

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: Vidal Rico Marina

Thesis title: "Not in our name": The Melilla tragedy as a case study of polarized media coverage of migration in the Spanish Southern border

Reviewer:

Surname and given name: Mackova Veronika

Affiliation: ICSJ FSC 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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):

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	B
2.3	Quality and soundness of the empirical research	B
2.4	Ability to select the appropriate methods and to use them correctly	C
2.5	Quality of the conclusion	D
2.6	Thesis originality and its contribution to academic knowledge production	B

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

I highly appreciate Marina's commitment to utilizing high-quality scholarly literature that is current and relevant to the subject matter. Consequently, the theoretical section of her work is firmly grounded, and I consider it to be of exceptional quality.

Despite my specific reservations about the justification of some conclusions in the work, this initial series of evaluations will be positive, as the overall impression is strongly influenced by the quality of the theoretical part of the work (I will explain my reproaches about the validity of the conclusions later).

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	C
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 (*)	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	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):

Chapter 3, "Methodology and Research Design," is clearly described, and the author's research objectives are entirely transparent. The sample and research method are well-defined. I highly appreciate Chapter 3.2.1, "Clarifications on the Spanish media landscape," which provided me with a more in-depth understanding of this environment. In Chapter 3.4, "Limitations, Reflexivity & Ethics," the researcher first defines the limitations of this study, demonstrating a mature approach.

In the analytical section, I would recommend giving more attention to the analysis of photographs, which has not been conducted in-depth. If the author is already using photographs, they should delve into better detail. Incorporating semiotic analysis (for example) could aid in a more comprehensive interpretation of the photographs. Currently, descriptions often remain at the basic level, indicating whether they cast a positive or negative light on the subjects. Furthermore, there is no information provided about the photographer, which could be significant.

On page 55, it is stated that... "Both images in Figure 4, for example, were published in articles that this analysis identified as having no reference to migrants. But despite their complementary nature, the presence of the photographs can be interpreted semiotically and reveal power relations and political positioning." On what basis did the author discern the power relations, and where does this statements find support in the literature?

Some of the author's claims are not supported by the literature. Thus, these are only the author's opinions. For instance, "Both photos portray the migrants as a mass of intertwined bodies in which it is hard to tell who is alive or dead. Recognizable pieces of clothing are ragged and dirty, taking up most of the space, while in the distance a line of observant police officers dressed in clean uniforms take on an observant role, carrying shields and weapons." I do not dispute the accuracy of this observation, but the author should have engaged with the literature, ensuring that this section is seamlessly connected to the theoretical framework.

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

I described the main criticisms of this thesis above. Even so, I consider this text to be of very high quality and I suggest rating it with the letter "C".

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

5.1	The author used sampling methods in sixteen articles in selected media. Isn't this approach limiting and potentially distorting the subsequent result?
5.2	
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	
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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:

Date:

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.