

POLISH THINK TANKS' ACTIVITY IN THE EUROPEAN SOFT POWER POLICY

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Abstract: The article defines the place of Polish think tanks in the all-European soft power policy. For this purpose, elements of the modified Joseph Nye's soft power concept were used. The analysis was conducted on the example of four Polish think tanks (Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), Center for Eastern Studies (OSW), College of Eastern Europe (KEW) and Warsaw University Institute of Eastern Europe (SEW). The authors' conclusions allowed determining the place of Polish think tanks in the EU foreign policy as that of organic elements aimed at achieving the goals prescribed by the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy. At the same time, the activities of Polish think tanks are also aimed at solving the tasks of the Polish Foreign Ministry, namely the expansion of Polish

influence in the Eastern European countries and the opposition to those political actors whose activities are contrary to Polish foreign policy.

Keywords: soft power, think tanks, European soft power, Polish foreign policy, Polish think tanks.

1. Introduction

The concept of 'soft power', which was introduced into scientific circulation not so long ago, has been attracting attention from both the scientific community and political functionaries over the past twenty years. The initial meaning of the idea (put into it by Joseph Nye) was the following: the ability to influence what other countries want is associated with such intangible resources as culture, ideology, and

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institutional strength. Soft cooperation is as important as "hard command power" (Nye, 1991). Nancy Snow notes that a state has the advantage of soft power potential in the following situations:

- "When its culture and values match prevailing global norms;
- When a nation has greater access to multiple communication channels that can influence how issues are framed in global news media;
- When a country's credibility is enhanced by domestic and international behavior" (Snow, 2009).

Talking about access to communication channels and issues framing, such soft power tool as think tanks is worth mentioning. Nowadays, think tanks remain influential actors of the world political system. Through their activities, think tanks create social and intellectual stimuli that make people argue and be aware of their own beliefs. They provide a platform for introducing new ideas into politics and provoke public debates on critical issues, thereby expanding their sphere of influence. The activities of modern think tanks are focused on promoting their own concepts through analytical counseling, influencing public opinion and the process of forming political elites. In this

sense, think tanks are one of the effective tools of soft power policy, since they influence foreign political elites in order to affect political decisions making.

Yet before studying the think tanks' role in soft power of a certain state, it should be taken into account that the very concept of 'soft power' has been criticized and updated by numerous scientists.

2. Literature review

The Nye's separation of power into the 'soft' and 'hard' was a most controversial aspect of his concept. The author points out that everything related to economics, financial and military pressure, monetary encouragement and bribery refers to 'hard power', and 'soft power' includes tools for creating attractiveness. The problem is that 'soft power', meanwhile, cannot exist without financial support. Both governmental and non-governmental organizations cannot exist without funding for humanitarian cooperation, cultural and educational programs (Davydov, 2004).

The most well-known criticism of 'soft power' as a scientific concept belongs to S. Lukes and N. Ferguson. S. Lukes notes that Nye's concept can be called the 'cousin' of his ideas about

third-person strength as the ability to influence and determine the beliefs of others (Lukes, 2005). Besides, 'soft power' contains many inaccuracies. For example, you should pay attention to the central category of 'attractiveness' which, according to Nye, can mean both persuasion and a tendency to consent in such way that the recipient does not realize they are given some arguments, not being imposed some choice. Following the scientist's approach, it is necessary to make two clear distinctions, the first one between the changing structure of the agents' incentives, whose interests are perceived as unchanged, and the way these interests are formed; the second one between the conditions in which interest are formed and the very mechanism of their formation. In the concept of 'soft power', there is no explanation for these differences, and that, according to Lukes, is its main weakness (Lukes, 2005).

In the preface to 'Colossus: The Price of the American Empire', N. Ferguson denies the scientific novelty of Nye's concept, arguing that all the tools of 'soft power' remind him of the components of imperialism policies setting. In his opinion, national interests cannot be achieved by reliance on

cultural exports and the formation of attractiveness, since they will not save the state from, for instance, what happened in Rwanda in 1994, and the real tools to promote cultural exports are still tools of hard power. Thus, according to Ferguson, soft power is "an iron fist in a velvet glove" (Ferguson, 2005).

In addition, 'soft power' does not guarantee that the state, instead of being admired by the culture of another country, will not begin to compete for itself to be considered attractive to others, for example, by restricting foreign films quota and displaying more domestic ones. Moreover, Nye does not indicate how to determine whether the attractiveness has brought some dividends at the level of international relations. Even if a state's culture is attractive, it does not mean that fulfilling what is beneficial to that state only because it has a high level of culture and well-being. It is quite possible that the acceptor will continue to implement what is beneficial to them and not to an attractive state. Nye's idea also contradicts with the desire of a number of states to preserve cultural authenticity, moreover, the culture of different nations is equal and has its own inherent features (Rustamova, 2016). Thus, how to

determine whose culture is more attractive if the formation of interests and preferences of the individual is a purely subjective process?

Responding to the criticism of his concept, J. Nye has published several more works on ‘soft power’, greatly expanding its interpretation: in 2002, the book ‘The Paradox of American Power: Why the Single World Superpower Cannot Act Alone’ was published (Nye, 2002); in 2005, ‘The Means To Success In World Politics’ was published (Nye, 2005). Subsequently, in ‘Power to manage’ (Nye, 2010) and ‘The Future of Power’ (Nye, 2011), the author, considering ‘soft power’ mainly as a resource of effective governance in the international arena, redefined some of his statements, therefore agreeing with the fair criticism of controversial moments.

In particular, the author agrees that ‘soft power’ as a theoretical construct leaves various questions, and its application in practice does not mean abandoning force methods: “in a broad sense, coercion means any pressure to change behavior, therefore in that sense, words can also force, and the effect on the mind may seem to be manipulation. It may seem that ‘soft power’ is a threat

and manipulation; nevertheless, it leaves more freedom of choice in response than physical strength” (Nye, 2011).

In his work ‘The Future of Power’, the author gives a more accurate and complete definition of the concept of ‘soft power’ – the ability to influence others through means of cooperation in shaping a program of action, persuasion and providing a positive attractive effect to achieve the desired results (Nye, 2011).

The set of ‘soft power’ resources is also expanding significantly. Except for its main components (culture, foreign policy and political values), J. Nye lists some new ones such as kindness, legitimacy, competence, trust (Nye, 2011), positive internal model, a successful economy and professional military force (Nye, 2011).

At the same time, having as many resources as possible does not guarantee obtaining the desired result. With relation to A. Vuing’s remarks that the problem of using ‘soft power’ is in mixing its resources with the very force (Vuing, 2009), Nye notes that turning resources into realizable force in terms of achieving the desired results requires taking into account the so-called ‘behavioral aspect of force’. Thus, Nye

introduces the concept of three behaviors for the impact of ‘soft power’:

- A subject uses attraction/persuasion to change the existing preferences of an object;
- A subject uses attraction or institutions to make an object consider the program of action as a legal one;
- A subject uses attraction and/or institutions to form the object’s initial preferences (Nye, 2011).

3. Methodology

The methodological basis of the present study is Nye’s modernized concept of soft power (with an indication of its application contextuality and of the expanded tools arsenal); this allows singling out exactly those cases of international relations that are relevant for the analysis of the EU soft power and making it possible to allocate the place of think tanks in it (Nye, 2011).

The think tanks selection for further analysis was carried out on the basis of the 2017 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report (2017 Global Go To Think ..., 2017), compiled annually by the University of Pennsylvania. This ranking is divided into several categories. Based on the subject field of the present research, the authors used the

ranking of top foreign policy and international affairs think tanks. The highest (the 33-rd) place among Polish Think Tanks belongs to the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM); Center for Eastern Studies (OSW) is 42-nd. In addition to these two think tanks that occupy high positions in the analyzed rating, the authors analyzed the activities of Kolegium Europy Wschodniej and Studium Europy Wschodniej as of the two most active institutions in the field of public policies and educational programs for the future political elite of the Eastern Europe countries.

4. Results

Soft power in modern EU foreign policy

Before allocating the place of Polish think tanks in the modern EU soft power, some words on its role in the EU foreign policy should be said.

One of the main documents characterizing the modern foreign policy of the European Union is the Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy ‘Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe’ (EUGS).

In the context of the present study, the authors are interested in the EUGS provisions characterizing the EU policy primarily in relation to its Eastern partners. The main goal of the EU policy in this direction is to maintain state and social resilience in the region (it should be noted that the very concept of ‘resilience’ is central in the EUGS and is mentioned in the document 40 times). Resilience in the Strategy refers to the ability of the states and societies to counteract and recover from internal and external crises. Achieving resilience grants safety to a state in the first place, and safety is seen as a key factor for prosperity and democracy.

The EUGS notes that countries to the East of the EU would like to establish closer relations with the Union within the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy; however, that primarily requires changes within these countries. One of the driving forces of these changes, according to the Strategy authors, is the EU's soft power resources, namely ‘time-tested attractiveness’ which can contribute to change but is not directed against any country. The changed situation in Tunisia and Georgia is noted as the success of the EU soft power use. These countries managed to

achieve prosperity, to establish peaceful and stable democracies and “whose success as prosperous, peaceful and stable democracies would reverberate across their respective regions” (Mogherini, 2016).

The tools for achieving the goals set by the EU are different. First of all, it is noted that the Union is planning to develop partnership on the individual basis. Among the possible options for this partnership there is the creation of a special economic zone with countries where an in-depth and comprehensive free trade zone is being created; and the expansion of trans-European networks and the energy community, as well as the establishment of physical and digital connections.

As far as the present study is concerned, it is important to stress that the EUGS pays special attention to social ties development. It is supposed to be carried out at the expense of greater citizens' mobility, cultural and educational exchanges, scientific cooperation, and civil society platforms. These activities should contribute to the development of social resilience of the EU's eastern neighbors. It is also planned to be strengthened by deepening relations with civil society, in particular,

by supporting efforts to ensure the accountability of governments. The EU intends to increase its interactions with cultural organizations, religious communities, social partners and human rights activists and to oppose reducing the space for civil society actions, including the violation of the rights to freedom of speech and assembly. For implementation of the described measures, resources of soft power policy are effective tools.

At the moment, there is no agreement in the expert community as to how effective the EU soft power policy is (Dempsey, 2016; Lehne, 2017). Paradoxically, the resources of the EU soft power policy may bring opposite results to what is desired. Speaking of the migration crisis, the attractiveness of the European Union plays far out of the hands of European politicians, and the current situation indicates failure of the humanitarian programs implemented by Europe in North African countries. Besides, the growing Euroskepticism, the apogee of which was Brexit, indicates that the attractiveness of European political ideals and ideas of European unity loses in competition with the problems associated (according to a certain part of the European political

elite) with the EU membership (Dempsey, 2016). At the same time, it is necessary to note the successes of the European policy of soft power. As mentioned above, changes in some Eastern European countries, such as Georgia or Moldova, were determined by the desire of these countries to have privileged relations with the EU. Apart from that, experts recognize Ukraine's pro-European policy as a significant success of European soft power policy. Here it is necessary to emphasize that the European choice of this state is carried out not only in the policy of the official authorities (despite significant external pressure and difficult inside and foreign policy situation). The EU itself attracts many citizens of Ukraine by quite diverse aspects of European life, from better paying jobs to prestigious places of study and recreation (Lehne, 2017).

In the present study the authors will focus on the Polish policy of soft power and allocate its place in the context of the whole EU policy starting by brief description of the Polish east foreign policy and employment of soft power in that area.

Modern Polish policy of soft power in relation to Eastern Europe

In the “National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland”, along with integration into European and Transatlantic structures, an important role belongs to the Eastern direction of foreign policy, and in particular, the development of long-term relations with the participants of the Eastern Partnership (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2014). Ukraine and Belarus are the most significant objects of the Polish foreign policy nowadays. The main priorities in the policy towards the countries of Eastern Europe are the following: “The Republic of Poland supports reforms in the Eastern Partnership countries and calls on them to develop closer ties with the EU and NATO. The basis for these actions should be the principles of freedom, democracy, market economy and prospects for integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions that express these values” (National Security Strategy ..., 2014).

Poland actively uses tools of ‘soft power’, in particular, public diplomacy in the Eastern direction of foreign policy. The success of the ‘non-force’ impact has already borne fruit: Warsaw has developed a network of contacts and platforms for interaction with Ukraine

and the Republic of Belarus in various fields (culture, education, media and other).

The ‘soft influence’ of Warsaw can be viewed as a projection of somebody else’s interests as a part of the process of building the national position in the regional context, as well as in the European Union’s common policy framework. However, the consideration of Polish foreign policy as a component of the European agenda alienates us from the traditional concept of ‘soft power’, the main essence of which is the expression of a separate sovereign state’s interests. It is worth noting that even before the accession of the Republic of Poland to the EU, this country was considered as a link between Western Europe and Eastern Europe.

The methods and concept of Polish ‘soft power’ in Belarus and Ukraine are based on the political traditions towards its eastern neighbors. Firstly, this region is a traditional area of Polish interests. The Jagiellonian Doctrine, which is often used by Polish parties for populism, always finds support in all segments of the population. This concept justifies the Polish influence in the region of modern Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine. Second,

Polish think tanks activity as a part of soft power policy

the government often justifies the methods of its policy with the principles of Polish messianism. Polish “Kresy” (territories that were once part of the powerful Rzeczpospolita) are now divided between Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus. As a result, Poland considers this region (if not as a sphere of political expansion) “at least a sphere of cultural influence and the spread of its values” (Koper, 2015). “Moreover, the attitude towards the Polish diasporas living here is special – they are like heirs, like followers of the ‘glorious history’ of the Poles' presence in these lands. And therefore, from their point of view, they should play a special role here” (Nemenskiy, 2015). Third, it should also be remembered that the specificity of the policy in this region is determined by the historical past of the Polish nation, which has been subjected to serious tests: from horrible wars to occupation and several reductions of the state territory. That is why Warsaw is concerned not only with protecting the interests of its citizens abroad but also with supporting democracy in this region.

It should be noted that the Polish policy of soft power is carried out with the use of various tools, including the activities of think tanks.

It is possible to speak about the emergence of Polish think tanks after the end of the Polish People's Republic period and at the beginning of institutional transformation in the political sphere. The modern community of Polish think tanks can be divided into four dominant areas of activity. The first is foreign policy and international relations; due to the peculiarities of the Polish foreign policy, two powerful directions appeared within this field of activity: Polish Eastern policy and European policy. The second significant area is economics, and if in the beginning of the 90s these organizations were mainly engaged in the economic transformation of Poland, nowadays more attention is paid to Poland's internal economic problems and their interdependence from the EU economy. The third area of activity is domestic issues, primarily the social policy of Poland. Finally, the fourth activity of the Polish think tanks is the so-called ‘civic enlightenment’.

As stated above, the authors chose four Polish think tanks for analyses: the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), the Center

for Eastern Studies (OSW), Kolegium Europej Wschodniej and Studium Europej Wschodniej.

The first think tank under study is the Polish Institute of Foreign Affairs (Polski Institut Spraw Międzynarodowych). The mission of the Institute is to deepen and spread knowledge about modern international relations. The institute is financed from the state budget of the Republic of Poland and interacts with academic, scientific and political institutions in Poland and abroad and conducts advanced training courses for specialists whose field of activity is international relations.

Among the activities to promote their points of view, apart from educational programs, the Institute is a patronage of the young Polish diplomats club; it regularly organizes conferences which include politicians, journalists and public figures. In addition, the institute is a platform for internships for students enrolled in law, economics, political science and international relations programs.

Among the publications of the PISM newsletter, the authors find many articles on Eastern Europe (in particular, Russia and Ukraine), as well as on EU

migration issues. Regarding the issues of the Russian and Ukrainian subjects coverage, there is a clear tendency to negativise the image of Russia, as evidenced by the names of publications and conferences held at the institute ('Russian aggression in Ukraine: balance and perspectives'; 'Voltage escalation in the Azov Sea', etc). Analysis of the articles and speeches rhetoric by representatives of the institute shows that PISM promotes the image of Poland as a defender of Ukraine's interests. Besides, PISM tries its best to ensure the great importance of the military conflict taking place in Ukraine for the Polish side. The perception of the Russian side as a military aggressor is clearly traced, while the Ukrainian side is shown as an innocent victim of the Russian policy, and the protection of Ukrainian interests is considered to be a necessary task of Polish foreign policy. Great importance in the publications of the Institute, as well as in its events, is given to the internal situation in the Russian Federation. The background of its coverage is clearly negative: the focus is on violations of human rights in Russia and living standard deterioration.

Thus, PISM, influencing political decision-makers inside Poland and

abroad, is one of the Polish soft power policy instruments. Its activity in the region is to promote the image of Poland that is attractive to the CIS countries being a promoter of their interests in the European Union and at the same time antagonizing Russia in this direction by promoting the perception of this country as an aggressor state with significant internal problems.

The following Polish think tank for analysis is Center for Eastern Studies (Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich im. Marka Karpia). The Center for Eastern Studies (CES) is engaged in monitoring and analysis of the socio-political and economic processes in Russia, Germany, Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic States, Turkey, as well as the Visegrad Group and the Balkans. The Center conducts publicist activities, organizes project work to create platforms for analytical work on Eastern Europe, and acts as a mediator of meetings between politicians, diplomats, NGO workers and journalists.

The main tool for the Center for promoting its own ideas is publication activity. The Center annually publishes more than several hundred analytical papers, the target audience being both Polish and foreign politicians. Besides,

the Center effectuates its influence by organizing meetings and debates for experts in the field of international relations.

Analysis of publications and materials of meetings held by the CES suggests that its rhetoric is much milder in comparison with PISM. The materials on Russia are primarily aimed at analyzing the internal Russian political and economic events. These publications focus on emphasizing the authoritarian nature of the political regime in Russia, highlighting the economic problems which are considered as one of the potential threats to the stability of this regime in Russia. Indirect evidence of this, according to analysts of the center, is the results of 2018 Russian governors' elections, which were of protest nature. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict is generally assessed with a position similar to PISM: Russia is assessed as an aggressor annexing the Crimea, but the tone of the articles is just moderately negative. It should be noted that less attention is devoted to the indicated problems in this think tank than in the PISM.

The activity of the CES as an instrument of soft power lies in the fact that by organizing publication activity

and acting as a platform for debate, this think tank promotes its own vision of the processes taking place in Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, the point of view that is promoted shows Russia acting as an authoritarian aggressive state with a weak economy.

So far, think tanks occupying high positions in the Global Go To Think Tank Index Report (2017 Global Go To Think ..., 2017) and concerned with international relations have been the objects of the authors' analysis. Besides, the authors would like to draw attention to the other two 'factories of thought' which carry out educational activities and a lot of work in the field of public diplomacy and of formation of public opinion.

One of them is College of Eastern Europe (Kolegium Europy Wschodniej im Jana Nowaka Jeziorskiego, KEW). This institution positions itself as an educational one, organizing a large number of educational programs for both humanitarian students and specialists in the fields of international relations, journalism and translations. Besides, KEW has its own publishing house and two analytical journals: Nowa Europa Wschodnia and New Eastern Europe; their target audience is Polish and

foreign politicians and public figures. In addition, books on political and cultural problems of Eastern Europe are published. KEW is a platform for holding conferences and debates on a wide range of issues relating to Eastern Europe.

The activity of KEW as an instrument of soft power policy should be considered in the following aspects: publishing and organizational. The publishing aspect suggests analyzing the content of the journals Nowa Europa Wschodnia and New Eastern Europe. Even a quick glance at the name of the publications (Putin falsifies elections; Corruption is Russia's biggest export) shows an extremely negative vector of the image created of the Russian authorities and Russia as a whole. Great attention in publications is paid to the activities of the current Russian President. First of all, the negative influence of this politician on the situation with democracy in Russia is emphasized, since it is argued that the authoritarian political regime in the country is a direct consequence of Vladimir Putin's policy. According to the paper's journalists, the current foreign policy of Russia under the leadership of Putin has aggressive

features. As a result, the political situation in Russia is regarded as a threat to the world community and especially to the Eastern Europe, that is why its change is recognized as necessary. Russian Federation appears on the pages as a backward country, exporting inefficient and undemocratic management practices to the outside.

Speaking about the organizational activities of KEW, the annual conference 'Polska Polityka Wschodnia' (Eastern Polish Policy) is to be regarded. The conference is a landmark event of the College's activities and gathers both eminent Polish and foreign politicians among its participants, as well as public and academic figures, journalists and students of higher educational institutions. The conference is dedicated to the formation of the eastern direction of Poland's foreign policy. According to the conference materials, the changes in the Russian political situation are necessary; the instrument of these changes is considered to be a 'new political elite'. One of the panels of the conference (Is a new generation of the Russian elite going to change the Empire?) is devoted to that issue. Besides, considerable attention is paid to

creating a positive image of the Polish foreign policy. Poland is represented at the conference as an assistant state in the further rapprochement of the CIS countries with Europe.

In addition to the conference, the College's organizational activities are also aimed at education. The College organizes programs for journalists and translators from the camp of Eastern Europe, and for almost ten years it had been co-organizing Winter Eastern School, a cycle of educational activities for humanities majors students from the countries of the former USSR. In the course of these events, the College has established contacts with those figures who most willingly continue to influence political decision-making in their countries.

Thus, KEW, carrying out extensive educational work in the field of public diplomacy, is one of the instruments of Polish soft power policy. Its activity, as in the previous cases, is to promote certain images of Poland and the Russian Federation. The image of the Republic of Poland as a translator of democratic values, a lawyer for the interests of the former USSR countries in the European Union is attractive for the CIS states. Russia, on the other hand,

appears as a backward country, exporting inefficient and undemocratic management practices to the outside, which necessitates changes in its management.

The last think tank for analysis is Warsaw University's Institute of Eastern Europe (SEW). Nowadays the Institute gives training under the program 'Eastern Studies' providing bachelor, master and postgraduate education. Students specialize in six 'eastern' areas; it is compulsory to study the languages of the former USSR countries. At the same time, speaking of the Institute as an instrument of soft power policy, it is necessary to mention, first of all, that its educational programs are 'export-oriented'; the Institute implements many specialized schools and scholarship programs in this direction.

Lane Kirkland's scholarship program is of greatest interest; it is addressed to students and other representatives of the active youth dealing with socio-economic changes in the post-communist countries of Europe. The main organizer of the program is the Polish-American Freedom Fund. Thus, the activities of the program are aimed at forming potential leaders who can later direct the modernization processes in

Eastern European countries. The joint character of this project (with the American side) suggests that its implementation takes into account American interests in making changes in the Eastern Europe.

Other scholarship programs (where the Institute is the only organizer) are addressed to graduates of major humanitarian faculties of the former USSR countries, who have shown some success in science or civic activism. One of the goals of these programs is to form the future Eastern Europe political elites, as well as journalists, scholars and other public figures that will be of a positive attitude towards Poland as a country that helps the social development of the Eastern Europe region and contributes to the promotion of democratic values there.

In addition to the scholarship programs described, the Institute organizes a broad program of thematic schools. Among them are both general humanitarian schools (Winter and Summer Eastern Schools), and those specializing in a particular state (Polish-Russian, Polish-Ukrainian, Polish-Belorussian and Polish-Moldavian schools).

Speaking about the work of the Winter and Summer Eastern schools, it should be said that they are conducted as meetings of young people with prominent scientists and civic activists from Poland and the Central Europe countries involved in Eastern issues. The formal purpose of the schools is to conduct trainings and spread information about the possibilities for further education in Poland. However, the nature of the held events (meetings with representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, employees of American NGOs, active and, most importantly, free distribution of products of their own publishing house and regular meetings with school graduates) suggests that in reality the activities of schools are aimed at establishing contacts with future political elites and civic leaders, as well as establishing and maintaining influence on their worldview.

The activity of specialized schools is primarily aimed at young representatives of science, art and education of the participating countries. In the course of its implementation, the participants get to know their Polish colleagues, exchange their experience and participate in educational events which purpose is to present and promote

the Polish point of view on issues of history, political science and culture. It is assumed that in the future, having influences on a wide audience in their own country, school participants will share the experience gained in Poland.

SEW, in addition to educational activities, also provides organizational work. It consists of organizing scientific conferences and publishing newsletters. Among the conferences organized, the most ambitious event is the annual Warsaw East European Conference which is a meeting place for scientists, politicians, diplomats and other public figures of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It is worth noting that, as a rule, special guests from US universities also participate in the conference. The audience consists of students of the Institute and of participants of the scholarship programs conducted by the Institute. Analyzing the content of the conferences, the authors of the present study consider these conferences to be in the common vector of similar Polish events: the main areas of interest are the development of democracy in the Eastern European countries and the transformation processes taking place in these. In the reports, Poland is usually given a

positive role of a locomotive and initiator of these changes, while Russia is shown as a country interested in maintaining instability and undemocratic political regimes in Eastern Europe. Information activity of the Institute Bulletin has a similar vector; the image of Russia in this edition is negative: the country is represented as an undemocratic state with a backward economy, pursuing an aggressive foreign policy.

Thus, SEW conducts massive educational and other types of work and also is a soft power tool of the Polish policy. Its activity consists primarily in creating a ‘human springboard’ for promoting Polish interests abroad. By training more than 500 potential decision makers from the Eastern Europe and communicating with them in the future, SEW prepares favorable conditions for social and political changes in the region.

5. Discussion

The analyzed cases of the Polish soft power policy towards the Eastern European countries in the context of the events that occurred in the region in the last 5 years (particularly, the change of government in Ukraine in 2014 and reorientation of its political vector towards Europe) serve as an example of

a successful implementation of such policy. For one, Nye’s definition of soft power as the ability to influence others through the means of cooperation in shaping a program of action, persuasion and creating attractiveness to achieve the desired results (Nye, 2011) very relevantly describes the influence made by Polish foreign soft power policy. In particular, it is the attractive image of Poland and the EU created by Polish think tanks as an example to be followed and a source of both positive institutional changes and financial support. The created negative image of Russia also had its meaning – Russia acted as an antagonist, as an existing negative alternative to a positive European choice. The analyzed case is also a good illustration of Snow’s idea concerning an actor’s behavior to make effective use of ‘soft power’ (Snow, 2009). In this case, the authors of the present research observed the impact of the subject (Polish soft power policy in the European context) when it uses attraction/persuasion to change the existing preferences of the object (the political situation in Ukraine).

However, in another direction of the European Eastern policy – the Belarusian one, similar changes are not

observed. The reasons for this may be, first of all, the successful opposition towards this policy by the local authorities, as well as the confrontation with the successfully pursued soft power policy of Russia, which has an antagonistic orientation towards Polish and European ones. At the same time, another Nye's remark about the long-term effect of a soft power policy should be referred to here (Nye, 2011). Belarus represents itself as a so-called 'experiment field' for a 'battle' between European and Russian soft power policies, the results of which will be seen in the future.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of Polish think tanks allows stating that their activities are organically integrated into the general policy of soft power of the Polish Republic. According to the above-mentioned 'Jagiellonian doctrine', the main goal of Polish foreign policy in Eastern Europe is to strengthen its influence in Belarus and Ukraine. By appropriately covering the activities of the Polish side in analytical publications of the Polish think tanks and the conferences they hold, the image of the Republic of Poland as a country

advocating the Eastern European states' interests in the EU is attractive for the Eastern Europe. Besides, the considerable attention paid by the Polish think tanks to public diplomacy and to the emergence of pro-Polish political elite, makes it possible to count on creation of a 'political springboard' for pursuing a policy favorable to Poland in the countries of the former USSR. It is also worth noting that the activities of Polish think tanks are aimed at creating a negative image of those political functionaries whose activities do not meet Polish interests; first of all, that applies to the present Russian and Belarusian authorities. The objectives of the Polish Eastern policy in the Eastern European region, for the most part, are in conflict with the activities of Russian diplomacy in this region. Accordingly, Polish soft power policy is also aimed at discrediting the image of Russia to create a suitable contrast for the Polish image. Thus, the aim of all the analyzed think tanks is creating a picture in which Russia appears as a backward country with an aggressive foreign policy, hindering the development of democracy in Eastern Europe and destabilizing the situation in the region. All this substantiates the need for social and

political changes in the Russian Federation, as well as in the Republic of Belarus.

Defining the place of Polish think tanks in the EU foreign policy, it can be concluded that their activities fit into the specific goals of the EUGS. In particular, one of its objectives is to achieve resilience of the EU eastern neighbors; for this, in the opinion of the EUGS authors, changes within these countries are necessary. The activities of the Polish think tank are particularly noticeable in this direction – they primarily create a substantiated basis for political and economic changes in the Eastern European countries and suggest ways of the needed changes. In addition, the EUGS states that the changes can be achieved by deepening relations with the civil society of the neighboring countries, and this task is also the responsibility of the Polish think tanks. The events they organize contribute to establishing a dialogue between journalists, translators, scholars and public figures of Eastern European countries and their Polish colleagues. Finally, it is worth noting that Polish think tanks contribute to the development of social ties, citizen mobility, cultural and educational

exchanges, and scientific cooperation between the EU and the countries of Eastern Europe. One of the goals of the EUGS is to develop the social resilience of the EU Eastern neighbors. On the other hand, the work of Polish think tanks contributes to the achievement of the Polish Foreign Ministry goals, namely the expansion of Poland's influence in the Eastern Europe and the contrariety to those political actors whose activities contradict Polish foreign policy.

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