

**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: Weisman, Jakob

**Thesis title:** Transitional Journalism as a Practice in the Balkans: Media Coverage Analysis in the Kosovo-Serbia Conflict

**Reviewer:**

Surname and given name: Brisku, Adrian

Affiliation: Institute of International Studies (IMS, FSV)

**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): Jakob largely pursued the same research objectives, methodology and thesis structure as initially set out in the research proposal. The only change (which he explains in the methodological part) was that of expanding the timeframe of the media coverage that he analyzes.

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

COMMENTARY (description of thesis content and the main problems): In this thesis, Jakob sets to establish whether there are transitional journalism (TJ) practices and frames in the writings and thinking of journalists in Kosovo, and they are mainly: 8 Kosovan Albanians, one Serbian from Serbia (he was unable to interview a Kosovan Serbian, not for the lack trying on his part) and one Albanian journalist from Albania. These journalists work and report for local and regional media outlets (there is a rare typo rendering Albanian language media outlet a Serbian language), and consequently have been covering the ongoing tensions between Serbia and Kosovo.

As such, Jakob has written a highly elegant master thesis on practices of transitional journalism (TJ) in contemporary Kosovo with a pertinent theoretical framework and methodological apparatus that allowed him to critically assess the existing state of the art as well as analyze his collected primary sources: mainly the contents of published newspaper articles (59) and the interviews that he conducted with their authors (10). The empirical research is of a very high quality and sound despite the fact, as Jakob acknowledges, that more interviews of journalists who had written more articles would have been desirable. However, given the

possibilities on the ground and the time limitation of the MA, this is understandable. Jakob did select appropriately and used correctly a mixed-methods methodology: qualitative (semi-structured interviews) and quantitative (within the perspective/theory of framing, he measured the frequency of the use of 8 frames of TJ). Jakob convincingly concludes that both TJ practices and framing are part of 'Kosovo's mediascape,' though with the eight frames that he identifies (formal accountability, educational, activist, reconciliation, self-censorship, retributory justice, historical accounting, promoting victim's rights), being able to measure their frequency, he established, confirming with the findings in the existing state of the art that formal accountability was the most dominant frame. Thus in his measurement of the frames, it had a higher frequency. This argument/conclusion, nevertheless, allowed him to make a large point that the presence of all eight frames reflect a reality of a post-conflict transitional society, as the Kosovan one, whereby the feableness of Kosovo's institutions, including those of justice, often induces journalists take it upon themselves a 'double or extended role,' of going beyond just 'formal accountability.' Still, formal accountability prevails. In this light, the thesis is not entirely original as some authors such as Sweeney et al (2020) have researched the case of Kosovo's TJ. However, its originality stands in its use of mixed methods, allowing Jakob to complement and confirm Sweeney et al's findings.

### 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	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):

The thesis is logically structured, with appropriate chapters, headings and subheadings as well as it is clearly and convincingly argued. It deploys relevant academic terminology and it is cited and quoted in conformity with the quotation standards. The thesis has a very good academic writing style, syntax and grammar (in some occasions, though, he has forgotten to delete double full stops at the end of some sentences). Textual lay-outing and appendices are appropriate.

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

**This a solid thesis with strengths in it having clear research questions and convincing findings/arguments, use of appropriate/relevant conceptual and methodological frameworks, and adding valuable knowledge to the still underresearched topic in the Western Balkans. The only weakness, some of which Jakob acknowledges himself as limitations in the use of mixed methods, is that of being unable (because of a lack of the Serbian language) to analyse such framings in the Kosovan Serbian mediascape.**

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

5.1	Given that the analysis of the Kosovan Serbian mediascape was not possible to do, to what extent are you able to infer that the practices there differ or are similar to the Kosovan Albanian one?
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	There is a 19 % similarity. However, there is no plagiarism as this percentage is connected to the direct quotations and/or titles of the sources used in the thesis.
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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:

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.*