



Universiteit
Leiden

Thesis evaluation Gaston Rieder

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Programme details

Programme: European Politics and Society

Specialisation:

EC: 30

Evaluators:

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Thesis details:

Title: Challenges to government formation in Western European parliamentary democracies (1980-2019)

Is the thesis in your assessment free of plagiarism?

Yes to my knowledge the thesis is free of plagiarism

It is.

Can the thesis be made publicly available in the Leiden University Repository?

by D.M. Oude Nijhuis: it can be made public through the repository.

Summary assessment/comments

This is in nearly every respect an outstanding thesis. Well-done!

Criteria

Knowledge and insight

This thesis seeks to explain how contemporary changes in party systems across Western Europe have affected the duration of government formation there. This is an original and important question and the thesis does an excellent job in showing that there is a clear – and surprising – gap between the literature on party system change and government formation. In addition, the thesis shows that existing studies can be refined by accounting for the impacts of recent party system change on the position of formateur parties. The identification of the research gap, connection to the research topic of the thesis and definition of the research problem are all very well done.

Assessment: very good

Weighing: n/a

Application knowledge and insight

The thesis provides a very clear, systematic and detailed overview of the methodological choices that are made and the concepts that are used in the thesis that are well-explained. Most importantly, the thesis makes use of advanced statistical methods by applying the Cox proportion hazards model and by doing so goes beyond the expectations of an ordinary MA thesis. In terms of the application and use of effective research methods the thesis is thus outstanding.

Assessment: very good

Weighing: n/a

Reaching conclusions

The empirical part of the thesis is also outstanding. The findings are presented in a clear, concise and systematic manner and do not seem to contain any visible flaws. The thesis thus manages to clearly answer the research question. Moreover, all of the four hypotheses are either clearly assessed or falsified. The author can be complimented for his ability to present the material in a concise and clear manner.

Assessment: very good

Weighing: n/a

Communication

The use of language is excellent. Despite the complexity of the subject the thesis is quite readable and everything is explained in a concise and clear manner. In terms of style, spelling, and grammar the thesis is simply excellent. The referencing apparatus also looks excellent.

Assessment: very good

Weighing: n/a

Learning skills

Gaston needed to receive very little assistance for his thesis: from the start he was quite clear on what he wanted to do and how to achieve his research objectives. This should also be commended

Assessment: very good

Weighing: n/a

Formal requirements

The word count is below the normal requirement, but given that this thesis provides such advanced quantitative research methods this is not a problem.

Final assessment

On 17-06-2021 this thesis is graded with a 9

Signatures



D.M. Oude Nijhuis