

Review of: "Collective Guilt and the Search for Meaning in Post-Communist Albania: An Existential Perspective"

Kaltrina Kusari¹

¹ University of Calgary

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Review: Collective Guilt and the Search of Meaning in Post-Community Albania: An Existential Perspective

Authors: Ledion Musaj & Anxheo Dema

Musaj and Dema's (2023) article focuses on an important topic in Albania. They affectively explained why it is important to look at collective guilt and meaning making, especially in the context of the post communist Albania. The authors offered clear definitions of these concepts and cited relevant literature to support such definitions. They also asked three clear questions which build well on each other. When it comes to their methodology, they offer an explanation as to why narrative analysis was chosen for this study. Among others, they highlight the strengths of a narrative analysis, especially when trying to understand complex processes such as meaning making. However, there are considerable improvements that need to be made in the paper.

First, the authors give the reader a brief overview of the context of post-communist Albania. However, for readers who are not familiar with Albania's history, elaborating a bit further on this context would be helpful. That is offering more details on how Albania changed with the fall of communism would offer clarity for the reader when it comes to why collective guilt might have emerged.

Second, the paper is not theoretically grounded. That is, the authors need to explain what theoretical framework guided their study and why this theoretical framework was chosen.

Third, more information on recruitment methods and eligibility criteria is needed. Among others, the author might want to offer information on how they shared recruitment notices (what kind of community events did they attend, did they distribute posters or did they offer a presentation to share information about the study), what does "self-selection" mean, how did participants let researchers know they were interested in participating, did the authors receive ethics approval, why were only those who are 65 and older recruited, etc.

Fourth, the authors need to engage with the limitations of online research. For example, how can they ensure that they know the identity of people who filled out the survey?

Fifth, more information is needed when it comes to how participants engaged with the questions. Participants were asked to reflect on collective guilt and meaning making. Were they offered an overview of what these terms mean, or did each participant write based on their own understanding of these terms. Were there writing prompts offered?

Sixth, the findings shared by the authors need to be supported by direct quotes from participants. The authors share important findings that emerged from this study. However, it would be helpful for the reader to have some direct quotes which back up the key themes that were identified in the analysis process. To this end, the reflections shared in section “Relationship between collective guilt and meaning-making” are not well supported by the findings shared by the authors. As such, a better connection between the two needs to be made.

Lastly, in the discussion section, it would be helpful if the authors refer to studies which have looked at either collective guilt or meaning making in other countries, including other post communist countries.