

Name of the student:	Hark Möller
Title of the thesis:	Postering Populism. The routine message and meaning of the populist political communication in Germany and Austria.
Reviewer:	Dr hab. Jacek H. Kołodziej, JU professor

### 1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

Understanding the string of successes of populist parties in Europe is one of the key issues for contemporary political analysis. It is even more important in the context of the dynamics of Euroscepticism linked with right-wing populism, thus any well-designed attempt to investigate the mechanisms of this process should be considered important. The author makes such an attempt, focusing on identifying the strongest elements of political campaign strategies on the example of two German-speaking EU member states. In accomplishing this task, he demonstrates extensive knowledge of, firstly, the political party system in Germany and Austria, secondly, the theory of populism and, importantly, proves his extensive methodological knowledge of linguistic and visual analysis within the approach of grounded theory.

### 2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

What is important, the thesis presents a clear analytical-empirical focus. The author aims at developing a model of political – populist communication, combining theoretical premises with well-developed conceptualization. I believe that the narrowing of the analysis to the political poster - the carrier of a political message - deserves praise. The political poster is a specific genre of statement that synthetically enables the expression of a message by linking text with symbolic means of visual communication. Moreover, party posters - due to their static nature – contrary to the hectic and short-lived campaigning virals in social media and political advertising – remain forever, thus revealing the cumulative campaign strategy. I find this narrowing down both useful and unconventional. In this respect, the paper is an excellent combination of implementing theoretical premises to carry out a well-conducted and mature empirical analysis.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

The author's aim is to reconstruct the nucleus of the populist parties' communication in Germany and Austria, so the best conclusion is expressed by the worked out detailed model showing the typical, recurrent components of the message, the organization of symbols and key media, with the overall structure together with rules - a kind of conceptual map, cognitive model of how the whole system works. It is a combination of a heuristic and analytical model, which certainly opens up and directs the possibility of a broad discussion on these topics. I believe that the strong point here is revealing the whole research process, with the structure of codes, meticulous interpretation of data together with summaries of individual findings. That kind of approach follows the core guidelines of a decent grounded theory. Academics from different fields of research can find a lot of interesting interpretations and insights here – like linguists, semioticians, discourse scholars and political scientists... The rich empirical material should work as a valuable resource.

### 4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

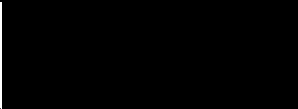
(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

In terms of form, the work is carefully written and correct.

### 5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

Firstly, the topic of the research is very important. Its narrowing down to two German-speaking countries was necessary because of the deeper and detailed research, but on the other hand the representativeness of the developed model for populist communication for other political cultural is an open question. Secondly, analytically, the paper provides a very good model. The author correctly performs research within the framework of grounded theory, enriching it with linguistic tools and elements of visual analysis. A great advantage is the skillful use of the analytical software MaxQDA, and it should be emphasized that the author uses the program in a fully informed and professional manner. Thirdly, the focus on the analytical-empirical dimension may give the impression of a certain deficiency of separate reflections of a theoretical nature - however, I believe that the author sufficiently demonstrates theoretical maturity in Chapter II, as well as and in many places during the interpretative sections. Fourthly, the decision to choose one medium - a political poster - is a good idea for creative narrowing of the research, but on the other hand it may raise the question of the extent of the author's generalizations in the context of full and complete political communication strategy. In conclusion, this analytical and empirical thesis fulfils all the requirements for a very good master's thesis on a key topic for European politics and society.

<b>Grade (A-F):</b>	A (very good, 5)		
Date: 25.06.2021	Signature:		
			

classification scheme

Percentile	Prague		Krakow		Leiden		Barcelona	
	Range	%	Score	%	Range	%	Range	%
A (91-100)	91-100 %	8,5%	5	6,7%	8,5-10	5,3%	9-10	5,5 %
B (81-90)	81-90 %	16,3%	4,5	11,7%	7,5-8,4	16,4%	8-8,9	11,0 %
C (71-80)	71-80 %	16,3%	4	20%	6,5-7,4	36,2%	7-7,9	18,4 %
D (61-70)	61-70 %	24%	3,5	28,3%			6-6,9	35,2 %
E (51-60)	51-60 %	34,9%	3	33,4 %	6-6,4	42,1 %	5-5,9	30,1 %

**Assessment criteria:**

Excellent (A): 'Outstanding performance with only minor errors';

Very good (B): 'Above the average standard but with some errors';

Good (C): 'Generally sound work but with a number of notable errors';

Satisfactory (D): 'Fair but with significant shortcomings';

Sufficient (E): 'Performance meets the minimum criteria';

Fail: 'Some/considerable more work required before the credit can be awarded'.