

Joint Dissertation Review

Name of the student:	Johanna Friederike Theile
Title of the thesis:	Poles and Poland as the Others as voiced by the German media
Reviewer:	Dr hab. Jacek H. Kołodziej, JU prof.

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

The topic of this well-written dissertation is the issue of the media representation of Poland and Poles in the media of the neighboring country - the German Federation. The author poses an important question about the impact of the change of power in Poland in 2015 (from liberal-democratic to populist and semi-authoritarian). In this way, she manages to construct a research project in which she combines the analysis of media representations of a significant neighbor with the use of the theoretical concept of Othering and Belonging - successfully related to the mutual perception of Poland and Germany. The research project is coherent and, in a sense, basic, as it concerns an approach typical of constructivism, in which historical knowledge and current symbolic communication are the domain of critical discourse analysis. In terms of the completeness of the literature and theoretical and metodological background, it is a well-planned and written thesis.

2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

The author skilfully combines the methodology of discursive research with the theoretical concept of Othering / Belonging, thanks to which her analysis gains depth. Usually, the reconstruction of the Others is only one of the tools of critical discourse analysis - here it is at its core. The author comprehensively shows her knowledge and accurately selects examples of practices of Othering between Poland and Germany. In terms of the structure of the data set for analysis, everything is as it should be, the data is plentiful and accurately selected (19 copies of dailies and 4 copies of weekly magazines - compared between 2014 and 2016). The conducted analysis is methodical and careful, providing many observations at the detailed and generalized level.

3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

The author succeeds in linking detailed observations and examples with the discursive practices of building representations of the Others. I consider an important part of the analysis to include the topoi of history - a specific model of building an image of the world and justifying one's point of view, as described by Ruth Wodak. The author manages to achieve the set research goals.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

In this respect, the work cannot be faulted.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

An undoubted achievement is the categorization of practices of Othering taking into account a broad and comparative historical perspective, supported by strong media evidence. Another achievement of the author is dealing with the complex relations between the Germans, the German press, Poles in Poland and Poles living in Germany. Besides, one of the special discoveries is the demonstration of a strong contextualization that affects media images and representations. The central question about the hypothetical difference in the ways of building the representation of Polishness during liberal rule and after the change of government in Poland - also leads to an interesting premise: it turns out that "whereas in the first period Poland is mainly constructed as belonging to Germany, to the European Union and to the Western world, in the second period, Othering is clearly dominating" (p. 52). This may mean that the politicization of the media message is conducive to the simplification and radicalization of the constructed media representations.

Grade (A-F):	B (good plus)
Date:	Signature:
25. 07. 2020	