SECOND READER THESIS REVIEW FORM

Name of the Student	Nicole Molinari
Date of Submission	June 2023
Title of the Thesis	EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY AMONG THE ITALIAN DIASPORA
Reviewer Name / Affiliation	Robert Kissack (IBEI-UPF)

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

Is the thesis in your assessment free of plagiarism?

Although I have not run it through software, the high proportion of text dedicated to interpreting the data from the author's own survey makes it unlikely to be plagiarised.

KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD
(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review)

The paper has identified a gap in the literature regarding the study of Italians living outside of Italy, in the EU, and their voting behaviour in Italian national elections. Thus the DV is voting behaviour and the chosen IV is attitudes to solidarity, expressly manifested at the EU level. The literature review therefore spans the DV and the IV discussion. The paper also explains why Germany, France and Belgium are the third state residencies of the survey respondents.

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

The summary of the analysis should be divided between the methodology, survey design and collection of data, and the way in which the data was analysed.
On the first issue, the 210 responses to the survey seem impressive, and the author should be congratulated on securing such a large number, the design of the questionnaire is detailed and a lot of important information has been gathered. In terms of sample survey bias, the most obvious and discussed in detail is the seeming predisposition to left and centre-left respondents, but this is likely to be indicative of the highly-educated Italian diaspora in general, so in that sense could be seen as a representative sample of the target population.
With regard to the analysis of the data, I would begin by congratulating the author on what must have been time-consuming work to code the correlation in the responses in the way that has been done, which is without any form of statistical software. This is also probably the biggest limitation of the work – it is calling out for a multiple regression analysis to robustly identify where there are statistically significant correlations to be identified, and where there

are not. Also, very importantly, a large amount of the rich data of respondent gender, age, and country of residence is lost – or rather not used – and instead voters are treated as a homogeneous set. I would strongly recommend holding onto the data and either taking a course on data analysis to build up the skills, or working with someone who has them, to fully realise the rich potential of the survey. Mention should also be made of the analysis of the manifesto documents and the textual analysis of how solidarity is presented to voters by the different parties. It formed the foundation of the analysis but is overshadowed by the survey work (because that is impressive).

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

The author explicitly states that she wants to use qualitative methods in place of the quantitative found in the reference literature. I think that this work remains in essence quantitative insofar as it analyses the data through the generation of correlations and the identification of patterns. While it does not engage in the positivism that one would normally expect of quantitative work, such as a formal statement of the dependent and independent variables, qualitative work would usually have an analysis of text (either in responses, source material or interviews) in which the research places an interpretive meaning over the text. The absence of statistical analysis is not the defining line on what is qual and what is quant.

I note this because I am not sure that 'the European solidarity perception in the Italian diaspora' (from the RQ on p.2) is consistently measured. It is analysed in four dimensions and tabulated in 7 metrics, but then the bar charts in sections 5 and 6 that cross-tabulate the survey responses pick different elements of solidarity. If statistical software had been used, it would have been possible to divide the IV into clearly distinct components, as well as run dummy variables for left-right that would show the extent to which the IV is doing the explanatory work. The conclusions are stated in a number of ways, some very confidently "here I argue that in the case of national elections, specifically the 2022 Italian general elections, European solidarity highly increased the chances of voting for PD above all, as well as +EU," (p. 56), to slightly less so: "To conclude, I argue that European solidarity did play a role in the vote choice of the Italian diaspora in the countries under study in the last Italian national elections." (p.57)

Correlation and causation – again – presuming that the positivist approach to social science is grounding this paper, are often found together but establishing strong causal claims would be significantly easier with the use of a more comprehensive statistical analysis.

FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE
(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout)

The presentation of the paper is first rate.

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT
(strong and weak points of the thesis, other issues)

In many ways, this is a very good thesis. The identification of the puzzle, the original work undertaken to gather data to answer it, and the relevance of the subject are of the highest order. The work carried out with the data was, I would think, very labour intensive, because of the search of multiple correlations. The biggest weak point is that it did not go further and really maximise the potential of the survey data through regression analysis, which would have reduced the work time, cut the length, increased the richness of the analysis (does age, gender or country of residence matter?), most likely forced a more comprehensive presentation of the IV, and yielded stronger results.
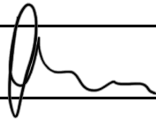
With this done, I would expect it to be of a publishable standard, and I would recommend the author explore this option as the survey work done be ideal for this.

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS
(for example, word count)

Fine.

(See below for grading scheme and grading descriptor)

Grade (1 – 10)	8.5
Date: 29-06-2023	**Reviewer Signature**

2 – 3 SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR THESIS DEFENCE

1.	**Why did you not use regression analysis for the data handling? What do you think would be gained from doing so?**
2.	**The paper claims that solidarity has been politicised, meaning more actors are taking a greater interest in the issue. Your data shows that it is widely talked about in the manifestos of the parties. To what extent is a favourable attitude to solidarity really distinct from left-right cleavages? How can you claim that attitude towards solidarity is a more important indicator than L-R voter preference?**
3.	**What would be your expectations of variation between the three countries (Germany, France and Belgium), with respect to voter attitudes?**