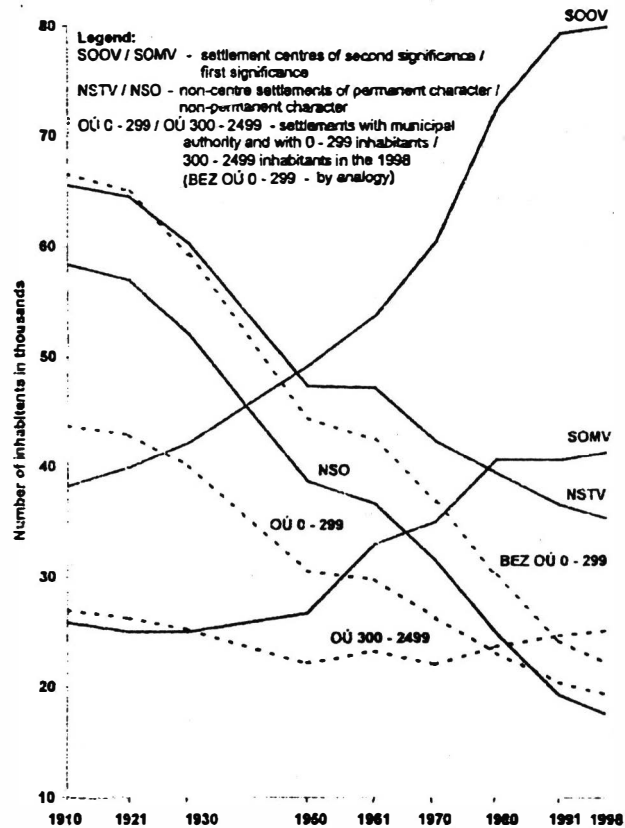


Fig. 6 The development of the number of inhabitants of rural settlements in the districts of Písek and Tábor - the functional administrative types of settlements

Table 1 The development of the shares of inhabitants and settlements in terms of the settlement size categories - districts Pisek and Tábor

Settlement size categories (number of inhabitants)	Share of inhabitants in % (thick type), share of settlement in % (by italics)								
	1910	1921	1930	1950	1961	1970	1980	1991	1998
0 - 49	1,00	1,21	1,52	2,83	3,35	4,50	6,55	7,70	8,85
	<i>7,76</i>	<i>8,77</i>	<i>10,62</i>	<i>16,55</i>	<i>18,95</i>	<i>23,52</i>	<i>32,20</i>	<i>39,49</i>	<i>44,41</i>
50 - 99	4,50	4,41	5,08	10,46	10,12	11,87	13,54	15,87	15,02
	<i>14,50</i>	<i>13,83</i>	<i>15,01</i>	<i>23,99</i>	<i>22,50</i>	<i>24,03</i>	<i>24,24</i>	<i>25,76</i>	<i>23,39</i>
100 - 199	18,50	18,37	20,88	29,15	28,86	29,06	28,48	23,29	21,78
	<i>30,19</i>	<i>30,02</i>	<i>31,53</i>	<i>33,28</i>	<i>33,16</i>	<i>30,80</i>	<i>26,44</i>	<i>19,83</i>	<i>17,97</i>
200 - 499	49,21	51,52	49,68	37,58	39,76	37,34	30,76	29,90	29,58
	<i>39,46</i>	<i>40,30</i>	<i>36,76</i>	<i>22,30</i>	<i>22,17</i>	<i>19,12</i>	<i>14,07</i>	<i>12,03</i>	<i>11,36</i>
500 - 999	16,42	14,19	11,98	11,18	9,25	8,61	11,55	12,88	13,66
	<i>6,07</i>	<i>5,06</i>	<i>4,05</i>	<i>2,70</i>	<i>2,03</i>	<i>1,52</i>	<i>2,03</i>	<i>1,86</i>	<i>1,86</i>
1000 - 2499	10,36	10,30	10,86	8,80	8,67	8,63	9,13	10,37	11,12
	<i>2,02</i>	<i>2,02</i>	<i>2,02</i>	<i>1,18</i>	<i>1,18</i>	<i>1,02</i>	<i>1,02</i>	<i>1,02</i>	<i>1,02</i>

Table 2 Shares of the rural settlements in term of the rate of change of the number of inhabitants during five periods - districts Pisek and Tábora

Change of the number of inhabitants during one year in delimitating period in %	Period																								
	1950 - 1961					1961 - 1970					1971 - 1980					1981 - 1990					1991 - 1998				
	Shares of settlements in % (rounded)																								
	Total	Sett. size. categ.				Total	Sett. size. categ.				Total	Sett. size. categ.				Total	Sett. size. categ.				Total	Sett. size. categ.			
0 - 99		100 - 199	200 - 499	500 - 2499	0 - 99		100 - 199	200 - 499	500 - 2499	0 - 99		100 - 199	200 - 499	500 - 2499	0 - 99		100 - 199	200 - 499	500 - 2499	0 - 99		100 - 199	200 - 499	500 - 2499	
-3,00 and less	3	6	2	-	5	10	19	4	2	-	23	38	14	4	-	25	37	12	5	-	17	24	4	3	-
-2,50 -- -2,99	3	5	3	-	-	7	9	6	6	6	10	10	12	9	-	10	12	8	6	-	6	8	3	3	-
-2,00 -- -2,49	4	7	5	-	-	12	12	15	8	6	12	11	13	12	-	13	12	22	6	-	7	8	9	1	-
-1,50 -- -1,99	6	9	5	4	-	15	10	19	20	-	12	9	17	10	-	12	13	13	6	6	10	9	13	11	-
-1,00 -- -1,49	12	11	12	13	5	17	13	20	18	17	13	9	15	19	7	10	6	16	17	-	10	8	16	10	-
-0,50 -- -0,99	17	12	24	18	5	15	12	16	19	22	9	5	10	17	7	8	6	10	10	6	12	11	13	13	6
0 -- -0,49	18	15	19	20	19	13	11	12	14	33	6	7	5	5	-	8	6	7	19	22	14	12	15	23	18
0,00 -- 0,49	13	10	14	17	19	5	3	4	8	17	3	1	3	4	29	5	1	6	14	17	7	2	15	17	41
0,50 -- 0,99	9	7	7	14	33	3	4	2	3	-	4	2	3	9	29	3	1	2	7	28	5	4	4	8	18
1,00 -- 1,49	6	7	4	8	10	1	1	1	1	-	2	1	3	2	14	2	1	1	5	11	4	3	4	7	12
1,50 -- 1,99	3	4	2	2	-	1	2	-	-	-	2	1	2	3	14	2	2	1	2	6	1	1	1	-	-
2,00 -- 2,49	2	2	2	2	5	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	3	-	0	0	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
2,50 -- 2,99	1	2	1	2	-	0	0	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	-	-	-
3,00 and more	2	4	2	1	-	1	2	1	1	-	3	2	3	3	-	2	3	1	-	-	6	8	3	3	-

3. CONCLUSION

In the observed area the process of depopulation slowed down considerably during the 1990's. Moderation of the depopulation process and more positive migration balance of rural settlements in the Czech republic are also described by other authors (Kára and Kučera 1986, Řehák 1994, Librová 1996 1997, Čermák 1996, Andrlé 1998). Migration gain, respectively the total growth of the number of inhabitants, is the phenomenon observable only in a few municipalities and in only small number of rural settlements (Tab.2.). In case of other municipalities and other settlements, the loss is smaller. There are more reasons for the change of the migration behaviour. It is not possible to discover and compare them all without the detailed inquiry among the inhabitants and migrants. The lack of housing in towns and their relative attainability in permanently uninhabited or partly inhabited buildings in countryside, are certainly important reasons.

Process of construction of new detached houses of urban type, on relatively cheap lands, in environment of good quality for middle and upper middle class of inhabitants, every day commuting, is well known in Germany, France and in other West European countries and now also in the Czech republic. In the Czech Republic, such types of buildings are being built in rural areas near the urban centres of settlement. In the investigated area this suburban process could be found only around the centres of the Tábor agglomeration, in Southern Bohemia county also near České Budějovice (in the area of Zlív, Hluboká nad Vltavou, Rudolfov and on the northern and southern outskirts of the town).

References

- Andrlé, A.** (1998): Vývoj obyvatelstva České republiky 1991 - 1996 podle obcí, okresů a oblastí. Urbanismus a územní rozvoj, 1998 (1): 3-17.
- Čermák, Z.** (1996): Transformační procesy a migrační vývoj v České republice. In: Hampl, M. (ed.): "Geografická organizace společnosti a transformační procesy v České republice", Praha, Přírodovědecká fakulta UK, s. 179-197.
- Kára, J. - Kučera, T.** (1986): Migrační bilance obcí v zázemí velkých měst. In: Ryšavý, Z. (ed.): "Nové tendence ve vývoji osídlení Československa.", Čs. demografická sp. a VÚVA, Praha, s. 135-143.
- Kolektiv,** (1978): Retrospektivní lexikon obcí ČSSR 1850 - 1970. Díl I. Svazek I. FSÚ, Praha, 678 p.
- Kolektiv,** (1984): Statistický lexikon obcí ČSSR 1982. FSÚ, Praha, 1011 p.
- Kolektiv,** (1994): Statistický lexikon obcí České republiky 1992. ČSÚ, Praha, 895 p.
- Korčák, J.** (1929): Vylidňování jižních Čech. Studie demografická. Praha, Spolek péče o blaho venkova, 99 s.
- Korčák, J.** (1972): Populační vývoj Jižních Čech. Sborník ČSSZ, 77 (1): 29-36.
- Librová, H.** (1996): Decentralizace osídlení - vize a realita. Část první. Sociologický časopis, 32 (3): 285-296.

- Librová, H.** (1997): Decentralizace osídlení - vize a realita. Část druhá. Sociologický časopis, 33 (1): 27-40.
- Pohl, J.** (1932): Vylidňování venkova v Čechách v období 1850-1930. Praha, Čsl. Akademie zemědělská, 148 s. + přílohy.
- Řehák, S.** (1994): Demografický vývoj venkova. Veronica, 8,čtvrté zvláště vydání, s. 16-20.

Resume

Vylidňování venkova v jižních Čechách

Práce analyzuje vývoj počtu obyvatel ve venkovských sídlech (jde o části venkovských obcí a o venkovské části městských obcí) okresů Písek a Tábor a jejich širšího jihočeského okolí mezi lety 1910-1998. V řešeném území se nachází velmi hustá síť převážně malých a velmi malých venkovských sídel (590 venkovských sídel a 9 měst na 2465 km² okresů Písek a Tábor). Pozvolný odliv obyvatel z jihočeského venkova se datuje již od roku 1870, k výraznému poklesu dochází po 2. světové válce a dále v 60., 70. a 80. letech. V 90. letech 20. století se vylidňování zastavilo (Fig. 1, 2). Sledovaný depopulační proces je z územního hlediska velmi diferencován. Rozdílný vývoj počtu obyvatel je dán polohou sídla v sídelním systému, jeho obslužnou vybaveností, výrobní funkcí a jeho velikostí. Vývoj počtu obyvatel a počtu sídel podle velikostních kategorií venkovských sídel (sídel do 2500 obyvatel) v okresech Písek a Tábor dokumentují Fig. 3-6 a Tab. 1, 2.