BACHELOR THESIS EVALUATION: THESIS OPPONENT

Thesis topic: Diverging Paths: Assessing the Heterogeneity of Far-Right Movements in Europe Through the Lens of Migration via the Examples of Italy and Hungary
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Advisor: Adam Bence Balazs
Opponent: Clarissa Tabosa
Study program: Political Science, Liberal Arts

Evaluation contains objective and critical analysis of a bachelor thesis proposal. Evaluation should be considered by the following criteria:

Criteria for the evaluation of the final thesis	Max. points	Points given by evaluator
1. Methodological aspect (Logical frame, process of inquiry, topic specification, how realistic are set goals and how adequate are proposed working methods)	10	5
2. Sources of domestic and foreign literature, familiarity with relevant literature	15	15
3. Formatting and style	15	13
4. Scope and proportionality of content	5	5
5. Systematic approach	15	10
6. Evaluation of achieved results	40	32
Total	100	80

Final evaluation: A (90-100 points), B (80-89 points), C (70-79 points), D (60-69 points), E (50-59 points), Fx(<49 points)

Evaluation, comments, recommendations:

The author addresses a timely topic and presents strong arguments. The thesis analyzes the discourse and practices of two far-right political parties - Fidesz and Fratelli d'Italia – especially in the realm of migration. The author also analyzes how these parties act in the European Parliament and assess the possibility of cooperation between these two parties in advancing an anti-immigrant position within the European Union context.

The author argues that far-right parties are not cohesive in their positions in the European Parliament. On matters of migration, specifically, the author shows that although most far-right parties share an anti-immigrant (I would specify – anti-asylum seeker) position, they tend to put forward different kind of policies (e.g., regarding relocation plans). The author shows that Hungary and Italy differ on matters of solidarity and burden sharing, with Meloni's party supporting a relocation system and shared responsibility and Orban's Hungary denying any attempts to receive asylum seekers. In the end, the author shows that for Italy, the EU serves as a tool to help manage the border crisis in its territory, while for Hungary, the EU is seen as an authoritarian body attempting to dictate who can enter and stay. Lastly, one of the author's main arguments is that we must study far-right parties by considering the national contexts in which they operate, not treating them as monoliths. The author argues that "while the discourse and overall image of far-right parties seem similar, there are major discrepancies between them, and it is difficult for them to collaborate effectively" (p. 37).

The thesis lacks a methodological section (not necessarily a separate chapter) that explains the chosen methods of analysis (discourse analysis) in depth, how the data was chosen and processed, and how it was coded. In Chapter Two, it is clear that the author created coding categories and followed some steps of discourse analysis, but the reader has to navigate through it and guess what the coding categories are. The research question is also not clearly stated, although on page 15 the author claims

to analyze "how the topic of migration shapes the rhetoric of the parties and whether there are obstacles that may prevent the parties from cooperating effectively." Overall, the thesis would benefit from more methodological rigor, which in turn would lead to a more cohesive and systematic (discourse) analysis. There are also minor formatting issues to make the thesis fully compelling with college guidelines.

Questions for the author (relevant to the content of the Thesis):

1. From a migration studies perspective, why is the electoral success of far-right parties a worrying issue, as you suggest in the thesis? Do far-right parties tend to adopt more restrictive immigration policies towards migrants?
2. During the defense, can you, please, explain why is it important that we understand the "heterogeneity" of the discourse of far-right politicians? Why does it matter?

In Bratislava, on: 06.05.2024

Signature of evaluator: _____