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REPORT

By Member of the Dissertation Committee on the
Dissertation of

NIGMATULLINA Kamilla on the theme:

“Professional Journalism Culture in Modern Russia,”

Submitted in conformity with the requirements for the

candidate degree in Doctor of Political Science

Specialisation 10.01.10 – Journalism

Having read the doctoral dissertation of Kamilla Nigmatullina in the English-language version, I am ready to offer a series of observations and draw conclusions concerning the academic quality of the work. The thesis concerns the evolution of journalism in Russia from a contemporary (21st century) practical and a theoretical perspective. Nigmatullina articulates the focus as seeking to understand the evolving and transforming (technological, individual and institutional) trends and processes underway in the culture, practice and perception of Russian journalism in the 21st century. It employs and blends different academic disciplines, such as journalism, sociology and communication studies. This thesis employs a rich set of Russian and foreign academic literature on the topics, plus an impressive set of interviews and surveys with different stakeholders.

This thesis in general is a remarkable feat of academic endeavour that is well considered and executed by Nigmatullina of this relatively highly stereotyped and often misunderstood professional community and creative activity, especially by foreign researchers and observers. The structure of the thesis is logical and maintains a good flow for the reader. Furthermore, the actual topic, method and approach are all very well described and justified in the very beginning of the thesis.

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The thesis displays a balanced and well-considered approach to realising the aims and goals that are stated. Certainly, the table of contents and structure of the thesis is intricate and complex, which is having its own strengths and weaknesses. An obvious strength is the ability to cover the highly complex and intricate structure of the method and approach employed by the candidate. A weakness is that this complexity can create an overly visually (and cognitively) complex structure that confronts the reader that requires much more time to absorb and digest the wealth of information and make sense of it.

In addition to the doctoral thesis, Nigmatullina has accumulated a very impressive number of published scientific articles and attended a staggering amount of academic conferences and events. For this significant accomplishment, she is to be highly commended. This thesis, in addition to the considerable review of foreign and Russian academic literature also brought a significant amount of original research data through the various interviews and surveys conducted. The method, theory and approach are all extensively explained, discussed and justified for the reader. They make sense, and the scientific work can be replicated as a result. A number of visuals throughout the thesis are used effectively to support the massive amounts of text, by summarising these large textual parts in manageable bites.

In addition to the rightful praise, some criticism needs to be articulated, although within the spirit of constructive criticism. There are some issues or problems with the thesis, but they are relatively minor in nature. The English language is somewhat problematic in places, which seems to be owed to the quality of the translation. A number of observable awkward translations appear throughout the text, for example on page 31 – “are the core disciplines INTEGRANT (integral) to this profession.” Page 45, “This disbalance (imbalance) in research ...” Page 64



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"Hullin (Hallan) and Mancini (other names also appear with different spelling, such as C or K Mellado – C. is correct), page 82 "editorial stuff (staff) ... thesis published in 19861" and other various such similar language errors. On page 113 there is repeated text in point 3. At other points, wording is awkward or inaccurate. For example, this is an academic thesis and not a "paper". An inaccurate and awkward term used on numerous occasions to describe the thesis work, exact terminology is important. Other times, slight inaccuracies, such as on page 16 stating that Boris Lozovsky and Vladimir Oleshko were from Moscow State University, when they are from Ural Federal University. On page 99, the "paper" of Jukka Pietilainen is in fact his doctoral thesis. Page 181, it is not exactly clear what is meant by "western-minded product." Another observation, which is a matter of format, is the style of the conclusion. As a formal academic work, bullet-point style is not really appropriate.

A last point of criticism to engage in refers to a rather low level of integration of exact key academic literature being used to place the significance of the empirical data collected to illustrate and locate the convergence or divergence of the findings in chapter three. There is of course evidence of an attempt at this but mainly in the form of select key authors, but greater interpretive conceptual and theoretical value would be from specific key literature.



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Not intended as criticism, but rather as additional points to consider, I encourage Kamilla Nigmatullina to consider the following. There was I believe a rather watershed moment in Russian journalism culture and professionalism experienced in the transition from the Yeltsin administration to the Putin administration (especially approximately during 2000-2004). This not only concerns Russian journalists, but also foreign journalists operating in Russia. As an example, I interviewed the head of Reuters in Moscow during this time, and it was admitted that the topic of Chechnya was avoided in order to not receive phone calls. Also, I remember the absolute lack of solidarity that you speak of, which became sharper owing to the political environment of the time. One phrase that has stuck in my mind was the discussion about the "inner slave" (psychological/cognitive) of Russian journalism that implied a certain level of cultural and professional conditioning.

In summary, the thesis covers a relatively understudied and undertheorized, but also in correcting misperceptions and assumptions subject within the wider field of Russian journalism and de-westernised journalism studies. The strengths of the work far outweigh the weaknesses of it. This work contributes to a deeper theoretical and empirical understanding of the nature of contemporary culture and professionalism in contemporary Russian journalism, and its theoretical and practical evolution.



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The dissertation meets the basic requirements established by Order No. 6821/1 of 1 September 2016, "On the Procedure for Awarding Academic Degrees at Saint Petersburg State University," the candidate Nigmatullina Kamilla deserves the award of the scientific degree of Candidate of Political Science in the speciality 10.01.10. – Journalism. Clause 11 of the aforementioned Order by the author of the thesis is not broken.



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05.07.2021

Member of the Dissertation Council

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University, Sweden, Associate Professor Greg Simons