

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: Weizman Jakob

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

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 are in line with 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. The changes regarding the title and the analyzed time period reflect the change in the dynamics of tensions between the ethnic communities in Kosovo. Thus, the little alterations from the research proposal - explained in detail on pages 32-35 - are logical, relevant, well argued and to the benefit of the thesis.

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	B
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	B

COMMENTARY (description of thesis content and the main problems): Jakob Weizman submitted an impressive thesis on transitional journalism (TJ) in the case of post-conflict society in Kosovo. Theoretical and empirical literature are well presented and critically discussed in various facets, even though the presentation of the conclusions of the key literature (Andresen et al., 2017; Milojević & Krstić 2018 and Sweeney et al., 2020) goes to unnecessary too much detail before the author presents his own framework and approach to the empirical research. However, this does not mean that the theoretical framework is not well argued and applied in the empirical part, which handily combines two methods of quantitative (framing analysis) and qualitative (reconstruction interviews) analysis to test/verify/revise the previous research on transitional journalism (in Kosovo), while the author is aware of the limitations of his research. Despite the well conducted research and overall sound argumentation, there are a few weaknesses to be discussed. Firstly, there is a little disturbance regarding the time period ("The sampling time frame extends primarily from July

3, 2023 to March 30, 2023, p. 38). Secondly, more important regarding the sampling is the link to research questions which are addressing "the extent" of TJ practices used amongst Kosovo journalists; how is this extent measured and what is it related to? This seems not to be clear enough. Thirdly, another issue is "self-censorship" which is not only identified as "practice" covered through the qualitative research based on the interviews but as "frame" in the quantitative analysis as well. Fourthly, the quality of the conclusion with highlighting the contribution of the conducted research to academic knowledge - especially in relation to the previous research on transitional journalism in Kosovo - could be more persuasive.

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	B
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 has a logical structure, a very high level of argumentation quality using appropriate academic terminology and conforms to quotation standards. Jakob Weizman presented an outstanding thesis regarding stylistics of his academic writing style. The number of typos is limited and not disturbing. The quality of the textual lay-outing is fine and appendices are sufficient.

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

Jakob Weizman presented an overall impressive thesis on a topic he is well familiar with. He was able to conduct interviews in Pristina with 10 journalists reflecting on the sample of 59 texts, handily mixing qualitative (thematic analysis of reconstruction interviews) and quantitative (framing analysis of texts by the respective interview partners) research, showing ability to analyze the material, discuss the results in the context of relevant theoretical and empirical literature and address limitations of his research as transparently as possible. He proved to be able to conduct an academic research on a very high level, including fine academic writing style. However, there are some points to be addressed at the defence of the thesis (see point 5).

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

5.1	"Self-censorship" in no doubt a journalistic practice. However, the author identified it as a frame as well in his quantitative research. Could he please explain it in more detail? Why is it a separate category next to "Reconciliation", "Historical Accounting", "Promotion of Victims' Rights" or "Formal Accountability"?
5.2	The author conducted interviews with 10 journalists who were open to participate at his research and analyzed the sample of 59 texts they were willing to discuss. Does he think it is enough to cover all facets of applied (transitional) journalism? How would/could another samples (journalists, articles) possibly change the results and conclusions? Does he believe the results would be the same if he conducted interviews with more ethnic Serbian journalists (representing a clear minority in Kosovo, but a clear majority in North Kosovo)?
5.3	The research question addresses "the extent" of TJ practices used amongst Kosovo journalists; how is this extent measured and what is it related to?
5.4	Regarding the results of the research, could the author present the contribution of his study in more detail; what is the contribution of his study in relation to the previous research on transitional journalism in Kosovo (Andresen et al., 2017; Milojević & Krstić 2018 and Sweeney et al., 2020)?

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 score of 19 % overall similarity by Turnitin does not indicate any problems after a detailed check. The thesis is original, conforming to quotation standards. The antiplagiarism tool of theses.cz identifies just 2 % of overall similarity.
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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: 1. 9. 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.