

## Master's Thesis Evaluation Form

Student's name: Daria Tsymbal

Thesis title: Media framing of the Norilsk oil spill

Name of the supervisor: Jan Miessler

Name of the opponent: Jan Balon

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis? Please give your reasons for the suggested grade in detail below.

1. *Does the author show understanding of one or more theories, and use theory to generate a hypothesis or to make the problem area more understandable.*

Comments:

The thesis predominantly refers to the “situational crisis communication theory (SCCT)” as the main framework for conducting the frame analysis. Theoretical parts mainly place focus on the concepts of framing, crisis communication and media coverage. The literature for the introductory parts (literature review) seems to be a bit outdated. On the whole, the references to theoretical ideas (such as Goffman and his frame analysis) appear in the text with no further discussion of their relevance for the whole research. The thesis adheres to the framework of the SCCT approach.

2. *Is the research question articulated clearly and properly? Is the research question sufficiently answered in the conclusion?*

Comments:

The author suggests that “the research question of this study is “How does media ownership and closeness of the media to the government influence the framing of Norilsk Oil Spill?”. The research design is very simple. There are also 2 hypotheses that are clearly unproblematic, and their confirmation comes as no surprise. The finding that “in the Norilsk Oil spill, the media pay more attention to the reason, cause, and blaming different stakeholders instead of communicating about ecological and environmental damage and how to solve it” (p. 39) is valuable.

3. *Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?*

Comments:

The thesis is largely descriptive. The “disaster” is narrated in detail from different perspectives. The position of the author is obvious – it is claimed that “inhabitants of the

Arctic zone in Scandinavia, the United States, Canada, and Iceland are on a journey toward a minimal waste lifestyle to save the planet, reduce a waste print, ensure a Future for all, and save the planet generally. However, in the other part of the Arctic zone, human mistakes and other non-excuses factors lead to the environmental catastrophe of the decades” (p. 19). This gives shape to the narrative that is put forward in the thesis.

4. *What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the sample method, data collection and data analysis appropriate?*

Comments:

The author identified almost 500 articles, more than 200 were analysed. As I suggested, the design of the research is very simple. The data analysis is correct although, again, not much is expected given the nature of the hypotheses.

5. *Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?*

Comments:

The findings refer to the research question. The conclusion does not discuss the contribution of the SCCT approach.

6. *Are the author’s thoughts distinguished unambiguously from the borrowed ideas?*

Comments:

The references are created in a correct style.

7. *Is the thesis containing original/innovative research (in terms of topic, approach, and/or findings)?*

Comments:

The topic is interesting and potentially significant. The approach is standard for this type of research. Some of the findings are relevant for the debate on environmental responsibility and its framing.

8. *What is the quality of style and other formal requirements?*

Comments:

The flow of the text is often interrupted with inserted subheadings (not in bold or italics). The paragraphs should also be better organized and linked together.

9. *Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.*

Comments:

10. *What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?*

Comments:

How would you reflect on your own value commitments in relation to the topic of your thesis?

11. *Declaration that the supervisor has read the result of the originality check in the system: [ ] Theses [ ] Turnitin [ ] Original (Urkund)*

Supervisor's comment on the originality check result:

Urkund did not indicate any major contravention.

Overall assessment of the thesis:

The thesis does not stake out very ambitious aims. The research design is simple and the course of research action is standard and unproblematic. It does provide some significant insights. Although the findings are not very surprising, I think that it is a sufficient output for the level of MA studies.

*(Please, state clearly whether the thesis is or is not recommended for a defence and write the main reasons for the recommendation).*

Proposed grade: C

*(A- B: excellent, C-D: very good, E: good, F: fail)*

Date:

Signature: