

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: PEÑAFUERTE III, Armando

Thesis title: WeChat in Silence? How WeChat surveillance and censorship experience impacts the digital communication behaviors of Filipino migrants in China

Reviewer:

Surname and given name: MIESSLER Jan

Affiliation: KMS IKSZ 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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: The changes are thoroughly and convincingly explained in the Introduction.

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

COMMENTARY:

China's comprehensive control over the internet is a thoroughly analyzed and theorized issue. This thesis explores a niche topic of perception of surveillance and censorship on WeChat among Filipino migrants using the platform during their stay in China. This narrow focus allows for going deep into the topic and investigate all relevant aspects of the issue as communicated by his respondents, and to formulate conclusions with wider implications.

The thesis starts with a very extensive review of related literature and theories where the author introduces and discusses relevant concepts. In the methodology chapter, he carefully and thoroughly explains the robust logic of his research – interestingly, he uses concepts and approaches that are unusual in media studies, such as hermeneutic and transcendental phenomenology, and he does it very productively and correctly. Essentially, though, he takes advantage of a quite diverse pool of his respondents to capture the scope of similarities and differences among them in relation to his main topic. Their replies then allow him to draw a picture that captures the ambivalence Filipino users feel about WeChat while in China and the way they reflect on surveillance and censorship they have experienced.

The thesis does not have any weak parts. Everything is in its place, well explained, logically organized, and skillfully interconnected. All parts are designed and executed with high degree of academic professionalism. The topic is relevant, and the conclusions can be easily extrapolated, adding to their value.

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	A
3.2	Quality of the argumentation	A
3.3	Appropriate use of academic terminology	A
3.4	Quality, quantity and appropriateness of the citations (both theory and empirical part)	A
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:

There are no substantial formal problems.

4. OVERALL EVALUATION:

The thesis is excellent. The topic is relevant, the theories and methods well chosen, the analysis thoroughly explained, and the significance of results clearly presented. There seem to be no substantial flaws.

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

5.1	
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	The system detected only properly quoted parts.
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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:

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.