Contested Spatialities of Lifestyle Migration
Public policies, local democracy and global market forces

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ABSTRACT

Locating lifestyle migrants in the linguistic landscape

This paper focuses on how real estate advertising practices in a particular lifestyle migration destination impact on the politics of place. Following Modan (2007), I take the politics of place to mean how versions of place are (re)produced and maintained, or negotiated and contested, through discourses that construct identities. It refers in particular to the way in which 'legitimate' (and, conversely, marginalised/excluded) collective identities are shaped within places, and thus has a strong impact on notions of belonging. By extension, the ways in which identities for places (and those who live in them) are constructed has material implications for the ways in which these places develop and change. In short, the relationship between place-making and social identities is dialectical.

Studies of the linguistic landscape (LL) are concerned with language in its written form, in the public sphere (Gorter, 2006); language (and, in my understanding, other forms of semiotics that accompany it) that is potentially visible to all through media such as public signs. Although the LL constitutes a major part of the scenery in which public social life takes place (Ben-Rafael, 2009), it is such a taken-for-granted part of our everyday experience that its importance as a form of social practice is often overlooked. Yet it could be argued that public signs are in some way symbolic markers of (collective) identity, status and even power, operating within semiotic systems of social positioning and power relationships through which struggles for hegemony among social groups can be traced (Scollon & Scollon, 2003).

I argue that discursive practices in the LL have a particular relevance in place-making and place-identity processes due to their *in situ* nature; LL texts are both physical and symbolic parts of the very place they help to construct. The place-making work they do may thus be assumed to impact on the socio-cognitive representations that underlie the collective identities of various social groups that are associated with a place. By means of illustration, I will show how the positioning of lifestyle migrants in a specific part of the Algarve (the so-called 'Golden Triangle') is achieved through highly visible roadside billboards. The majority of billboards in the 'Golden Triangle' area advertise land and

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property sales/development, predominantly in English. This contributes to a social representation of the area as being 'up for sale' to English-speaking buyers, rather than to 'local' groups. Furthermore, a closer examination of some of the discourse strategies of these multi-modal advertisements reveals the stylisation of an elite place-identity based on privilege and difference. It is in this way that the LL functions as a kind of interface between between place, identity and the power relations that underlie the micro-politics of place.

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