

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: Solheim Malene

Thesis title: Navigating Narratives: Framing the Sino-Norwegian Relationship in Norwegian News Media since 2016

Reviewer:

Surname and given name: Miessler Jan

Affiliation: KMS IKSŽ FSV UK

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): The thesis is in line with the research proposal, only the number of analyzed articles is smaller (14 articles instead of 50-70 originally planned).

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

COMMENTARY (description of thesis content and the main problems): The thesis tries to capture how the Norwegian media treated the country's dynamic relationship with China after 2016. In order to capture the scope of various media organizations' approaches to the issue, it looks at three different outlets representing different political perspectives, in order to identify three key frames and two minor ones.

While the conclusions sound generally reasonable, they are based on analysis of only 14 articles, a significant drop from the original plan. This allows for going (qualitatively) into deeper detail but prevents making more general (and quantitative) conclusions, or at least provides less solid grounding. However, the author is aware of these limitations and addresses them properly (p. 61-62).

The overview of academic literature on Sino-Norwegian relations is thorough and is complemented by introduction of framing as the author's key analytical approach in the theoretical section. Somewhat misleadingly, the thesis also mentions "narratives" (in the thesis title), "discourses" or "soft power" but does not really work with these concepts. Especially narrative analysis and discourse analysis are usually regarded as competing approaches to the author's preferred frame analysis, but here they seem to be presented as

complementary. Even though "framing analysis" is an extremely flexible approach (as eminent discourse analysis author Teun van Dijk recently observed in his article "Analyzing frame analysis: A critical review of framing studies in social movement research"), it might have been better to distinguish it more clearly from alternative ways of analyzing media output.

Actual choices made by the author during the analysis are reasonable (time scope, media outlets, particular articles to be analyzed) and even though they may be subjected to a debate, the author defends them with convincing arguments - probably with one exception of presenting Klassenkampen as the 8th most trusted Norwegian media outlet (see p. 38). Most importantly, these choices lead to meaningful conclusions. The discussion or results and their meaning is particularly useful.

Although the thesis uses established methods and sometimes appears misleading in its terminology, its main contribution is in covering a previously unresearched field of media coverage of Sino-Norwegian relations.

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	C
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	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):

From the formal point of view, the thesis is fine. Only some terminology regarding methods may be misleading, as has been already mentioned.

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

The thesis covers a relevant and timely topic in a meaningful way, using an established method, that allows her to present reasonable conclusions. The small scope of analyzed material and somewhat misleading methodological terminology do not substantially weaken the author's main arguments.

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

5.1	
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	The parts highlighted by the software are in fact properly referenced.
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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: June 10, 2024

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.