

**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: 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 conforms to the approved research proposal in almost all objectives. A slight change is in terms of respondents (the proposal's version mentioned 5 experts and 5 journalists, the final is 3 experts and 8 journalists), however, this change is well explained and appropriate. In her thesis, Hoi Ming Tsui did not use the particular theoretical concepts presented in proposal (Technological Determination, Liberal Theory, Access Theory etc.) and focused on the internet shutdown instead.

**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	A
2.4	Ability to select the appropriate methods and to use them correctly	A
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):

Hoi Ming Tsui focuses in her thesis on an important and very actual topic. As mentioned above, she decided not to use some of the theoretical concepts presented in the proposal, which might provide much thorough theoretical framework to her thesis, however, considering the overall topic, the literature regarding internet shutdown works well. She picked up very interesting cases from different countries and was able to apply the literature in the empirical section. The methodology is well explained, clear and correctly used, the only thing I would suggest is to add a table with respondents-journalists, so the reader knows before analysis from which countries are they, whether they are men/women or how old are they (+ e.g., years of experience as journalists). Also, I am not sure if the author mentioned the nationality of experts. Nevertheless, I truly appreciate author's courage to approach journalists from countries such as Cameroon, Zambia or Iran as it provides very interesting data. I only graded "C" the quality of the conclusion as I would expect better connection with the previous research and literature review. It is mentioned only briefly (p. 53 "...most findings from this research echo the empirical studies"), but particular studies are not presented here. Also, as

the author highlights diaspora communities as one of the new findings (p. 53), it would deserve much more space (there is only small subchapter 5.3.3 and one sentence in Conclusion). Besides that, the overall quality of thesis is very high. I also appreciate the reflection on the limitation of the work.

### 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 (*)	B
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):

The structure of thesis is very good (the table of contents is very detailed). The author uses academic terminology appropriately. The text is very well written and nice to read, I noticed only few small errors (p. 19: “people around the have been trying”, p. 17: extra space within second paragraph or p. 12: two dots ending third paragraph; “internet” versus “Internet”). I did not find any huge issues regarding form, only the first and second page should have larger indentation (such as the official thesis form). The thesis conforms to quotation standards, the citations are appropriate. The author uses a lot of examples from other studies.

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

**Thesis of Hoi Ming Tsui focuses on (sadly still) very actual and important topic. She shows the ability to provide empirical research based on well-chosen method and thorough literature review – she uses a lot of examples from other studies, which I appreciated. The only “C” was graded in the part regarding quality of conclusion, as the author could focus more on the previous studies and research in comparison to her very interesting and original findings. Therefore, I suggest grade A/B, depending on the defence.**

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

5.1	Why did you decide to non-anonymize the experts?
5.2	What lead you not to use the theoretical concepts you mentioned in the proposal?
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 16% because of direct citations.
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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:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:11.9.2024

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.***