

TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

School of Business and Governance

Department of Law

Kristiin Elmat

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CHINA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN
EUROPE**

Bachelor's thesis

International Relations Programme

Supervisor: Ton Notermans, PhD

Tallinn 2019

I hereby declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors has been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading. The document length is 11 074 words from the introduction to the end of conclusion.

Kristiin Elmat

.....

(signature, date)

Student code: 164929TASB

Student e-mail address: kristiin.elmat@gmail.com

Supervisor: Antonius Johannes Hubertus Notermans, PhD:

The paper conforms to requirements in force

.....

(signature, date)

Chairman of the Defence Committee:

Permitted to the defence

.....

(name, signature, date)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	4
INTRODUCTION	5
1. SOFT POWER: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	9
1.1. Definition: Soft Power and Public Diplomacy	9
1.2. Measuring Soft Power	10
1.3. Data on public perception of China in European Union member states	11
1.4. Public diplomacy: the debate on its effectiveness	12
1.5. Soft power and public diplomacy: The Chinese way	15
1.6. Confucius Institutes	18
2. RELATION BETWEEN CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES AND PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF CHINA.....	20
2.1. Results	21
2.2. Findings	22
3. CASE STUDIES.....	23
3.1. Obstacles for China’s public diplomacy.....	25
3.2. Western Europe: Germany	26
3.2.1 Political relations	26
3.2.2 Economic ties	28
3.3. Southern Europe: Italy	29
3.3.1 Political relations: Chinese Immigrants and Italy’s Fashion Industry.....	29
3.3.2 Economic ties: Chinese Investments in Italy	30
3.4. Eastern Europe: Poland	30
3.4.1 Political relations: The Polish government seeking an ally in China	31
3.4.2. Economic ties: 16+1 Initiative as China’s East Entrance to Europe	32
3.5. Conclusion	33
CONCLUSION	34
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	36

ABSTRACT

As a rising power, the People's Republic of China has embraced public diplomacy in order to increase its soft power abroad. Its public diplomacy strategy is aimed at attracting and persuading foreign audiences and reasserting its image as a responsible international actor and a reliable economic partner. This thesis investigates how China conducts public diplomacy in Europe and whether it is effective in changing the audience's perception i.e. increasing its soft power. This thesis first aims to conceptualize soft power and public diplomacy, the debate surrounding public diplomacy's effectiveness, and Confucius Institutes in Europe as China's most prominent public diplomacy strategy. Since data acquired by opinion polls is the central way of assessing the effectiveness of public diplomacy, the quantitative part consists of four regression models analyzing the relationship between Confucius Institutes and perceptions of China which, in conclusion, show no correlation. Thus, the third continues with an examination of three case studies; Germany, Italy, and Poland, and seeks additional explanations for the perceptions in Europe's three macro regions. The key finding is that occasionally, hard power measures, alone or along with public diplomacy, might be more effective in creating soft power than public diplomacy alone.

Public Keywords: public diplomacy, effectiveness, soft power, hard power, China, Europe, Italy, Germany, Poland

INTRODUCTION

Since Joseph Nye coined the term “soft power” in International Relations it has mostly been applied to analyzing United States’ policies. Much has changed since then, and now there is another superpower on the rise aiming to become the new world leader. China is not planning to slow down its “peaceful rise” by any means and is increasingly implementing new policies to ensure that. Public diplomacy has become one of its main foreign policy tools to persuade and attract audiences to its “Chinese Dream” – a concept officially stated by the Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. The speech hinted at what is to come: theories from the Western world interpreted according to Chinese characteristics. Since then, China has actively engaged in keeping its “face,” dismissing criticism from the international arena, and developing public diplomacy efforts. (d’Hooghe 2015)

Polls have shown that whilst the US soft power is declining in certain countries, the perception of China is increasingly positive. (Kurlantzick 2007) China has realized that hard power “sticks and carrots” system will not support its “peaceful rise” strategy, thus implying the importance of soft power and an effective public diplomacy strategy. (Nye 2004) Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, China has found its way back to the roots of Confucianism, after being rooted out under Mao, and has invested \$2.8 billion into projects like the renovation of the Confucius Temple. (Peterson 2017) Further, using culture as a means to persuade and attract is a tool China has taken advantage of through establishing Confucius Institutes and Classrooms across the globe and Chinese backed news outlets. Today, there exists 548 Confucius Institutes altogether and 182 of them are situated in Europe with the “aim to promote Chinese language and culture in foreign countries” since 2004. (Confucius Institute Headquarters/Hanban n.d.)

The aim of this thesis is to inquire about the effectiveness of China’s public diplomacy in European Union (EU) member states. As China is believed to overtake/replace the United States as the world’s leading superpower, the EU struggles to find a balance between the status-quo preserving United States and a rising China. For China, the EU poses a strategic obstacle due to the different

political nature the countries have. Thus, public diplomacy is required to strengthen its soft power in the EU. Whether China is exercising its public diplomacy effectively in the EU or not will be discussed further in this thesis.

Power is, and has been, one of the core concepts of international relations with especially hard power being discussed amongst scholars for most part of history until Nye defined soft power. (Nye 2004) For China, it has never been as relevant as now to take advantage of soft power and to have an effective strategy to increase its sphere of influence in Europe. After all, Europe is one of the continents holding the lowest favorability rates of China. (Pew Research Center 2017) China has always emphasized the effectiveness and importance of bilateral agreements rather than multilateral ones, but in Europe one of China's obstacles for gaining influence lies in the EU's push for a common strategy towards China who has been defined as a rival recently. (European Commission 2019) Soft power strategies, on the other hand, give possibilities to build bilateral relations, persuade without punishments and thus, give an opportunity for China to influence without hard power.

The questions at the center of this research are the following:

- RQ1: How is China exercising public diplomacy as a tool to increase its soft power?
- RQ2: Are Chinese public diplomacy efforts effective in EU member states? Is there a correlation between Confucius Institutes, i.e. one of China's foremost public diplomacy efforts, and public perceptions of China in EU member states?
- RQ3: What other possible factors, besides Confucius Institutes, may explain the perceptions of China in EU member states?

The author has chosen a mixed method design as the most relevant type of methodology for this thesis. To best be able to research the topic, the most appropriate approach is exploratory design: the taxonomy development model. (Creswell, Clark 2007) In this design, the analyzing occurs in sequential timing i.e. at first, qualitative data is collected and analyzed. It is followed by collecting quantitative data in the second phase, in this case obtained from Pew (2017), and then analyzed on the basis of four regression models. The third sequence is again qualitative, three case studies in this case, to elaborate on the quantitative results obtained in phase two.

The paper is divided into three main sections. The first section will look at soft power as a theory, public diplomacy as a means to an end, and the history of Chinese public diplomacy. This part will

outline the term “soft power” as Nye put it forward which, simply, is the ability to attract and change behavior in accordance with one’s will through non-coercive means. A way of exercising soft power is through using assets, such as public diplomacy, to persuade people to follow your purpose. (Nye 2004) Essentially, China’s “charm offensive” began in 2002 with their notion of a “Peaceful Rise,” meaning China does not aspire to threaten any country whilst becoming the world’s global power. Already early on it realized its hard power limits and thus opted for developing a soft power strategy. (Kurlantzick 2007) Soft power was officially implemented as a strategy in China in 2007, but most noteworthy is that it was initiated by the Ministry of Culture and not the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus, underlining what role culture may have on foreign policy. (Courmont 2015)

In the second, empirical, section the author collects quantitative data for the four regression models with the aim to answer RQ2. The third, empirical, section seeks answer(s) to RQ3 through analyzing public perceptions of China in the European Union with the aim to identify the effective measures of China's public diplomacy efforts that seem to correlate with the change of member states' perceptions. As surveys show, the perception of China varies across EU member states – for some countries, the favorability rates have been volatile and for others, more stable. (Pew Research Center 2017) This thesis will choose three case studies since there is simply not enough space to study all of the EU member states included in the study. The number of three is explainable by Europe's three macro regions, thus the first case study will be of Germany, a Western European nation; the second case study will be of Italy, a Southern European nation; and the third case study will be of Poland, an Eastern European nation. This section will explore the underlying reasons for fluctuations in public perceptions of China within these countries.

The findings have shown little, if not zero, correlation between the number of CIs in a country and the public perceptions in the hosting countries. One could expect a higher number of CIs to promote an increasingly positive view of China, yet, as this thesis shows, the quantitative data cannot back that claim. Even if China is increasingly pumping billions into its public diplomacy efforts, they might not yield results as effective as hard power ‘carrots.’ This would be the case of Poland which sees Chinese investments as an opportunity to, for example, develop its infrastructure and trade with China. As for Italy, Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) goes a long way as well, whereas in Germany, ‘carrots’ are substantial but so are values like human rights.

The thesis will end by concluding that CI's, China's foremost public diplomacy strategy, is not an effective initiative to increase Europeans' favorability of China. Instead, 'carrots,' as defined to be a hard power tool, yield better results in increasing soft power than public diplomacy efforts.

1. SOFT POWER: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Power is something nation-states have fought innumerable wars over and still wish to acquire more and more of. Inherently, it “is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes you want.” Joseph S. Nye, Jr. distinguishes power into three categories: “sticks” i.e. punishment, “carrots” i.e. payments, and attraction which aims to influence others to want what you want. The former two are regarded as “hard power” whilst the latter is “soft power.” (Nye 2008)

1.1. Definition: Soft Power and Public Diplomacy

In his book “Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics,” Nye gives his contribution to the field of International Relations which is the term “soft power.” Nation-states have for centuries exercised what is called “hard power.” It is a way of obtaining one’s will through coercive ways such as military force and economic means and is often described as using “sticks and stones.” Soft power inherently works for the same cause – to reach desired outcomes, but the mechanism is different from hard power. It is the ability to attract and persuade others to do what you want. (Nye 2004)

“The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority.)” (Nye 2004) In the post-Cold War era, soft power was discussed in the context of United States domination. The US successfully gained legitimacy and influence abroad as the number of liberal democracies increased, people demanded human rights and free speech, and the number of free market capitalist economies more than doubled in 30 years. (Li 2018) Then, for a while again, the discussion on soft power moved towards whether it is becoming obsolete until the events of September 11, 2001. That was a turning point where public diplomacy became the center of attention in the global political environment. (Hayden 2011) But what is the difference between soft power and public diplomacy?

Persuasion and communicative tools can be used for political means, thus “public diplomacy is an instrument that governments use to mobilize these resources to communicate with and attract the publics of other countries, rather than merely their governments.” (Nye 2008) Nye sees information as power, which itself implies the importance of public diplomacy for nation-states. Public diplomacy is substantially about information and how nation-states use it in order to persuade the publics of other nations. And especially in democracies, public opinion does matter – the information age has brought power to for example a variety of global society activists, extremists, and criminal organizations who compete, for influence besides nation-states, over “whose story wins.” The aim of public diplomacy then is to influence public opinion positively through a state’s (foreign) policies. (Hayden 2011)

1.2. Measuring Soft Power

Hard power is quite easy to measure – you can get a clear number on how many military assets a nation holds, hard power is measurable physically. But when it comes to soft power, measuring becomes more difficult as it is intangible. Many scholars have argued for the inefficiency and faults in measuring soft power. (Lainevool 2015)

Ji (2017) states that when measuring the effectiveness of soft power tools, even if most of the emphasis it put on “subjects’ perceptions, affections, and behaviors towards soft power exerted by agents,” the “agents’ resources, capabilities and behaviors” should be taken into consideration as well. The aim of soft power is to influence the subjects’ perceptions, whilst public diplomacy gives the tools and abilities to manage it – thus, measuring perceptions for evaluating efficiency becomes clear. As a part of a nation’s efforts are about branding and image creating, such can be evaluated by “looking at visibility and valence in national image analysis.” (Ibid.) Visibility as in how much coverage the nation gets in the media and valence focuses on whether the visibility increases favorable views of the nation in question. This approach is common amongst professional research institutes such as Pew Research Center and Gallup International Polls. (Ibid.) Further, some more specific ways of measuring public diplomacy’s effectiveness might include the number of people from the subject’s country visiting the agents’ one, the number of exchange students, and the popularity of national events abroad. (Lainevool 2015)

1.3. Data on public perception of China in European Union member states

Data on perceptions is far from perfect as many variables might affect it, however, there is so far no better alternative to measure public perceptions, thus, the data for this thesis is gathered from Pew Global Attitudes Survey and BBC World Service Poll covering a large number of countries. Out of the EU member states, Pew has collected data for Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Pew asked the following from the participants: “please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of China.”

Data for Bulgaria exists only from 2007 when 44% of the recipients viewed China favorably. On the Czech Republic there is data from 2007, 2013, and 2014 with close to no difference in views of China with 35%, 33%, and 34% view China favorably respectively. France and Germany are a rather interesting case with data from each year between 2005-2017. Each year, the change in perception has been similar to the neighbor’s i.e. if public favorability of China has decreased in France, so has it in Germany as well, and the other way around. Exceptions are between 2012 and 2013 when in France the favorability slightly increased but decreased in Germany. For France, the highest percentage of favorability was in 2006 with 60%, and in Germany it was the same year with 56%. The lowest percentage of favorability was in for both countries in 2008 when it was 28% in France and 26% in Germany. Since then, the views have fluctuated but have not returned to the highs of 2006 anymore.

For some countries, such as Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Slovakia, and Sweden, there is limited data available. For others, more extensive data has been collected, which has also been one of the factors for the chosen case studies discussed in the third section of this thesis. The highest amount of favorability has been observed in the between 2005-2006 with 65% and the lowest has been observed in Germany, with 26% in 2008, and in Italy, with 26% in 2014. The full data is found in the table below.

Table 1. Favorability of China in the European Union measured in percentage.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Bulgaria	–	–	44	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Czech Republic	–	–	35	–	–	–	–	33	34	–	–	–	–
France	58	60	47	28	41	41	51	40	42	47	50	33	44
Germany	46	56	34	26	29	30	34	29	28	28	34	28	34
Greece	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	56	59	49	–	57	50
Hungary	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	45	38
Italy	–	–	27	–	–	–	–	30	28	26	40	32	31
Lithuania	–	–	–	–	–	–	52	–	–	–	–	–	–
Netherlands	56	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	47	49
Poland	37	–	39	33	43	46	51	50	43	32	40	37	42
Slovakia	–	–	45	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Spain	57	45	39	31	40	47	55	49	48	39	41	28	43
Sweden	–	–	43	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	37	41
United Kingdom	65	65	49	47	52	46	59	49	48	47	45	37	45

Source: Pew Research Center (2017)

1.4. Public diplomacy: the debate on its effectiveness

Public diplomacy has become increasingly relevant and a powerful tool to sway perceptions due to technological advancements, such as smartphones and social media, which have enabled subject to multiply their audience. As China aims to increase its global power, it has understood the necessity of public diplomacy as an instrument to achieve soft power. (d'Hooghe 2015) If soft power is seen as non-coercive, and public diplomacy is a part of it, then both must rely on the will of the audience. (Merickova 2013) This section will look into some of the obstacles for effective public diplomacy which might be reasons for why China's strategy is not winning the hearts and minds of Europe.

A nation that is applying its resources to increase its soft power must be careful if the nation's culture, political values, and foreign policies are not attractive, the situation can backfire. Thus, it implies that an effective strategy for public diplomacy is crucial for countries whom have a bad image already. If a liberal country is to project, for example, nudity to an overwhelmingly

conservative country, it may produce “repulsion rather than soft power.” (Nye 2008) The key to successful soft power “strategies” and outcomes depend more on the receiver than the applier. So, a state must acquire “credibility” in order to increase its soft power. If there is no credibility, i.e. a nation-state’s strategies are perceived as propaganda, the state has failed in its mission. (Nye 2011) Moreover, an agents’ image may depend much on the state-to-state relationship and whether the agent is regarded as an ally or an enemy in the subject country. If the agent is perceived as an enemy, then there is more incentive for the subject country to prevent the agents’ actions aimed at increasing its soft power. (Lainevool 2015)

Critics of soft power argue that the concept is rather vague and mostly, is a description of a part of hard power. States which are already strong in hard power, have thus the ability to exercise soft power more effectively. (Liaropoulos 2011) Hard power is a relatively easy and a quick way of making a country do something in favor of you which they would not otherwise do as the consequences, usually, are not meant to be pleasant. On the other hand, soft power tools can take much longer to show any effectiveness. As already mentioned, a state must acquire credibility in order to be able to pursue and attract other states, however, if a state is not attracted by the agent country, then there are really no other means that coercive one’s to make the subject country obey. (Kounalakis, Simonyi 2011) Denis MacShane (2013), the UK’s Minister for Europe from 2002 to 2005, claims that if soft power was effective, it would have yielded results by now. Instead what can be observed around the world is numerous conflicts with examples like Crimea (Ukraine) and Syria which are not far away from EU member states. (Ibid.) Further, acquiring credibility becomes difficult if the tool for soft power mainly comes straight from the government – on the contrary, it should stem from civil society. (Nye, 2013)

Public diplomacy’s eventually is aimed at changing public opinion; however, the efficiency depends on the public’s core values’ and attitudes’ strength. If the values and attitudes are steady, it might be much harder for a political agent, in this case a state, to radically change them. Changing public opinion depends on three issues: respondent’s opinion, evaluation of the source, and the source’s position. If the opinion is strong and steady, the harder it will be to change it. It applies vice versa as well, i.e. the weaker the opinion the easier it gets to influence it. (Merickova 2013) To effectively change public opinion, one has to understand why, not only what, the target audience holds certain values and attitudes. (Lynch 2006)

As Niall Ferguson (2005), one of Nye's main critics, put it: "soft power is merely the velvet glove concealing an iron hand. To illustrate that sentence, Nye has argued that the U.S. world dominance mainly depends on its ability to attract through soft power. Ferguson disagrees and claims that due to its world superiority in military resources and economic growth, i.e. hard power, is the reason behind its success. To achieve its national interests, cultural means are not enough, Ferguson (2009) claims as "power, then, is partly about monopolizing as far as possible the means of projection (of power), which mainly include material things: guns, butter, people, money, oil." (Ibid.) To control people, one must have credibility which helps to maintain a positive reputation. The difficulty lies in remaining one's reputation in the age of contemporary communication technologies which enable information to travel at a fast speed. Thus, a country's actions undoubtedly influence its reputation abroad. With the example of Turkey, soft power is vulnerable to its reputation as its public diplomacy has failed to save its hostile policies and activities. (Çevik 2018)

Regarding the issue of credibility, "whether a source possesses credibility or not is largely in the eye of the beholder," (Gass, Seiter 2009) thus implying that credibility is dependent on the receiver. However, it is not limited to the receiving end only, as the source has power to some extent as well. Sources still have the ability to influence perceptions, but it is crucial to understand the context to establish credibility. Further, culture has its influence on credibility as well. Depending on the history and culture, one audience might find low credibility of a source whilst another audience finds the same source highly credible. (Ibid.) It is easy for a source to lose credibility if it uses disinformation in its public diplomacy strategy – and once it is lost, it might be hard to get it back. (Dasgupta 2011)

Further, if the public diplomacy efforts are in line with its actions, the result should ideally be positive. (Nye 2004) Such efforts, nevertheless, are not always "soft" in essence, but might rather see a mixture of soft and hard power initiatives. (Hayden 2011) A state's economic power might yield results in its soft power exercises if the subject nation is attracted to other factors beyond trade, market access, or job opportunities. (Huang, Ding 2006) Another example of the two types of power complementing one another is, for example, when a nation's national image has been improved through exercising hard power by sending military resources to humanitarian missions. Military power is considered a hard power resource, but the result, improving national image and increase soft power, is public diplomacy's aim. (Kurlantzick 2007)

Even Nye himself argues that, at times, hard power can be difficult to differ from soft power. Larger states with a higher national income have the possibility of acquiring more hard power sources than others and pressure other states economically. Smaller states, on the other hand, might therefore limit their initiatives to exercising mostly soft power. (Nye 2004) To understand, for example, China's use of hard power, which is on the increase, and soft power, one has to understand its history of being colonized and humiliated and only recently learning to comprehend its status as a superpower. (Jia 2010)

Łoś (2018) even argues that it is harder for authoritarian states to acquire and utilize soft power because their initiatives are centralized and controlled. It is common for authoritarian states to use social influence tactics such as projection i.e. accusing another actor of its misdeeds whilst actually pursuing such themselves just to shift focus from oneself. (Pratkanis 2009) Such tactics can be seen utilized by China, an authoritarian state claiming to be democratic, in their strategy of "talking back" regarding the economy and culture. (Rawnsley 2009) This topic will be further discussed in the upcoming sections.

1.5. Soft power and public diplomacy: The Chinese way

Public diplomacy has become one of the most prominent tools China uses in international relations in order to build a narrative that portrays the nation as desirable, as Beijing often feels misjudged and misinterpreted as a hostile, non-democratic country. Instead, it looks to portray itself "as a trustworthy, cooperative, peace-loving, developing country that takes good care of its enormous population." (d'Hooghe 2005) It might not be guided by democracy as Western countries see it, but their policies are directed by democracy in a sense which they explain as having "Chinese characteristics." It is not the only term which they have translated from the Western world in order to apply "Chinese characteristics" to it. Socialism (Hartig 2016), rule of law (He 2017), public diplomacy (d'Hooghe 2015), sustained cultural development, and soft power (Lee 2018) are further terms which have been put into the Chinese context and interpreted by the government in Beijing as desired (Barr 2011).

Essentially, China is in need of increasing its soft power due to its claim of pursuing "a peaceful rise" – its grand strategy – since hard power strategies would be hostile. China is claiming that it

is possible for a superpower to rise without threats and coercion. However, China is well aware that it cannot yet compete with the U.S. over its military power promising to aid any ally threatened by conflict. (Kurlantzick 2007) Therefore, it is increasingly investing in its soft power resources to achieve rationality, legitimacy, and attributes connected to hegemonic status, in order to finally become the hegemon. (Wang 2008)

After the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 by the authorities in China, the regime and the public increasingly became to believe that China had the right to pursue global power. As China increasingly gained confidence, it also began to question the world system lead by the US. In the 1990s, Chinese scholars, young academics, and party officials believed that China should become more active on the international arena and not limit itself to being on the defensive side. (Kurlantzick 2007) Nye's book "Bound to Lead" (1990) was published only two years later in Chinese, followed by a wider discussion on soft power between Chinese scholars. (Aukia 2014) A common thread amongst these journal articles was clear: China had to strengthen its soft power. Ingrid d'Hooghe writes (2015) that already in 1993, when the Chinese President Jiang Zemin's political adviser Wang Huning published an article on the topic of Chinese soft power, Huning emphasized culture as the main resource for soft power. (d'Hooghe 2015) By the end of the 1990s, soft power came to be discussed together with national strategy and foreign policy as a topic moved from being only a topic between scholars and officials, to being discussed amongst the wider public. (Cho, Jeong 2008)

Scholars have explained China's urgency for soft power through comparing to the Soviet Union and claiming that its fall was purely due to lack of soft power. (Cho, Jeong 2008) Nevertheless, a breakthrough on discussing soft power did not arrive until the 21st century, when in 2004 the number of related publications begun to increase year by year (Aukia 2014) leading to the term being widely accepted from 2006 (d'Hooghe 2015). Behind this was the introduction of China's "Peaceful Rise," "Peaceful Development," and "Harmonious Society," (Wang 2011) an increased promotion of soft power by the party, and General Secretary Hu Jintao's report to the 17th CPC Congress in 2007 which put soft power on the national strategy agenda. (Aukia 2014) The Chinese government is mostly focused on the cultural aspect of soft power "including arts and culture, media and entertainment, publishing, and language learning." This has come in the form of opening Confucius Institutes and classrooms around the globe and expanding state-owned media channels such as China Central Television, the People's Daily, and Xinhua News Agency. The Beijing Olympics, the World Expo in Shanghai 2010, promoting "civilized behavior" for its

citizens traveling abroad, and the “Made-in-China” TV campaign beyond China’s borders in 2009 have all been pursuits for soft power through public diplomacy. (Wang 2011)

Public diplomacy and soft power are highly valued in modern-day China as the goal of such strategies is to serve foreign policy objectives and to improve the over-all image of China abroad. Zhao Qizheng defines Chinese public diplomacy as follows: “the government is leading, the public is the foundation, and the elites constitute the backbone” (d’Hooghe 2015) to which Han Fangming, a founder of a Chinese thinktank of public diplomacy, adds that “the media are the key.” (Ibid.) China regards Western culture as a threat, which China must be able to compete with and protect itself from through promoting its own culture. A notion already coined by Hu Jintao, but increasingly used by Xi Jinping nowadays, is to spread the ‘Chinese Dream’, as a counterpart to the American Dream, which is essentially “socialist culture with Chinese characteristics.” (Ibid.)

The actors mainly overlooking public diplomacy efforts in China are state actors, however, the state is pushing for non-governmental organizations (NGO) to play a significant role in promoting Chinese values as well. In China, the NGOs are in fact governmental non-governmental organizations (GNGO), as they still hold ties to the state. In contrast to Western NGOs, the Chinese one’s actions and maneuverability are under Beijing’s watch. (d’Hooghe 2015)

The State Council Information Office (SCIO) and the Communist Party’s Office of External Publicity are mainly in charge of building China’s public diplomacy offensives. China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is a third actor that does not create the rules but implements them through giving China’s embassies abroad more autonomy to approach the local media. (d’Hooghe 2005) Further state actors include the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and the State Administration for Radio, Film and Television (SARFT); The Ministry of Defense and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA); China’s leaders; The Communist Party of China (CCP); and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). In this sense, one can see how extensive and controlled public diplomacy is on the state level in order to reach the foreign public. The MFA gives the embassies the duty to fine-tune Beijing’s orders according to the local situation and thus, build political trust, promote ties with China, develop exchanges with the local community and media, organize events supporting the cultural narrative set by Beijing. (d’Hooghe 2015) Such activities coming from the, often perceived, authoritarian regime may be interpreted negatively, therefore, non-state actors are increasingly encouraged to support Chinese public diplomacy. Even as such actors are not entirely independent from the authorities, they are still

perceived as more trustworthy than direct state actors by the international community. (d'Hooghe 2005) Non-state actors from China “include people’s diplomacy organizations, intellectual elites, volunteers and celebrities, companies, and overseas Chinese.” (d'Hooghe 2015)

1.6. Confucius Institutes

Amongst one of the most well-known Chinese soft power initiatives are the worldwide Confucius Institutes (CI). (Peterson 2017) The institutes are situated in local university premises to increase the teaching of Chinese and to introduce and promote Chinese culture for enhanced cultural exchange. (Kurlantzick 2007) The first CI was opened in 2004 by “Hanban,” the Office of the Chinese Language Council International, which has been operating since 1987. (Peterson 2017) On their webpage, Hanban is described as “a public institution affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education” (About Us: Hanban n.d.) however, Rachelle Peterson (2017) suggest the two being much closer than only in affiliation. Their activities seem to be so intertwined that many Chinese directors use the terms “Hanban” and “Chinese Ministry of Education” as synonyms. Regarding the funding of CI’s, in the beginning they usually receive \$150,000 from the Hanban and \$100,000 in the consecutive years, which should then according to the contract be half of the total funding. The rest should come from the local partner university. The issue some scholars see arising with the funding is that the money inherently comes from the regime in Beijing streaming into higher educational institutions to influence perceptions. (Ibid.)

In Europe, there are currently 182 Confucius Institutes which is the highest number of any continent. In the UK there are 29 CIs alone, 19 in Germany, 12 in Italy, and 5 in Poland with the rest spread-out all-over Europe. (Confucius Institute Headquarters/Hanban n.d.) The expenditure on CIs escalated enormously between 2006 and 2014 from \$45 million to \$295 million. Another interesting finding is that China is regarding liberal-democracies, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, France, Italy, and Germany, higher when it comes to choosing or accepting the location for a CI. (Ding, Saunders 2006) In the majority of cases, Hanban is looking for prestige and credibility in the chosen university which should then presumably affect the CI positively. On the other hand, others imply that China in some of the cases does in fact choose the destination for a CI, but in other cases the initiative has to come from the institution looking to set up a CI. Hartig (2016) concluded that other possibilities do not to exist. (Ibid.)

CIIs have come under vocal scrutiny from both insiders and outsiders as tools for China's cultural imperialism and the Chinese attempt to influence foreign citizens and governments through investments. (Hartig 2016) Some doubt about its main goal, to teach the language and advertise the culture, and see it rather as an opportunity to spy on the host country. (Barr 2011) In some countries, the concern has gone as far as being a subject of discussion in the parliament and eventually leading to an end of the contract between Hanban and the host university. The CI in Stockholm University in Sweden was one of such instances, other closures of CIIs have occurred in the University of Chicago (Gil 2017), and as recently as in 2019, 10 CIIs on US universities' campuses are set to close (Brazys, Dulkalskis 2019).

2. RELATION BETWEEN CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES AND PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF CHINA

This thesis focuses mostly on Confucius Institutes as tools for increased soft power and is seen as a public diplomacy effort by the Chinese which should, logically, have a positive effect on public perceptions. In this case, a regression analysis would give a qualitative contribution to understanding whether the change in public perception is linked to Confucius Institutes. The regression analysis is based on Pew Research Center (2017) Global Attitudes Survey conducted between 2007 and 2017 in France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Exceptions include the Czech Republic, where there is data from 2007 to 2013, and Greece, where there is data from 2012 to 2017.

The independent variable (y) is the percentage of change in public perception from 2007-2017 for the majority of countries, with the exception of the Czech Republic in 2007-2013 and 2012-2017 for Greece and it is the same in every regression analysis. However, in the first regression analysis, the dependent variable (X_1) is the duration in months since first CI to see whether the impact of a longer amount of CI presence has had any positive impact on the public perception. In the second regression analysis, the dependent variable (X_2) is the cumulative CI duration i.e. what has been done is simply adding together the total amount of months every CI has been open in a certain country. In the third regression, the dependent variable (X_3) is the cumulative CI per capita, which was relevant to analyze as one could argue that the amount of “exposure” to CIs plays a role as well. Thus, running a regression solely on the amount of one month, or cumulative, a CI has been operating might have not given an entirely correct picture. Therefore, an independent variable that measures the exposure relative to the population was used, too. Lastly, the dependent variable (X_4) in the fourth regression was months of CI per capita.

2.1. Results

The regression analyses were done in order to test whether China's public diplomacy is effective. When analyzing the summary output, what is relevant here is to observe the R square, for the goodness of fit, regression F and P-values, whether the results are statistically significant, and the X Variable 1 coefficient, which presents whether the line is downward or upward sloping. When it comes to the results, R square is highest in regression analysis #4 with 0.23618892, 0,07252868 in regression analysis #1, 0,00494186 in regression analysis #3, and 0,00270192 in regression analysis #2. Nor does any of the four regression models show a significance close to 0.05. For regression analysis #1 and #2, the x variable 1 hints at a slightly upward sloping line, nevertheless, it is close to zero with 0.0967784 and 0.00048193 respectively. In regression analysis #3 and #4 the x variable 1 is -0.0609396 and -1.0667804 respectively, which indicates a slightly downward sloping line.

Table 2. Summaries of the results of four regression models.

	Regression model 1	Regression model 2	Regression model 3	Regression model 4
Independent variable (Y)	% of change in public perception between 2007-2017	% of change in public perception between 2007-2017	% of change in public perception between 2007-2017	% of change in public perception between 2007-2017
Dependent variable (X)	the duration in months since first CI	the cumulative CI duration	the cumulative CI per capita	months of one CI per capita
Significance F	0,51781847	0,886600529	0,84697998	0,15440311
R Square	0,07252868	0,00270192	0,00494186	0,23618892
Coefficient	0,0967784	0,00048193	-0,0609396	-1,0667804
P-value	0,45178185	0,88660053	0,84697998	0,15440311
F-value	0,6256036	0,0216739	0,03973125	2,4737941

Source: author's own calculations based on data from Table 1.

2.2. Findings

The results of the regression analyses lead to the conclusion that no direct effects of CI on public perception can be detected, Confucius Institutes have not had a positive effect on the public perception of China in the surveyed European countries. In this case, R square explains close to none of the variance of the data. The significance level is not even close to 0.05, which simply is not enough to say that the changes in the independent and dependent variable are related to each other. Even though public perception is hard to predict, as humans' opinion is constantly changing, the data, R square data along with the significance level, leads to the conclusion that it is fairly safe to assume that there is no correlation between Confucius Institutes and the public perception of China in the countries covered.

3. CASE STUDIES

The favorability of China, measured in percentage, in the countries chosen as case studies in this thesis are illustrated in the graph below. The average favorability of China amongst EU member states as presented by Pew (2017) and calculated by the author, is 42,34%. The highest percentage of favorability, which on average is 41,45% between 2007-2017, is highest in Poland. Poland's highest favorability rate was 51% in 2011 scored above average and 33% was the lowest, thus, showing that the data is rather volatile. Favorability in Germany is below average with 30,36% and rather stable as it fluctuates between 26 and 34. As for Italy, the favorability rate is 30,57% and has never reached above the EU average but is still more volatile than Germany's ranging from 27 to 40.

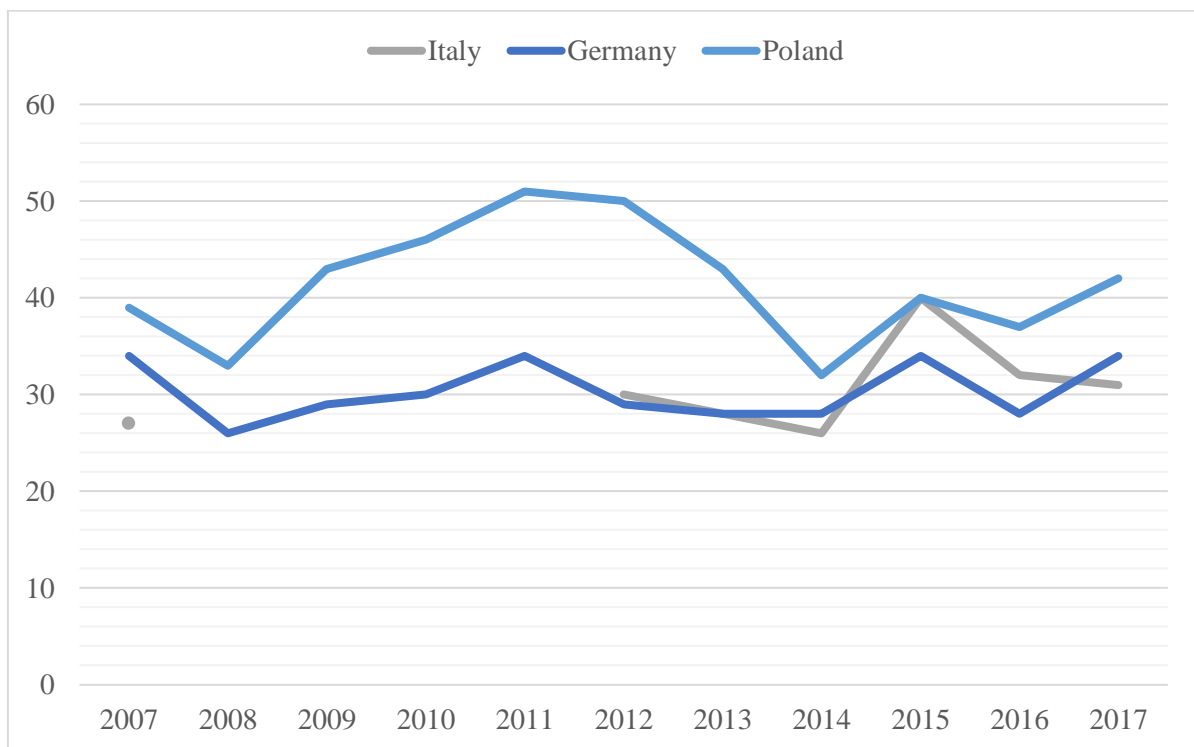


Figure 1: Favorability of China measured in percentage between 2007-2017 in Germany, Italy, and Poland

Source: Pew (2017)

Since one of China's major public diplomacy efforts failed to explain the perceptions of China for a selection of European states, there must be other factors which might explain the changes and levels of favorability. Thus, this section will begin looking at possible obstacles, such as different political systems or the issue of credibility, to China's public diplomacy and why it has proved to be ineffective. It will be followed by three case studies which will aim to look for other factors possibly influencing the, mostly, low favorability of China among European countries.

The case studies will look into China's relation within the three macro regions in Europe; Germany, a Western European country, Italy, a Southern European country, and Poland, an Eastern European country. It would not be possible to do case studies of all of the EU member states included in the Pew (2017) survey. Neither would be choosing neighboring countries from the same region give credible conclusions to the differences in perceptions of China around Europe. The three macro regions are not equal when it comes to the economy and neither do they share the same history when it comes to politics. Germany is pro-EU, whereas Italy's and Poland's governments have become increasingly Eurosceptic. The Eurozone crisis hit Italy hard and it is yet to fully recover, making it "vulnerable" to outside forces offering investments. (Ewing, Horowitz 2018) Further, populist governments are on the rise with Italy and Poland being relevant in this case. The difference, though, is that Poland's history of occupation by the USSR has resulted in cold relations with Russia at the same time as Italy is beginning to find Russia as an ally. (Bruni 2018)

Regarding the political realm, China is mentioned in Germany's media in majority from a political perspective. Thus, the portrayal of China's actions on the international arena or at home have the potential to speak louder than its public diplomacy efforts. (d'Hooghe 2015) Certain domestic beliefs or core values, such as human rights in Germany, have proved to be important in state-to-state relations and political affairs. (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development 2010) For Italy, the large Chinese community residing in Italy has been prone to create tensions between local Italians and migrant Chinese. (Max 2018) And in Poland, the government balances between eradicating communist sentiment domestically whilst trying to appeal to China where the communist party is ruling. (Zemanek 2014)

When it comes to the economic realm, China's FDI's into Europe, Germany ranks second as receiving the most greenfield investments between 2009-2018, Poland comes fourth, and Italy comes eight. Since the signing of the Belt and Road Initiative agreement, Italy is in hopes of rising

overall in the rank of receiving Chinese investments. (Romei 2019) This is relevant as it is the part regarded as ‘carrots’ from the Chinese buying stakes at major European businesses. At first, the investments might seem appealing, with few strings attached (Keating 2019), however, it is a way of the Chinese to acquire knowledge of sensitive technologies and critical infrastructure. Since 2017, there has been a discussion surrounding whether Chinese infrastructure projects are in fact debt-traps where China gives major loans to smaller countries unable to re-pay. (Chellaney 2017) As the cases so far have been mostly in Asian countries, the discussion surrounding it has become increasingly relevant in Brussels as Italy has become the first G7 country to join BRI and China’s engagement in EU is on the increase, as well. (Keating 2019) The debt-trap might soon hit home as China has given loans to neighboring Balkan countries where, for example, Montenegro already is close to being indebted due to a motorway financed by China. (Barkin, Vasovic 2018)

3.1. Obstacles for China’s public diplomacy

China seeks to increase its soft power around the globe – in its close neighborhood, in the Americas, in Africa, and in Europe. For certain governments, sharing similar ideologies with the government in Beijing, China has become an idol in the way it has succeeded becoming a superpower and the world’s second largest economy through market-led development whilst keeping an authoritarian government. Its growth has proven authoritarian states that the Western model of democracy is not the only way for economic prosperity. (Rawnsley 2009) Nevertheless, the nature of different political systems itself poses a barrier as democratic states prefer to hold dialogues, whereas authoritarian states feel comfortable with monologues. Authoritarian states seek to control society, which explains China’s preference for bilateral agreements over multilateral one’s as it enhances their advantage over the other party. (d’Hooghe 2015) Nevertheless, it should be noted that China has recognized the advantages of operating within a multilateral environment decreasing the image of it posing a threat globally. (d’Hooghe 2007)

For Western democratic states, democracy includes free media, freedom of speech, civil liberties, and human rights whereas for China, such things are disregarded or controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The absence of those elements is a liability for China, particularly in democratic states such as EU member states. (d’Hooghe 2015) Further, another issue for effectively promoting “the Chinese Dream” and “the peaceful rise” is nationalism. Chinese nationalism has not proved appealing for foreign audiences as the government is increasingly

censoring domestic access to the internet and cracking down on institutions. (Albert 2018) As mentioned, soft power yields better results when coming from the civil society, not solely the government. Thus, China's soft power is already in essence limited as the NGOs are rarely non-governmental, but commonly GNGOs. Even if governments have a role in accumulating soft power, it does not create credibility the way the civil society is able to. (Dobbs 2016)

3.2. Western Europe: Germany

Germany's relationship with China is complicated. Human rights and Tibet are issues Germany raises its voice for but have proven to complicate relations between Germany and China as the latter perceives such to be matters of sovereignty and internal affairs. Even if Chancellor Merkel decided to shift focus to human rights matters in her first term (Schnellbach, Man 2015), some still argue that Berlin is not pushing Beijing hard enough on the issue and 71% of the German public in 2012 held the belief that China has to improve its record on the issue before further cooperation between the two expanded. (Hartig 2016) Furthermore, Germany is China's most important trading partner in the European Union whom China also passed as the world's leading exporter in 2009. (German Federal Foreign Office n.d.) The rising issue of Chinese acquisitions and money flowing into high-tech German companies is not easing the relations either as Berlin has become increasingly worried. (McBride, Chatzky 2019)

3.2.1 Political relations

Regarding politics, Huawei's (Noesselt et al. 2014) study found that 59% of Germans see China's political power as a threat; 63% believe the Chinese media to be state-controlled; and only 8% believe public debates on political and social issues take place in China. 35% of the media coverage in Germany on China is about Beijing's politics and state including its foreign policy, its political system, its rule of law, and the environment. Whereas the first topic is covered mostly in a neutral tone, the articles on the latter three topics hold a more negative tone. Furthermore, it seems that the German media and the public still largely classifies the Chinese state as authoritarian i.e. the same way as during the Maoist People's Republic even though China has since then has undergone major changes internally. (Ibid.)

Another issue which has been discussed between the governments is human rights. In Germany, human rights are a guiding principle holding an important part in establishing and implementing

policies. It sees human rights as a fundamental value in developing policies as well, which it is exercising and supporting abroad. 15 years ago, in 2004, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development decided to systematically adopt a human rights-based approach in development cooperation, thus integrating human rights at the base level in partnering countries and across all sectors. (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development 2010) Human rights are as important domestically in Germany, as it is in advocating for the matter in its foreign relations. (German Federal Foreign Office 2017)

On the other hand, China has a very different view of human rights, as it has with everything it labels as with Chinese characteristics. (d'Hooghe 2015) Even if China is participating in discussions and forum regarding human rights, (Sceats, Breslin 2012) it seldomly understands human rights issues like Western democracies do, thus the issue poses a liability in China's public diplomacy efforts (d'Hooghe 2015). Instead, it perceives the matter to be internal for a country and usually dismisses the issues in legal terms. When the UN, or governments of foreign countries, raise their concerns regarding human rights in China, the government in Beijing becomes protective and recommends other states to stick to their business. When Beijing pursues investments and cooperation with suppressive governments, it neglects the issues of human rights which in turn might affect public opinion negatively in liberal democracies. (Sceats, Breslin 2012)

In 2011, China's government became anxious when seeing protest movements eroding around the Middle East, leading to a crackdown of political activist and human rights defenders in China itself. (d'Hooghe 2015) Whether this is a reason for it or not, Germans' favorability of China dropped 5% between 2011 and 2012, from 34% to 29%. (Pew Research Center 2017) Neither did its treatment of the Nobel Peace Prize award-winner Liu Xiaobo benefit its public diplomacy efforts abroad. The Chinese government went even as far as to bully and pressure other diplomats from attending the prize ceremony in 2010, clearly out of its own interests. As for Germany, the numerous human rights violations by China could most certainly be a factor for the overall low favorability China bears in Germany. (d'Hooghe 2015) Another situation occurred in 2016 when Michael Brand, a member of Bundestag, upon his visit to China was told by China's ambassador to Germany that he would not be allowed to enter China if he did not cancel certain events in Germany and simply, restrain himself from speaking negatively of China. Brand did not give in and therefore he was entirely banned from entering China. (Tatlow 2018) The same year public perception of China decreased in comparison to the previous year 2015. (Pew Research Center 2017)

A second sensitive issue for China is the Tibet region and the Dalai Lama, whose visits abroad China has used to punish the host countries. From the standpoint of Beijing, they have stood behind the development of the region and brought higher living standards. However, the views cardinally differ from the population's in Tibet who see the government in Beijing suppressing their freedoms, culture, and religion and not giving them the autonomy which the government is promising. (d'Hooghe 2015) In 2007, Germany came under scrutiny when Chancellor Merkel hosted Dalai Lama's visit in Berlin, leading to China canceling high-level meetings between the countries. (Krah 2008) Jiang Yu, the spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry at the time, claimed the Dalai Lama not to be only a religious figure, but even more a separatist living in exile. (Dempsey 2007) Coincidence or not, favorability rates for China dropped from 34% in 2007 to 26% in 2008 in Germany. (Pew Research Center 2017)

3.2.2 Economic ties

Germany has become one of China's main economic partners in the EU and is also the biggest recipient for Chinese FDI. The German government has increasingly become aware of the situation and is alert over the potential national security threats Chinese acquisitions pose. (Hanemann, Huotari 2017) Chinese mergers and acquisitions of German companies reached a record high in 2017 with 69 deals and the value peaked already in 2016 with €7 billion. (Fernández 2018) However, China has begun planning its own strategy to develop its high-tech industry through the "Made in China 2025" industrial policy proposed in 2015. Germany sees the initiative as rather alarming due to China's aim to first invest in Germany's high-tech companies and then re-produce the products with a lower price. (McBride, Chatzky 2019) Further, the increasing amount of German exports into China have not had a positive impact of Germans' favorability of China, either. (Carrel 2015)

Beijing has further begun to show interest in acquiring stakes at European airports which has become to be discussed as a national security issue, as with ports. Nevertheless, in 2016 a Chinese company was allowed to acquire 82.5% of Germany's Hahn airport near Frankfurt. (Corre 2018) HNA group, which acquired the stakes, believes there is potential for the airport to support the aims of the Belt and Road Initiative. (The Blue Swan Daily 2018) The same company acquired a share in Germany's Deutsche Bank the same year, further causing Berlin to worry about a Chinese investment spree and what it would mean for its national security. (Koenen 2017) Its acquisitions

spree has been criticized for being debt-fueled and not only by the West, but domestically in China as well. (The Blue Swan 2018) Regarding perceptions, in comparison to 2015 Germans' favorability of China dropped in 2016 from 34% to 28%. (Pew 2017)

3.3. Southern Europe: Italy

Out of all EU member states, Italy is the country hosting the biggest number of Chinese migrants which is one of the interesting reasons for choosing it as a case study. As mentioned, the Italian citizens, who participated in the Pew (2017) survey about perceptions, hold one of the lowest favorability rates across Europe. The current coalition government led by the Five Star Movement and the League have shown empathy towards Beijing, something the Italian public rather has not shown with its generally low favorability. Perhaps one of the greatest tasks of the government is to change public perception to support its China agenda whilst it is promoting its "Italians and Italian goods first" slogan without losing credibility. (Coratella, 2019)

3.3.1 Political relations: Chinese Immigrants and Italy's Fashion Industry

Italy is infamous for its artisan leather goods and textiles under the label "Made in Italy" – a phrase almost synonymous for fine quality. The majority of the textile industry in Italy is located in the small town of Prato and in the neighboring area, which has rapidly undergone a change as Chinese migrants are increasingly owning and staffing the factories. (Max 2018) The first Chinese migrants began moving to the clustering of the textile manufacturing in Italy between the 1950s and 1970s (Mariani 2013), but the first momentous period of time was in the 1990s when the migration escalated with some even turning to illegal ways of entering Italy (Max 2018).

The new, Chinese, owners of textile enterprises in the region have different ways of conducting their businesses – tax fraud, disregarding local laws on sanitation and welfare, and overall poor working conditions are some of the issues. Eventually, on the 1st of December 2013, a premise caught fire and left seven Chinese migrants dead. (Mariani 2013) Taking this into consideration when reviewing the data from Pew (2017), the happening late 2013 could have had a slight impact on the perception, as Italians favorability of China dropped from 28% to 26%. These enterprises run now by the Chinese are indeed located mostly in Prato, but also in surrounding areas in Northern Italy, where the current populist and anti-immigrant government partly has its roots from.

Poorly surveilled ports in Italy was another issue – the products shipped from China entered Italy, and thus EU territory, without being subject to any duties. (Mrevlje 2019)

3.3.2 Economic ties: Chinese Investments in Italy

In a survey done in 2018, Italian respondents were asked whether they perceived the Belt and Road Initiative as “a great economic opportunity,” “a risk,” or “I am not sure.” The majority, over 50%, perceived it to be a great economic opportunity – possibly because Italy’s infrastructure investments have not recovered since the economic crisis in 2008, thus, making FDIs into the sector highly attractive. (Romei 2019)

The biggest change in measured Italians’ perceptions of China was between 2014, when it was its lowest at 26%, and 2015, when it increased to 40%, the highest measured in Italy. How come the perceptions changed so significantly? One instance includes the 2014 signed deal between China and Italy worth 8 billion euros “ranging from energy to engineering,” the same year as China already had invested in stakes over 5 billion euros in diverse large Italian companies. (Landini, Scherer 2014) Further, in 2015 the Chinese ChemChina acquired a 7 billion acquisition of Italian tire producer Pirelli – a record breaking takeover by a Chinese company in the EU. (Hanemann, Huotari 2016)

A recent issue, which arose in 2019, is Italy’s eagerness towards the Belt and Road Initiative which the government signed during President Xi Jinping’s visit to Rome. The EU perceived it as a deliberate sign of Italy distancing itself from the union whilst befriending Chinese capital. For Italy, which still suffers from high unemployment, tax evasion, and a huge public debt, China is an opportunity to develop its infrastructure. The Italian government faces a tough mission: to sell the Belt and Road Initiative as an opportunity for Italy, despite Italians low favorability of China. (Mrevlje 2019)

3.4. Eastern Europe: Poland

Up until 2008, the relationship between China and Poland could be described as low-profile and rather cold, even if both countries have a socialist history. When Poland begun transforming to a capitalist and democratic society after years of belonging to the Soviet Union, in contrast, China

at the same time was involved in cracking down on internal democratic protests. A tendency for far-right populist parties in Western and Southern European countries has been to find a political ally in Russia in one way or another. (Polyakova 2017) Poland's right-wing government, acquiring power in 2015, is the opposite possibly because of its history of fighting against communism which the current government still encourages. Nevertheless, since Donald Tusk's visit to China in 2008, ties have slowly been warming up. Since then sensitive issues have been marginalized and instead, emphasis has been put on economic cooperation. (Szcudlik 2018)

3.4.1 Political relations: The Polish government seeking an ally in China

The current conservative and right-wing government in Poland led by the Law and Justice (PiS) party could be described as a Eurosceptic party, but that does not mean it is looking for a partner in Moscow, either. It is a common pattern seen in France with Marine Le Pen and in Italy with Matteo Salvini – right-wing forces becoming critical of the EU whilst becoming increasingly silent or neutral when it comes to Russia. (Kalan 2018) For Poland, forgetting history has not been easy as pro-Kremlin sentiment is still highly marginalized (Ibid.) and Russia is still viewed as an aggressor (Ruohan & Jie 2019). One of Law and Justice (PiS) aims is to eradicate the communist sentiment, or rather anything associated with communism, within Poland. (Luxmoore 2018) On the other hand, China is ruled by the Communist Party but paradoxically, Poland does not seem to perceive that as an issue. Largely, the Polish media is not portraying the Chinese government negatively and offers a simplified picture which does not pose questions such as if China poses a threat to the existing world order. (Zemanek 2014) However, some sensitive issues remain including Tibet and Dalai Lama and human right issues which Poland promotes in its foreign policy, (Song 2017) but even such seem to be overshadowed by the positive projection of China's economy in Polish media. (Zemanek 2014)

Furthermore, Poland is well aware of its location – a country with a perfect geo-strategic location between Europe and Asia. (Szcudlik 2017) It can be the perfect entrance for China into Europe, especially other Western European countries. When it comes to China, Poland has no past of conflict to hold against it, as it has with Russia. Instead, China is seen as an investor whom may help Poland develop, for instance, its infrastructure. (Ruohan, Jie 2019) Chinese investments into infrastructure and telecommunications is nothing new, however, since 2012 there has been an increase of Chinese financial presence in Poland. As of now, there are branches of four different Chinese banks in Warsaw including some of the largest banks in China – the Bank of China and

the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. (Szczudlik 2017) The perception of China in Poland, in terms of Europe, has been rather neutral or even positive, but it has suffered setbacks as well. For instance, the construction of the COVEC highway and Chinese company's failure to understand local regulations led to an ultimate fiasco in 2011. (Turcsanyi 2017) Since 2011 to 2013, the public perception of China took a hit in Poland – first it went from 51% to 50% and then in 2013 to 43%. (Pew Research Center 2017)

3.4.2. Economic ties: 16+1 Initiative as China's East Entrance to Europe

The 16+1 cooperation is between 16 Central and Eastern European countries and the People's Republic of China with the aim to boost relations within the political and economic sphere. The talks begun in 2011 when Wen Jiabao was in Poland, the first stop along his visit to Eastern Europe. (Musabelliu 2017) The initiator on the European front of the 16+1 framework between China and Central and Eastern European countries was, in fact, Poland – a country interested in the opportunities China might provide. (Sarek 2019) Since 2012, when the first summit was held in Warsaw, annual summits take place where the member states meet, generally preceded by bilateral talks. (Musabelliu 2017) Again, analyzing Pew (2017), the highest percentage for favorability of China in Poland was in 2011, with 51%, and 2012, with 50%. Since then, the outcome has decreased to yet again slightly increase, however, it has not reached the levels of 2011 and 2012. (Ibid.) When it comes to interpretation of the situation, the 16+1 framework might have posed high hopes in Poland but failed to deliver on the results.

Another reason for why the relations during 2011-2012 might have been the highest was because of the shift from bilateral ties to “strategic partnership” during Donald Tusk's time as Prime Minister, resulting in friendlier encounters in the Sino-Polish relation. However, a turning point came along the elections in 2015 when a far-right extremist party, Law and Justice, also known for being authoritarian and its anti-communist morale, formed the new government. Apart from that, officials in Poland have not disregarded encouraging closer ties with China, instead, Poland still seeks increased economic cooperation with China even if it is not its priority. (Szczudlik 2016)

Poland wishes to increase its exports, especially agricultural goods, to China and thus decrease the trade deficit. Nevertheless, the amount of goods Poland is exporting to China does not seem to be exceed the amount of Chinese goods that flood into Poland any time soon. In the light of Russia's embargo on EU pork exports in 2014, Poland had to find alternative markets for its pork industry,

which is one of Poland's top exports. Through promoting and establishing better railway connections between Poland and China, the Polish are hopeful of increasing their pork exports to the Chinese market. An obstacle, though, came in 2014 when China put an embargo on Polish pork due to African Swine Fever. (Reuters 2016) The same year, public perceptions of China fell down to 32% favorability in comparison to prior years' 43%. (Pew Research Center 2017)

3.5. Conclusion

Historically, economic means have been regarded as a tool of hard power but for China, the line is more blurred. Economic efforts such as foreign direct investments and their push for expansion of the Belt and Road Initiative are not necessarily only hard power mechanisms, but a part of soft power as well. This section aimed to find alternative factors besides soft power tools which influence public perception in Germany, Italy, and Poland. In each of the cases, political and economic ties seem to have an effect on how perceptions change year-to-year. But, for instance, the case of Italy is rather interesting with a low favorability for China amongst the public, the Italian government is eager to cuddle up to the growing superpower. Economic relations seem to influence perception in Poland, too, as when Polish pork exports to China were limited, perception fell heavily the next year. For Germany, human rights records are still a substantial matter for the population colliding with what China's government stands for. In comparison to Italy and Poland, FDI seems to present the opposite effect in Germany – instead of increasing favorability, it has decreased instead. Therefore, it could be concluded that a country with a solid economy tends to rate Chinese investments rather as a threat whereas struggling economies, such as Italy and Poland, tend to regard such as opportunities. Further, if local German politicians are threatened by Beijing to act in one way or a punishment will follow, that is coercive means. The instance of Michael Brand might have not been the sole reason for change of perceptions in 2016, but it might have been a factor as such events draw attention.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to examine how China conducts public diplomacy in the European Union member states and whether its efforts increase its soft power in the region. China has given rise to public diplomacy with Chinese characteristics giving its public diplomacy a defensive and an offensive role at the same time. One of the prominent public diplomacy efforts by China by far are the Confucius Institutes, which this study has put focus on. In conclusion, China's input, i.e. an increasing number of CIs, should ideally result in an increasingly positive perception of China. Yet, the regression models have shown close to no correlation between the number of CIs or the amount of exposure to CIs. Thus, its foremost public diplomacy effort cannot explain the changes in public perceptions between 2007-2017. In conclusion, public diplomacy efforts are not, perceivably, increasing China's soft power.

Interestingly, there must be other factors influencing public perceptions. When it comes to Poland, an Eastern European country, and Italy, a Southern European country, loans are appealing to countries with struggling economies. China is aware of its strategic upper hand when giving loans to smaller, economical struggling countries. The 'carrots' China offers yield better results in soft power than CIs, a public diplomacy effort, as many regard Chinese investments as an opportunity. Even if the overall perception is below average for Europe, it seems to be on the increase, and it could be expected to rise as well with Italy signing the agreement to join the Belt and Road Initiative as a possible explanation. As for Poland, a right-wing government in power which deters Russia with a flourishing Euroscepticism regards China as an investor for its infrastructure, whilst China regards it as its gateway to Europe. When it comes to Germany, 'carrots' are overshadowed by existing values in the German society such as human rights, civil liberties, and the rule of law. Thus, China's authoritarian leadership and domestic issues might undermine its soft power and the effectiveness of public diplomacy, as well.

As scholars have agreed, public diplomacy is difficult to measure, in contrast to hard power. Surveys and polling have been found to be one of the preferred evaluation methods for measuring public diplomacy, yet the data is still limited. There is a lack of extensive data from each country in Europe, and around the Globe for that matter, which could contribute to a better understanding of the issue overall. This study calls for further research within the field. This thesis has come to conclude that indeed, China's public diplomacy efforts in the EU are not effective and come to examine other possible factors, such as hard power 'carrots' which might influence public perception at times more effectively than public diplomacy. This study is based on limited case studies; therefore, it cannot draw the same conclusions for the rest of Europe, but it gives a hunch on how history and politics in such regions may affect public perceptions. Further issues could be researched more in depth as for example overall values as human rights and climate policies, or how relations within the EU member states currently affect bilateral relations, that each EU member state has, with China.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- About Confucius Institutes*. Hanban. Accessible: http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm, 13 May 2019.
- About Us: Hanban*. Hanban. Accessible: http://english.hanban.org/node_7719.htm, 13 May 2019.
- Albert, E. (2018). *China's Big Bet on Soft Power*. Accessible: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-big-bet-soft-power>, 13 May 2019.
- Aukia, J. (2014). The Cultural Soft Power of China: A Tool for Dualistic National Security. – *Journal of China and International Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 71-94.
- Barkin, N., & Vasovic, A. (2018). *Chinese 'highway to nowhere' haunts Montenegro*. Accessible: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-silkroad-europe-montenegro-insi/chinese-highway-to-nowhere-haunts-montenegro-idUSKBN1K60QX>, 13 May 2019.
- Barr, M. (2011). *Who's Afraid of China? The Challenge of Chinese Soft Power*. Ed. New York: Zed Books.
- Brazys, S., & Dulkalskis, A. (2019). *Why U.S. universities are shutting down China-funded Confucius Institutes*. Accessible: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2019/01/11/u-s-universities-have-shut-down-confucius-institutes-heres-what-you-need-to-know/?utm_term=.5989b08f04ea, 13 May 2019.
- Bruni, F. (2018, March 10). *Italy Has Dumped America. For Russia*. Accessible: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/10/opinion/sunday/italy-has-dumped-america-for-russia.html>, 13 May 2019.
- Çevik, S. B. (2018). *The Rise and Fall of Turkish Soft Power*. Accessible: <https://dayan.org/content/rise-and-fall-turkish-soft-power>, 13 May 2019.
- Chellaney, B. (2017). *China's Debt-Trap Diplomacy*. Accessible: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-one-belt-one-road-loans-debt-by-brahma-chellaney-2017-01?barrier=accesspaylog>, 13 May 2019.
- Cho, Y. N., & Jeong, J. H. (2008). China's Soft Power: Discussions, Resources, and Prospects. – *Asian Survey*, Vol. 48, No 3, 453-472.
- Carrel, P. (2016). *Once a source of envy, Germany's China exports turn into a risk*. Accessible: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-economy-germany-analysis-idUSKCN0QV1MP20150826>, 15 May 2019.
- Coratella, T. (2019). *Italy's Chinese Dilemma*. Accessible: https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_italys_chinese_dilemma, 13 May 2019

- Courmont, B. (2015). *Academic Foresights*. Accessible: <http://www.academic-foresights.com/Soft Power Debates in China.html>, 13 May 2019.
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oak: SAGE Publications.
- Dasgupta, A. (2011). Making public diplomacy work. – *Journal of International Communication*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 78-83.
- Dempsey, J. (2007, September 23). *Despite censure from Beijing, Merkel meets with Dalai Lama in Berlin*. Accessible: <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/23/world/europe/23iht-berlin.4.7609899.html>, 13 May 2019.
- d'Hooghe, I. (2005). 'Public Diplomacy in the People's Republic of China', in J. Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp 88-106.
- d'Hooghe, I. (2007). *The Rise of China's Public Diplomacy*. Accessible: https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20070700_cdsp_paper_hooghe.pdf, 13 May 2019.
- d'Hooghe, I. (2015). *China's Public Diplomacy*. 10th Ed. Leiden: Brill, Nijhoff.
- Ding, S., & Saunders, R. A. (2006). Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language. – *East Asia*, Vol, 23, No. 2, 3-33.
- Dobbs, J. (2016). *China's soft power challenges*. Accessible: <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/chinas-soft-power-challenges.politics,1999,report.html>, 13 May 2019.
- Commission reviews relations with China, proposes 10 actions*. (2019). European Commission. Accessible: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-1605_en.htm, 13 May 2019.
- Ewing, J., & Horowitz, J. (2018) *Why Italy Could Be the Epicenter of the Next Financial Crisis*. Accessible: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/12/business/italy-debt-crisis-eu-brussels.html>, 13 May 2019.
- HNA may be starting to rethink its airport investment plans*. (2018). The Blue Swan. Accessible: <https://blueswandaily.com/hnas-financial-issues-may-be-starting-to-influence-its-airport-investment-prospects/>, 15 May 2019.
- Human rights in practice: Fact sheets on a human rights-based approach in development cooperation*. (2010). Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Accessible: https://www.bmz.de/en/publications/archiv/topics/human_rights/BMZ_Information_Brocure_7_2010e.pdf, 13 May 2019.

- Fedirka, A. (2017). *Hard Power Is Still King*. Accessible: <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/hard-power-still-king/>, 13 May 2019.
- Ferguson, N. (2005). *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*. Reprint Ed. New York: Penguin Books.
- Ferguson, N. (2009). *Think Again: Power*. Accessible: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/03/think-again-power/>, 13 May 2019.
- Fernández, E. (2018, August 26). *Once welcoming, why Germany is wary of Chinese investment amid Trump's trade war*. Accessible: <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/business/article/2160911/once-welcoming-why-germany-wary-chinese-investment-amid-trumps>, 13 May 2019.
- Gass, R. H., & Seiter, J. S. (2009). 'Credibility and Public Diplomacy', in Snow, N., Taylor, P. M. *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*. New York: Routledge, pp 154-165.
- China – a land with many faces*. German Federal Foreign Office. Accessible: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/regionaleschwerpunkte/asien/china>, 13 May 2019.
- Human rights – a cornerstone of German foreign policy*. (2017). German Federal Foreign Office. Accessible: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/human-rights-acornerstoneofgermany/1034022>, 13 May 2019.
- Gil, J. (2017). *Soft Power and the Worldwide Promotion of Chinese Language Learning: The Confucius Institute Project*. 1st Ed. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Hanemann, T., & Huotari, M. (2016). *A New Record Year for Chinese Outbound Investment in Europe*. Accessible: https://www.merics.org/sites/default/files/2017-09/COFDI_2016.pdf, 13 May 2019.
- Hanemann, T., & Huotari, M. (2017). *Chinese investment in Europe: record flows and growing imbalances*. Accessible: <https://www.merics.org/en/papers-on-china/chinese-investment-europe-record-flows-and-growing-imbalances>, 13 May 2019.
- Hartig, F. (2016). *Chinese Public Diplomacy: The rise of the Confucius Institute*. 1st Ed. New York: Routledge.
- Hayden, C. (2011). *The Rhetoric of Soft Power: Public Diplomacy in Global Contexts*. 1st Ed. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- He, Z. (2017). 'Legal Diplomacy and the Possible Approach of China', in Chitty, N., Ji, L., Rawnsley, G. D., Hyden, C., *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power*. New York: Routledge, pp 166-176.
- Huang, Y., & Ding, S. (2006). *Dragon's Underbelly: An Analysis of China's Soft Power*. – *East Asia*, Vol.23, No. 4, 22-44.

- Ji, L. (2017). 'Measuring soft power', in L. J. Naren Chitty, *The Routledge Handbook of Soft Power*. New York: Routledge, pp 75-92.
- Jia, Q. (2010). *Continuity and Change: China's Attitude toward Hard Power and Soft Power*. Accessible: <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/continuity-and-change-chinas-attitude-toward-hard-power-and-soft-power/>, 13 May 2019.
- Kalan, D. (2018). *Poland's New Populism*. Accessible: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/05/polands-new-populism-pis/>, 13 May 2019.
- Keating, D. (2019). *Will China Balkanize Europe?* Accessible: <https://berlinpolicyjournal.com/will-china-balkanize-europe/>, 13 May 2019.
- Koenen, J., Scheuer, S. (2017). *Airport Deal Adds to China Currency Fears*. Accessible: <https://www.handelsblatt.com/today/companies/capital-flight-airport-deal-adds-to-china-currency-fears/23567248.html>, 15 May 2019.
- Kounalakis, M., & Simonyi, A. (2011). *The Hard Truth About Soft Power*. 1st Ed. Los Angeles: Figueroa Press.
- Krah, M. (2008). *Germany, China repair ties after Dalai Lama row*. Accessible: <https://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-31530320080122>, 13 May 2019.
- Kurlantzick, J. (2007). *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World*. 1st Ed. New York: Yale University Press.
- Lainevool, B. (2015). *Hiina Rahvavabariigi Pehme Võim Ja Selle Avaldumine Eesti Vabariigis*. (Master's thesis). Tallinn University of Technology, Department of International Relations. Tallinn.
- Landini, F., & Scherer, S. (2014). *Italy and China sign business deals worth \$10 billion*. Accessible: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-china-deals/italy-and-china-sign-business-deals-worth-10-billion-idUSKCN0I327020141014>, 13 May 2019.
- Le Corre, P. (2018). 'Chinese Investments in European Countries: Experiences and Lessons for the "Belt and Road" Initiative', in Mayer, M. *Rethinking the Silk Road*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution, pp 161-175.
- Lee, C. S. (2018). *Soft Power Made in China*. 1st Ed. Incheon: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Li, E. X. (2018). *The Rise and Fall of Soft Power*. Accessible: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/20/the-rise-and-fall-of-soft-power/>, 13 May 2019.
- Li, M. (2009). *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*. Plymouth: Lexington Books.
- Liaropoulos, A. (2011). *Being Hard on Soft Power*. Accessible: <http://www.rieas.gr/researchareas/2014-07-30-08-58-27/transatlantic-studies/1519-being-hard-on-soft-power>, 13 May 2019.

- Łoś, R. (2018). U.S. and China: Hard and Soft Power Potential. – *International Studies: Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 39–50.
- Luxmoore, M. (2018, July 13). *Poles apart: the bitter conflict over a nation's communist history*. Accessible: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jul/13/poles-apart-the-bitter-conflict-over-a-nations-history-poland-monuments-communism-soviet-union>, 13 May 2019.
- Lynch, M. (2006). 'Public Opinion Survey Research and Public Diplomacy', in Fouts, J. S. *Public Diplomacy: Practitioners, Policy Makers, and Public Opinion*. USC Center on Public Diplomacy & the Pew Research Center.
- MacShane, D. (2013). *Soft Power Doesn't Exist*. Accessible: <https://www.theglobalist.com/soft-power-doesnt-exist/>, 13 May 2019.
- Mariani, T. (2013). *Chinese migration to Europe: challenges and opportunities*. Accessible: <http://website-pace.net/documents/10643/1264407/Rapport-Mariani-Migrationschinoises-EN.pdf/eedbb5e1-4932-48ca-bf22-09637e85ff1f>, 13 May 2019.
- Max, D. T. (2018). *The Chinese Workers Who Assemble Designer Bags in Tuscany*. Accessible: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/04/16/the-chinese-workers-who-assemble-designer-bags-in-tuscany>, 13 May 2019.
- McBride, J., & Chatzky, A. (2019). *Is 'Made in China 2025' a Threat to Global Trade?* Accessible: <https://www.cfr.org/background/made-china-2025-threat-global-trade>, 13 May 2019.
- Merickova, L. (2013, December). *Obstacled to Public Diplomacy*. Retrieved from Cultural Diplomacy: http://culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2013-12-annual/Obstacles_To_Public_Diplomacy_Laura_Merickova.pdf
- Merickova, L. (2013). *Obstacles to Public Diplomacy*. Accessible: http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2013-12-annual/Obstacles_To_Public_Diplomacy_Laura_Merickova.pdf, 13 May 2019.
- Mrevlje, A. (2019). *Is Italy China's Trojan Horse?* Accessible: <https://yondernews.com/2019/03/17/is-italy-chinas-trojan-horse/>, 13 May 2019.
- Musabelliu, M. (2017). China's Belt and Road Initiative Extension to Central and Eastern European Countries - Sixteen Nations, Five Summits, Many Challenges. – *Croatian International Relations Review*, Vol. 23, No. 78, 57-76.
- Noesselt, D. N., Schueller, D. M., & Schueler-Zhou, D. Y. (2014). *Germany and China – Perceptions and Reality*. Accessible: <http://www.huawei-studie.de/downloads/Huawei-Studie-2014-EN.pdf>, 13 May 2019.
- Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft power: the means to success in world politics*. 1st Ed. New York: PublicAffairs.

- Nye, J. S. (2008). Public Diplomacy and Soft Power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, No. 1, 94-109.
- Nye, J. S. (2011). *The Future of Power*. 1st Ed. New York: PublicAffairs.
- Nye, J. S. (2013, April 29). *What China and Russia Don't Get About Soft Power*. Accessible: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/04/29/what-china-and-russia-dont-get-about-soft-power/>, 13 May 2019.
- Peterson, R. (2017). *Outsourced to China: Confucius Institutes and Soft Power in American Higher Education*. New York: National Association of Scholars.
- Global Indicators Database: Opinion of China*. (2017). Pew Research Center. Accessible: <https://www.pewglobal.org/database/indicator/24/survey/15/>, 13 May 2019.
- Polyakova, A. (2017). Introduction: The Kremlin's Trojan Horses 2.0', in Polyakova, A., Kounalakis, M., Klapsis, A., Germani, L. S., Iacoboni, J., Lasheras, F. D., Pedro, A. N. *The Kremlin's Trojan Horses 2.0*. The Atlantic Council, pp 1-4.
- Pratkanis, A. (2009). 'Public Diplomacy in International Conflicts: A Social Influence Analysis', in Snow N., Taylor, P. M. *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (pp. 111-153). New York: Routledge, pp. 111-153.
- Rawnsley, G. D. (2009). 'China Talks Back: Public Diplomacy and Soft Power for the Chinese Century', in Snow, N., Taylor, P. M. *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*. New York: Routledge, pp. 282-291.
- Reuters. (2016). *Xi welcomes Chinese freight train to "strategic partner" Poland*. Accessible: <https://www.reuters.com/article/poland-china-xi/xi-welcomes-chinese-freight-train-to-strategic-partner-poland-idUSL8N19C33W>, 13 May 2019.
- Romei, V. (2019). *Charts that show why Italy wants China's Belt and Road Initiative*. Accessible: <https://www.ft.com/content/23e0245a-4b2e-11e9-bbc9-6917dce3dc62>, 13 May 2019.
- Ruohan, L., & Jie, S. (2019). *Poland is getting closer to US, but should China be worried?* Accessible: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1135861.shtml>, 13 May 2019.
- Sarek, Ł. (2019). The "16+1" Initiative and Poland's Disengagement from China. – *China Brief*, Vol. 19, No. 4.
- Sceats, S., & Breslin, S. (2012). *China and the International Human Rights System*. Accessible: https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/International%20Law/r1012_sceatsbreslin.pdf, 13 May 2019.
- Schnellbach, C., & Man, J. (2015). Germany and China: Embracing a Different Kind of Partnership? Accessible: https://www.cap-lmu.de/download/2015/CAP-WP_German-China-Policy-Sep2015.pdf, 13 May 2019.

- Song, W. (2017). *China's Relation With Central and Eastern Europe: From "Old" Comrades to New Partners*. 1st Ed. New York: Routledge .
- Szczudlik, J. (2016). *China's Investment in Influence: The Future of 16+1 Cooperation: When the Silk Road Meets the EU: Towards a New Era of Poland-China Relations?* Accessible: https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/China_Analysis_Sixteen_Plus_One.pdf, 13 May 2019.
- Szczudlik, J. (2017). 'Poland's Measured Approach to Chinese Investments', in Seaman, J., Huotari, M., Otero-Iglesias, M. *Chinese Investment in Europe: A Country-Level Approach*. European Think-tank Network on China, 109-116.
- Szczudlik, J. (2018). 'Poland's modest approach to a values-based China policy', in Rühlig, T. N., Jerdén, B., Putten, F.-P. V., Seaman, J., Otero-Iglesias, M., Ekman, A. *Political values in Europe-China relations*. European Think-tank Network on China (ETNC), pp. 67-70.
- Tatlow, D. K. (2018, January 25). *China Reaches Into the Heart of Europe*. Accessible: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/25/opinion/china-germany-tech-manufacturing.html>, 13 May 2019.
- Turcsanyi, R. Q. (2017). Central European attitudes towards Chinese energy investments: The cases of Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. – *Energy Policy* 101, 711–722.
- Wang, J. (2011). 'Introduction: China's Search of Soft Power', in Wang, J. *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy through Communication*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-19.
- Wang, Y. (2008). Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power. – *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, No. 1, 257-273.
- Zemanek, A. (2014). *Media in China, China in the Media: Processes, Strategies, Images, Identities*. 1st Ed. Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press.