



Universiteit  
Leiden

# Thesis evaluation Wouter Brons

## Student details:

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## Programme details

**Programme:** European Politics and Society

**Specialisation:**

**EC:** 20

## Evaluators:

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## Thesis details:

**Title:** The birth of homonationalism: An analysis of the development of Dutch homonationalism 1990-2002

Is the thesis in your assessment free of plagiarism?

Yes to my knowledge the thesis is free of plagiarism

Yes, original work

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

by M.J. Janse: it can be made public through the repository.

## Summary assessment/comments

An ambitious and impressive thesis. The interdisciplinary approach is original, and Wouter has proved that he is capable of criticizing research approaches on a meta level, revising his own hypotheses, and reformulating new ones. This well-written thesis reads as science-in-progress. The new label 'proto-homonationalism', and the new periodisation of the development of homonationalism are fruits of this approach, and will be useful for social scientists and historians of homonationalism alike.

## Criteria

### Knowledge and insight

This is an ambitious thesis in which social science and history approaches are successfully combined, to increase insight in both fields. The research question, 'To what extent was homonationalism present between 1990 and 2002?' is highly relevant. The case study of the Netherlands is a good one, as this is, it seems, one of the earliest instances of homonationalism, and this period is underresearched. Relevant social science literature, and, to a lesser extent, historical literature, is used to contextualize the research question.

**Assessment:** good

**Weighing:** n/a

### Application knowledge and insight

The method to analyse the source material is sophisticated, and partly devised/adapted by the student himself during the course of writing the thesis. When homonationalism was less present than expected, while the opposite of homonationalism was apparent, he added a series of themes ('accepting diversity' and 'solidarity with minorities') and related codes. This allows us to follow the complex development of homonationalism, the theories relating to homonationalism, esp. Puer are found to be falling short to analyse historical time periods. The method is mainly social science-oriented, but the interdisciplinary character immediately pays off when it is critically assessed in a historical context.

**Assessment:** very good

**Weighing:** n/a

## Reaching conclusions

The argument is structured well, and highly sophisticated, as towards the end of the thesis the author realizes that his initial hypothesis falls short, and formulates a new one. The period under research did not see homonationalism as understood in the dominant definition of Puar, but as there were forms of engagements with ideas that resemble full-fledged homonationalism, he argues that we should think of this phase as one of 'proto-homonationalism', thus introducing a new periodisation of the history of homonationalism. This self-reflexive, and self-correcting mode of argument is highly scientific, and to be commended in an MA thesis.

Does this mean there is nothing to criticize? No, of course there are flaws in the argument, I will name two. First, combining Catholic and gay identities is an interesting topic, but does not equal combining Islam and gay identities (thus challenging homonationalism), as Catholicism is seen as part of a national, European identity. This could have been discussed a bit more. Second, in the thesis the two added themes are described as challenging homonationalism (e.g. p 31, 34, 4.2.2), this implies that homonationalism existed in the 1990s, which might be a bit ahistoric, in that in many cases it is the opposite of homonationalism rather than challenging it. Perhaps solidarity with minorities precludes/prevented the development of homonationalism?

**Assessment:** very good

**Weighing:** n/a

## Communication

The thesis is well written, even though several rewriting rounds have left their trace (in the form of words or parts of sentences left over from earlier versions). Bibliography, annotation are very good. Impressive and clear appendices allow us to follow the research method and source analysis.

**Assessment:** good

**Weighing:** n/a

## Learning skills

Wouter Brons has worked independently on this thesis. It was a highly challenging project, as until close to the deadline, due to Covid-19 restrictions, his primary source material was unavailable. Fortunately the Royal Library opened up in time for him to study at least one of his sources, the Gay Krant, and the amount of work he has done with the source material in only a few weeks is impressive, especially since analysis of this new source material led to insights which meant that parts of the thesis needed to be rewritten. I have been impressed with Wouter's ability to ask the hard questions and revise his original argument, thereby offering valuable insights for social scientists and historians alike. He has also been very good at following up on my feedback.

**Assessment:** very good

**Weighing:** n/a

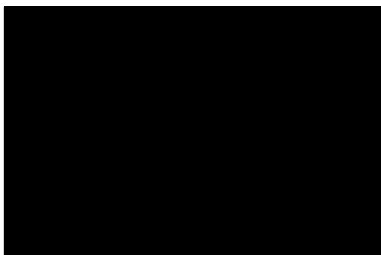
## Formal requirements

These have all been met.

## Final assessment

On 24-06-2021 this thesis is graded with a 9

## Signatures

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of the assessor.

M.J. Janse