

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences**  
**Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism**

**MA THESIS REVIEW**

**NOTE: Only the grey fields should be filled out!**

**Review type** (choose one):

Review by thesis supervisor  Review by opponent

**Thesis author:**

Surname and given name: Hon Leung Kenneth IP

**Thesis title:** Through an Outsider's Lens: Donald Trump in Hong Kong Media's News

**Reviewer:**

Surname and given name: Sandra Lábová

Affiliation: IKSŽ FSV UK

**1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND THESIS** (mark one box for each row)

		Conforms to approved research proposal	Changes are well explained and appropriate	Changes are explained but are inappropriate	Changes are not explained and are inappropriate	Does not conform to approved research proposal
1.1	Research objective(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Methodology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	Thesis structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMENTARY (description of the relationship between the research proposal and the thesis. If there are problems, please be specific):

**2. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS CONTENT**

Use letters A – B – C – D – E – F (A=best, F= failed)

		Grade
2.1	Quality and appropriateness of the theoretical framework	C
2.2	Ability to critically evaluate and apply the literature	C
2.3	Quality and soundness of the empirical research	A
2.4	Ability to select the appropriate methods and to use them correctly	B
2.5	Quality of the conclusion	C
2.6	Thesis originality and its contribution to academic knowledge production	A

COMMENTARY (description of thesis content and the main problems):

In the Introduction, little attention is paid to the research objectives. These are not properly introduced and are only briefly mentioned at the end of the introduction. Additionally, the reasons, motives, and possible contributions to academic knowledge are not well explained. Overall, the Introduction section reads more like a literature review, which is absent from the thesis as a separate chapter. Hon Leung Kenneth IP brings up some crucial points in the theoretical section of the introduction; however, at times, the discussion feels superficial and would benefit from more detailed reflection, especially considering the qualitative and interpretative nature of the author's research. Moreover, the author rarely indicates the page numbers in the study from which the cited paraphrases are drawn.

The aim of the theoretical framework is to discuss framing theory. First, the author should explain why framing is chosen as both the theoretical framework and method. How does this choice align with the author's research aims and objectives? As the chapter develops, some key ideas and scholars are discussed. However,

similar to the literature review in the introduction, the discussion is rather fragmented and resembles a list of various relevant insights. For example, the concept of 'interpretative packages' is not properly explained, despite the author using this term later in the study. Furthermore, the author should situate framing theory within the broader theoretical context of the constructivist paradigm, as this is how frames are approached in the author's research. The concept of the construction of reality is mentioned but not fully explained. Moreover, framing can be understood as both a theory and a method, and it would be correct to recognize this dual aspect. In the current theoretical framework, the author oscillates between these two aspects, at times discussing framing as a method rather than as a theory (e.g., page 14). This would not necessarily be incorrect if it were discussed within the methodology chapter. Furthermore, the chapter "1.1 Framing Trump" does not provide much theoretical discussion but rather a literature review or examples of studies where framing has been employed to study the coverage of Donald Trump. Additionally, some of the insights in this chapter are not contextualized within the study's objectives, such as: "However, Trump's fiery tweets and sudden moves often captured most public attention (Turner & Kaarbo, 2021)" and the numerous studies mentioned in the first paragraph on page 16, leading to a rather superficial consideration.

Chapter 2, Methodology and Research Design, is chaotic and requires significant revision. It does not provide enough information on how the data were sampled or explain how the framing analysis was conducted. For example, more details about the time frame of the events are needed (it is not always clear when the selected events occurred), and the span of the period within which the articles were considered should be provided. The explanation, "The timeframe for selection covers one week plus 1-day post-event to cover the initial response and aftermath," is somewhat unclear. Furthermore, more details on the rationale for choosing particular media outlets would enhance the argument. From my perspective, it is also not clear whether the author worked with printed outlets, online news outlets, or a combination of both.

The analysis and presentation of the findings, on the other hand, are well-executed and provide some highly relevant insights. The analysis shows potential to go beyond the surface of the issues studied, and the author pays attention to and explains very subtle nuances.

The discussion section demonstrates several strengths, including a clear identification of frames used by media outlets to cover Trump during key events, which showcases a strong grasp of framing theory. The contextual analysis effectively links media coverage differences to the nature of the events and their geopolitical contexts, adding depth to the argument. The use of theoretical models like Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model, along with a critical perspective on the media's role, further strengthens the analysis. However, there are notable areas for improvement. For example, I wonder why the Propaganda Model was not discussed in the theoretical chapters. Furthermore, the structure and clarity of the argumentation could be enhanced by explicitly highlighting key findings, such as the shift in media framing during the Capitol Riot, and by improving transitions between sections to ensure a smoother flow. The discussion on media ownership influence could be expanded to provide more concrete examples and evidence, while a more direct comparative analysis of framing across different media outlets would bolster the argument. Additionally, a deeper engagement with contemporary literature, especially on international news framing and authoritarian influence, would strengthen the theoretical implications. Addressing potential methodological limitations and offering specific directions for future research would add a layer of critical reflection, making the thesis more rigorous and impactful.

### 3. EVALUATION OF THE THESIS FORM

Use letters A – B – C – D – E – F (A=best, F= failed)

		Grade
3.1	Quality of the structure	B
3.2	Quality of the argumentation	B
3.3	Appropriate use of academic terminology	A
3.4	Quality, quantity and appropriateness of the citations (both in the theory part and in the empirical part)	B
3.5	Conformity to quotation standards (*)	A
3.6	Use of an academic writing style, and correct use of language (both grammar and spelling)	A
3.6	Quality of the textual lay-outing and appendices	A

(\*) in case the text contains quotations without references, the grade is F; in case the text contains plagiarised parts, do not recommend the thesis for defence and suggest disciplinary action against the author instead.

COMMENTARY (description of thesis form and the main problems):

As previously mentioned, the structure of the thesis is chaotic, which hinders the clarity and coherence of the argumentation. Additionally, the author should ensure that page numbers are consistently provided when referencing sources.

**4. OVERALL EVALUATION** (provide a summarizing list of the thesis's strengths and weaknesses):

Given the strengths in the analysis and discussion sections but considering the significant issues in the theoretical and methodology chapters, I would suggest a grade in the range of B-C. The strong analysis shows potential, but the weaknesses in the foundational theoretical chapters, research design and chaotic structure prevent it from achieving a higher mark.

**5. QUESTIONS OR TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE THESIS DEFENSE:**

5.1	In your analysis, you identified various frames used by media outlets to cover Trump. How do you believe these frames might influence public perception of Trump, and what implications do they have for media consumers in terms of understanding political narratives?
5.2	
5.3	
5.4	

**6. ANTIPLAGIARISM CHECK**

The reviewer is familiar with the thesis' score in plagiarism analysis in SIS.

If the score is above 5%, please evaluate and indicate problems:

6.1	
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**7. SUGGESTED GRADE OF THE THESIS AS A WHOLE** (choose one or two)

- A**  Excellent (excellent performance)
- B**  Excellent (excellent performance)
- C**  Very Good (above the average standard but with some errors)
- D**  Very Good (above the average standard but with some errors)
- E**  Good (generally sound work with a number of notable errors)
- F**  Fail (unsatisfactory performance)

**If the mark is an "F", please provide your reasons for not recommending the thesis for defence:**

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Date: September 8, 2024

Signature: .....

*A finalised review should be printed, signed and submitted in two copies to the secretary of the Department of Media Studies. The electronic version of the review should be converted into a PDF and uploaded to SIS, or sent to the Department of Media Studies secretary who will upload it to SIS on the reviewer's behalf.*

*Do not upload PDFs with a scanned signature, the review uploaded to SIS must be without signature.*