

# Inhabiting the Past: Reflections on Czech Silesian Collective Memory

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**Abstract:** Our talk explores the intricate dynamics of collective memory in Czech Silesia, focusing specifically on the communities of Opava and Hlučín. Based on historically informed ethnographic research, we delve into how local communities construct, contest, and negotiate their collective identities amidst a backdrop of complex historical narratives and ethnonationalist challenges. This complexity reveals the divergent historical experiences of the Opavians and the Hlučínians, highlighting their distinct interpretations of regional history and the challenges they face in reconciling these narratives within a cohesive collective identity. At the heart of our talk is an examination of the mnemonic efforts of the Museum of the Hlučín Region, framed within the concept of slow memory. Through this and other case studies, we underscore the significance of local memory institutions in safeguarding, but also constructing cultural heritage. By analysing the institutionalization of memories over "longue durée," we illuminate the resilience and agency of mnemonic agents in shaping the narrative landscape of Czech Silesia.

**DISCUSSANT: BÖRRIES KUZMANY (UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA)**

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