

Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with the relationship between two regional powers in the Middle East – Iran and Saudi Arabia. Middle East is a conflict-prone region with a delicate balance of power. We work with the assumption that a specific combination of internal and external factors caused the rise of Iran as a regional power. The balance of power in the Middle East has thus changed and Iran has started to pose a threat to Saudi Arabia that needs to be balanced. First, we analyze the theoretical concepts of power and region in international relations and subsequently we propose a definition of a regional power. The theory of balance of threat by Stephen M. Walt is used as a framework for the analysis of the Iranian threat. Last chapter of this thesis is devoted to three case studies. Here, we analytically describe particular examples of Iranian threat and its balancing by Saudi Arabia in Bahrain, Yemen and Lebanon.