

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Title of the thesis:	Turkey as growing regional power. Strengths and limitations
Author of the thesis:	A.Aliyev
Referee (incl. titles):	M.Riegl

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the 5 numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

1) Theoretical background:

The submitted paper is framed within major IR theories, namely traditions of realism and liberalism. This is definitely a good starting point, however deeper insight to these schools of thought would be beneficial. What I am missing is for example distinction between offensive and defensive versions of realism. On the other side I do appreciate a conceptualization of the term hegemon which is closely linked to systemic cluster of theories of regionalism (particularly realistic tradition), here again it would be nice to provide more theoretical discussion on regional hegemony, as there are various academic concepts of regional hegemony (e.g. cooperative hegemon etc.). Secondly, regional hegemon may play rather variable roles in the region and may be approached by other states within regional security framework in many different ways. E.g. other states may perceive a regional power as a threat to regional security (either due to his coercive foreign policy or potentially internal instability) and thus align against him, a guarantee of security (bandwagon), or may be perceived as a strategic competitor by other aspiring regional powers.

The paper's RQ is clearly defined, the same may be said about four hypotheses, which are not answered satisfactory enough in the conclusion. Also my impression is that theoretical framework of the paper is completely decoupled from the empirical analysis.

2) Contribution:

I like an author's attempt to conduct both qualitative and quantitative analysis of Turkey's potential and limits of regional power ambitions. Measuring economic and military potential (post-coup purges in the army should also be considered as a factor which diminished the role of the army and weakened it in general) is definitely relevant. What I do miss are non-material attributes of regional power. It may be either a strategic vision of political elites, willingness to act, or simply a soft-power. There are not many things I do not disagree with author on, but there some. When he says that Turkey is economically superior in comparison to other countries in the region, he considers the overall size of the economy only, however it does have a little explanatory value about power potential. It also contradicts with chapter 3.5, where author argues about the current economic crisis which hit the country. E.g. Saudi Arabia which is far smaller in terms of population size has almost similar size of economy. Secondly considering overall population of country (83 mio. people), design of compulsory military service (men at the age between 21 – 41), I highly doubt that overall manpower is 35 mln. Thirdly I am not sure about the precision of presented data on military expenditures. Lastly I am not persuaded that the level of democracy is having such a strong impact on Ankara's attractiveness for other countries in the region, I would rather questions author's argument that consolidated democracy was a role model for regional regimes.

There is nothing particularly wrong about the thesis, but its overall impression is that the thesis provides rather limited value added, reads like a textbook and is not particularly innovative. Sorry for harshness of this comment.

3) Methods:

Use of qualitative and quantitative approach is satisfactory.

4) Literature:

Selected theoretical literature is relevant, what I miss are seminal works on regionalism and regional powers of S.Cohen, L.Fawcett etc.

5) Manuscript form:

The paper meets all formal criteria, but additional proofreading would be helpful. Standard of language is satisfactory but not excellent one. Time to time it's difficult what the authors is saying, terms such as spend instead of spending are used throughout the thesis.

Suggested questions for the defence are:

I recommend the thesis for final defence. I recommend the following grade: "...".

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20 points)</i>	14
<i>Contribution (max. 20 points)</i>	14
<i>Methods (max. 20 points)</i>	15
<i>Literature (max. 20 points)</i>	15
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20 points)</i>	12
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100 points)	70
The proposed grade (A-B-C-D-E-F)	C-D

DATE OF EVALUATION: 8th August 2019

Referee Signature