

Name of the student:	Giorgi Mikava
Title of the thesis:	Understanding Party Positions on European Integration amidst Crises: The impact of national and regional crises on political party behavior in Spain and Ireland
Reviewer:	Dr Natasza Styczyńska

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

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

This MA thesis cover very interesting and up to date issue that is not getting yet enough scholarly attention. Mr Mikava decided to analyse the impact of Brexit and Spanish referendum on the possible rise of Eurosceptic attitudes of political parties in Ireland and Spain. The research objective is well exposed and discussed, although the state of the art (literature review) could involve more of a recent publications both on Euroscepticism (among others Vasilipolou Far Right Parties and Euroscepticism: Patterns of Opposition, 2018, or The Routledge Handbook of Euroscepticism published in 2018 and including discussion on Euroscepticism and political parties) and on Brexit (reports and analyses from the UK in the changing Europe with several chapters dedicated to case studies of Ireland and Spain).

The research question is ambitious, but in my opinion, not fully answered. Also the selection of cases to compare – Spain and Ireland are not justified well. While referendum in Spain was an internal „crisis“, Brexit happened outside of Ireland (but of course have had enormous influence on Irish politics). Overall, the theoretical part is well prepared and promise elaborated comparison based on both author’s analyses of party manifestos as well as on existing data from the Manifesto project. Unfortunately the later part of the thesis do not use the data extensively and lack of independent thought and critical assessment of the data.

2. ANALYSIS

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

While the first part of the thesis are a solid piece of work, I find the analysis much more weak and not in dept. also the link between theoretical part and the analyses is somehow missing. Also the analysed manifestos are not discussed in details and not linked with the data presented data about public opinion.

I miss more critical examination of the existing data and connecting it to the existing context (Brexit negotiations took relatively long and the discussed proposals influenced the party discourse both in Ireland and around the EU). Some claims are very superficial and based only on one or two sources (like comparison with CEE, based on the article that covers situation in V4 from 6 years ago – so both before Brexit/Spanish referendum).

3. CONCLUSIONS

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

The conclusions are interesting but do not answer the research question in detail – to my surprise they only occupy 2 pages of the whole thesis !

In my opinion conclusions could be more elaborated and the collected material analysed

with more conscientiousness. The whole paper is rather descriptive, while gathered and analysed data could be better linked with the existing literature and answer RQ exhaustively, as well as demonstrated an independent thought and analytical abilities.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE


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

Language and style are correct, the structure is clear and easy to follow. There are minor aberrations in style and punctuation as well as in bibliography (some names put in capital letters), that do not influence the overall impression that the work is well done and according to the academic standards.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

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

Strong point: Very important and up to date topic, well stated RQ and solid theoretical part.
Weak point: Selection of case studies, not enough elaborated conclusions and link between the collected data and the answer to the RQ

Grade (A-F):	C (4)
Date:	Signature:
27.06.2021	

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'.