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REVIEW 1

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Details of the evaluated article:

BIANCHI, Álvaro. Contemporary Neo-Fascisms and Post-Fascisms: Fratelli d'Italia and Rassemblement National. **Mediações - Revista de Ciências Sociais**, Londrina, v. 30, p. 1-17, 2025. DOI: 10.5433/2176-6665.2025v30e51942. Available at: <https://ojs.uel.br/revistas/uel/index.php/mediacoes/article/view/51942>. Accessed on 10 out. 2025.

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Recommendation: Mandatory corrections

1. Is the subject of the article relevant to social sciences?

Yes. The topic discussed in the paper is highly relevant to social sciences. The rise of far-right political movements, their ideological foundations, and their impact on contemporary democracies are pressing issues in the modern global political scenario. By examining the evolution of post-fascist ideologies in parties like Fratelli d'Italia and Rassemblement National, the paper provides valuable insights into the dynamics of nationalism, authoritarianism, and the reconfiguration of extreme-right ideologies within democratic frameworks.

2. Is the article written clearly and consistently?

Yes, the article is written clearly and consistently. The author systematically develops the argument, moving logically from theoretical definitions of fascism, neo-fascism, and post-fascism to detailed case studies of Fratelli d'Italia and Rassemblement National. The language is precise, and the structure allows the reader to follow the progression of ideas effectively. However, certain aspects, such as the conceptual tension between adherence to liberal democracy and authoritarian tendencies, could benefit from more explicit clarification to enhance the overall clarity and depth of the discussion. See further in the review attached.

3. Is there an introduction in which the aim and justification of the article are clearly presented?

Yes, the introduction presents the main argument of the paper and develops it clearly.

4. Does the article make innovative theoretical contributions?

Yes, the work presents a few innovative theoretical contributions. By applying and refining the concepts of fascism, neo-fascism, and post-fascism, the article deepens our understanding of how far-right ideologies adapt to contemporary political contexts. Its exploration of the ideological continuity and transformation within Fratelli d'Italia and Rassemblement National provides a useful framework for analyzing the evolving nature of far-right movements. The distinction between neo-fascism and post-fascism, as well as the emphasis on the hybrid and contradictory nature of post-fascist ideology, represent a significant theoretical contribution. However, the theoretical framework could be further enriched by addressing its applicability to far-right movements without explicit historical ties to fascism, thus broadening its impact. See further in the attached review.

5. Does the article make innovative empirical or methodological contributions?

The article provides a detailed analysis of programmatic theses, electoral platforms, and ideological trajectories of Fratelli d'Italia and Rassemblement National, enriching the empirical understanding of these parties' evolution from neo-fascist roots to post-fascist frameworks. From a methodological perspective, the article's approach of combining historical analysis with document analysis effectively traces the ideological continuity and adaptation of these parties. While the methodology is solid, it does not introduce novel techniques or tools; instead, it innovates through its focused application of existing methods to underexplored aspects of far-right ideologies, offering valuable insights into contemporary political dynamics. Nonetheless, the article exhibits some ambiguity between a primarily historiographical approach and one rooted in political theory. While the detailed historical reconstructions provide valuable context and demonstrate the ideological continuity from fascism and neo-fascism to post-fascism, this emphasis occasionally overshadows the article's central focus: the analysis of the contemporary phenomenon of post-fascism. Given the article's primary objective, the political theory perspective should prevail or, at the very least, achieve a better balance with the historiographical elements. This would ensure that the discussion is more directly aligned with the contemporary relevance of post-fascism, allowing for a deeper exploration of its ideological features, political implications, and role in shaping current far-right movements. By recalibrating this balance, the article could more effectively address its core argument and contribute to theoretical debates on the nature and evolution of post-fascist ideology.

6. Are the interpretations and conclusions demonstrated (clearly and satisfactorily)?

Yes, the interpretations and conclusions are satisfactory. The article systematically develops its arguments, providing a strong theoretical foundation and supporting its claims with well-chosen empirical evidence. The analysis of the ideological evolution of Fratelli d'Italia and Rassemblement National is thorough and well-substantiated through references to primary documents, historical context, and relevant scholarly literature. The conclusions align logically with the evidence presented, particularly regarding the classification of these parties as post-fascist. However, certain aspects, such as the broader applicability of the post-fascism framework and the tension between authoritarian tendencies and liberal democratic frameworks, could benefit from further elaboration.

7. Do the abstract and keywords express the article well?

Yes.

8. Do any changes need to be made to make the article more suitable for publication?

Yes, certain aspects, such as the conceptual tension between adherence to liberal democracy and authoritarian tendencies, could benefit from more explicit clarification to enhance the overall clarity and depth of the discussion. For further details, see the attached review.

9. Opinion on the article's publication:

- ☐ Accept
X Accept as long as the mandatory corrections are observed
☐ Reject

10. If you decide on mandatory corrections, do you want to review the revised version?

- X Yes**
☐ No

11. *Mediações* encourages and allows reviewers to work according to the principles of open peer review (Open Science, SciELO, etc.), which includes, among other things, the possibility of exchange between authors and identified reviewers. Do you wish this review to be open to the author(s) during the review process?

- X Yes**
☐ No

12. Do you wish to have your name publicized as a reviewer at the end of the article, if the article comes to be approved and published?

- X Yes**
☐ No

13. Reviews constitute a new type of literature in the SciELO methodology and are treated similarly to research articles. Do you authorize *Mediações* to publish the text or excerpts of your review?

- X Yes**
☐ No

Additional Comments

The paper critically examines the ideological evolution and political trajectories of two European far-right parties, Fratelli d'Italia (Italy) and Rassemblement National (France). It argues that these parties exhibit a post-fascist ideology, transitioning from neo-fascism while maintaining ultranationalist and xenophobic traits. The paper explores how these ideologies adapt to modern liberal democratic frameworks, highlighting their shared myths of crisis, decline, and civilizational rebirth.

The paper shows several evident strengths. It effectively contextualizes the two parties' ideologies within the broader framework of fascism, neo-fascism, and post-fascism. Its theoretical grounding, supported by various scholarly sources, lends credibility and depth to the analysis. The choice of case studies is appropriate because the comparison of Fratelli d'Italia and Rassemblement National allows for a nuanced examination of how post-fascist ideologies manifest in different national contexts, enriching the understanding of their ideological flexibility. Finally, from a historical

perspective, by tracing the lineage of the parties from their neo-fascist predecessors, the article provides valuable insight into the continuity and transformation of far-right ideologies in Europe.

The rise of far-right political movements, their ideological foundations, and their impact on contemporary democracies are pressing issues in the modern global political scenario. Thus, the paper's contribution is highly relevant, and it might have a significant impact, particularly in the context of Brazil and Latin America. However, the reasons that underpin the potential of the article also urge us to improve some essential elements related to the differentiation between fascism, neo-fascism, and post-fascism that could be more well-articulated. **Two main questions implicitly raised by the article should be better addressed.**

1. Is post-fascism an ideology uniquely tied to parties with a clear lineage and tradition of fascism, or can it be used as a broader framework to describe the ideological profiles of contemporary far-right parties and movements worldwide?

This question is particularly relevant given the diverse manifestations of far-right ideologies globally. While the essay convincingly argues that Fratelli d'Italia and Rassemblement National embody post-fascism due to their direct historical ties to neo-fascist movements, it leaves room for debate about whether post-fascism can encompass far-right parties without such explicit connections. For example, many far-right movements worldwide exhibit traits attributed to post-fascism in the paper, such as ultranationalism, anti-immigration, anti-globalization, anti-elite discourses, and myths of crisis and national rebirth. Political movements in countries like Brazil, India, and Hungary share these features without a direct lineage to historical fascism. This analysis might highlight the adaptive nature of post-fascist ideology, suggesting its potential relevance beyond European contexts.

The paper could strengthen its theoretical contributions by addressing this question explicitly. For example, it might clarify whether the concept of post-fascism is inherently tied to historical fascism or if it can describe contemporary far-right movements globally; alternatively, it could discuss the limitations and risks of applying the post-fascism framework beyond its traditional context. Comparative examples of far-right movements outside Europe could be incorporated to test the framework's broader applicability.

2. Does post-fascist ideology adhere to the principles of liberal democracy, or does its democratic commitment reflect a more generic, plebiscitary vision that prioritizes nationalistic definitions of 'the people' and undermines liberal democratic principles such as the separation of powers, minority rights, and pluralism?

Although the paper acknowledges the contradictions between post-fascist ideology and liberal democracy, it risks oversimplifying this relationship by taking adherence to liberal democracy too much at face value. This tension should be a core argument within post-fascist ideology, and the article should give it more room. For example, the paper asserts that post-fascist parties have transitioned from neo-fascism by renouncing

extralegal violence and committing to liberal democratic principles. However, this claim may conflate procedural democracy (regular elections) with substantive liberal democracy (the protection of individual rights, pluralism, and institutional checks and balances). A relevant case is Viktor Orbán's Hungarian regime, which openly embraces the concept of "illiberal democracy," where the mechanics of elections coexist with authoritarian tendencies. A similar pattern cannot be excluded a priori in post-fascist parties like Fratelli d'Italia and Rassemblement National.

It seems that post-fascist parties align more closely with a plebiscitary model of democracy, where the 'people,' narrowly defined in ethnic, cultural, or religious terms, are seen as the sole legitimate source of political authority. This vision often sidelines liberal principles in favour of a majoritarian logic that undermines the rights of minorities and dissenting voices. Although the paper correctly notes the tension between the authoritarian and liberal components of post-fascist ideology, it does not sufficiently interrogate how this tension plays out in practice. The rhetorical commitment to democratic norms may coexist with policies and practices that erode the democratic fabric, such as the centralization of executive power, undermining judicial independence, and suppressing opposition. Again, examples from Orbán in Hungary or Erdoğan in Türkiye highlight how regimes that adhere to democratic procedures can systematically dismantle liberal democratic institutions while claiming legitimacy through electoral victories.

The paper could revisit and critically assess the claim that post-fascist ideology has accepted liberal democracy, incorporating the possibility that it aligns more closely with a plebiscitary or illiberal model of democracy.

Final considerations:

By engaging with both these questions, the article would provide a more nuanced and critical exploration of the relationship between post-fascism and democracy, highlighting the complexity and contradictions of this ideological phenomenon and the risks posed by the nationalist and authoritarian tendencies of post-fascist ideology.

To align with the journal's word limit and enhance the article's focus, it is recommended that the historical reconstructions be streamlined. While these historical details are informative, the article might retain only those that are directly relevant to demonstrating the ideological transitions from fascism to neo-fascism and finally to post-fascism. As stated in the introduction, the primary focus is on the emergence and characteristics of post-fascism, and focusing on this latter form aligns better with the article's central thesis. By contrast, the article only devotes a few pages to the contemporary post-fascism examples of Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia (just pages 7-8) and Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National (just pages 12-13). In this way, additional space could be dedicated to a deeper analysis of post-fascism, its defining traits, and its implications in contemporary politics.

Furthermore, this reformulation might also improve the article from a methodological perspective. Indeed, the article exhibits some ambiguity between a primarily historiographical approach and one rooted in political theory. While the detailed historical reconstructions provide valuable context and demonstrate the ideological continuity from fascism and neo-fascism to post-fascism, this emphasis occasionally overshadows the article's central focus: the analysis of the contemporary phenomenon

of post-fascism through two case studies. Given the article's primary objective, it seems that the political theory perspective should prevail or, at the very least, strike a better balance with the historiographical elements. This would ensure that the discussion is more directly aligned with the contemporary relevance of post-fascism, allowing for a deeper exploration of its ideological features, political implications, and role in shaping current far-right movements. By recalibrating this balance, the article could more effectively address its core argument and contribute to theoretical debates on the nature and evolution of post-fascist ideology.

Final Evaluation:

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Recommendation: Accept

Final Opinion:

The revised version offers several insights and clarifications compared to the original. In particular, it successfully highlights the conceptual tension within post-fascist parties between their formal adherence to liberal democratic principles and their underlying authoritarian tendencies. Moreover, the article provides a clearer distinction between the conceptual categories of fascism, neo-fascism, and post-fascism.