

Heritage and Borders

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ABSTRACT

Borders now seem to be everywhere, just like it is often said in heritage studies that the past is everywhere. In this edited volume a multidisciplinary group of scholars explore what happens, philosophically and in practice, when these two concepts and phenomena, heritage and borders, are combined. The findings show that heritage, as well as borders, exist just as much in the mind as on the ground. Heritage and borders can be understood both in terms of roots and routes. They are matters of administration, but they are also matters of consideration, matters of competition, and matters of contention. They are defended in the name of security and protection, longing for belonging, and good will. And they are contested in the name of philosophical critique, or political and artistic activism. In six articles and a joint conversation, the volume addresses key issues and entangled complexities in discussions on heritage and borders that take place in and across academic disciplines today.

Keywords: Heritage, border, in-between, roots, routes, law, time, memory, buffer zone, conflict

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The revival of cultural heritage and borders

A literature review with some explanatory remarks

INTRODUCTION*

This contribution aims to provide a (critical) literature overview of the cross-fertilization of two large research themes: that of “cultural heritage” and that of “borders”. It is acknowledged that both fields have enjoyed growing recognition and concomitant institutionalization over the past years: both Heritage Studies and Border Studies are now considered as established academic fields, with their respective journals, conferences, educational programmes, and a more recent and still-emerging “critical” school of each. Yet despite the rapid growth of both fields especially over the last two decades, few seem thus far explicitly to have reflected upon what appears to be a growing evidence of cross-fertilization¹ between them. Hence, in the form of a literature review, this paper maps the milestones and fruits of that process, complemented by some – in places critical – reflections. The argument is that borders are neatly tied to heritage, and do not and will not disappear but rather transform.

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¹ A few years ago, a whole theme issue of the *Journal of Borderlands Studies* was devoted to the cultural production and negotiation of borders, not least through heritage. See Schimanski & Wolfe 2010; Amante 2010.

The chapter is structured as follows. This very short introduction is followed by a brief presentation of some of the key concepts in Heritage Studies and Border Studies, also touching upon potential common fields of investigation. Subsequently, a section introduces some of the first instances of cross-fertilization, which mostly took place in the 1990s. The longest section then tries to continue the journey chronologically, focusing on the complex (power) relations between communities on different territorial scales when it comes to defining “their” heritage. The last section before the concluding one carries on with the literature review but here the guiding question is whether heritage is imaginable without any sorts of boundaries at all. The chapter ends with a brief summary, some concluding thoughts as well as future outlook.

THEORY, DEFINITIONS, AND DELIMITATIONS

In spite of the above-mentioned blossoming of heritage-related literature, few papers actually seem to offer (shorter) definitions of the term. This may be more understandable considering that most authors – in accordance with the post-positivist, or constructivist paradigm – are interested in what their research subjects value as heritage, rather than following their own presumptions. A few examples of definitions are nevertheless in place here. On a more abstract level cultural heritage can be seen as “a way to manage the past for the future”.² Brian Graham and others for instance refer by heritage to “that part of the past which [groups, individuals, and institutions] select in the present for contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political, or social”.³ Consequently, according to Elizabeth Greenspan “sites of heritage are those spaces at which groups, individuals, and institutions negotiate how to use aspects of the past in the present, often by manipulating the space of the site itself”.⁴ In general, then, this literature review uses the definitions of (cultural) heritage which the cited authors themselves have adopted. Applying a broad approach will of course include tangible and intangible heritage alike. There is in any case one important delimitation to be mentioned. While more cross-fertilization would surely be fruitful (and has to some extent already started taking place), I – as many other social scientists – do not deal with Heritage Science, i.e. the technically-oriented study of heritage conservation. I find that fields such as Memory Studies, History, Human Geography, Cultural Studies, etc. are closer to the discussions in which most scholars of Heritage Studies as well as Border Studies are engaged.

2 Eskilsson & Högdahl 2009, p. 78.

3 Graham *et al.* 2000, p. 17.

4 Greenspan 2005, p. 372.

Similarly, then – and again in line with the general trend – the concepts of border and boundary are used here in a broad sense. A conventional distinction between the two has been for the border to refer to the line in the sand, i.e. the physical barrier, whereas a boundary could refer to any aspect of social demarcation. Such a distinction has, however, become increasingly blurred.⁵ On precisely this note, one of the contributions of Border Studies has been to show how borders in the minds have created physical separation barriers on the ground – a process that works just as efficiently the other way around; i.e. the creation and maintenance of territorial borders also influence, if not fully define, group belongings.⁶ Border Studies as we know it emerged in the late 1990s as a counter-narrative to notions of a borderless and deterritorialized world that accompanied the enthusiasm and optimism of many commentators at the end of the Cold War along with forecasts of an ever-more unfolding globalization.⁷ The overall picture has become more nuanced by the recognition of the border as a meeting point or contact zone between different actors – for good/legal⁸ and bad/illegal or semi-legal⁹ purposes.

Not only new cultures (see below), but also path-breaking research often emerge through meetings at the borders of already established or emerging academic disciplines.¹⁰ Increased interactions between the fields of Heritage Studies and Border Studies seem particularly fruitful, and should be regarded as fertile ground for advances in research, since borders are often seen as the finites of one territory and the beginning of the next, and can as such be strongly linked to definitions of cultural heritage. As Sara McDowell explains:

The concept of, or acts of, territoriality are bound up in notions of a demarcated geographic space (a territory) which usually contains some kind of homogeneous, collectivized community sharing a collective identity or heritage. Territoriality is needed to stabilize and mobilize groups or individuals and their resources inside demarcated boundaries. Within societies then, various groups insert symbols into the cultural landscapes which resonate with their sense of heritage and identity, and which simultaneously incite remembering and mark territory. For territoriality to work, the group

5 For a longer paragraph on the gradual transformation of this distinction see Balogh 2014, p. 22.

6 For a longer account on the background and development of Border Studies see e.g. Balogh 2014, pp. 35–52.

7 Newman 2006; Paasi 2009.

8 Löfgren 2008.

9 Byrska-Szklarczyk 2012.

10 Källén & Sanner 2013, p. 9.

often places visual warning symbols around the agreed territory further to deny others access into the home area [...] Flags, for example [...]¹¹

SOME OF THE EARLY SIGNS OF CROSS-FERTILIZATION

One of the first papers to deal with the connection between cultural heritage and boundaries is Leo Ou-fan Lee's account of Chinese literature produced in peripheral areas of the country, in exile, or by diaspora members.¹² The author takes note of a number of writers who saw themselves deprived of their cultural heritage through their remote physical distance from the geographic centres of Chinese cultural life, thus hindering them from producing valuable literature. However, Lee argues, it is exactly at the intersection of different cultures – often coming about by crossing regional or national boundaries – where new value is created, in the form of new cultures in general, and in this case in the form of new and inspiring types of literary work in particular.

In a similar vein, art teacher and scholar Elizabeth Garber notes that “[i]n border studies, the meeting of two cultures and countries is studied”.¹³ She is inspired by the concept of a border consciousness that “necessarily implies the knowledge of two sets of reference codes operating simultaneously. The challenge is to fully assume this bi-culturalism, develop it, and promote it”.¹⁴ Garber's empirical focus is on Chicanos, a label that “refers to Mexican-Americans who identify themselves as part of a political and social movement to establish self-respect and respect for the customs and heritages of Mexican-Americans”.¹⁵

One of the early boundary scholars to mention cultural heritage is anthropologist Fredrik Barth. In an added preface to his reprinted anthology *Ethnic groups and boundaries*, Barth and his co-authors explain the wide adoption of their work as follows:

It is true that the word “ethnic” is used to refer to groups of people who are considered to have a shared identity, a common history, and a traditional cultural heritage. But these features may not in themselves provide the best bases for analysing and understanding ethnic phenomena. The breakthrough we were striving for during our

11 McDowell 2008, pp. 47–48.

12 Lee 1991.

13 Garber 1995, p. 223. It can be added though that Border Studies have been interested in (the reasons for) a lack of cross-boundary contacts nearly as much as in their presence.

14 Cf. Garber 1995, p. 223.

15 Garber 1995, p. 224.

symposium in 1967 was to identify the particular processes whereby ethnic groups are formed and made relevant in social life. To do so, we were looking for something like mechanisms, not for descriptions of manifest forms.¹⁶

The authors exemplify: “in analysing indigenous people’s political activism, we discussed the shift to seeing such groups as engaged in a social struggle for meaningful change, not the revitalization of an unchanging heritage of aboriginal cultural traits”.¹⁷

Indigenous movements are also a departure point in anthropologist Simon Harrison’s short but important contribution. Quoting a crucial insight by Brigit Meyer and Peter Geschiere that “people’s awareness of being involved in open-ended global flows seems to trigger a search for fixed orientation points and action frames, as well as determined efforts to affirm old and construct new boundaries”,¹⁸ Harrison notes “an increasing resistance by many indigenous communities to what they perceive as appropriations of their cultures by outsiders, perceptions which to some degree involve the reification of their cultural heritage as a form of property”.¹⁹ Thus “[i]ncreasingly, indigenous peoples and their supporters seek to protect [...] commercially valuable aspects of their cultural heritage with intellectual property”.²⁰ One of Harrison’s examples is the Notting Hill Carnival, which contributed to strengthening West Indian identity in Britain at the same time as it was seen by many of its organizers to have been misappropriated by outsiders and adulterated by white British culture. Hence “[t]he West Indians had tended to reify the concept of carnival, that is to treat it as if it were a material object, and to regard it as being exclusively their own”.²¹ Harrison’s other case is the heritage of classical antiquity, which in many Greeks’ eyes needed to be purified from its Turkish accretions in order to be reassembled as Greek culture. The author draws the important lessons that point to the perpetual nature of boundaries:²²

16 Barth 1998 [1969], p. 5.

17 Barth 1998 [1969], p. 7.

18 Cf. Harrison 1999, p. 10.

19 Harrison 1999, p. 11.

20 Harrison 1999, p. 11.

21 Cf. Harrison 1999, p. 12.

22 Not so much their exact drawing between various groups or territories of course, but their very existence.

The folk rhetorics of identity which I have tried to outline thus certainly allow groups to represent themselves as more or less outward-looking, more or less amenable to various sorts of mutually enriching cultural give-and-take – so long as their cultural boundaries are not erased altogether and all distinction lost between inside and outside. For according to these discourses of identity [...] the distinction between the cultural Self and Other depends irreducibly on stopping at least some transmission of culture between them [...]²³

But while all group identities depend on bordering – i.e. in some way defining the Self and/or the Other²⁴ – some of them can perhaps be more easily mobilized at times. Changes in the physical delimitation of (state) boundaries and often-concomitant population exchanges provide illustrative cases of both persistent and shifting collective identities. Paasi for instance described how Finland's post-WWII loss of Eastern Karelia to the USSR created a community of expellees whose ideological interests, coupled with the economic interests of local authorities and the emerging heritage industry all combined to give rise to a kind of “reconstructed Karelia” in the border areas of Eastern Finland:

War memorials, houses built in the Karelian style, the symbols of Orthodox religion, and events exploiting the Karelian heritage mushroomed in this part of the country and created a symbolic space that provided the Karelians with cultural representations that perhaps partly compensated mentally for their lost territory, while at the same time stimulating tourism.²⁵

Such expellee associations have typically been engaged in maintaining local forms of identity and heritage, as well as organizing visits to their members' former native homelands on the other side of the border. Yet the number of such nostalgic trips have decreased as they realized the “Utopian land” they were looking for no longer exists, with the differences between the commemorated past and contemporary realities being particularly exacerbated by the diverging historical trajectories that the two sides of the once-coherent region have experienced since the split.²⁶

23 Harrison 1999, p. 13.

24 The related concepts of bordering, ordering, and othering are discussed in a large corpus of literature on Border Studies, see e.g. Scott 2009; van Houtum 2010, pp. 959–960; Balogh 2013, pp. 192–193; Scott 2015.

25 Cf. Paasi 1999, p. 672. For the German-Polish context see e.g. Balogh 2014, pp. 24–25.

26 Cf. Paasi 1999, pp. 677–678.

COMPLEX RELATIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT TERRITORIAL SCALES

Connecting the fields of cultural heritage and borders will inevitably raise issues of territorial scale. As the designation “World Heritage” gained momentum due to UNESCO and other organizations, scholars began discussing – and often questioning – the idea and practice of global heritage. Anthropologists, archaeologists, geographers,²⁷ and others have engaged in a critical debate of heritage sites designated as “global” by organizations such as UNESCO and the World Heritage Fund. The most resonant critique questions the salience of the category of “global heritage” itself. Archaeologist Lynn Meskell argued that such a category suggests a universal agreement about what constitutes globally valuable sites of heritage and assumes that individuals or communities from different regions of the world value “global heritage” to begin with.²⁸

In an illuminating case study of Cyprus, Julie Scott analyses the conflictual implications of “world heritage” as intended by UNESCO versus “on the ground” on the divided island. In the Greek-Cypriot south, three sites have received World Heritage status between 1980 and 1998.²⁹ At the same time, despite there being more known heritage sites in the north, due to its status as disputed territory the (so-called) Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus could not nominate any of them for World Heritage status. Thus as “Greek and Turkish Cypriots are differentially positioned in relation to the authoritative resources of the island’s past, for which World Heritage inscription has become the ultimate brand”,³⁰ the “current stalemate works to deepen existing imbalances, and further entrench the exclusion of Turkish Cypriots from a sense of ownership of Cyprus’s heritage”.³¹ The author therefore concludes that the UNESCO philosophy of world heritage for a world citizenry is perhaps only possible in cyberspace.³²

Scott points out a fundamental dilemma, which is that “[t]he dominance of the nation-state model of political self-determination has encouraged a view of heritage

27 See e.g. Graham *et al.* 2000.

28 Meskell 2002.

29 Scott 2002, p. 101. It is nevertheless noteworthy that no Cypriot site has been added to the World Heritage List for two decades now, despite there remaining unrecognized cultural heritage sites on the Greek side as well. While this particular question is beyond the scope of the present paper, we might speculate that the exclusion of the Turkish side has been hindering the recognition of any further sites on the Greek side as well.

30 Scott 2002, p. 112.

31 Scott 2002, p. 113.

32 See e.g. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/>

as the cultural property of specific ethno-national groups”.³³ As potential panacea she is turning to two concepts: one of them is patrimony, which – unlike heritage – is future oriented: “[i]f one is talking of heritage or of an heir, the genealogy goes back from the son to the father ... If one is talking of patrimony, one’s attention is directed towards the future, towards the son.”³⁴ The other concept is stewardship, which “directly confronts traditional and entrenched notions of property and its associated rights, with an alternative model of duties and obligations [...] and which substitutes universal values for particularistic interests and identities”.³⁵ Hence, the author laments the explicit exclusion of active forms of stewardship from UNESCO’s remit in relation to World Heritage Sites.

While remaining contested, “global heritage” is explicitly defended by for instance urban anthropologist Elizabeth Greenspan.³⁶ She argues that the latter must not be constructed top-down by large bureaucratic organizations but can also be conceived by for instance tourists and local residents. Based on a case study of the World Trade Center (WTC) memorial site during the year following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, she claims visitors from around the world as well as locals were actively co-creating the site and turning it into global heritage. According to the author this was manifested for instance by people leaving notes such as “The world supports you” or “We love America” on plywood walls and memorial posters. Greenspan also conducted on-site interviews with visitors, one of whom she quoted saying: “Even if we don’t belong to the same culture, I’m Filipino, there are many nationalities here. But we can ... be together”.³⁷

Some critique is in place here regarding the way Greenspan treats the concept of globalness. Although not framed as self-critique, she does mention some of the term’s ambiguities:

[G]roups and individuals are constructing globalness at heritage sites in multiple, perhaps contradictory, ways. At the WTC site, visitors were not a random sample of individuals from around the world; they had the desire and means to visit the USA, New York City, and the WTC site – quite a selective group. Interviews with visitors

33 Scott 2002, p. 112.

34 Scott explains this idea in somewhat more detail (Scott 2002, p. 114). Others, such as Sundberg and Kaserman (2007, p. 731), have also critically approached the notion of heritage itself, which often refers to “something transmitted by or acquired from a predecessor” as well as “something possessed as a result of one’s natural situation or birth.”

35 Scott 2002, pp. 114–115.

36 Greenspan 2005.

37 Greenspan 2005, p. 380.

revealed that many had friends and/or family who live or have lived in or near NYC, or elsewhere in the USA. As a result, their ideas about what kind of place the WTC site is, and how it may, or may not, be a global heritage site, are shaped by these factors. While many who visited the WTC site said it feels international or global, others may visit and experience it as intensely Western and/or American.³⁸

Thus, while there are few things or identities in the world that can be described as genuinely global (with New York City still widely regarded as an iconic example), the geographies of visitors even at such an international site as the WTC memorial will be selective. Relatedly, there is a risk of conceptual inflation where Greenspan conflates such terms as “non-national” and global: “this paper uses the word ‘global’ to refer to representations that situate phenomena or groups ... beyond the boundaries of any one nation-state; the phenomena, though rooted geographically in a precise locale, are represented as ‘non-national’”.³⁹ The empirical evidence of manifestations of globalness remains vague, or at least questionable:

Flags hanging on walls from Japan, Italy, France, Canada, and Britain, and comments on plywood written in Czech, Hebrew and Hindi collectively worked to situate processes of heritage making as a project originating from more than one nation-state. Visitors did not always see or engage in such an international collective during their visit, but by reading walls, adding their own comments, and photographing memorials, visitors participated, perhaps indirectly, in such a collective marked materially at the site. Constructions of globalness were marked primarily in the collection of flags and signatures from many countries on walls and fences surrounding the site. Such a collection presented a coming together of many distinct nations, an “imagined community of nations”.⁴⁰

Referring to her interviewees, Greenspan writes that “[m]any said that the memorials expressed to them support for New Yorkers and/or Americans. Even without mentioning the world or globe, such comments imply the presence of a scale beyond the national, one that is able to provide support to local and/or national collectives”.⁴¹ My point is that “beyond the national” is not necessarily global. Some of the alterna-

38 Greenspan 2005, p. 382.

39 Greenspan 2005, p. 374.

40 Greenspan 2005, p. 380.

41 Greenspan 2005.

tive concepts the author could have used include transnational⁴² or translocal,⁴³ perhaps even binational cultural heritage⁴⁴ could have been more suitable in a number of cases. Common to these terms is that they do emphasize the transboundary nature of a phenomenon or an individual, but do not claim to represent the global. Greenspan does use the terms “international” and “multinational”, but her aim throughout the whole article is to defend “global heritage”, a notion that – despite Greenspan’s well-intended efforts to prove its constructive potential – does not become much less fuzzy.

It is crucial to add at this point that the fuzziness of “global heritage” does of course not mean that national heritage would be much easier to define, something Tomas Germundsson’s study well attests. He shows how the continued significance of mainstream notions of the Swedish national landscape, often rooted in historical romanticism, serve to exclude some regions such as Scania.⁴⁵ That area has both a distinctive physical landscape and a historical record of belonging to Denmark. Of course, Scania is not the only part of Sweden where the country’s borders have shifted historically. However, although Scania has been under Swedish rule since 1658, its “landscape heritage runs the risk of being alienated when it is valued from a national criterion [...] a critical questioning of official heritage practice is therefore needed”.⁴⁶ In the meantime, regional actors in Scania are not just waiting for that to happen. Instead, in the age of a “Europe of regions” they have actively been mobilizing Scania’s contemporary heritage, including the potentials of a new bridge to the Danish capital Copenhagen,⁴⁷ as well as the relative proximity (as compared to other Swedish regions) to continental Europe. In this case – as along many other intra-European borders – a cross-border region (Öresund) has gradually been institutionalized, also supported by a mobilization of past and recent heritage.

Another case study from southern Sweden emphasizes the need to maintain the multiplicity of readings and practices of cultural heritage in a historical borderland.⁴⁸

42 Conceptualizations of transnationalism have boomed since the early 1990s (see e.g. Vertovec 2009 for a comprehensive account) but have only started infusing Heritage Studies more recently (cf. Jørgensen 2014). This might be related to that the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage “contains no guidelines for dealing with transnational cultural heritage or mobile, migrating cultures” (Leimgruber 2010, p. 176).

43 Kiiskinen 2008.

44 George & George 2016.

45 Germundsson 2005.

46 Germundsson 2005, p. 21.

47 Germundsson 2005, p. 33.

48 Eskilsson & Högdahl 2009.

The “Snapphanes” were a 17th-century pro-Danish guerrilla organization that fought against the Swedes in the Second Northern Wars in Scania, and were consequently arrested and killed by Swedish authorities during and following the ousting of the Danes from the region in the 1670s. Their story could be constructed in “classic” nationalistic frames, i.e. as an example of the enemies of the nation “rightly” being punished for their lack of loyalty. While that version is not excluded, the story is “in many ways the little man’s struggle against an oppressing superior force” and can thus be “regarded as a practice of history valid in our age”.⁴⁹ Moreover, under the current realities of an ever-more integrated Danish-Swedish cross-border region, local Snapphane stories can also be mobilized as a shared heritage connecting the two nations, evidenced for instance by the presence of both Swedish and Danish flags at the annually held “Snapphane Days”.⁵⁰ The challenge to such multiplicity and hybridization is thus not so much an animosity between Swedes and Danes, which is nowadays virtually non-existent, but rather the ever-more influential needs of (place) branding, which require competitive and simplified messages. The authors’ final thought regarding the future of the Snapphane Days is a challenge most likely shared by other similar events across the world:

[T]he “professionalization” of the event probably will raise claims for a “cleaner” and more homogenous storytelling, as well as more stylized settings. We will claim that one possibility to keep this multiplicity is an on-going ambition to leave space for the “bottom-up” where new local actors will continue the discussion on the history of the Snapphanes and prevent it from becoming another tourist attraction: easy to trace and understand but without the nerve that emanates from the negotiation that actually *makes it meaningful*.⁵¹

A diversification of commemorative practices at local level is also the main concern in a paper by Ewa Ochman that focuses on south-western Poland.⁵² The key argument here is that Polish administrative-territorial reforms in the 1990s have triggered a process whereby local governments are now much more in charge of commemorative practices that were previously handled by the national government, resulting in much more fragmented and diversified heritage narratives.⁵³ Local identity-building is seen

49 Eskilsson & Högdahl 2009, p. 77.

50 <https://www.hembygd.se/osby/kulturarrangemang/snapphanedagar-2010-och-2011-11/>

51 Eskilsson & Högdahl 2009, p. 79 (emphasis in original).

52 Ochman 2009.

53 In a positive sense (i.e. in terms of multiplicity).

as particularly necessary in this post-socialist context, given the former regime's neglect and even denial of (local) diversity, with all past-related narratives subordinated to the ideology of the central state and class-struggle master narrative.⁵⁴ Accordingly, local actors, especially in the historical border town of Gliwice, have worked hard – reportedly successfully – to redefine local heritage to emphasize their community's past multicultural character. Moreover, given that different municipalities conduct divergent politics of memory, Ochman concludes that such an intense diversification “has the most potential to challenge a coherent and nationalizing version of the historical past propagated by the state”.⁵⁵

Whereas Ochman's enthusiasm and appreciation of such trends is both understandable and welcome (from a normative standpoint), the need emerges to nuance the picture with two – perhaps less optimistic – aspects. The first targets the idea that a post-socialist context and politico-economic decentralization would guarantee a rich diversity of heritage accounts. As Eskilsson and Högdahl show in their above-discussed article, multiplicity can be threatened by fundamental marketing strategies and branding activities, in particular the tendency to create short, simple, and saleable messages and communications rather than more complex and nuanced ones with a multifaceted character with which most heritage would deserve to be treated. This suggests that economic liberalization as well as political decentralization do not *per se* guarantee that heritage does not get “corrupted”. The second and strongly related critique cautiously raises a warning finger towards the main sources of current diversity-embrace, which often include European Union (EU) funding. Ochman accounts for projects like Gliwice's Minority, which “allows us to show the heritage of the region through traditions and culture of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural local society” and has so far presented exhibitions on Armenian and Jewish minorities. The museum also holds annual Gliwice Heritage Days as part of the European Heritage Days.⁵⁶ In the author's own words:

Rethinking the image of the city as a historic border town and a present-day cultural, linguistic, and economic contact zone has concrete ramifications. Primarily, it helps to increase prospects for receiving EU subsidies and encourages national and foreign

54 Ochman 2009, p. 405.

55 Ochman 2009, p. 393.

56 Ochman 2009, p. 404. The author just mentions this in parenthesis. I think it is important that the local heritage days are connected to the European Heritage Days, with the latter thus most likely having an impact on the former.

investment. This is particularly important in the context of the decline of mining and metallurgy industries in Upper Silesia.⁵⁷

Firstly, although museum curators and others engaged in such exhibitions and events are almost certainly open-minded persons with noble intentions, it remains difficult not to think of the present near-total absence of ethnic minorities (such as Armenians and Jews) whose heritage they commemorate. It is of utmost importance to note here that “boasting” of one’s own tolerance by proudly displaying currently nearly non-existent domestic minority-cultures is far from a uniquely Polish phenomenon. The point is, therefore, to take note of the contradictions involved in such a process; since contemporary, genuinely multicultural societies are not rarely infected with ethno-national or -linguistic, or religious conflicts (or a combination of these). Secondly and relatedly, Ochman refers more than once (see e.g. the quotation above) to the peripheral character of her study area, which is a rather disadvantaged city in a region known for struggling with its more recent heritage based on mining and heavy industry. Yet she does not really discuss the consequences and potential risks that such structural challenges and a concomitant subordinated position – including dependence on financial transfers from domestic and European core regions – imply. Given that the discourses and financial means of diversity-embracement partly stem from outside (e.g. Brussels),⁵⁸ a failure of the European project and citizens’ related unfulfilled expectations could turn into some sort of a “revenge” of the periphery, including a rejection of most – even noble – ideas stemming from the core. That we have already been witnessing over the past few years, not least in countries like Poland and Hungary.

Ochman’s point that heritage is particularly contested in post-socialist contexts is nevertheless valid. In the following quote Sara McDowell describes an example from the Baltic states, but similar practices can be found not just in post-socialist but also in post-colonial contexts.⁵⁹

57 Ochman 2009, p. 405.

58 Although loaded with contradictions and increasingly challenged, these discourses can perhaps still be considered as hegemonic in the context of the EU.

59 Turkmenistan for instance has a colonial (pre-1917) as well as a Soviet state socialist (until 1991) historical record. Given that for over a century local authors and intelligentsia published almost exclusively in Russian, the country has found it particularly difficult to rediscover its national heritage. See briefly about some attempts in Balogh 2007.

In Latvia, for example, the annual commemoration of the Barricade Days [...] which marks the restoration of the country's independence, has become increasingly popular, while a significant number of memorials in Riga, the capital, remember the sacrifices made by the hundreds of thousands of Latvians killed throughout the country's history of occupation [...] These practices are an integral part of the construction of a new identity and a separate heritage for many Latvians. By dismantling sites of heritage synonymous with Soviet occupation (which were constructed in the first instance to reinforce Soviet control of Latvian territory) and replacing them with expressions and narratives of Latvian identity, the local population can validate their new-found independence. Similar processes have taken place in neighbouring Estonia [...]⁶⁰

Yet relatively recent examples of "heritageization" and "re-heritageization" from Estonia in particular again reflect the challenges of creating coherent national narratives. Around a quarter of the population (still) identify themselves as ethnic Russians, and the country has experienced a war of monuments⁶¹ that peaked in 2007 upon the relocation of a bronze statue of an anonymous Soviet soldier, from a central place to a less-frequented site within Tallinn. At the same time, in the northeastern border-town of Narva, with over 90% Russian speakers, the restoration in 2000 of a Swedish Lion monument to mark the tercentenary of Sweden's victory over Russia at the first Battle of Narva was perhaps compensated by subsequent commemorations of the Russian conquest of the city in 1704. But then again, a proposal a few years later to erect a statue of Peter the Great in Narva briefly threatened to open a new front in Estonia's monument war.⁶²

In a related paper David Smith and Stuart Burch explore how social categories are articulated through place-making, with a particular focus on the meanings ascribed to public monuments and other heritage sites by "everyday" residents of the EU's eastern border city of Narva. A restorationist discourse harking back to "authentic", Old Narva prevails among ethnic Estonians (in Tartu and Narva) and dismisses the city's current modernist Soviet architecture as abhorrent and ugly, and moreover emblematic of the damage inflicted on the "real" western Estonia by 50 years of Soviet occupation.⁶³ For the vast majority of informants the researchers encountered in Narva, however, the Soviet architecture has real value: in many instances they or their forebears had an actual hand in its construction, as part of Estonia's post-war devel-

60 McDowell 2008, p. 49.

61 Burch & Smith 2007.

62 Burch & Smith 2007.

63 Smith & Burch 2012, p. 414.

opment scheme.⁶⁴ The authors conclude that these sometimes conflicting narratives in turn convey something of the complexity of identity in this borderland setting, a complexity which is still insufficiently acknowledged not just in political but also in academic discourse around the interface between the EU and Russia.⁶⁵

CULTURAL HERITAGE WITHOUT BORDERS?

As previously alluded to, heritage is not just contested in relatively newly independent states but also in places across Western Europe (see *Fig. 1*) or North America. Juanita Sundberg and Bonnie Kaserman for instance find that recent strategies to enforce the United States boundary with Mexico have shifted undocumented immigrants into remote lands federally designated as protected areas, such as national parks or wildlife refuges.⁶⁶ The US Government and media represent such entries as a threat to nature and wildlife. Repeatedly defining that which is threatened as American, such discourses work to draw and reinforce boundaries around the nation, creating categories of inclusion and exclusion by means of narration. According to the authors, discourses about border-protected areas create images of nature as the embodiment of the “American” nation and its national heritage. The notion of heritage thus “serves to delimit the body politic as Anglo-American and cements this community’s claims to territory”.⁶⁷ The dominant images represent Southwestern border-protected areas as threatened by wounding and contamination by undocumented immigrants who are consequently held responsible for this damage. The resulting association between them and the traces they leave behind – refuse and human waste – works to preclude them from inclusion in the body politic as rights-claiming individuals.⁶⁸

It can be added that (illegal) migration is increasingly contested in many parts of the world. An article by Ashworth and Bruce focuses on historical town walls and tourism,⁶⁹ therefore a comparison with state border walls that we see again rising across the world may seem far-fetched at first sight. And yet their insight that these historical “town walls can be seen as the grim barriers between contested identities or as the emblems of the peaceful security of the town within”,⁷⁰ can arguably just as well

64 Smith & Burch 2012, p. 415.

65 Smith & Burch 2012, p. 422.

66 Sundberg & Kaserman 2007, p. 727.

67 Sundberg & Kaserman 2007, p. 729.

68 Sundberg & Kaserman 2007.

69 Ashworth & Bruce 2009.

70 Ashworth & Bruce 2009, p. 299.



Fig. 1. Perhaps also due to its relatively fragile structure (as a federal state divided by ethno-linguistic, cultural, and administrative borders), the shape of Belgium's territory is commemorated on souvenirs such as this coin (indirectly contributing to the maintenance of the political order and state borders of that country). Photograph by author.

be linked to the contemporary border protection mania, a result of massive fear by many citizens that has been successfully mobilized by some – irrespective of whether or not on justified grounds.

Some critical scholars such as Mary Taylor understand the revival of not just cultural heritage but culture more generally as a product of late capitalism.⁷¹ Building on influential scholars such as Nancy Fraser, George Yúdice, anthropologists Arturo Escobar and Jane Cowan, as well as geographers Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, the main argument in this approach is that the recent emphasis on cultural rights is neatly tied to identity politics and, most importantly, has replaced social rights as the key force of political mass mobilization. While this is an important observation, in a way we should have seen it coming. In 1989, Francis Fukuyama predicted that

[i]n the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history. I can feel in myself, and see in others around me, a powerful nostalgia for the time when history existed. Such nostalgia, in fact, will continue to fuel competition and conflict even in the post-historical world for some time to come.⁷²

Accordingly, roots tourism – i.e. travel for the purpose of seeking roots – has been emerging in particular among “descendants of a diaspora living in contemporary multicultural societies and travelling to ancestral homelands in search of identity and belongingness”⁷³ (see also *Fig. 2*). While such activities certainly create links between established territorial states, to some extent they also question these entities – or

71 Taylor 2009, p. 54.

72 Fukuyama 1989, p. 18.

73 Higginbotham 2012, p. 189.

at least their fixed nature – by emphasizing ethnic/genealogical and cultural bonds stretching beyond them.⁷⁴

At the heyday of the globalization debate – i.e. around the turn of millennium – influential writers such as Marc Augé and Zygmunt Bauman have conceptualized globalized, uniformalized places such as international airports as non-places, being “nowhereville”. Yet more recent heritage studies have pointed to the growing presence of national and local cultural heritage at exactly these sites; not just in commercial forms but also through exhibitions, performances etc.⁷⁵ Paasi for instance has described this contradiction as follows:



Fig. 2. The nowadays-popular search for ethnic roots may to some extent question administrative borders by emphasizing other types of belonging that reach beyond the confines of (current) political entities. Photograph by author.

74 Higginbotham 2012, pp. 196–198.

75 van Ulzen 2011; Silverman 2017.

[B]orders are challenged by postnational and denational processes, mobility, and at times by ethnic upsurges, [yet] studies on (banal) nationalism display how much emotional bordering, fear, and loyalty are mobilized through nationalized and memorialized material landscapes like military cemeteries and monuments, or through national performances such as flag/independence days, parades, and other elements related to national heritage, “purity”, and symbolism.⁷⁶

If nothing else, borders are maintained as they can serve as a resource to local communities and beyond.⁷⁷ In Europe cross-border co-operation initiatives can receive funding for maintaining different elements of cultural heritage from the EU,⁷⁸ but the advantages go far beyond this. In many places, such as along the Polish-Ukrainian border, cities like Przemyśl as well as its surroundings have consciously built up the tourism industry around the region’s frontier culture, including walks to historical demarcation lines (for a similar example see *Fig. 3*), promotion of border fortresses, exhibitions on the lives of local borderlanders, etc.⁷⁹ Interestingly enough, the narratives produced here (as in the Estonian cases above) also have some difficulties balancing between a focus on the historical multicultural heritage and current realities of ethnic homogeneity.⁸⁰ Along many borderlands, such sites and places of remembrance now often host various events of cultural exchange, high-level political encounters etc. In less fortunate situations, however, these (sometimes very same) sites see a clash of memories, or worse, of physical bodies. Whether a peaceful or a hostile meeting point, the symbolic and practical role of the border is indisputable for the production of past, present, and future cultural heritage.

IN LIEU OF CONCLUSIONS

As above examples of cross-fertilization between Heritage Studies and Border Studies have hopefully demonstrated, the meta-theoretical approach of the two fields has by and large been in line with the prevailing paradigms of the past decades, with a particular focus on diversity. A dilemma of diversity, not least in an era of globalization, is that its very existence depends on the presence of distinguishable units (i.e.

76 Paasi 2012, p. 2305.

77 In fact, conceiving of the border not just as a barrier but rather also as a resource has been one of the key shifts in Border Studies, among policy practitioners, and others. For a discussion on this see Balogh 2014, pp. 44–48.

78 See e.g. Oćokoljic 2013.

79 Barthel 2016.

80 Barthel 2016, pp. 60–61.



Fig. 3. The large bunker complex pictured here and forming part of the Árpád Line (an extensive historical border corridor) has peacefully been visited by Ukrainians, Hungarians, and others for years. Yet a nearby historical landmark at Verecke Pass, which commemorates the (assumed) entry point of the ancient Hungarians into the Carpathian Basin in the 9th century, has multiple times been vandalized by Ukrainian radicals. Photograph by author.

territories, groups) and boundaries between them. At the same time, diversity is arguably of limited value if it cannot be experienced – an action that itself necessitates the crossing of borders, physical and mental.

As Border Studies have shown, the world has not become a borderless space, as some well-intentioned but naïve commentators expected in the 1990s. The important thing then is how we deal with borders, for instance when presenting cultural heritage. In a number of countries in Africa and Asia for instance, “heritage resources have found themselves embroiled and endangered by militarised conflict and political turmoil, and simultaneously acting as a source of ethnic or religious tension”.⁸¹ In some regions with similar but temporally more remote records of ethnic conflicts, such as the German-Polish borderland, local and regional cultural heritage is actively promoted and crafted into a suitable form by avoiding certain contested historical periods, such as the mid-20th century.⁸² But even in regions with a more peaceful re-

81 Winter 2013, p. 534.

82 Nilsson *et al.* 2010, p. 165.

cent history such as Scandinavia, cultural heritage can be hijacked and manipulated by such forces as the political far right.⁸³

There are good examples, too, of course. On the international level, despite relevant criticism of organizations as UNESCO playing into the hands of old-established national structures,⁸⁴ its World Heritage List now recognizes 37 so-called Transboundary Properties.⁸⁵ The EU supports a good number of cross-national initiatives such as Europeana, a huge online digital archive accessible to all.⁸⁶ Cross-border heritage routes and itineraries have been around for some time and noted for their capacity to bring about dialogue and interaction.⁸⁷ And on the local but transnational level, in his study of a bilingual school in Haparanda at the Swedish-Finnish border, geographer Thomas Lundén found in the local curriculum that

the pupils shall gain knowledge about and understanding for our native environment, our shared culture and history, thereby being able to push forward, preserve, and pass down the cultural heritage of Tornedalen. They shall learn to take responsibility for our neighbourhood and to consciously co-operate long-term for an ideal global environment; to develop an international perspective that enables understanding and respect for other cultures, and facilitates collaboration, friendship, and peace.⁸⁸

In the end, the question is not whether any heritage will remain to be claimed by community A or B, or in some cases a newly forming group – for instance at the intersection of A and B. The question is how such claims by spatially or culturally bounded communities are handled.

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83 Niklasson & Hølleland 2018.
 84 Scott 2002; Taylor 2009.
 85 <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>
 86 <https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en>
 87 Moulin & Boniface 2001.
 88 Lundén 2011, p. 90.

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