



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Alžběta Kvasničková

Title: Urbanism and Authoritarian Resilience: Preventing Popular Uprisings in Egypt

Programme/year: Security Studies 2024

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Jaroslav Weinfurter, PhD

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	<b>10</b>	8
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	<b>30</b>	24
	Methodology, analysis, argument	<b>40</b>	32
<i>Total</i>		<b>80</b>	64
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	<b>10</b>	10
	Style	<b>5</b>	5
	Formal requirements	<b>5</b>	4
<i>Total</i>		<b>20</b>	19
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	83



## Evaluation

### Major criteria:

- Research question is clearly stated and further explicated, but not fitted into a broader research problem as a way of clarifying its importance/relevance and the eventual contribution.
- Theoretical and conceptual framework is satisfactorily explicated on a piece-by-piece basis, but more effort would be necessary to tie all concepts into a single analytical framework working towards set objective(s).
- Methodological aspects of the work are outlined, but underdeveloped. More thorough explication of data sources is needed for the kind of systemic macro-structural analysis that the work sets out to undertake.

### Minor criteria:

- All stylistic and formal aspects meet the standards expected for work at this level of study. The work's use of literature is extensive (although not exhaustive) and the sources used are relevant. Stylistic and grammatical issues are occasionally present.

### Assessment of plagiarism:

- Turnitin analysis shows a 29% match. Upon closer inspection, highlighted sections, for the most part, pick out external literary sources which are appropriately referenced by the author.

### Overall evaluation:

The submitted thesis, authored by Alžběta Kvasničková, adopts a rather unconventional approach to the study of authoritarian resilience which she grounds in the (authoritarian) politics of space and urban design. In focusing on the ongoing post-revolutionary urban projects in Egypt's capital city (cities), the work systematically uncovers the political and security dimensions of architectural and/or urban forms whilst showcasing their varied uses over time as instruments of both (bio-)political control and revolutionary struggle.



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The thesis develops a comprehensive analytical framework that is well-fitted for the author's objectives – to explore *“how do urban design, architectural form, and a set of regulations regarding the everyday experience of living in Cairo (what Foucault refers to as the security dispositif) contribute to the mechanisms of political repression of the current military regime in Egypt?”* By making an appropriate use of a number of concepts brought together under a well-adjusted Foucauldian framework, the work delivers not only a solid argument, but also a rich and convincing insight into the politics of regime resilience and urban security.

The weaker points of the thesis can, in my view, be almost all ascribed to the general pacing of the argument, which comes across as quite rushed, and to some missed opportunities whose inclusion would have grounded the discussion and tied it together more effectively. These include the following issues:

- The thesis would benefit from a more comprehensive introduction that would address the broader research “problem” (not merely the “question”) – “why” is the research necessary and what does it tell us?
- The work should also take better care to set up some of the basic premises and to make a more thorough demonstration and application of some of its key concepts. How exactly is architecture used for the control of spaces and people? How did Mubarak use urbanism to remain in power? Or how have urban forms mapped onto revolutionary practices? The author is aware that these questions are “logically entangled” (p. 10) with Sisi’s post-revolutionary practices, but their omission creates (1) the analytical problem of not having a properly established links between political power and urbanism in Egypt; and (2) a narrational problem with the aspect of “authoritarian learning” which the thesis makes a point of setting up – what specifically is being “learned” and in what specific regards/areas does Sisi’s urbanism course-correct? A more detailed before-after analysis would be needed in order to clarify these matters.
- The previous point is also relevant for methodological reasons - which specific aspects of urbanism and which specific urban areas are relevant for the work’s focus? While the thesis uses valid examples to make its point(s), their selection feels rather random and cherry-picked to align with author’s objectives.



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Overall, the work handles the set tasks competently. It provides a lucid analysis of Egypt's use of architecture and urbanism for the purposes of security and regime resilience-building. It is well-written and, despite the above mentioned shortcomings, builds a legitimate argument. I thereby move to recommend the submitted thesis for defence.

Suggested question for defence:

- What has Sisi's regime learned from past forms of Egyptian urbanism and how has it adjusted its policy (e.g. via its Ministry of Housing, its collaboration with UN Habitat, etc.)

**Suggested grade:**

B (83%)

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. W. S.', written in a cursive style.