



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Marika Pianese

Title: The unintended metamorphosis of Political Islam in Egypt: Al Azhar, Salafism and Muslim Brotherhood

Programme/year: ISSA/2020

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Jan Daniel

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	15
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	20
<i>Total</i>		80	42
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	9
	Style	5	5
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	19
TOTAL		100	61



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis takes an interesting approach to the often-studied topic of transformation of Islamist movements in the contemporary Middle East by focusing on three different approaches within the Egyptian Political Islam. The traditional focus on Muslim Brotherhood is thus enhanced by looking on the representatives of the official “state” Islam and politicization of Salafi currents. The thesis is in result able to come to some interesting insights and conclusions while comparing their diverging fortunes in post Mubarak era.

Unfortunately, the thesis also suffers from some major shortcomings. First of all, although the conceptual chapter spends few pages with discussing the notion of Political Islam, its usage throughout the thesis is quite unclear and used in different part for ideology, actor or a vague label of certain discourse. This leads to some unclear and misleading statements. There are also minor slippages in using of some other key terms as well as big, rather unsubstantiated claims resulting from unclear wording.

Second, the theoretical background of the thesis as sketched in the part discussing the issue of relations between different Islamist actors and the state should have been developed much more. While it currently discusses some important contributions to the study of Islamist actors and the concept of moderation, it is less clear how these will structure the actual empirical investigation.

Third, the lack of proper theoretical background and argument also contribute to the fact that the empirical part of the thesis seems unfocused. This results in somewhat chaotic narration which is on the one hand clearly structured in successive time periods, but on the other, discusses slightly different things in each case (foreign funding, relation with the regime, internal struggles etc.).

Minor criteria:

I don't have any major reservation regarding the major criteria, and I would like to note that the title of the thesis slightly changed with my approval. My only minor reservation here is that the thesis could use more up-to-date academic sources (it uses rather more think tank and journalistic reports which is definitely fine) and that the literature review should have been written in more polemical manner in order to clearly show the contribution of the thesis.



**FACULTY
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**
Charles University

Overall evaluation:

The evaluated thesis tackles an important and highly interesting issue of transformation of different Political Islam currents in Egypt following the Arab Spring. While the overall approach to the topic, its framing and number of partial observations are to be commended, the quality of the resulting text is hampered by unclear usage of key concepts, lack of proper theoretical framework and unfocused empirical chapters. Nevertheless, I believe that despite these issues, the thesis manages to bring some interesting insights on the studied topic and proves the writing skills of the student.

Suggested grade: D

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dana'.