

Interactive comment on “From political construct to tourist souvenir – building the “National” landscape through advertising in Galicia (Spain)” by F. López Silvestre and R. Lois González

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The overall subject of the article, the social construction of landscapes, is fitting very well in the thematic spectrum of Social Geography and the authors of the paper have worked out some profound mechanisms of regionalisation and nationalism in a decent way. The core of the paper deals with (regional) identity formation in the light of the social construction and reproduction of the region Galicia/Spain through 19th and early 20th century literature, press and art, especially landscape painting, and recent practices in advertising. Theoretically based on Gombrich's concept of 'stereotyping', the authors try to elaborate the similarities between the motives and methods used by

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nationalisms and marketing practices concerning the promotion of a region for mass tourism through symbolically highly loaded images of the 'Galician landscape'. The methodology used by Silvestre & González for analysing their case study, which is borrowed from the field of Visual Communication and Semiotics, is quite ambitious and still not usual in mainstream Geography.

However, whereas the case study is promising and apparently well researched, the theoretical backing of the article is insufficient and the main thesis, that national/regional landscapes are socially constructed, is by now common knowledge in social sciences and by no means a key conclusion. Moreover the paper remains descriptive, there is hardly an interpretation or a discussion about different theoretical approaches. Thus, the international discourse about nationalism, the social construction of landscapes/realities, the social imaginary, (regional) identity formation, the media and representation is lacking. Concerning the foci of the paper there is already abundant and relevant literature for consideration like, to name just a few, Cassierer (1923, 1925), Berger & Luckmann (1966), Panofsky (1972, 1974), Eco, (1978) Cosgrove (1984, 1989), Cosgrove & Daniels (1988), Baudrillard (1988), Duncan & Duncan (1988), Urry (1990), Shields (1991), Anderson (1991), Freedberg (1991), Matless (1992, 1995, 1998), Bender (1992), Daniels (1993) [named but not discussed], Morley & Robins (1995), Robins (1996), Jones & Natter (1999), Nash (1999), Morley (2000) etc. A closer look to the literature of Media and Cultural Studies altogether might be useful.

Furthermore, implicit topics, such as the structure of power relations, are neglected as well. Besides, a reader who is not familiar with the regionalist movements in Galicia could feel a bit lost, since the authors do not really describe the historical and present circumstances of the Galician nationalism. Referring to the thesis, that the methods and motifs of nationalists and advertisers are comparable, the question arises, if the motifs are not quite diametrical? Aren't the nationalists seeking the exclusion of 'the other' and advertiser for mass tourism the inclusion, at least the invitation, of (the) (foreign)ers?

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Overall the paper reads well and there are only a few typographical/technical errors, although it is recognisable that the authors are from a non-English speaking background.

Especially the case study has some merit, but the theory is too poor to really discuss the topics.

Technical correction:

Page 239, line 9, delete the second 'he'

Page 241, line 14, add space before the hyphen

Page 241 / 242, line 29/1 and 12/13, twice the same sentence

Page 244, line 16 replace 'our' by 'the Galician'

Page 250, line 19, space after the hyphen

Page 258, line 1, space after the hyphen

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