

Abstract:

Territorial identities are a mosaic of many different cultural elements, from which religion is just one subset. This dissertation explores elements of religion as they are expressed within territorial identities at varying scale levels in Czechia and several neighboring countries. The use of a religiously themed postage stamp or a Christian toponym, the inclusion of a religious site in a hand drawn map of one's hometown or one's position regarding the return of disputed properties to the churches they were taken from years ago, each of these can be an expression of territorial identity. Whether actively practiced or passively acknowledged, religion is bound up in our sense of place. The four separate studies that make up the body of this dissertation present religion's case as an integral ingredient within the territorial identities of Central Europe.

In terms of spatial differences, Slovakia and Poland are more likely, as compared to Czechia, to recognize and include elements of religion in their territorial identities. This is true at both national – postage stamps – and local levels – toponyms and cognitive maps. Each of the methods used to explore the presence of religion in expressions of territorial identity – postage stamps, toponyms and cognitive maps – proved effective. The comparative analyses and case study presented in the article “Secularization and church property: The case of Czechia” also proved effective in shedding light on religion as a component of territorial identities. The recurring dichotomy of passive and active forms of religious identity and their differing impacts on territorial identities becomes apparent when the studies are examined collectively.