

Peer Review

Review of: "Who Owns the Past? Symbolic Authority and Heritage Revitalization in Czech Borderlands"

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This article explores the revitalization of cultural heritage in the Czech borderlands—a subject of considerable academic and societal importance. The topic is timely and holds much potential to contribute to ongoing conversations about heritage in post-conflict regions. However, there are areas where the article could be strengthened to enhance its clarity, depth, and overall impact.

First, while the introduction briefly references the post-war historical rupture in the Czech Republic, a fuller elaboration of the historical context and the institutional development of heritage policy would help situate the study more clearly. Providing a stronger temporal and political framework would allow readers—especially those unfamiliar with the Czech context—to better understand the significance of the research.

Second, the literature review demonstrates thoughtful engagement with memory studies, yet it would benefit from a broader integration of critical heritage studies. In particular, incorporating scholarship on post-conflict heritage—such as discussions around contested narratives and the politics of interpretation—could offer a more balanced and comprehensive theoretical foundation.

Third, the study employs a qualitative methodology through narrative and semi-structured interviews, which is a valuable approach for exploring lived experiences and perspectives. At the same time, the limited sample size (ten participants) may constrain the article's ability to fully capture the complexities of multi-actor interactions and power dynamics, which appear central to the analysis. Expanding on this aspect—perhaps through additional cases or deeper elaboration—would strengthen the empirical grounding.

Lastly, the analytical section presents some intriguing conceptual reflections, but it would be greatly enriched by more detailed empirical evidence. Including concrete examples, such as quotes from interviews or specific case illustrations, would help clarify the roles and relationships among different actors and provide stronger support for the article's key claims.

Overall, the article addresses an important and underexplored topic. With further contextualization, a broader theoretical lens, and more empirical detail, it has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to both critical heritage studies and the understanding of post-conflict cultural revitalization.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.