

Review of: "Semiosphere and Anthropological Aggression on the Example of the "Memorial Conflict" — Polish-Russian borderland: Warmia"

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This paper deals with an interesting topic: the memory wars in Polish Warmia, a border region in the North Poland. The area has been the site of memory struggles over what the author calls semiosphere, of which various memorials are part of. While the paper provides solid interpretation of the political motivations behind the memorials, unfortunately it somewhat lacks scientific rigor.

Firstly, the paper lacks appropriate citations. For instance, in the very beginning the author states, when discussing the theoretical concept semiosphere, that "the term itself leans from Yuri Lotman's semiotics of culture and helps understand the human social environment denoted by the sign and sign systems". It should then be followed with the proper citation (Lotman, Year of Publication: possible page number) so that the reader can track down the original source with ease.

Secondly, the paper lacks discussion over other scientific literature on memory conflicts though there is a lot written about them, also in anthropology about information warfare, contested memorials and aggression. This discussion with appropriate research is needed so that the reader will understand what is novel about this paper and what gap this paper is trying to fill. Also, discussion with other researchers will let the reader know that the author is informed on similar processes occurring elsewhere and has pondered on the differences / similarities between different memory conflicts. Most importantly, discussion with other scientific literature will demonstrate that the author is not just giving his personal opinion on something but rather that what he/she is arguing, is backed up by research. For instance, the author states: "a cultural naturalisation process may occur independently, or a state actor may initiate the process as has been known since ancient times". This should be backed up by references.

The third point is more to do with my personal interest but I hoped that the author would have included the analysis of the memorials themselves, their visual and material cues, and examined how those tend to naturalize certain narratives and understandings. Given that the paper's theoretical framing deals with semiotics, I think this would have been called for.

I think what is incredibly important about this paper is the point that anthropologists, historians ect. have the means to understand the nature of memory conflicts, and that they can easily be linked with events taking place today. This should be emphasized more and mirrored with existing literature.

