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 X

Thesis author:

Surname and given name: Melikyan Aren

Thesis title: Televised Imperialism: Normalisation of Russian irredentism in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus through state-controlled Channel One's news journalism, following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine

Reviewer:

Surname and given name: Němcová Tejkalová Alice

Affiliation: Department of Journalism

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)	X	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.2	Methodology	X	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.3	Thesis structure	X	☐	☐	☐	☐

COMMENTARY (description of the relationship between the research proposal and the thesis. If there are problems, please be specific): I would stick to the names of the chapters from a thesis proposal – Literature review and Theoretical framework ("Literature and Theory" is not so fitting). Even though I confirmed that a structure of thesis conforms the approved research proposal, some parts of LR are missing, I'd like to hear more especially about "The politicl geography of the Eastern Partnership countries".

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	C
2.3	Quality and soundness of the empirical research	C
2.4	Ability to select the appropriate methods and to use them correctly	D
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): I am concerned about the methodology. To have 120 hours for qualitative analysis is impossible to conduct it well. I also do not know what I should imagine under the sentence: "This data was informally coded to identify the general patterns of normalisation." What does the term "informal coding" mean, how did it look like and where have you found the methodological support for doing so? I can understand a reduction of programs for the "proper" qualitative analysis but to have only one from each research period is not much. I know you were also working with some "informal coding" of the rest of the programs but still, it is not really persuasive that it can be at least anyhow reconstructed back if someone would like to follow your research. Further, I do not understand why do you mix framing and thematic analyses. It does not make sense. Previous scholars, e.g. Iyenegar or de Vreese were using framing on various levels, working e.g. with thematic and specific frames. These issues logically impacts the analysis. I have troubles with the names of the frames. What stands "We"

and "Our" for? What does it frame? And The "Other"? Either Empire – or nothing is closest to what is usually used as a name for a frame in a qualitative analysis. How were the normalisation techniques identified? And how do they differ from framing strategies? I appreciate the attempt to come up with a proper academic discussion that I like. On the other hand, I disagree with the statement in a conclusion that "the research investigates the editorial strategies to normalise the state's imperial aspirations and irredentist policies within Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus". To really analyze the editorial strategies, one needs to be present in the medium and observe the editors. In this type of research you analyze your perception of editorial strategies. The frames you highlight are the frames you perceive. We cannot be sure they were really meant like that by the authors, i tis just our analysis and interpretation. The frames also do not use anything. They are used to create some kind of impression. The texts are framed (by their authors) to be read somehow.

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	C
3.2	Quality of the argumentation	C
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)	B
3.6	Quality of the textual lay-outing and appendices	C

(*) 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):
I am missing the numbered outline of the chapters that would help the reader with orientation in text's hierarchy, especially in the analytical part it is quite a big issue. I would also definitely divide the otherwise really interesting Theoretic Framework by subheadings into respective parts dealing with framing and normalisation.

4. OVERAL EVALUATION (provide a summarizing list of the thesis's strengths and weaknesses):
I really like the idea behind this thesis. Nevertheless, I have objections against how the methodology was constructed and the analysis conducted. Even though it is a very interesting thesis and I think that intuitively, the author navigate us well through it, it has its issues that cannot be overlooked and regularly appers on many pages of the text in uncertainty of usage of the term frame and dealing with it.

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

5.1	I posed several questions in the previous parts, please, answer them during the defense process.
5.2	
5.3	
5.4	

6. ANTIPLAGIARISM CHECK

x 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	All sources have been referenced properly.

7. SUGGESTED GRADE OF THE THESIS AS A WHOLE (choose one or two)
A ☐ Excellent (excellent performance)
B ☐ Excellent (excellent performance)
C X 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: September 6, 2024   Signature: …………………………..