

**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: Dimitrov Michal

Affiliation: Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, external lecturer

**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): Research objectives, methodology and structure of the presented thesis follow the original thesis proposal, proving the deep interest of the author in the topic and his ability to come up with a solid thesis proposal right at the beginning of the research. Thus, no changes in the thesis proposal were needed.

**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	A
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	B
2.6	Thesis originality and its contribution to academic knowledge production	A

COMMENTARY (description of thesis content and the main problems):Nils Benjamin Hindrichs presented an exploratory study to the yet scarcely covered topic of role-orientation of citizen OSINT investigators on the example of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The author shows an outstanding ability to pointedly and critically evaluate and discuss the available secondary literature, identify blank spots of the research and formulate a relevant research question, embed his research in an appropriate theoretical framework and apply useful concepts (radical war, participative warfare, journalistic roles and cognitive role-orientations) effectively in his own empirical explorative study, correctly using appropriate method of semi-structured interview with 7 citizen OSINT investigators. Based on the structured evaluation of the data in the context of theoretical literature and empirical research, the author - being well aware of the limitations of his research - presents a typology of role-orientation of citizen OSINT investigators, identifying 4 types: the critical civilian, the citizen journalist, the contributor and the human-rights interventionist. Despite the discussed limitations of the study (see further section 4 and 5 below) the thesis is a valuable contribution to the topic and the suggested typology a solid foundation for a further research.

--

### 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	A
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 (*)	A
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):

The author presented a M.A. thesis with a high quality of argumentation and stylistics. The text meets all key standards of scientific work, including appropriate use of academic terminology, quotation standards, appendices etc. However, the textual lay-outing could be better and numerical navigation (1.1.1) would make the orientation in the text and its structure easier. The transcribed interviews (or at least parts of them) could have been attached.

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

**Nils Benjamin Hindrichs presented an overall outstanding and well-written thesis covering a blank spot (with the exemption of the M.A. thesis of Cochrane, 2022) in the research of ongoing substantial changes in journalism of the 21st century where it is easier as ever to publish information and spread (a piece of) news: the role-orientations of volunteer citizen OSINT investigators who provide information to journalists or publish the results of their unpaid work on-line. The author sums up and discusses the available up-to-date (May 2023) theoretical research and empirical literature (valuable on its own!), outlines the theoretical framework of role-orientations (applying and adjusting the typology by Hanitzsch and Vos, 2017), analyzes the 7 conducted semi-structured interviews with citizen OSINT investigators, presents the findings and suggests a well argued typology of four different types of role-orientations. This typology can be perceived as the boldest and weakest part of the thesis at the same time, as it is hard to build and defend a solid typology of four types based on the sample of 7 (interviews). The author obviously knows that, but deliberately dares to do this step, openly discussing the limitations of his research design, findings and conclusions and making a fair offer to use and test his typology for further research on this topic. As it is discussion that moves things forward, the thesis of Nils Benjamin Hindrichs should find a broader academic reception and be published.**

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

5.1	The author formulated a typology of 4 types (the critical civilian, the citizen journalist, the contributor, the human-rights interventionist) based on analysis of just 7 conducted semi-structured interviews. Why does he believe that the sample (with all its limitations) is big enough to formulate a typology? What are the strengths of the typology and can they compensate its weaknesses?
5.2	The author identified "the citizen journalist" type of role-orientation. Where does he see the boundary between an OSINT investigator who carries out his work on a voluntarily base and journalist? In other words, is it appropriate to call a citizen OSINT investigator a journalist?
5.3	Did the author consider attaching the transcribed interviews (in appendix) in order to make his empirical research more transparent? Why didn't he do it?
5.4	What could make the presented typology more valid? Is there another way than just making the sample higher?

### 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	-
-----	---

**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: 12. 6. 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.*