

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: Hindrichs Nils Benjamin

Thesis title: Combatants, civilians, activists or journalists ? The role orientation of citizen OSINT investigators in participative warfare in Ukraine

Reviewer:

Surname and given name: Neag Annamaria, PhD

Affiliation: IKSZ

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): There were no major changes.

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	A
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): This is an interesting and novel topic that is quite relevant taking into consideration the current situation in Ukraine. The author provides a good overview of the topic and is invested in presenting relevant findings. There were some issues relating to critically assess the role of the investigators, the literature and the answers received. Overall, this is a strong thesis, with some issues that will be presented in the sections below.

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)	A

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	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):

Good flow of the text; some issues with quotations (e.g. long quotes are not always indented; some quotes could have been easily paraphrased), chapters and sub-chapters should have been numbered to make comprehension easier

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

Well-written literature review, but it lacks criticality to a certain degree (e.g. taking at face value what these new OSINT organisations say that they are doing, relying very much on what their self-presentation, e.g. Higgins-quotes). Similarly, it does not address thoroughly issues related to bias, reliability, or ethics. It is interesting to note that it seems that OSINT investigators are not looking into Ukrainian actions. For a researcher this needs to be handled with caution.

Theoretical framework: strong theoretical framework, although it is not clear why both participative and radical war are needed as concepts, as it seems that both are built around the same ideas. The link to journalistic roles should have been made stronger, as it is not clear whether these investigators can be considered journalists or not.

Methodology: The interviews were a good choice for uncovering the themes, however, the number of the interviews should have been higher in order to provide more robust data. The Guest et al (2006) article mentioned recommends 12, while they say that 6 interviews provide 'basic elements'.

It is not clear why 'cognitive' has been placed among paranthesis in the research question. It is interesting that the author explicitly left out Ukrainian participants, but he did include a Russian one. This choice should have been argued.

Analysis: In case of some themes found, it is not clear why they were positioned in one group (e.g. archiving and accountability). In another theme, Ethics - although some aspects are indeed connected to ethics, but it seems that much is about mental well-being and self-preservation. More information should have been provided on how the author came up with the four role-orientations.

Limitations: Strong points, and major issues mentioned.

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

5.1	Why Ukrainian investigators were not selected, but a Russian one was?
5.2	The process through which the author advanced the four role-orientations
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:

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Date:19.05.2023

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.