

**BOOK
REVIEW**
***Media and Gaúcho
southern Brazilian –
Identity***

ÂNGELA FELIPPI AND VÍTOR NECCHI (ORG.)
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The subject of cultural identity has acquired a remarkable importance these days. On one hand, because of globalization and a possible trend toward cultural homogenization; on the other hand, because of the evident importance attained by regional and even national identities, in a local strengthening movement. The approach to national, regional, juvenile and gender identity as a communications study subject requires a more specific and complex understanding of these identities because their analysis extends to different social activities – especially the ones related to the media in a particular social environment. On an operational level, this involves the description and analysis of specific processes of identity formation which in this case are put together by the massive presence of different social networks made possible by communication technologies. The book *Mídia e Identidade Gaúcha* (Media and Gaúcho - southern Brazilian - identity) is connected with those movements. For this reason it is relevant to rethink journalism practices, the consumption of music, the role of radio broadcasting, the representations put into circulation by the cinema, by TV, by the press, by websites, by comic strips and by advertising, as related to the *gaúcho* way of life as this collection shows.

Beyond the *gaúcho* culture, the reports in this book bring up the question of constructing this *gaúcho* identity through representations put into circulation by different media and/or symbolic practices. The existence of a diversity of narratives about this way of life is intrinsic to this conception and configures a cultural regime that lives through differences. From a conceptual standpoint, both the plurality of narratives and the existence of conflicts over the construction of the

gaúcho identity are recognized in the analysis of the book. However, the descriptions of these subjects, which are part of the course of the book, largely maintain that the *gaúcho* very nature depends to some extent on tradition. This disparity establishes an association between these analyses and a certain concept of identity in which the precariousness of the link between culture and power becomes evident. This explains the need for an analytical protocol to point out these relationships, contemplating a regulating dimension of the culture exerted on the social activity and on the way of life, without going back, of course, to the traditional study of ideologies.

Some of these texts observe that the relationship between culture and economy and vice-versa is increasingly strong, phenomenon that cannot be ignored given the growing trend towards monopolization of the cultural space. In this area we point to globalization and its effects on the social environment, not only being part of the day-to-day local life but also configuring the formation of identities. However, the movement that Hall calls “adjustment through culture” is relatively murky in those analyses, especially that form of adjustment which falls directly on the construction of subjectivities and, of course, identities. This form of adjustment makes the subject internalize behaviors, norms and rules, *adjusting himself*. That is where the power of the media comes into play.

It is on this level of “adjustment through culture” that we find the representations. In other words, the representations carried by the *Zero Hora* newspaper, by the *Analista de Bagé* comic strips, by the *Anahy de las Misiones* film, by advertisements, by the regional TV production, among other media cultural expressions analyzed in this publication, construct one of the conceptions of “who we, the *gaúchos* are.” In this way, from the moment we take certain positions, built upon these significations, “our” identities will be in formation. This is the movement that needs to be emphasized in the examination of the *gaúcho* media representations. And this is when power takes a central position and the action of the subject necessarily begins to be thought of in relation to the distinct processes of social control. Of course, if we side with the subject, analyzing his identifications, perhaps we will make other discoveries, but this does not invalidate the need for the analytical movement required in this collection.

More than a review, what we present here is a more global view of the analyses put together in “Media and Southern Brazilian Gaucho Identity”, a view built from the preface and the epilog written for the book by invitation of the organizers. The uniqueness of each research can only be appreciated by the reading of the reports put together in the publication.

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