

Review

Aghayar Aliyev: Turkey as a growing regional power? Strengths and limitations. Master Thesis, Institute of Political Sciences, Prague, 2019. 59 p.

The author attempted to examine the role of Turkey as regional power within the Middle Eastern region. He tries to define the very term regional power and provides several IR schools concepts of foreign policy. The author's research look through the transformation of Turkey from regional state to imaged regional power under AKP rules.

From structural point of view, the text keeps balance between the theoretical part as well as practical application. Starting from Chapter 3, the author provides with comprehensive analysis of economic, military and geopolitical power of Turkey in the region and, in this way, moving towards the practical issues. However, in this case, theoretical part is only weakly reflected and linked to practical analysis.

Looking at each chapter more thoroughly, the economic overview, even if showing deep knowledge of the topic, moves partly the text away from the main topic of the thesis (subchapters 3.1. and 3.2.). Despite the importance of internal policy, the text does not link it (at least in some conclusion) with the position of Turkey within the region and as regional power. In addition, the figures mentioned by the author are from 2016, while more recent data (available at least for 2017 and even 2018) would make the paper more topical.

The chapter about military power the author poses several questions (p. 34) that could have been answered at least partly in the text to discuss and support main arguments of the thesis. Again, the lack of linkage with theoretical part substantially downgrades the text.

Geopolitical part (Chapters 5 and 6) is the closest to the text within the International Relations discipline. Here, the author finally proves the development of Turkey at the international scene from regional state to regional power. However, even in this case, highly positivistic and descriptive approach prevails.

Finally, the conclusion remains the quintessence of the main author's problem throughout the text. It summarizes the practical part of the text, while the text does not answer the main research questions from the text.

In general, the author wrote the text that fits rather to Area studies than Political Science/International Relations theories. He presents his analytical skills which is far from being exhaustive, nevertheless, it brings comprehensive and balanced view of the problem (albeit sometime more descriptive than analytical). Unfortunately, due to weak linkage between theoretical and analytical parts as well as several above-mentioned critical remarks I have to downgrade the evaluation to 83%.

Questions to the author:

- Does Turkish leadership behave rather in Realistic or Neo-realistic manner in its foreign policy. Or could you see another approach (or even no theoretical approach) in building its image as regional power?

- Could the author include more personal factor into the foreign policy implementation. In which aspects is the personality of R. T. Erdoğan reflected in Turkish foreign policy (including some concrete example/s)?
- Could the author define Russian-Turkish relations in broader way than a situational analysis provided in the text. In which aspects this vector of Turkish foreign policy (in the context of Middle Eastern region) could be considered as long-term and steady? Which factors might become obstacle for such partnership?

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. Horak', is positioned to the right of the text. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Prague, September 3, 2019