

Name of the student:	Adriana Lungulescu
Title of the thesis:	Article 7 TEU in the News
Reviewer:	Dr Maxine David, Leiden University

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

The student asks: “how did the media frame the discussion around Article 7 TEO proceedings. This research question (RQ) is contextualised well, although certain statements needed to be argued rather more, e.g. that the media framing may affect the success or failure of the Art 7 proceedings and certainly, even in introductory terms, authoritative backing was needed for the possibilities outlined (p. 6). The thesis is underpinned by appropriate and authoritative literature. Key debates and concepts are identified and the student shows excellent understanding of the subject matter. I would usually frown upon the inclusion of primary sources in a literature review but such references were kept minimal and used to point us to that literature that debated the particular point of an article. The discussion is a mature one where the student largely shows due regard for both political and legal arguments. There are some exceptions to this, e.g. p. 21 where the discussion of the Commission was not characterised by the same curiosity about the nature of that institution and its members as was the case elsewhere in the review, see particularly the last paragraph of the Commission section on p. 21. The section on the EP is less sure-footed, with reference to EP parties vs groups and insufficient interrogation of the argument that MEPs shelter autocratic governments; I would have liked to see the student finding literature that talks about the conditions under which this happens at a more general level given the nature of the RQ. And certainly the student needed to avoid talking about the national arena in a monolithic fashion as if there are not different constituencies of thought, all of which need to be supported and upon which particular MEPs rely on for support. While there is good coverage of Art 7, the discussion of the media is too narrow. It is the case that Chapter 3 does a lot of the heavy-lifting here but claims about the media as an agenda-setter, for instance, required more attention, especially as the claims are mostly made in relation to the domestic environment but the methodological focus is on Europe-wide media.

2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

The method selected is a good fit with the RQ. The general discussion of framing is set out clearly and concisely. The selection of Euractiv and Politico is reasonable and this also renders the thesis additionally topical and of significance given these two are emerging as the leaders in what was previously a vacuum. The decision to focus on headlines was an interesting one and the student relies on some good literature to make the case of this, including in relation to originality. Concerns about the results being very superficial were allayed in the abstract discussion by the decision to employ a hybrid analysis and then by the analysis itself, which is rich and which also sees the student sometimes looking below the headlines. Matters relating to time frame and search terms showed understanding of methodological issues, although I would have liked to see clearer evidence of the searches returning too many irrelevant articles – I know from supervision that this happened but, as set out, that is not clear for other readers. There are other places too where more clarity about the process of building the analytical framework was both possible and desirable, especially in relation to the frames ultimately derived.

3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

The empirical analysis and its discussion were impressive and persuasive. I very much liked the student’s categorisation of the 3 frames. The limitations inherent in focusing just on headlines were very neatly mitigated by good contextualisation and interesting differences identified and highlighted, e.g. agency in relation to Poland versus Hungary. There was some caveating around the analysis. I understand the reasons for this and it was good the student did not exceed what was reasonable in

respect of claims but then the conclusion could have been used to talk about the scope – indeed necessity – for further research that includes interviewing journalists. Otherwise, the future research agenda proposed was a thoughtful and persuasive one.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE


(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

The thesis was very well-presented. The writing was of an excellent fluid quality, with good regard for the reader shown in terms of signposting. The structure was very good, albeit more space needed to be given to the media section in the lit. review, by reducing the preceding discussions; and section 4.1 would have been better placed, on the whole, in chapter 3. On referencing, the separation into primary and secondary sources revealed a lack of understanding of what constitutes a secondary source, with a large number of primary sources listed under secondary sources. The primary sources were also not set out correctly. Elsewhere, it was sometimes difficult to tell which source was being referred to because of incomplete information on the bibliography, e.g. European Commission ref. Some publication information was missing elsewhere, e.g. Bard et al. Some references were just strange, e.g. Closa et al. .

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

A topical, eminently readable, and original thesis that covered interdisciplinary subject matter in an impressive fashion and delivered good insights into media framings of the Article 7 debates, demonstrating excellent research skills and very good critical thought along the way.

Grade (A-F):	A
Date:	Signature:
8 July 2024	

GRADE CONVERSION MA EPS

Percentile	Prague	Krakow	Leiden	Barcelona
A (91-100)	91-100 %	4,51-5,00	8.0-10	9-10
B (81-90)	81-90 %	4,21-4,50	7.5-7.9	8-8,9
C (71-80)	71-80 %	3,71-4,20	7-7.4	7-7,9
D (61-70)	61-70 %	3,21-3,7	6.5-6.9	6-6,9

E (51-60)	51-60 %	3,00-3,20	6-6.4	5-5,9
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Assessment criteria:

Excellent (A): 'Outstanding performance with only minor errors';

Very good (B): 'Above the average standard but with some errors';

Good (C): 'Generally sound work but with a number of notable errors';

Satisfactory (D): 'Fair but with significant shortcomings';

Sufficient (E): 'Performance meets the minimum criteria';

Fail: 'Some/considerable more work required before the credit can be awarded'.