

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

Francesco Trupia Trupia

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This ambitious research paper attempts to bring light to an overlooked perspective of post-socialism in the Balkans and Albania in particular. In fact, while most studies look at how young generations “remember” the Communist past and how knowledge is transferred across generations, the authors here knowingly focus on elderly Albanians to investigate their sense of guilt and the meaning-making process.

The article is readable and well-structured. Methodology is also thoroughly explained, as well as how the latter has guided the authors to unpack the perspectives they stated they want to explore. In doing so, the three research questions are explored and answered in the following sections of the paper.

In my opinion, this paper could be used for a wider research project; hence, the research findings can be used as a statement for a research proposal seeking a grant for further research and fieldwork. Speaking of the latter, I would only like to point out a few issues that both authors can easily deal with:

1. As a qualitative research, it could be interesting to introduce some of the narrative insights to highlight similarities and better prove the hypothesis of the study.
2. The authors state to have built this paper around 20 narratives: Are they the ones collected or they were selected from a larger account collected during fieldwork? If so, the authors shall include the original number of collected numbers and why they selected these 20 and discard the rest.
3. Narratives were selected during “community events”: Could it be possible to say a bit more about them? I am aware that anonymization could have also considered these gatherings to protect respondents' identities. However, if this could not jeopardise respondents' anonymity, authors shall describe shortly which events they have collected data from. Also, were these events organised for the purpose of writing this paper? Or, conversely, were they also used to do so in parallel to the main event?
4. Last but not least, how the collection of personal narratives was organised? More precisely, on what topics, events, dilemmas, or personal circumstances, the respondents were asked to write their opinions/memories about?