

Summary of the doctoral thesis

Bilateral relations of Poland and the Czech Republic in the years 1993-2016

The aim of the thesis is to examine the development of Polish-Czech relations in the context of their positions and roles in the international system. These relations have been analysed in the spheres of politics, military affairs, economy, culture, science and cross-border issues, taking also into account external factors on regional, European and global levels. The main focus is on the influence of powers and Poland's and the Czech Republic's neighbours on relations between the two countries, and their activity in multilateral structures of international cooperation, particularly NATO, the European Union and the Visegrad Group.

The work is based on books and scientific articles as well as reports, analyses and annuals of Polish and Czech foreign policy. Bilateral agreements and declarations have also been analysed. Valuable additional material consists of press articles, interviews and statistical data.

The theoretical framework for this analysis is Kenneth Waltz's structural realism, which stresses the interaction between states and the international system structure. The work proposes the following hypotheses: 1. The bilateral relations of Poland and the Czech Republic in the years 1993-2016 strengthened the position of both states in the international system as well as the European and Central European subsystems. 2. The aim of ensuring security contributed to the development of Polish-Czech bilateral relations. 3. Pursuing national interests by Poland and the Czech Republic was sometimes an obstacle to mutual cooperation. Additionally, several research questions have been asked with the aim of verifying the above hypotheses. The analysis of Polish-Czech relations is based on specific methodology including: the empirical approach, the comparative method, methods relevant to historical sciences (descriptive, philological, progressive and retrospective) and, above all – from the perspective of the neorealist paradigm – system analysis.

The work describes the neorealist theory applied to Polish-Czech relations and explains the notion of "bilateralism". Next, it presents the historical background of mutual Polish-Czech relations and the internal and external conditions shaping the foreign policies of both countries, which is a starting point for the deliberations on their cooperation and the strengthening or weakening of their position in the international system in the years 1993-2016 regarding different spheres of their activity. The most effective areas of common

operations are also taken into account along with the future direction of Polish-Czech bilateral relations in the context of both countries' priorities in the area of foreign policy.

The doctoral thesis concludes that the cooperation of Poland and the Czech Republic in various spheres of activity strengthened their position in the international system, especially in Central Europe. The cooperation of the two countries has also been largely influenced by the policies of the world hegemon – the United States as well as other powers, such as Russia, Germany and, more recently, China. Ensuring national security played a significant part in shaping Polish-Czech relations, which was particularly visible in the efforts of both countries to join the Euro-Atlantic structures. On the other hand, such processes as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the migration of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, terrorism, the EU unity crisis and the Nord Stream project, have all hindered the development of these relations due to the differences in the national interests of both countries. The obstacles occurred mainly in the areas of common military and economic security. The proposed model of bilateral relations between Poland and the Czech Republic, considering their position in the international system, emphasizes the necessity of their development within NATO and the European Union and of strengthening their cooperation in other areas, based also on regional contacts.

Key words: Polish-Czech relations, Polish foreign policy, neorealism, international system

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