

B.A. thesis supervisor's review

Ivana Saraf: How does Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty portray migrants on the Balkan migration route? Prague 2021: Faculty of Humanities CU, p. 58.

At the very beginning of my review, I have to describe the overall background of the thesis writing and of cooperation with the student. Ivana Saraf, came to me in the winter semester 2019, and asked for supervising her B.A. thesis. We have met few times since then and discussed the possible methodological and theoretical paths of the future research. In July 2020, the student contacted me at the very last moment and wanted to finish her work within few days before the deadline. I strongly did not recommend this idea, because I found the thesis not good enough and reworked to be defendable and at the proper level of a B.A. thesis. Since that moment, I have not heard from the student at all (until today) and found out about the thesis ready for defense from the students' office and SIS system. Therefore, it is of a great difficulty for me, to be put in the role of thesis' supervisor, as the student did not consult her work with me at all, did not cooperate and did not inform me of her plans to submit the thesis in July. Nonetheless. I will try to review the thesis, even though the whole situation puts me more in the position of a reviewer than of a supervisor.

Firstly, the student slightly changed the title from official SIS title *The portrayal of migrants along the Croatian-Bosnian border reflected in Radio Free Europe news* into *How does Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty portray migrants on the Balkan migration route?*, which probably reflects the hurry, in which the thesis was written. In the abstract of the thesis, the author claims neutrality of the news presented by the studied medium – Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. No news is neutral and this assumption is somehow false especially in critical analyses of media content.

The theoretical framework is short and general (only four pages). It resembles more a draft than a proper theoretical chapter of academic work. There is no information on the studied medium and its implications, or the justification of its choosing. The information, on similar research already conducted, is put after the methodological part, when it should be enclosed in the theoretical chapter.

When it comes to the methodology – there is no research question and research strategy defined more than a single sentence. I lack any further elaboration on the method used; its

limits; author's personal involvement in the studied subject (coming from the region studied articles concern). Moreover, sampling method is described not enough; it is not clear why the author decided to focus on the studied period 2018-2019?

The conclusion part is very short, does not include any references to the theoretical framework of the research and contains some non-academic assumptions, such as: *The results mean that RFL/RE is a very factual newspaper whose authors report only to pass on information - at least when it comes to the coverage of the migrant crisis (...) With regards to the research question "How does Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty portray migrants on the Balkan migration route" – it portrays migrants very factually, as a moving force but also as stuck, as victims and as instigators but most importantly with personal agency.*(p. 53) What does it mean that the medium portrays migrants very factually or is very factual? How is the author able to measure this? The role of news media is to report; this cannot be treated as result or conclusion coming out from the author's research.

Formally, it is problematic to use some causal language abbreviations in formal writing.

To sum up, the thesis is controversial and it is on the verge of being defensible and of meeting the requirements for a B.A. thesis, therefore, I recommend the thesis for the defense, but suggest grade 3 (good) or 4 (fail) depending on the defense itself.

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