

Report

Master's Thesis

“The Journalistic Culture in Ukraine in Times of Conflict.

A critical analysis of the coverage of English-language media in
Ukraine about the *Ukrainian Crisis* and the *War in Donbass*“

by

Isabel Lerch

Academic style

In the submitted thesis, direct quotations and paraphrased passages have been given the corresponding source information. The literature also appears extensively researched with a large number of publications (more than 100 entries). An additional glossary completes the work.

Outline / Theory / Methods

The structure of the work is clear and comprehensible as well as appropriate to the object of investigation in its complexity and based on a scientifically accepted approach. The individual questions and (working) hypotheses have been specified and systematically derived from the theoretical reflections.

The theoretical foundations have been extensively examined and presented with references to current literature. The second chapter, which contains a lot of context information, also proves to be valuable. Thus, without naming it explicitly, an attempt is also made to understand communication studies as an integrative science while using Political Science references and references to Area Studies, which are indispensable for analyzing research questions in the field of international / intercultural of communication studies.

Ambitious, refreshing and well-based is the attempt to synthesize Media Studies (esp. war and conflict reporting, journalism cultures), Postcolonial Studies and Post-Soviet Studies.

The discussion surely represents only first steps due to formal restrictions of this kind of qualification work, but has the potential for further investigations.

The choice of a qualitative content analysis as a methodological approach must be judged to be rather ambiguous for this work. For the analysis of mechanisms of war and crisis reporting as well as the question of post soviet postcolonialism, it seems appropriate. For the study and the comparison of journalism cultures rather less, since here at best through the journalistic texts (and not by interviews) interpretations of journalistic peculiarities can be made. However, the author herself thoroughly and independently reflects these aspects and methodological shortcomings.

The volume of data, its collection, the periods of data sampling as well as the operationalization are to be considered as appropriate. Nevertheless, the restriction to opinion pieces - as done by the author (p. 83f.) - can be criticized. Longer reports in the media could at best have offered a broader range of actors and their positions and opinions, and made further assessments of post-colonialism aspects visible.

Description & Analysis

The analysis itself is systematically oriented towards the core issues of the work and has produced a number of interesting findings. These correspond with previously available research results (aspects of war reporting, journalism cultures) or question them in a differentiated way (post-colonialism). Hence, the matching of theoretical aspects and gathered empirical data is appropriate. The idea of a constant need for a sensitization to historical or post-colonial contexts and media-transported images and positions was underpinned by the work and can be understood as a permanent appeal to daily journalistic practice.

Language, Information Representation, Formal Aspects

The work is fluently readable and generally accessible in understanding. Writing and argumentation style are based on a scientific approach. Despite of the qualitative approach, it would have been interesting to occasionally find some information on the frequencies of the different analysis aspects in the sample. This also applies to the background information on the individual authors of the opinion pieces in the two media examined.

The citations via footnotes should always be separated with a comma in the text, and several sources should be taken under a single footnote.

Moreover, the submitted thesis was tested with the plagiarism software *turnitin*.

Overall Evaluation

Despite the limitations mentioned above, the submitted thesis can be rated 1.3 (very good) in the overall assessment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dirk-C. Ulrich", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Dr. Dirk-Claas Ulrich