



Universiteit  
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# Thesis evaluation Chi-Hsuan Tsao

## Student details:

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## Programme details

**Programme:** European Politics and Society

**Specialisation:**

**EC:** 30

## Evaluators:

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## Thesis details:

**Title:** Economic Promise from the East and Skepticism to the West.  
How populist parties act differently when it comes to China: The Cases  
of Poland's Law and Justice and Hungary's Fidesz

Is the thesis in your assessment free of plagiarism?

Yes to my knowledge the thesis is free of plagiarism

I have reviewed the Turnitin report and found no evidence of plagiarism.

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

by D.D. Schade: it can be made public through the repository.

# Summary assessment/comments

This is a good thesis which contributes a unique perspective on populist foreign policies. It is somewhat weakened by some formal aspects, however.

## Criteria

### Knowledge and insight

- The thesis identifies a clear research gap which is made apparent by a research puzzle set out in the introduction. This leads the author to develop a research question and to delineate the topic on populist foreign policy both in the temporal and the cases dimension.
- A link to existing work on populism in general and foreign policy in particular is made apparent, amongst others, through a dedicated chapter, and reference is made to the novel insights provided by this thesis.
- By identifying such a research gap on differences in populist foreign policy towards a key global player the thesis can indeed make an original contribution.

**Assessment:** very good

**Weighing:** n/a

### Application of knowledge and insight

- The literature review provides a decent overview of the state of the art of thinking about populist foreign policy, and more specific China policies of your two cases, in particular. Given the contested nature of populism (which is acknowledged in the introduction), it might have been beneficial to also briefly provide a working definition of populism which is compatible with the thesis' reading of the literature and which helped identify Poland and Hungary as countries with populist governments. Given the breadth of populism research overall, it could also have delved somewhat further into more general literature on populist foreign policy, even if the thesis then explore why it isn't the most relevant for the case at hand. I am particularly thinking of analyses which explore populists' tendencies to identify an "other" also in the foreign policy domain to justify their own actions as the "will of the people". The latter portions of the literature review on the two country cases also seem to serve a dual purpose of reviewing the relevant (empirical) literature and to already provide the reader with the necessary background knowledge on the two cases for the further analysis. This makes it somewhat difficult to identify the purely literature review portions of this chapter, as it then proceeds to also include a significant number of news sources to provide the background information.
- The discussion of methodology is very detailed and reviews a significant amount of methodological literature. Care needs to be taken though not to overpromise what can be done in the analytical chapters given the limited space and empirical material available. Given how detailed the discussion of methodology is, it might have been important to highlight more clearly what one cannot expect to achieve under these conditions (much like has been done for limiting the temporal scope of the thesis). This is somewhat present in the conclusion but not clearly enough earlier on.
- In the empirical chapters the methodological framework is then applied and made constant reference to, which strengthens the analytical case.
- While the theoretical and methodological discussion is quite detailed in general, the consideration of empirical source material is somewhat less developed. No significant space is devoted to discussing the selection of specific sources, nor does this potential limitation feature

significantly in the analytical chapters. The depth of the empirical discussion is still good though, but would have needed a somewhat more detailed exploration on its extent and limitations. The thesis hints at these limitations in the conclusion but it would have been helpful to also acknowledge this somewhat earlier.

**Assessment:** good

**Weighing:** n/a

## Reaching conclusions

- The fact that the thesis includes a dedicated chapter which compares the two empirical case studies makes it stronger. This is where it truly is able to draw comparative conclusions.
- Both this comparative chapter and then the formal conclusion help respond to the research question and point to where the genuine contribution of the thesis lies.
- The contribution of the findings to the existing literature could have been made more apparent overall.

**Assessment:** good

**Weighing:** n/a

## Communication

- The thesis is well-structured overall with each chapter contributing to its overall argument in a unique way.
- I have found the introduction a particularly effective way of communicating the relevance and intricacies of the topic to the reader.
- The English used in this thesis is not perfect. However, the errors which occur likely due to its author being a non-native speaker of English do not detract from the overall argument being made. There are also some errors which could likely have been eliminated by further proofreading, such as sometimes abbreviating Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) as FAP.
- The combination of referencing styles used in this thesis is quite unusual. It seems that for mostly academic sources in-text citations are used, while news sources or data tables appear to be referenced in footnotes. While each system is internally consistent, the choice of when which system is used does not appear fully clear. What's more it is very unusual to use such a mix of referencing system and typically one should be chosen or the other. In case of in-text citations then footnotes should be limited to providing explanatory remarks which do not warrant to be included in the body text. What's more, for your sources page numbers are only provided when using direct quotes. However, you need to also provide page ranges when referencing parts of an argument made in a longer chapter/article that is not an over-arching argument made throughout.
- Structurally it is very unusual to properly introduce hypotheses past a methodology chapter while already hinting at them within said chapter. This makes part of your discussion seem like a cliffhanger earlier on with the reader wondering what kind of expectations you have about the empirical mechanisms at work.

**Assessment:** good

**Weighing:** n/a

## Learning skills

- The thesis author has shown a significant degree of independence in writing this thesis, all while engaging with the substantive feedback received in supervisions.

**Assessment:** very good

**Weighing:** n/a

## Formal requirements

The thesis fulfils all formal requirement.

## Final assessment

On 14-06-2024 this thesis is graded with a 7.6

## Signatures

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D. Schade". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

D.D. Schade