Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Tommaso Paperini

Title: The Ideological Fragmentation of the Italian Far-Right on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Programme/year: International Relations, 2024/2025

Author of Evaluation (second reader): Jan Karlas

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	**10**	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	**30**	27
	Methodology, analysis, argument	**40**	32
Total		*80*	69
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	**10**	7
	Style	**5**	4
	Formal requirements	**5**	3
Total		*20*	14
TOTAL		*100*	83

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Evaluation

Major criteria:

One of the strong aspects of this thesis is that it addresses a genuine puzzle: why the mainstream/governing far-right parties in Italy support Israel in the current Gaza conflict, while the extra-parliamentary far-right parties are pro-Palestinian.

The Introduction to the thesis is very short, taking just a 1,5 page. A more extensive introduction, which would present a bit more the topic and thesis, would be more convenient.

To analyse the selected puzzle, the thesis presents several theories, which might be relevant for interpreting the positions of the far-right parties. At first, the author presents nativism, populism, and nationalism. These are the theories that certainly influence the positions of the given parties, but according to the author are not primary concerning the positions of the parties in the respective conflict. While this perspective seems to be reasonable, these theories could still be outlined a little bit more in depth. Populism is presented in a section that has three sentences.

To interpret the positions of the parties in the conflict, the thesis proceeds instead from civilisationism and anti-imperialism/anti-globalism. These theories were reasonably selected on the basis of the literature review, although a link between the works included in the literature review and the presented theoretical framework of the thesis could be more explicit.

In methodological terms, the author relies on critical discourse analysis and Fairclough's three-dimensional framework. It must be appreciated that the author chose a concrete and detailed method to analyse the discourse. Concerning the data, the analysis explores posts on X and articles. According to my view, the number of the analysed sources (100 tweets and 25 articles) is relatively modest. However, I do realise that detailed discourse analyses often work with a limited number of sources.

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The empirical analysis is relatively detailed and it does properly use and apply the selected theoretical and methodological frameworks. The author finds that the two theories account for the divergence in the views very well: while civilisationism clarifies the support of the governing parties for Israel, anti-imperialism/anti-globalism enlightens the pro-Palestinian stances of the extra-parliamentary parties. In a somewhat strange fashion, the analysis presents only the "rough" results and the interpretation is offered in a long discussion section.

Concerning the analysis and findings, I think that it is standard for discourse analysis to present directly relatively many statements from the discourse to illustrate and substantiate the findings. This thesis focuses on the presentation of the aggregated results and contains only a limited number of concrete illustrations of the identified discursive positions.

Another limitation could be that the analysis works with Israel and Palestine as only coherent entities and does not differentiate concrete actors within these two coherently treated subjects (in particular the Hamas and the "ordinary" Palestinians).

It would be also useful if the author could link the civilizational and anti-imperialist ideologies of the parties to their nationalist and populist ideologies. Although nationalism and populism may not directly explain the positions in the conflict, the civilizational and anti-imperialist ideologies are still anchored in them.

Similarly to the Introduction, the Conclusion is too short.

I suppose that the standard is that the author should provide a list of concrete references to the used tweets and articles. At the same time, references to these concrete sources should be (in a reasonable degree) provided in the text. The number of the used secondary sources is relatively modest (around 30 sources).

Minor criteria:

The thesis is very well written, although it contains many too short sections (with 2-3 sentences).

Assessment of plagiarism:

The Turnitin check indicates only a very low (11%) of overall similarity.

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Overall evaluation:

This is a very good thesis. Concerning its strong aspects, it addresses a genuine puzzle and employs relevant theories. It also draws on a concrete and relevant method. The offered empirical analysis is well structured and detailed. Regarding the limitations, the thesis would benefit from building an explicit bridge between the two selected theories and nationalism and populism (both theoretically and empirically). In empirical terms, a more detailed differentiation of the actors on the Israel/Palestine side could be beneficial (or at least why this differentiation is missing), as well as a more concrete illustration of the identified discursive positions with concrete statements. What is also a limitation is that the empirical analysis is not accompanied with references to concrete tweets and articles, and the list of these tweets and articles is missing.

Suggested grade:

B

Signature:

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