

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: Sebastiaen Toon Jan Van Aert

Thesis title: Traditional Foreign Correspondence in Crisis? A Dutch Perspective

Reviewer:

Surname and given name: Anna Hrbáčková

Affiliation: ICSJ FSS CU

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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): The thesis mostly conforms to the approved proposal in its all aspects, the only slight change is in terms of interviewees – the author decided not to choose parachute correspondents and desk reporters, however, this change is explained.

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	B
2.2	Ability to critically evaluate and apply the literature	B
2.3	Quality and soundness of the empirical research	B
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	B

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

In his thesis, Sebastiaen van Aert works with number of studies and publications, the theoretical framework and literature review is thorough, though some of the studies might be perceived a bit old (e.g. p. 25: Archetti (2013) who “recognizes challenges the correspondents are facing **today**” – that means 11 years ago, so is it still actual today?). The method is clear and logical, the author focuses on semi-structured interviews and follows with thematic analysis. I was wondering, whether the questions on p. 43-44 are the only (or main?) ones, or if the author has a larger set of questions (in that case, he could provide it within attachments). One other thought came to my mind while reading about desk reporters (chapter 3.4) and parachute journalists (3.4.1), as the author decided (compared to proposal) not to choose them for his research – whether it was a good idea to not incorporate them into research, but still talk about them. Nevertheless, the empirical research is done very well and provides very interesting data. The author ends with quite strong conclusion and decision as he is able to look back to theory and discuss his findings in the wider context.

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	B
3.3	Appropriate use of academic terminology	B
3.4	Quality, quantity and appropriateness of the citations (both in the theory part and in the 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	B

(*) 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):

The structure of thesis is clear, the text is very well written and readable. I would only avoid some idioms (p. 47 and 69: “be taken with a grain of salt” or p. 23: “new kids on the block”) to maintain academic language, rather than journalistic style. Besides that, the thesis is formally without any errors, the author works well with quotations, only in some cases the references are not unified (in alphabetical order/year of publishing; e.g. p. 31 first and second paragraphs with more than two authors in brackets).

4. OVERAL EVALUATION (provide a summarizing list of the thesis’s strengths and weaknesses):

Sebastiaen Van Aert focuses in his thesis on an interesting and actual topic. The text is very well written, it demonstrates a thorough theoretical framework, the methodology is clear and empirical research is well-conducted, bringing valuable data. Above mentioned, I really appreciated Sebastiaen’s quite detailed part on limitations and suggestions for future research. I suggest grade A/B depending on the defence.

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

5.1	The respondents were anonymized, though, I miss at least brief mention about ethical procedure of the research – how did you work with this?
5.2	Do you think that findings about parachute/desk journalists would conform to what do they (parachute/desk journalists) think about their working experience?
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 score is 13 % caused by using quotations, which conforms to quotation standards.
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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:12.9.2024

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.