

**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: Hoi Ming Tsui

**Thesis title:** Fourth Estate in the Dark: Examining the Tactics Employed by Journalists during Internet Shutdown

**Reviewer:**

Surname and given name: František Géla

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

The research objectives and thesis structure are in accordance with the approved research proposal. A minor modification to the proposal is the change in the number of experts and journalists for the interviews. The author has conducted three interviews with experts instead of five and eight journalists instead of five. This change is appropriate.

**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	B
2.4	Ability to select the appropriate methods and to use them correctly	B
2.5	Quality of the conclusion	B
2.6	Thesis originality and its contribution to academic knowledge production	A

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

The thesis is an original and up-to-date piece of work which presents a clear and coherent text, supported by hands-on experience. It makes a valuable contribution to the existing academic knowledge on this important subject.

In the theoretical section, the author outlines the role of the Internet, the technological aspects of contemporary communication on the global network, and its role in current journalism, with a distinct focus on authoritarian countries and their legal and technological actions aimed at restricting the open character of the Internet. The author employed relevant and up-to-date literature, comprising primarily primary sources. The research is well designed, but it could have been more precisely described in the methodology section. For example, deeper characteristics of respondents - journalists (e.g. via tables), could be included (like characteristics of experts panel, which are unnecessarily included in the appendices too). Via thematic

analysis, the author presents various problems which the interviewees face in various situations, some of which are country-specific, while others are more general. Furthermore, the in-depth analysis examines both technological and non-technological solutions, as well as other specific issues. The conclusion and discussion section could be more closely linked to the literature presented in the theoretical part, providing a direct answer to the research questions (which are addressed in the manuscript, but not explicitly marked as such).

### 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	A
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)	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)	B
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):

From a formal standpoint, the final version of the thesis contains a few minor errors. There is inconsistency in the use of the terms "internet" and "Internet" (e. g. Table of Contents - p. 13 and in other instances throughout the text). Additionally, there are typographic errors ( ", " instead of "." etc.). The citations and references are in accordance with the standard formatting requirements. The overall layout is appropriate, and the appendixes include a semi-structured interview guide among other relevant documents.

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

**I propose grade A or B, depending on the defence. The thesis contains a quality theoretical section and the research is well executed. It is my opinion that the thesis contributes to several fields within media and journalism studies, including the freedom of the Internet and the routines of journalists in various contexts.**

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

5.1	Lately, the founder of the Telegram app was arrested in France. Do you think the platforms should be responsible for published/distributed content?
5.2	As outlined in the thesis, the issue is primarily associated with authoritarian regimes. However, what are the potential threads to Internet freedom in the Western world?
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	Matching parts are cited correctly and include citations, general expressions and references.
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### 7. SUGGESTED GRADE OF THE THESIS AS A WHOLE (choose one or two)

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F

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

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Date:10/09/2024

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.*