



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Tommaso Paperini

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

Programme/year: 2024/2025, MAIN

Author of Evaluation (supervisor) Mgr. Tereza Plíštilová

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	<b>10</b>	6
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	<b>30</b>	25
	Methodology, analysis, argument	<b>40</b>	37
<i>Total</i>		<b>80</b>	
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	<b>10</b>	8
	Style	<b>5</b>	4
	Formal requirements	<b>5</b>	4
<i>Total</i>		<b>20</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	84



## Evaluation

### Major criteria:

The present thesis examines a highly relevant and engaging topic of the Italian far-right parties and their contrasting ideological positions towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I personally find this topic fascinating as it contests a popular belief of ideological alignment among the far right in Europe. In contrast, the far-right political parties and social movements exhibit a complex and varied stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict, driven by often contrasting factors such as islamophobia, antisemitism, and anti-Western sentiments or simply geopolitical pragmatism.

I appreciate that the author clearly states the **research question (RQ)** in the introduction of the thesis: **“Why do certain Italian extra-parliamentary far-right movements adopt a pro-Palestinian stance, contrasting with the pro-Israel position of mainstream far-right parties?”** (p. 3). While I do not find the construction of the RQ problematic per se, I was not convinced that the research design employing the Critical discourse analysis is suitable to answer it. The author argues that the “study adopts a qualitative design, focusing on the language, discourse, and meanings ... enabling a comprehensive understanding of **how** the far right formulate its positions within complex global conflicts.” (p.19). There is, thus, an apparent mismatch between the RQ and the selection of the appropriate methodology. **I would strongly suggest rephrasing the RQ to *how* instead of *why*.** For example, How does the Italian far-right discursively construct their positions towards the ongoing war in Gaza?

Besides this inconsistency, the **author draws on relevant literature from discourse studies (e.g., Fairclough, 2013; Van Dijk, 2015) and uses an appropriate conceptual framework (Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model).** I would, however, welcome a more comprehensive and systematic engagement with the existing literature on the far right and their positions towards foreign policy issues. The author promises to “identify potential gaps in the literature” (p.4), yet the lit. review is instead a mere description of some existing works rather than a proper synthesis of knowledge/state of the art. It is also unclear to the reader why the author discusses concepts, such as populism or nativism, that are not used in the thesis. It could be easily omitted from the text.

On the other hand, the author does an excellent job in terms of methodology and data analysis. The methodology, including the collection of newspaper and social media data, is described in great detail. Although, I do not think that stating the



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ethical consideration was necessary since the author draws on publicly available information.

The analysis is conducted rigorously, and the author thoroughly engages with the data. I appreciate that the author uses MAXQDA for a systematic analysis of the data and shows some of the findings in figures., even though I think that tables instead of bar charts would be easier to navigate. In addition, the data visualization would benefit greatly if it were accompanied by titles and the bar charts were sorted in descending order.

In overall, the author provides some interesting findings, arguing that pro-Israel tweets are more focused on the use of imperative words to precisely convey a sense of authority and legitimacy, and are contextualized within a broader cultural and historical context of Western values while pro-Palestine tweets focus on the use of emotional words and expressions and more detailed descriptions of recent events to highlight victimization and injustice. (p.43-44).

**Minor criteria:**

In terms of references, the author is sometimes inconsistent in style, combining footnotes and in-text references. The author should also pay more attention to providing references with page numbers when providing detailed claims, especially in Chapter 3.2.

The general structure of the thesis meets formal criteria. However, some of the chapters seem unusual and inconsistent. For example, why does the author state the objectives specifically for chapter 5?

Even if the author uses relevant literature, I would appreciate it if the author extended the lit. review as the number of works appears quite limited for an MA thesis. In addition, he should have fully cited the non-academic sources instead of only providing html links.

The overall level of academic language is high, and the text is written in good academic English.

**Assessment of plagiarism:** According to the Turnitin protocol, the overall similarity is 11%. I could not find any indications of plagiarism.



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**Overall evaluation:**

The thesis is an original piece of work and addresses a fascinating and puzzling topic. The main strength of the thesis lies especially in methodology and rigorous analysis. Yet, it suffers from some important weaknesses, such as the inconsistency of the RQ and the overall research design. The author demonstrates his competency in conducting social science research, and the thesis meets the formal criteria for defense.

**Suggested grade: B**

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JP'.