PhD dissertations consisting of articles

Article 13 of the Leiden University PhD Regulations offers PhD candidates the opportunity to obtain a PhD based on ‘a collection of separate scientific treatises’. The first four paragraphs of article 13 are as follows:

1. The dissertation describes research conducted independently by the PhD candidate or research to which the candidate has made an essential contribution. The doctoral candidate is responsible for the dissertation as a scientific contribution. The doctoral candidate has primary responsibility for ensuring that the dissertation does not contain any form of plagiarism and that it in every other respect meets the applicable code of conduct on academic practice.

2. The dissertation consists of either a scientific treatise on a specific subject in book form, or a collection of separate scientific treatises that have already been published, or have been accepted by the editors of the relevant journal, or have been submitted to the editors. The dissertation may also consist of a combination of both options, provided that they are related in terms of content. In this case, the relationship should be explained in an introductory chapter and/or a concluding summary.

3. If one or more articles have been written by more than one author, only those articles are accepted as part of the dissertation that can be ascribed primarily to the PhD candidate.

4. If previously published articles are incorporated into the dissertation, the period of time between the publication of these articles and the completion of the manuscript may not exceed five years. The Dean, acting on behalf of the Doctorate Board, may grant an exemption from this requirement in response to a motivated request by the supervisor.

Therefore such a dissertation:

a. should consist of two or more treatises submitted to the editors of a journal;
b. may consist of treatises that have not yet been published;
c. may consist of treatises that have not yet been accepted by the editors of a journal;
d. may consist of a combination of articles and chapters;
e. should demonstrate connection in terms of content between the different parts;
f. should include an introductory chapter or a conclusion in which this connection is explained;
g. may include articles by multiple authors (as is common in many other fields of academia), provided the articles can be primarily ascribed to the PhD candidate;
h. may not contain articles – unless dispensation has been granted – published more than five years before the PhD candidate requested the relevant professor to act as supervisor.

In the absence of any mention in the PhD Regulation on a number of points, it may be deduced that such a dissertation:

i. may include articles that have been submitted to a non-peer-reviewed journal;
j. may include other types of scientific publications than articles (scientific reports, case notes, contributions to edited books);
k. may include facsimiles of articles, or revised lay-outs;
l. may include an updated or not-updated version on an article;
m. may comprise treatises in different languages (Dutch, English, French, German, or even another language, in line with article 15 of the PhD Regulation).