

Abstract

This thesis focuses on critical analysis of the discourse on the Bohemian Forest National Park (BFNP) between 1991 and 2010. This large-size protected area has over the long term been the subject of highly critical debate among various participants including top political representatives, particularly as a result of several cases of massive disturbances of mature forest stands. Hence this discussion offers some very suitable material for an analysis aiming to help expose the links between regional subjects and general politics – and to demonstrate the relations between language and power.

The introductory two chapters presenting the subject and a clarification of the position from which my critical analysis is to be performed is followed by a section describing the basic procedures and concepts defining the theoretical and methodological framework of the critical discourse analysis (CDA). This third chapter deals with the mutual relations between the initial CDA qualitative approach and the quantitative corpus approach, particularly in view of the issues surrounding the replicability of critical research. However, it also presents such key terms as *discourse*, *critique*, *ideology*, *identity* and *intertextuality/interdiscursivity*.

The fourth chapter forms the analytical core of the work – made up of two parts, the first of which presents several pilot analyses aiming to acquire an initial idea of the form of the discourse under analysis and to set down the basic research questions. A microanalysis of four significant texts from the 2009–2017 period (supplemented by an extensive analysis of the role played by writer Karel Klostermann in establishing the "original Bohemian Forest" motif and the image of the region's past) points to two prominent, interlinked elements in the discourse under investigation – a dispute over the status of science and the motif of the debate on the BFNP as a confrontation between local (traditional) and external interests. Against the backdrop of preliminary analyses, a central hypothesis has emerged whereby discourse on the BFNP in the narrower sense served as a basis for the legitimization of a broader political agenda. The second part of the fourth chapter comprises the actual analysis to verify the stated hypotheses and to reveal the specific discourse strategies, processes and schemas mediating this phenomenon. Hence it focuses on a chronological description of the depiction methods and distribution both of prominent discourse participants – *scientists*, *activists* and *villagers*, and the ways the forest and its dynamics are depicted, particularly in the light of such motifs as *naturalness* and *authenticity*.

The fifth chapter presents a summary of findings acquired along with their interpretation. The key finding of my analysis is primarily that during the twenty-year duration of discourse on the

BFNP, the initial dispute over the way the (mountain) forest was managed transformed into an extremely prominent conflict of identities. This confrontation was established primarily by the promotion of the image of a solid coalition between *scientists*, *activists* and *politicians*, standing against the natural interests of "man" as represented by the regional governors, local senators or future presidential candidate Miloš Zeman. The basis for the emergence of this discourse structure was not only the long-term, universal reproduction of the image of the forest as a naturally stable environment, a phenomenon that facilitated the successful restoration of the idea of the connection between the forest and tradition, but also the thorough marginalization of scientists or their demotion to the role of members of a standard interest group.

The final chapter focuses on what is known as prospective or sociodiagnostic critique, which is an inherent component of CDA, and which consists in proposing ways for the analysis results to be utilized to disrupt the status quo and democratize public debate.

Keywords

bark beetle outbreak, Bohemian Forest, Bohemian Forest National Park, critical discourse analysis, delegitimization of science, disturbance of forest ecosystems, environmental discourse, identity, polarization of society, policy setting