

CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CROATIAN TOURIST PROMOTION – ANALYSIS OF CROATIAN TOURIST BOARDS WEBSITES

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Introduction

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- Ongoing PhD research
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Introduction

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- Why tourism?
 - ▣ important in Croatian society
 - ▣ economic and cultural value
- Why websites?
 - ▣ popular new medium of advertisement (Cook 2003)
 - ▣ new place of ethnographic fieldwork (Senjković and Pleše 2004)
 - virtual public space (virtual semiotic landscape)
- Why tourist boards?
 - ▣ official, dominant discourse(s) of tourism
 - ▣ country-wide network

Research questions

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- **How** is cultural heritage represented on the tourist boards' websites?
- **Which** cultural heritage, i.e. which elements have been chosen for representation?
- What can we infer from answers to these questions concerning the power relations and the dominant **ideological discourse** governing the process of representation?

Theoretical and methodological framework

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- Theory of representation (Stuart Hall 2003)
 - ▣ Representation = practice of constructing meaning through the use of signs and language
- Semiotic approach – way language produces meaning (poetics)
- Discursive approach – effects of representation (politics)
 - ▣ Discourses: “ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society” (Hall 2003)

Theoretical and methodological framework

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- Multimodal analysis (Kress and Leeuwen 2001, Kress and Leeuwen 2006, Pauwels 2005, 2012, etc.)
 - ▣ especially visual communication (WWW)
- Wodak et al. (2009) – **discursive identity building**
 - ▣ nations as “imagined communities” (Anderson 1983)
 - ▣ “heighten the awareness of the rhetorical strategies which are used to impose certain political beliefs, values, and goals... to throw light on the largely contingent and imaginary character of nation and to sharpen awareness of dogmatic, essentialist and naturalising conceptions of nation and national identity” (Wodak et al. 2009:9)

Theoretical and methodological framework

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- History and culture = resources
 - ▣ nation means a cultural and political connection which unifies into one political community all of those who have the same historical culture and homeland (Smith 2010)
 - ▣ Croatia: social and political changes, nation-state
 - ▣ Representation of cultural heritage never completely exhausts its historical, esthetical, cultural and social values (Watson and Waterton 2010).

Analysis

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- Dimensions (variables)
 - ▣ types and subtypes of represented cultural heritage
 - ▣ period (antiquity, the middle ages, prehistory...)
 - ▣ ethnic, religious, cultural, class, etc. identification (implicit or explicit)
 - ▣ characteristics of visual signs (location, visibility, composition, etc.)
- Sample: national “Croatian Tourist Board” (www.croatia.hr) and local tourist boards

Results

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- Types of heritage (Timothy 2010)
 - ▣ Tangible heritage: historic settlements, religious attractions, military attractions, dark attractions, industrial attractions, archaeological sites
 - ▣ Intangible heritage: arts, languages, folkways, music and performing arts, religion, sport, festivals and pageants
- Most used: tangible heritage
 - ▣ historic settlements, religious buildings (churches, cathedrals, monasteries, shrines), military structures (walls, fortresses, castles)

Results

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- Historic settlements (“old towns”)
 - ▣ semiotic framing



Trogir



Dubrovnik

Results

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Rovinj



Zagreb

Results

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- Religious heritage
 - esp. early medieval Croatian churches; Catholic



St. Dunat, Krk



Holy Cross, Nin

Results

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St. Nicholas, Prahulje, Nin



Holy Trinity, Split

Results

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"Nijemo kolo" (silent circle dance),
Dalm. hinterland



Baptismal Font of Duke Višeslav, Nin

Results

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Temple of Augustus, Pula



Jupiter's temple, Split

Results

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- Negative analysis: few non-catholic religious elements
 - ▣ exception: Roman temples
 - ▣ Orthodox heritage – underrepresented
- Emphasis on religious heritage connected with the medieval Croatian state and the catholic identity

Results

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- Military heritage
 - ▣ walls, fortresses, castles



St. Ivan's fortress, Dubrovnik



St. Mark's fortress, Trogir

Results

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Pula



Trsat, Rijeka

Results

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- Military heritage
 - ▣ period: ancient Roman to Austrian-Hungarian
 - ▣ origin: Roman, Venetian, Austrian-Hungarian, Croatian (incl. 1990s)
 - ▣ negative analysis: Turkish, Yugoslav (incl. WW2), but also pre-historical (“Illyrian”) heritage – significantly missing

Results

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- “Dark attractions”
 - ▣ scarce
 - ▣ only examples from 1990s, e.g. Vukovar
 - ▣ negative analysis: no WW2



Memorial cemetery, Vukovar

Results

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- Industrial heritage
 - ▣ also scarce
 - ▣ exception: Rijeka



Torpedo launch station, Rijeka



Sugar factory, Rijeka

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- Pre-industrial heritage
 - ▣ mills, workshops, etc.
 - ▣ more traditional



Popovičev mlin, Delnice

Results

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- Intangible heritage
 - ▣ very rare
 - ▣ usually UNESCO listed
 - ▣ often represented together with tangible



“Bećarac singing and playing from Eastern Croatia”

Conclusion

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- Representation of cultural heritage on Croatian tourist boards' websites – specific view of heritage
 - ▣ Laurajane Smith (2006): **authorized heritage discourse** – dominant, hegemonic Western discourse about heritage “that works to naturalize a range of assumptions about the nature and meaning of heritage” (4)
 - ▣ old, grand, monumental and aesthetically pleasing sites, buildings and artefacts

Conclusion

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- Authorized heritage discourse
 - “concerned with the negotiation and regulation of social meanings and practices associated with the creation and recreation of ‘identity’” (Smith 2006:5)
 - naturalizes narratives linked to ideas of nation and nationhood
 - origins connected to 19th century nationalism and liberal modernity
 - intrinsically embedded with a sense of care for the material past and the expressions of national identity (Smith 2006)

Conclusion

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- Croatia
 - new nation-state
 - intensive symbolical nation-building
 - represents itself as a Mediterranean and Central European country, firmly historically connected to the Western cultures: ancient Greece and Rome, Venice, also Austria-Hungary
 - differentiation of Croatian culture from neighbouring, competing cultures and identities
 - seen as Eastern, non-European and therefore less prestigious

Conclusion

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- Negative (implicit) identification with the “Eastern”, Balkan cultural legacy
 - ▣ incl. period before classical antiquity
 - very rare pre-historical heritage
 - ▣ incl. socialist Yugoslavia
 - absence of “socialist heritage”
 - also: rare industrial heritage
- Very low differentiation of local heritage
 - ▣ discursive inclusion into the national and European heritage

Conclusion

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- Discursive constructs of national identity “primarily emphasise national uniqueness and intra-national uniformity but largely ignore intra-national differences. In imagining national singularity and homogeneity, members of a national community simultaneously construct the distinctions between themselves and other nations, most notably when the other nationality is believed to exhibit traits similar to those of one’s own national community” (Wodak 2009:4)

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Thank you!