

***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**

H. Gertel (Editor)

HolgerGertel@web.de

Received and published: 20 December 2007

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

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?

[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)[Discussion Paper](#)

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

Literature:

Anderson, B.: *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1991.

Baudrillard, J.: *America*, Verso, London, 1988. Bender, B.: *Landscape Politics and Perspectives*, Berg, Oxford, 1992.

Berger, P. L. and Luckmann, T.: *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Anchor Books, New York, 1966.

Cassierer, E.: *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Erster Teil: Die Sprache*, Berlin, 1923. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Volume One: Language*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1955.

Cassierer, E.: *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Zweiter Teil: Das mythische Denken*. Berlin, 1925. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Volume Two: Mythical*

Thought. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955.

Cosgrove, D. and Daniels, S.: *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988.

Cosgrove, D.: *Geography is everywhere: culture and symbolism in human landscapes*, in: *Horizons in Human Geography*, edited by: Gregory, D., Walford, R., Macmillan, London, 118-135, 1989.

Cosgrove, D.: *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1984.

Daniels, S.: *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Landscapes in England and the United States*, Polity, Cambridge, 1993.

Duncan, J. and Duncan, N.: (Re)reading the Landscape, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 11, 473-486, 1988.

Eco, U.: *A Theory of Semiotics*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1978.

Freedberg, D.: *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Jones, J. P. and Natter, W.: *Space and Representation*, in: *Text and Image: Social Construction of Regional Knowledges*, edited by: Buttimer, A., Brunn, S. D., Wardenga, U., Institut für Länderkunde Leipzig, Leipzig, 239-247, 1999. Matless, D., *Landscapes of Englishness*, Prentice Hall, Harlow, 1998.

Matless, D.: *An occasion for geography: landscape, representation, and Foucault's corpus*, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 10, 41-56, 1992.

Matless, D.: *The art of right living: landscape and citizenship 1918-1939*, in: *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation*, edited by: Pile, S., Thrift, N.,

Reaktion, London, 93-121, 1995.

Morley, D. and Robins, K., Spaces of Identity. Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries, Routledge, London, 1995.

Morley; D.: Home Territories. Media, Mobility and Identity, Routledge, London, 2000.

Nash, C.: Landscapes, in: Introducing Human Geographies, edited by: Cloke, P., Crang, P., Goodwin, M., Arnold, London, 217-225, 1999.

Panofsky, E.: Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art, in: Meaning in the Visual Arts, edited by Panofsky, E., The Overlook Press, New York, 26-54, 1974.

Panofsky, E.: Studies in Iconology. Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance, Oxford University Press, New York, 1939/1972.

Robins, K.: Into the Image. Culture and politics in the field of vision, Routledge, London, 1996.

Shields R.: Places on the Margin. Alternative Geographies of Modernity, Routledge, London, 1991.

Urry J.: The Tourist Gaze. Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies, Sage, London, 1990.

Interactive comment on Soc. Geogr. Discuss., 3, 237, 2007.

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion

Discussion Paper