

Name of the student:	Niklas Pawelzik
Title of the thesis:	Political Parties as Institutions of a Civil Sphere of Solidarity: The Shifting German Perception of Eastern Europe
Reviewer:	Brian Shaev

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

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

The thesis contains two key elements: a normative political theorization conceptualizing in abstract terms the proper role of political parties in democratic systems as constitutive links mediating between civil society and government/legislation, with a focus on the ambiguity of representation and other core democratic concepts, and a second section that is a case study of the integrative discourses of the two leading political parties in Germany concerning expellees and Eastern Europeans. The political theorization appears admirably done and quite sophisticated, but the second section on German history is weaker than I would have liked, in particular from the perspective of an ‘empirical party scholar’ to quote the thesis. From my perspective there is an imbalance between the sophistication of the normative theorization and the relative superficiality of the analysis of expellee integration and Ostpolitik. Also there is not sufficient incorporation of literature assessing the ‘success’ of expellee integration—recent specialist and now even generalist literature (Gatrell, *The Unsettling of Europe. The Great Migration, 1945 to the Present*, 2020) has shown that expellees remained disadvantaged in terms of wealth and status vis-à-vis the general population into the 1970s and also experienced serious social stigmatization—in other words the ‘success’ story has been much more qualified than in previous scholarship [Philipp Ther, ‘The integration of expellees in Germany and Poland after World War II: a historical reassessment,’ *Slavic Review* 55:4 (1996) 779-805; Rainer Schulze, ‘Forced migration of German populations during and after the Second World War: history and memory’, in: Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, *The disentanglement of populations: migration, expulsion and displacement in post-war Europe, 1944-9* (Basingstoke 2011) 51-70; Gaëlle Fischer, ‘Heimat Heimstättensiedlung: Constructing Belonging in Postwar West Germany’, *German History* 35:4 (2017) 568-587].

Another useful article is: Iris Nachum and Sagi Schaefer, ‘The semantics of political integration: public debates about the term “expellees” in post-war Western Germany’, *Contemporary European History* 27:1 (2018): 42-58

2. ANALYSIS

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

The thesis applies the concepts of assimilation, hyphenation and multiculturalism within a critical discourse analysis of the CDU and SPD (taken as totalities rather than heterogenous organizations) discourses on expellees and East Europeans from the 1950s until Brandt’s execution of Ostpolitik as Chancellor. There are moments of extraordinary insight, for instance this formulation: ‘Bonn’s early Ostpolitik was not aiming for peaceful rapprochement; it was primarily an externalized acknowledgement of its expellees’ moral entitlement towards their perpetrators: Hitler’s uncivility was dissociated from (Eastern) German victimhood.’ The application of the concepts appears well done but the empirical materials are too thin to catch the nuance and multifaceted ambiguity to realize the full

potential of applying the sophisticated normative political theorization. The description of the sources examined are quite wide-ranging and appropriate (from leaders' speeches documents to parliamentary records and party platforms, etc.) but we do not really see much of this material in the analytical and empirical section itself. It appears that the empirical material was in a way made to fit what was intended by the normative theorization, but from an empirical and historical perspective I would like to see the theories bring out a richer or sharper account of the history itself, whereas the history appears a bit impoverished here as it is made to fit into the theoretical framework. Some examples:

The thesis overlooks how Ostpolitik represented considerable continuities with previous SPD collective security proposals under Erich Ollenhauer in the 1950s, in particular in the 1954-59 period. This is a problem in particular because we are told in the thesis that civil society organizations moved first on Ostpolitik and the SPD followed in the 1960s—but we don't see much in the way of evidence of this or who these civil society organizations were in the 1950s; the available state of the art on SPD history is, contrary to this, that Ostpolitik was a reformed and reprised and re-languaged evolution of previous SPD policies from the first détente phase (1952-54) and the subsequent engagement with the various international plans (including the SPD's Deutschland plan) floated as possible resolutions to Cold War tensions in Central Europe in 1953-59. I am quite surprised by the complete absence of Egon Bahr, the actual crafter of the SPD's Ostpolitik and an important figure close to Willy Brandt—at the least his biography and published writings should have been incorporated into the thesis. Also there is no mention of the Hallsteindoktrin, that was the CDU foreign policy legacy explicitly blocking any official engagement with states that recognized the GDR including obviously Poland (with the important exception of the USSR). The treatment of APO-SPD interrelations is a bit superficial—we don't actually learn what the APO (which was not homogenous anyway) conception of policies towards the Eastern bloc was—and how the SPD engaged with or did not engage with APO ideas and discourses. I'm also surprised that the Ostpolitik treaties are so decontextualized from détente and the Cold War—the thesis does not even mention the Cold War. I know much more from my work about the SPD—but the treatment of the CDU appears rather superficial as well.

A few further comments:

The SPD-CDU 'consensus' about expellee integration and discourses to the East leaves out a crucial component of this that I am well familiar with from reading SPD internal documents and meeting protocols from 1948 into the 1950s: the SPD leadership was in a large sense afraid of the expellee population, and worried explicit that they would be 'radicalized' and destabilize West German democracy in the absence of an explicit program for social and economic integration---related to this comment, why aren't they any references to the Burden-Sharing Laws that targeted material resources at expellee populations?

The nasty SPD-CDU clash in the early 1970s left a longer legacy than is recognized here, as it has been encompassed into a broader political-intellectual (and almost overtly partisan) clash in Germany over whether Adenauer's Westpolitik or Brandt's Ostpolitik paved the way for the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

'However, any party with intentions to win elections seemed to need the expellees' support, resulting in an enthusiastic adoption of the outlined narrative by all parties.' [something like 20% of the FRG population were expellees, so it would be stronger to be clear about the context for this—their political weight in effect could not be ignored]

'The arriviers were primarily acknowledged not as East Prussian, Pomeranian or Silesian – rather "foreign" identities – but as "expellees".' [This formulation leaves out that it was expellee organizations themselves that insisted on the term Heimatvertriebene rather than Fluechtlinge]

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

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

The theoretical examination results in what appear to be interesting and successful conclusions, in particular concerning to 'a more inclusive recodification of expellees and East Europeans,' though the discussion about how expellee experiences were devalued from the

1970s in comparison to their status in the 1970s, whereas the 1970s saw a new period of historical consciousness valuing both Polish and Jewish (not exclusive obviously) experiences as victims in West German culture and politics. Following the general thrust of the evaluation, the conclusions of the normative theorization appear well done but there is a mismatch with the weaker empirical analysis.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

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

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Overall the writing is very good, some tense confusion in places, 'principal' rather than 'principle' (p. 25), and some other relatively minor mistakes.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

A very strong and in many ways creative thesis in terms of political theory, but the empirical follow-through was not consistent with the quality of the theoretical sections. (strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

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Grade (A-F):	
Date:	Signature:

Leiden Grade: 7.5

classification scheme

Percentile	Prague		Krakow		Leiden		Barcelona	
	91-100 %	8,5%	5	6,7%	8,5-10	5,3%	9-10	5,5 %
B (81-90)	81-90 %	16,3%	4,5	11,7%	7,5-8,4	16,4%	8-8,9	11,0 %
C (71-80)	71-80 %	16,3%	4	20%	6,5-7,4	36,2%	7-7,9	18,4 %
D (61-70)	61-70 %	24%	3,5	28,3%			6-6,9	35,2 %
E (51-60)	51-60 %	34,9%	3	33,4 %	6-6,4	42,1 %	5-5,9	30,1 %

**Assessment criteria:**

Excellent (A): 'Outstanding performance with only minor errors';

Very good (B): 'Above the average standard but with some errors';

Good (C): 'Generally sound work but with a number of notable errors';

Satisfactory (D): 'Fair but with significant shortcomings';

Sufficient (E): 'Performance meets the minimum criteria';

Fail: 'Some/considerable more work required before the credit can be awarded'.