

Soft power in international relations-Case study of China's foreign policy
towards the Visegrad Group countries
2012-2022

Summary

The purpose of the dissertation is to understand and explain the motives, goals, assumptions and specifics of China's use of soft power in its foreign policy towards the Visegrad Group countries, i.e. Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 2012-2022, and in the broader international context of the superpower's policy towards the Central and Eastern European region. The work is divided into four chapters, the first of which deals with the basic differences between soft power in American and Chinese terms. The second chapter deals with the importance of the Visegrad Group countries in the context of the strategic objectives of Chinese foreign policy. In the third chapter to clarify what Chinese institutions and decision-makers have a key influence on the formulation of Chinese soft power an attempt was made to analyze the complex organizational structure and operating principles of Chinese party and state institutions. The fourth chapter analyzes the basic methods of applying Chinese soft power in the Visegrad countries: economic diplomacy, scientific and educational policy, which consists of cooperation with scientific institutions and technology companies, and the activities of Confucius Institutes. In accordance with the paradigm of methodological pluralism, the following research methods were used in the study: comparative, lexical, statistical, systemic analysis, institutional-legal and various types of political explanations.

China's foreign policy in the Central and Eastern European region is presented in the context of China's relations with the European Union, Russia and the US. From the perspective of Trine Flockhart's concept of "multiple orders." The relations of the Middle Kingdom with the Visegrad Group countries are significantly influenced by:

- political and economic cooperation of the "Belt and Road" order with the Eurasian order,
- economic cooperation of the "Belt and Road" order with the European liberal order,
- political and economic conflict of the "Belt and Road" order with the American liberal order.

The assessment of the effects of 10 years of Chinese soft power on the Visegrad countries took into account the lack of the assumed effects of economic cooperation, a series of corruption scandals and the perception of China as an oppressive state and cooperating with Russia. Despite the impact of these negative factors, China's soft power model has shown effectiveness in Visegrad countries, as evidenced by the high public support for economic cooperation with China and the positive attitude of some political and economic elites. Their effect is to revive, after a period of stagnation, diplomatic, economic and trade contacts between the Visegrad Group countries and China in 2021-2022.