

**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: Emilia Söderholm

**Thesis title:** One year with the Foreign Espionage Act: Implications to the Freedom of Press in Sweden

**Reviewer:**

Surname and given name: Barbora Součková

Affiliation: ICSJ FSS CHU

**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):

Emilia Söderholm's thesis adheres to the main research objectives set out in the approved 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	B
2.2	Ability to critically evaluate and apply the literature	B
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	A

**COMMENTARY** (description of thesis content and the main problems):

**Theoretical framework:** The theoretical part deals with concepts that are relevant to the chosen main topic of this diploma thesis. The author uses high quality academic literature which acts as a solid theoretical basis for her own research. The author supports her theoretical review with a reflection of current research and illustrates it with particular examples from regions around the world. Despite this, the theoretical part of the thesis is sometimes superficial and would definitely deserve a more detailed and deeper elaboration of some concepts and, above all, a critical reflection on them. At the same time, it would be beneficial to include other topics (e.g. objectivity and its role in journalism) or additional literature sources (such as the Worlds of Journalism Study). The author proves her ability to work critically with literature, but the reflection could also have been more profound.

**Methodology:** The methodology part of the thesis is developed thoroughly and serves as a robust basis for the analysis itself. The chosen method of semi-structured interviews would have deserved more theoretical anchoring; on the other hand, the author reflects in very detail on all the steps she took in the proces of data collection and the own analysis. In the appendices she also provides an example of the analysis and coding

process. The transparency and theoretical reflection on the validity and reliability of the research must be appreciated.

Analysis and conclusions: The analysis itself reflects the high quality methodological framework that the author prepared for her research. It is clear that the author has demonstrated the ability to apply the methods correctly and to draw conclusions from them. I appreciate the presentation of the results of the analysis, which are logically organized and described clearly and in detail within the chapters according to the individual themes that emerged from the thematic analysis. Moreover, the results are interesting and beneficial for the field of journalism. The author then reflects on the findings in the "Discussion" chapter, where she demonstrates her ability to reflect on her own research, including its limitations.

### 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	B
3.2	Quality of the argumentation	B
3.3	Appropriate use of academic terminology	B
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)	C
3.6	Quality of the textual lay-outing and appendices	B

(\*) 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):

Overall, the thesis is logically structured; in the theoretical part, allocating some topics into separate chapters would be beneficial. Moreover, it would be worthwhile to include a separate chapter that would present the theoretical frameworks discussed in the context of the Swedish media landscape and its specificities (the author does include different national specificities from different regions, which is confusing at times, and it would be better to emphasize the Swedish media field directly). Some of the information in the text is repetitive and redundant, especially in the introductions of individual chapters, and instead acts as "stuffing"; the text could stand without it.

The author has proved her ability to apply academic terminology. Still, the overall use of the academic writing style of the thesis could be on a higher level (the author uses phrases from colloquial language or journalism, which is inappropriate for an academic text). In terms of grammar, the text is free of significant errors.

The precision with which the author adheres to the quotation standard, using it correctly and precisely, must be appreciated.

The editing of the thesis format and lay-outing could be more accurate.

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

**Emilia Söderholm presented her original thesis, "One Year with the Foreign Espionage Act: Implications to the Freedom of Press in Sweden". The chosen topic deals with a current and urgent issue that is important to address academically and reflect on through the research. The one presented by Emilia Söderholm brings interesting conclusions that are definitely beneficial for the journalistic field. Perhaps the only limitation is that the author's research was carried out shortly after the Foreign Espionage Act came into force in Sweden, as it has been shown that no cases have been influenced by this law yet. However, this study has also shown that the law has a real impact on the work of journalists, especially on decision-making and editorial policy, which is hugely worrying when we are experiencing the global decline of democracy, caused by various influences. One of the main findings is, that journalists perceive this law negatively and mention the practices of self-censorship and influence on the content, topics or reflection they give to certain topics, which is also alarming. Thus, this thesis serves as a first mapping of the perception of this law among journalists; it would certainly be interesting to replicate this research over, in more extended time period and with a larger sample of journalists.**

Given the strengths and objections to this thesis outlined above, I suggest a grade of A-B, depending on the defence.

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

5.1	As a journalist working in Sweden, do you feel the impact of this law on your work?
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 similarities are mainly in direct quotations or in the thesis template.
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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: 7. 9. 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.*