Geography & Environment, School of Geosciences
GG3052/GG3573/GG3574: RESEARCH DESIGN

Appendix 3b: **Contested landscapes: railway poster variants**

- Read the main task Assignment 3b task brief first! The same instructions ('what you have to do', tips, reading, etc). apply to these two variants.

- Deadline: 12 noon, Monday 2 May 2022

Science and Society Picture Library – http://www.scienceandsociety.co.uk/

This holds the National Railway Museum's archive of railway posters. A search for **railway poster scotland** produces 292 posters; for railway poster highlands, 60 posters. Some fascinating imagery from a bygone age... Two variants:

1. Representations of the 'Celtic fringe'
2. Representations of the seaside

Railway posters #1: representations of the 'Celtic fringe'

A variant on this project, should anyone wish to give it a go. Search the Science and Society Picture Library (see above) for:

- **railway poster highlands** (60 results, February 2022)

- **railway poster wales** (88 results)

- **railway poster ireland** (59 results)

to produce three visual data sets for three areas of Britain's 'Celtic fringe'. [If you are keen, you can add **railway poster cornwall** (41 results) for the full set!] Task: use visual methods to discuss how railway posters portrayed the 'Celtic fringe'. The same points for 'what you have to do' and 'tips' (see above) apply, although here your focus is set, with obvious priority attached to pictures, not words – but do not ignore captions and slogans. Scope to examine the use (abuse?) of stereotypes (what is the 'essence' of Wales, for example?); to compare and contrast the different regions, perhaps relate (briefly) to contemporary marketing images. It strikes me that this data set is sufficiently small to attempt both:

- **Content analysis** – which involves 'coding' / classification of the imagery, and counting the number of times that different things appear: e.g., how frequently does tartan appear in the Scottish posters? Beaches? Mountains? Lakes? With what significance? This type of analysis tends to be extensive, superficial, quantitative.

- **Discourse analysis** – which involves more in-depth analysis of the meanings promoted by the images/texts, and the contexts in which they are produced/consumed. See above, references below and the handout for the original visual strategies workshop. Discourse analysis tends to be intensive, qualitative, and – as it relies more on reading into (rather than just counting) images, signs, symbols, etc. – requires more creative, persuasive inputs from the researcher.

The two techniques are complementary: the paper by Hopkins (1998), recommended above, does a bit of both. *The International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* has useful entries on both 'content analysis' and (in the first 1st edition) 'discourse analysis'. For a second empirical study, see for example:

> Pritchard, A. and N. J. Morgan. 2001. Culture, identity and tourism representation: marketing Cymru or Wales? *Tourism Management*, 22, pp. 167-179.

For a third:

Kneafsey, M. 2002. Tourism images and the construction on Celticity in Ireland and Brittany. In: D. C. Harvey, R. Jones, N. McInroy and C. Mulligan (eds), *Celtic Geographies: Old Culture, New Times*. London, Routledge, pp. 123-138. If you cannot get this from SDRL, it is available as a dodgy download:
https://epdf.pub/celtic-geographies-landscapes-culture-and-identity-critical-geographies.html

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Railway posters #2: representations of the 'seaside'

Not necessarily rural, nor Scottish, but too good to block. A second variant using the Science and Society Picture Library/National Railway Museum collection. Search for "railway poster seaside": 421 results to work with. Task: use visual methods to discuss how railway posters portrayed the British seaside.

Two papers I like on seaside posters:

Hewitt, J. 1995. East Coast Joys: Tom Purvis and the LNER. *Journal of Design History*, 8, 4, pp. 291-311.

Harrington, R. 2004. Beyond the bathing belle: Images of women in inter-war railway publicity. *Journal of Transport History*, 25, 1, pp. 22-25.

Both of these work with the 'qualitative content analysis into discourse analysis' approach. Think how these match up theory, data and discussion. Are you convinced? Perhaps consider how these two papers perform against the credibility checklist on the lecture slides – which is a worthwhile exercise for any paper that you read! If you think there are shortcomings (e.g., is there scope to sharpen up the account of the methods used?), can you do better in writing-up your own research?