Geopolitical Ideas of Great Space as Soft Power – Analysis of the Case of the Republic of Poland*

KEY WORDS
Polish geopolitics, great-spatial ideas, the Republic of Poland, international relations, Polish soft power

ABSTRACT
The author discusses geopolitical ideas of great space as collective images relating to the geopolitical culture of the nation. These ideas are usually presented as ideas of conquest, ideas relating to the change of state borders. The situation has changed with globalization and the networking of international relations.

The article presents the great-space ideas of the Republic of modern times as soft power and the possibility of using its possible revitalization in contemporary international relations.

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Introduction

The subject of these deliberations is the geopolitical ideas of the large space. The research intention is to develop a coherent conceptual and theoretical framework for this concept so that in the future it will become the basis for a useful form in the field of state information security as part of its soft power strategy. Large-scale ideas are a *sine qua non* of modern geopolitics and geostrategy. They should be directed internally, as an offer addressed to the nation, and externally, but already as a social concept, to international opinion.

The aim of the article is theoretical conceptualization and methodological operationalization of the ideas of the great space as a means of *soft power* and showing them on examples and potential of Polish geopolitical concepts. The first part of the article analyses the potential of the historical Republic of Poland with its contemporary associations. Geopolitical concepts of development of international relations and regional security of Poland are presented, taking into account the use of *soft power* potential of native ideas of great space.

Literature Review

The paper analyzes both the source texts and the subject matter of geopolitics, internal and international security, as well as the history of the Polish state, political science, international relations and sociology and anthropology. At the beginning of the 20th century, mainly German geopoliticians: Friedrich Ratzel, Karl Haushofer and Carl Schmitt, wrote about the use of large scale ideas. In the article, however, attention was focused on the matter not touched upon in the literature - the ideas of great space not defined and the geopolitical concept of the Republic of Poland, which appears to be an original conceptual observation of the Polish *soft power*. This part of the article presents the historical concept of the Republic of Poland and its use in modern times as well as possible possibilities of its use today in the field of state information security.

Methods

The work is based on a study of analysis and criticism of literature (literature on geopolitics, political science, international security, international relations). A broad and interdisciplinary approach to the research on the ideas of the large space allows for a theoretical and pragmatic approach to this phenomenon. In addition, the paper uses the following methods: logical-rational, referring to the technique of deconstruction of
theoretical-operational concepts, construction of relations between them and socio-political facts and definition design, as well as heuristic in its dimension of thinking and construction of deductive and inductive judgments. The work is scientific-research and methodical in nature and refers to the theoretical-analytical properties of large-space ideas as a concept, but also to the essence of soft power in the contemporary international security environment.

Large-Scale Ideas in Geopolitics

In the paradigm of realistic international security, a state of affairs is invariably dominant. The state as a spatial organization has been the subject of geopolitical considerations from the very beginning of this science. Friedrich Ratzel considered the state to be a natural entity, objectively presenting the condition of nations in the arena of their international struggle. He anthropomorphized the state: he pointed out that it is a living organism which, subjected to evolution, must fight for its existence. There is, however, a certain distinction between states with a status of power and states that cannot have such a status. According to Ratzel, the difference between these states lies in culture. Countries aspiring to the status of powers have culturally developed ideas of great space (Raumsinn)\textsuperscript{1}. They testify to cultural superiority, better adaptation to geographical conditions, more effective use of resources and the prospective development of the nation and state.

Rudolf Kjellén said the same thing. He considered the state to be a reflection of a nation that can be judged from the perspective of its society: nature delivers only the framework and raw materials; it depends on the population and the state to fill it up and shape it, in a word, to organize it\textsuperscript{2}. Nations and states that did not develop appropriate cultural ideas could not become developmental entities because they were subject to evolutionary processes that required the development of large scale ideas at a higher level. After all, the state and the nation are one organism\textsuperscript{3}. Absorption and mixing of ethnic groups are conditions for the development of the community\textsuperscript{4}, but to do so, it is necessary for it to be adequately equipped with spatial ideas.

Large-scale ideas were developed by German geopolitical thought and tried to make them real with hard power. According to Karl Haushofer, great-spatial ideas are objective entities with stable and democratic properties, because they assume the coexistence and cooperation of different ethnic groups within a single state organism.

\textsuperscript{1}Ratzel talks about the sense of space and the school of space (die Schule des Raumses) as scientific-political concepts for the further development of countries. S. Costachie, N. Damian, Ratzel and the German geopolitical school - the inception of culture as an essential element and factor in the political geography, ‘Revista Romana de Geografie Politica’ 2010 t. 12, s. 302.

\textsuperscript{2}K. Hwang, Power in Alexander Supan’s Guidelines to General Political Geography (1918/1920), ‘Przegląd Geopolityczny’ 2011 nr 3, s. 33.

\textsuperscript{3}M. Heffernan, On the origins of European geopolitics, 1890–1920, w: Geopolitical Traditions. A century of geopolitical thought, Routledge, K. Dodds, D. Atkinson (red.), London 2003, s. 45.

\textsuperscript{4}J. Dutka, Demographic Strategy in the History of Geopolitical Thought, ‘Geopolitical Review’ 2017 No. 19, p. 41.
They were characterised by common values and the dominant culture (in his view - German) and a certain internal autonomy of groups operating within a common space.

Carl Schmitt referred much more clearly to the ideas of great space. He proposed the development of the term ‘Reich’ as a large-area category, [...] whose political idea radiates into a certain large area and which in principle excludes the intervention of foreign forces in this area. He pragmatically conceived the term ‘Reich’ as an idea. He indicated that imperialism has negative associations and is burdened with colonial connotations, while the ‘Reich’ is a universal idea: ... the state of affairs is best characterized by ... the connection between a great area, a nation and a political idea, which is our starting point. Schmitt, like his predecessors, ascribed to the idea of a large area the property of cultural superiority; he pointed out that it is becoming more powerful, while the guardian of a large area is the nation if it turns out to be mature for this task.

Large-scale ideas are forms of consciousness present in the paradigm of realistic international security. The first assumption of political realism, as Hans Morgenthau pointed out, was to equate politics with human nature, as geopoliticians did. According to Morgenthau, realism referred to geography, a map that sets out the achievable foreign policy objectives of a country. Countries that do not have and do not develop their own spatial maps, their own ideas, especially nowadays - in the era of globalization - are themselves becoming mental (social) and geographic (goods) spaces that need to be filled and developed.

For the state to develop, it needs autonomous, national spatial imagery, relating to itself (the territory it occupies), cultural, political and historical environment. This is all the more important because geopolitical imagery is an element of our knowledge of the surrounding reality, provides us with a kind of ‘map of the world’ and thus strongly influences our actions. Perception of the physical and social world is not only a natural but also a cultural process. Large-scale ideas should be analyzed in cultural, structural and historical contexts in the field of politics, because every political, geographical or social space is shaped and transformed by people, and history is of

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7 Ibidem, p. 79.
8 Ibidem, p. 95.
Geopolitical ideas... great importance, which is the main source of geopolitical perceptions of the world, shaped by the historical process. Large-scale ideas should correspond to the objectification of interests, the raison d’être of a given community. Knowledge about the outside world is generated in social, political and historical processes and is produced [...] in the specific conditions of a given historical moment and at the same time reveals the anxieties, interests, desires that motivated this definition. With regard to geopolitical concepts, the indication that large scale ideas are created by powers and states with hegemonic status in the region or the world remains valid.

The task of geopoliticians is to construct and deconstruct these ideas and to transfer them. Ideas consist of myths and narratives relating to their own group and neighbouring countries and nations on the basis of identity-forming ‘my-foreign’ antagonism. Nowadays, spatial imagery is constructed not only by states, but also by non- and supra-state groups and entities. All these narratives should be analyzed and confronted with native ideas, and they should be created and adapted to their own and rightly state of mind large-spatial ideas in order to create within the framework of political culture also a geopolitical culture, which determines the way one perceives one’s place in the candle.

Myths and geopolitical codes are responsible for perceiving oneself and others in the geopolitical culture, which are the building blocks of the ideas of great space. National myths are forms of consciousness that develop collective images (they are stored within the social framework of memory), which Maurice Halbwachs is talking about and to which the research of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in the context of the theory of social cognition refers. National myths, which are the keystones of codes, shape collective images, and these function as concrete and culturally and politically realistic. In this way they create their own ‘thought map’ on the basis of broad narratives and short, symbolic expressions in the form of geopolitical codes. The content of the code is

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15 Ibidem.
17 A. Suchocka, I. Króliowska, Creating cultural identity as a challenge of the 21st century, ‘Colloquium of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences’ 2014 No 4, p. 78.
18 J. Potulski, what is geopolitics..., op.cit., p. 24. Geopolitical culture is formed on the basis of geopolitical imaginings, thanks to which, among other things, there is an explanation and justification of the ‘natural’ character of territorial boundaries, discursive definition of ‘enemies’ and ‘friends’, identification of the state model and indication of countries to be imitated or rivaled, identification of ‘national idea’ or ‘national destiny’, collective identification of civilizational, religious, racial, linguistic identity, etc. Geopolitical culture is therefore a set of ideas about oneself, about the world, about one’s location in the global space. J. Potulski, Contemporary directions of Russian geopolitical thought. Between Science, Ideological Discourse and Practice, Gdańsk 2010, p. 41.
symbolic quality, while the role of the code is played by tradition, and the mechanism of functioning is to activate the rules of mythical thinking.\(^\text{22}\)

It can be assumed, therefore, that the ideas of the great space are an expression of the maturity of political culture and the development of a geopolitical culture in it, referring to the location of oneself as a group and state in the world and to one’s role and relations with other groups and states. They are accompanied by mythical narratives, which consolidate the quality of collective memory. It should be noted, however, that geopolitical culture and geopolitical codes have convergent definitions in scientific discourse. Culture determines the way one perceives one’s place in the world, while geopolitical codes make it possible to determine how a given country is situated in relation to the world.\(^\text{23}\)

Large-scale ideas can and should be analyzed using mythical narratives and geopolitical codes that answer questions: a) who are our current and potential allies b) who are our current and potential enemies c) how can we maintain our allies and look after potential allies d) how can we oppose our current enemies and emerging threats e) how do we justify these four assumptions to our public opinion and to the global community?\(^\text{24}\) These codes treat the state of each sovereign state, and the development of a matrix of actions and their implementation constitute a vital interest of each power. Colin Flint points out that geopolitical codes make it possible to define mental maps of foreign policy. Having them is essential not only for the sovereign state, but also for its allies, who will judge the truthfulness, strength and motivation of international relations on their basis. It must be remembered that geopolitical actors still \[\ldots\] in their activity rely on socially produced spatial imagery, which is an important element of self-identification and identity.\(^\text{25}\) The implementation of foreign policy is the sum of the intensity of specific mythical narratives and geopolitical codes.

Large-scale ideas are national ‘geopolitical visions’, about which Gertjan Dijkink treats. He introduces this concept as an analytical postulate and a cognitive category to explore geopolitical culture. He considers geopolitical visions to be a reference of the spatial mentality of individuals and social groups to the outside world. However, the essence of its definition is the postulate to combine geopolitical visions with national and international security by identifying threats, challenges, opportunities or even the very beliefs about the state’s extraordinary situation.\(^\text{26}\)

Geopolitical visions, using mythical narratives and geopolitical codes, create mental maps of the world which are three-dimensional space, functioning in social consciousness and combining knowledge/factography with geographic and physical code properties (sign), values with metaphysical elements (meaning) and mythical narratives (signifié - meaning).\(^\text{26}\) Such maps are geographically autonomous.\(^\text{27}\) They can

\(^{22}\text{Ibidem, p. 21; J. Niznik, Myth as a Methodological Category, ‘Culture and Society’ 1978 No. 3, p. 163-174.}\)

\(^{23}\text{C. Flint, Introduction to Geopolitics, Warsaw 2008, p. 72.}\)

\(^{24}\text{Ibidem, p. 72.}\)


be given real value because they are socially constructed and political phenomena are spatially situated. It is the political and historical axiology that is responsible for the construction and placement of appropriate points (accents) on the narrative-conscious mental map through its ideology and pragmatism.

Large-scale ideas are created on the basis of national values and interests represented and implemented by political elites, but they still remain a historical and social form of knowledge about the space in which we operate. It is a social and political image of the world, not a description of what it is. Large-space ideas by means of mental maps of the world enable its objectified factual and geographical perception, supplemented by political values (historical, nationalistic and xenophobic). Maps enable the scanning of fears and the creation of security through the location of values and meanings functioning in public discourse. They are constantly negotiated for reasons of raison d’etat and geostrategic variables. Large-scale ideas, using the social value of the construction and usefulness of maps, allow to give a geographical shape to the political dimension of the state, to give shapes (geographical space) social values and functions, which culturally close a specific national group within the limits set in their own mental maps.

Large-scale ideas are therefore a sign that the nation has a geopolitical culture. They are built from geopolitical visions, references to the space of the outside world, national mythical narratives referring to geographical features, geopolitical codes and a mental map as an idea externalised on real, geographical features (although with axiological and symbolic features).

The Soft Power of Large-Scale Ideas

Large-scale ideas, according to the proposed interpretation, have a soft-poster potential. The history of the First Republic shows - this will be demonstrated in the further part of this work - that cultural and political attractiveness can build the prestige of the state and gain allies as effectively as the use of force, with the advantage, however, that they leave no resentment associated with the use of coercion. Large-scale ideas in the issue of Polish raison d’etat should constitute attractive visions and

27 W. Chlebda, Polak przed mentalną mapą świata (A Pole before the mental map of the world), ‘Etnolinguwistyka’ 2002 No 14, p. 9.
28 J. Potulski, What is geopolitics..., op.cit., p. 27.
solutions for the states of the region and international powers, so that Poland becomes a nodal country for them in the modern geopolitics of network connections. The Polish idea of a large scale Polish Republic of Both Nations turned out to be a success. Polish soft power was so attractive that it allowed the creation of a Polish-Lithuanian empire. Nowadays, geopolitical notions in the soft power concept must focus on presenting desirable (not necessarily real) actions for regional security and expose the bidder state as a leader and initiator.

The concept of soft power presented by Joseph Nye assumes operation on three levels of activity and attractiveness of the state and nation: [...] its culture (where it is attractive to others), its political values (if it follows them at home and abroad) and its foreign policy (if it is perceived as legitimate and has moral authority). Large-scale ideas aggregate all three dimensions of soft power: they are a socio-cultural product (political and geopolitical culture), they refer to values (mythical narratives and national stereotypes) and foreign policy by means of geopolitical imagery and mental maps.

In the creation of soft power with the use of large scale ideas it is necessary to use appropriate values. What Schmitt pointed out - that the concept in its very name should not be burdened with axiology, from the point of view of Poland and each country is the most important (creating only positive semantic connotations). The values of a large-space idea should be created and used by means of geopolitical codes that will moderate a dialogue based on as many common axioms as possible. Thanks to this action [...] the values spread beyond the limits of their generation, also influencing the fate of other participants in the system. The background to such an influence of a political entity increases when its actions are justified in the eyes of other participants in the international system, strengthening its image and spreading the ideals it promotes. Effective use of soft power creates in others a sense of necessity to participate in the realization of common values.

Large-scale ideas are extremely useful in the age of globalisation. Phenomena of deterritorialisation and transnationality cause that geography loses its political significance and becomes more important in the axiological (symbolic and historical) dimension. In addition, there are phenomena leading to an increase in the importance of universal values and a mental erosion of established geographical boundaries. Societies find the planes of understanding more quickly, especially when the very idea of a large space is presented not as a national one, but has the characteristics of an offer (e.g. in terms of military security).

Soft power, using the idea of large scale should include structural and institutional actions, preparing the state for both offensive and defensive activities in the field of information security, especially to respond to the propaganda activities of other actors in international relations (states, international organizations, lobbies, etc.). This is because the state’s post-modern, post-sovereign power is shaped [...] primarily by its ability to

37 R. Łoś, Soft Power in contemporary international relations, Łódź 2017, p. 78.
38 Ibidem, p. 79.
achieve an information advantage and its ability to shape its image (its brand), which will allow it to pursue its political goals without or with the minimum use of force 39.

The Experience of Polish Soft Power – Republic of the Nobility

The idea of the Republic of Poland has guided Polish society since the beginning of modern statehood to such an extent that the very term ‘public thing’ (res publica) creates the name of the Polish state. This was due to the noble idea of republican democracy, [...] when the term ‘state’ began to spread in Western Europe, the term ‘republic’ took root in Poland, best reflecting the conviction, which had dominated since the 16th century, that the Polish state is a public thing, something that one has in common and that one should take care of40.

The Republic had a powerful soft power, especially affecting its eastern neighbors, and it was to them that it was directed. In modern times, during the period when the ideal countries in the West were being created, the Republic appeared to be a fulfillment of the postulates, a concrete political entity - completely non-utopian41. As a real state with broad pro-liberal prerogatives, it intrigued the West until the end of the 18th century, it was [...] a multinational community of peoples, typical of the traditional form of empire. It did not enjoy the favor of other states, especially from the West. It was only the collapse of the Republic of Poland that resulted in the creation of Poland as a modern, though for some time only virtual, national community. It gained considerable approval in the international arena, especially in the West42.

The Republic itself was a state, actually a common good, the common good of all, in which all states were equally responsible for security. The Republic enjoyed universal respect and recognition of its citizens, and its majesty manifested itself in an ideal system and its representation (of the king and officials), as well as in a nation that had prerogatives to exercise power43. Every nobleman had a share in the Republic - by state, land or office. In this way, it served everyone and integrated citizens, as it really belonged to them. Having it, in one dimension and not another, brought with it a certain benefit, but also taught the nobility responsibility for community decisions. It was repeatedly pointed out that concern for the existence of the state, for its permanence was

39 W. Lewandowski, Soft Power as..., op.cit., p. 69.
the duty of all citizens\(^{44}\), while the war in defense of the Republic of Poland was perceived as a distinction, as a ‘sacred work’\(^ {45} \). The idea of a common move meant that the shareholder between the homeland and the enemy should be the fence itself\(^ {46} \).

The well-known idea of equality ‘a nobleman on a homestead equal to a governor’ was a concrete condition for the coexistence of citizens, consisting in the fact that equality was guaranteed not according to the property status, but was a formal property of every nobleman regardless of his possessions. The idea of equality in a noble society, now devalued by crooked messages and ridiculous sayings, was to uphold freedom. And freedom in the Republic of Poland was an overriding idea. The nobility had great economic rights, authority over peasants, numerous political rights (including personal integrity), the right to make political decisions, the right to elect a king, the right to terminate his obedience, his own judiciary and freedom of speech. All these rights and freedoms were translated into the Republic, which as an idea and state was their embodiment and guarantor. In fact, it was the nobility, thanks to their power in the state, who guaranteed these rights themselves as long as the state existed.

The Utopian state, which not so much gave a sense of equality and freedom as it was their real security, laid the foundations for [...] the self-identification of the citizens of the Republic of Poland, their sense of bond with the political community they form together, their conviction that the Republic is their common work and\(^ {47} \) that of their ancestors. The political community educated in this way was the largest in modern Europe, as it comprised 10% of Polish society. Taking into account that in the 17th century the Republic was inhabited by 12 million citizens, the right to vote was over one million. It was the largest hybrid (direct and indirect) democracy in Europe and the longest functioning one (from 1492 to 1795).

The ideas of freedom and equality were given great importance because they helped to create a sense of political bond between the Polish, Ukrainian and Lithuanian nobility and other nations living in a multinational Republic. In a country where there were no state differences, there were no internal fights because: [...] Great is common freedom, that the Lord does not rule me as he wishes and as he thinks, nor any light person, but my brother, my blood, about whom there is also a great deal to do as well as about me, and I am happy to endure this for a free man, to which my brother and I, when he is blown up, will allow me to do so\(^ {48} \). The nobility did not rebel against themselves, the average nobleman was aware of the principles of community action. He did not have to serve others, and even if he did, he was a different nobleman, so the service turned into help or clientelism.

A form of noble political clientelism, which is negated in contemporary Poland, finds approval among contemporary thinkers, who indicate that it is based on the principle of

\(^{44}\) D. Pietrzyk-Reeves, State as..., op.cit., p. 35.


\(^{46}\) W. Kunicki, Obraz szlachcica polskiego, Kraków 1615, p. 63.

\(^{47}\) D. Pietrzyk-Reeves, you as..., op.cit., p. 45.

\(^{48}\) F.S. Klonowicz, Naprawa Rzeczypospolitej do elekcji nowego króla [Repair of the Republic to the election of the new king], Cracow 1959, p. 18.
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reciprocity and leads to the fact that a politician is to some extent responsible to those who voted for him49. It is now being argued that clientelism should be seen as an early form of democracy rather than a form of corruption50. Aristocratic democracy at its end was therefore a prodemocracy that succumbed to the authoritarianism of its neighbors. As Almut Bues states, the example of the Republic of Poland shows that decentralization and the prevalence of states could lead to democracy without having to follow a circular path through absolutism51.

Paradoxically, the Republic of Poland was an idea that contributed to the survival of the Polish nation under partition in a spirit of strong patriotism and cultural sovereignty. The idea of the Republic itself [...] did not die with the Polish statehood at the end of the 18th century, on the contrary, because it was only thanks to the partitions that Poland, perhaps for the first time in history, found itself on the mental map of foreigners [...] the effects of the partitions showed the attachment of Poles to their lost homeland [...] it was the strongest manifestation of the new ethnic consciousness52.

Another element of the post-modern era’s soft power of the Republic of Poland was its attractiveness, not only social, cultural, legal and political, but also military, often mocked by native historiography. Indeed, Poland has never developed great militaristic ideas for fear of the dominion of the absolute. It was a condition for the functioning of the state’s political balance. Polish historiography often operates with the image of the Republic of the nobility as a country in the background, on the sidelines, with incomplete institutions. Anglo-Saxon historiography speaks much better in this matter than its native one: [...] The Polish monarchy or the Republic, which was one of the great powers of North-Eastern Europe in the early modern era, was subject to all the tendencies that existed in Europe at that time [...] it slightly deviated from the typical solutions in terms of royal power, types of offices, diplomacy, the judiciary or the armed forces54.

It must be said straightforwardly: the Republic of Both Nations was the largest European empire of the modern era! The Grand Duchy of Moscow belonged to the Eurasian countries, the Ottoman Empire to the Afro-Eurasian ones. From the time of the Union of Lublin until the partitions of Poland, the Republic of the Two Nations was the largest European country - it occupied almost all of Central and Eastern Europe.

From the very beginning, the Republic of Poland seemed to be a spatial idea. The period of the system of the Commonwealth of Nobles is the time of the greatest territorial expansion (in the political and cultural context) and modern reforms not only on a national but also on a regional scale, it is a period of expansion and concentration, during which a number of areas were incorporated into the Crown (Corona Regni

49 F. Fukuyama, Political order and political regress. From Industrial Revolution to Globalization of Democracy, Poznań 2015, p. 108.
50 ibidem, p. 109.
52 R. Evans, Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy..., op. cit., p. 48. 54 A. Bues, Formation of the Monarchy..., op. cit., p. 86.
This vision is at odds with the hitherto accepted form of aristocratic pacifism. And yet, the Republic had [...] two kinds of noble citizens. One is suitable for war and the other for peace, the former expand the borders of the country with their weapons, the latter ruled by advice and prudence. Polish historiographers do not say that a nobleman’s evasion of the duty to defend the state [...] resulted in internal depreciation of the individual and social ostracism. The ‘pacifists’ were spared no criticism or warning of the consequences of their attitude. And this to such an extent that the Czech brothers were expelled from the country for sowing pacifist attitudes and wooden swords at the side.

Pacifism is attributed to the Polish nobility incorrectly. It was present in trends and attitudes presenting the idyllic nature of life, which did not fit in with the idea of a warrior nobleman.

Pacifism and the Polish idea of conquest may also have resulted from the nobility’s duty and the fact that it took on a burden that was far beyond its capabilities. The Polish idea of conquest is soft cultural power. Thanks to its political and cultural attractiveness, it was possible to win Lithuania, earlier the states of Prussia sought to merge the whole of Prussia with Poland. Nowogród Wielki paid for the union with the Republic of Poland by Ivan the Terrible with pacification. Inflanty, whose incorporation into Poland was feared by the nobility, were eventually incorporated as a Polish-Lithuanian dominion under the auspices of the monarch. Kurland and Semigallia can also be mentioned. Moldova and Silesia also aroused interest among the nobility, and the idea of creating a dominion of the Crown and Lithuania from the Baltic Sea is visible in the incorporation of Estonia.

The examples given above prove that the nobility constantly intended to spread the land of the Motherhood. However, this was not done with a weapon, as it was used mainly to defend the borders. The pacifism that the nobility was accused of, contributed to the development of a republican ideology (or perhaps was the result of it), and this postulate made it possible for the Republic to rely on loose confederacy ties with subsequent territories. This is clearly visible in the idea of free election and in personal unions, which thus expressed the geopolitical thought of the modern era active in the region of Poland (e.g. union with Transylvania, Saxony, Sweden).

Poland’s greatest political achievement in the 16th century was undoubtedly the Union of Lublin. Personal unions happened quite often in Europe, but it was rare for the two countries to be united peacefully as a result of a real union to such an extent that in unum et indivisum ac indifferens corpus - create an ‘inseparable body’. (in the form of the Republic of Both Nations). At the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th

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53 Ibidem., p. 85.
54 W. Goślicki, O senatorze doskonały, Cracow 2000, p. 137.
55 U. Świderska-Włodarczyk, Homo Nobilis..., op.cit., s. 159.
57 A. Mosbach, Two messages to Poland by the Silesians, Poznań 1863.
58 W. Kurnicki, Image..., op.cit., p. 63.
59 A. Bues, The Formation of the Monarchy..., op.cit., p. 95.
century it was even possible to reach the ‘Troist Union’ of the Crown, Lithuania and the Grand Duchy of Moscow (honoured in 1611). During the first interregnum, the most serious candidacy for the throne of the Republic of Poland was Ivan IV\(^{60}\), [...] if Moscow or his son were king of Poland, and in time, this one monarchy, if Poland joined Lithuania and Moscow, could compare it to the old Persian, Assyrian and Roman states\(^{61}\). The source materials cited by Jerzy Malec indicate that the plans for a union with Moscow were already quite specific (a common army, a common capital in Kiev), but were not realized either in the first, second or third election.

However, the Republic was an atypical empire: it did not have any imperialist tendencies. The nobility did not hesitate to incorporate Inflanty, although they feared problems with Moscow (Inflanty was incorporated as a result of Polish *soft power*), believed in the return of Silesia, the incorporation of the Grand Duchy of Moscow and the creation of an Eurasian empire. She managed to achieve some limited military successes - the tribute to Prussia (1525) and Moscow (1611) - but these did not turn out to be solutions as permanent as those concluded as a result of peace and *soft power* (Lithuania, Courland and Semigalia).

The Contemporary Republic and Its *Soft Power*

In the Middle Ages the Polish spatial idea of the Crown of the Polish Kingdom was in force, in modern times the idea of the Republic of Poland. The first Polish geopoliticians also saw in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the need to create a large-temporal idea that would shape national ideas about their own state and its borders. Eugeniusz Romer referred to the issue of defining the borders of a post-partition Poland (as a geographical idea) as the area of the pre-partition Republic. He pointed out that its characteristic features were: peculiar climate, hydrological cohesion, symmetry and passivity of topographical structure and bridging\(^{62}\). He attributed great importance to the river system; he considered the Vistula and its river basins as the so-called core area. He understood that the ideas of great space are necessary to create a sovereign state. He stressed that Poland is a country located in the lowlands without borders, only a great political organism can be solid and strong on such a natural basis\(^{63}\). Poland was therefore doomed either to be a regional power or to what happened to it in 1939.

While Romer was based on geographical historiography, Wacław Nałkowski tried to establish Polish borders on a solid geographical basis. However, he did not draw too optimistic conclusions. He considered that the territory of Poland was characterised by a transitory character, the permanent sign of which is the struggle between the West and the East; it takes place and will take place on the territory of the Republic of Poland\(^{64}\).

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\(^{61}\) J. Czubek, *Pisma polityczne z czasów pierwszego bezkrólelewia* [Political writings from the times of the first interregnum], Kraków 1906, p. 356.


He postulated that the Polish borders should be built on the basis of socio-economic elements. However, the resulting borders of the Second Polish Republic were artificial, crossing communes and towns for centuries.\(^65\)

Examples of large scale ideas about the Republic of Poland can be found in many other studies. But what seems to be more important is how to translate the achievements to date into contemporary Polish soft power. At present we do not draw enough from our good past. The social awareness of Poles of their own nation’s achievements is low, while the awareness of the West of the achievements and the contribution of the Republic to European democracy is negligible. It is worth turning to the past in order to draw conclusions and to draw on good models and experiences, especially of our own ancestors. This is particularly important now, in the 21st century, when international security results from national consolidation and internal security and policy. The Republic and the liberal doctrine of the Polish state adopted in 1989 is free of great ideas, symbols and myths that bind the community together, and is free of historical ties.\(^66\)

The idea of a large scale Republic of Poland should be directed primarily internally and relate to the consolidation of the nation, [...] because the history of Europe teaches that the greatest conflicts took place on Polish soil, it is only strong, economically highly developed, efficiently ruled, wise with the wisdom of its citizens, and consequently respected and treated as a partner in international politics that Poland can and should be a factor of stability and peace in Europe.\(^67\) Unfortunately, Poland has been reduced in the political and economic context to the position of a peripheral country, thus it is not possible to develop an appropriate international position.

Conclusions and recommendations

You need to look back to take the right action in the future. It is necessary to start with a great challenge: to focus Polish society around serious, bold and forward-looking reforms. The 1990s showed that Polish society is capable of great sacrifices. Therefore, it needs stimulation, challenges, self-government and development of the middle class.\(^68\) It is precisely this class that guarantees attachment to the homeland, cultivating patriotic attitudes and determines the essence of the nation.\(^69\) All of this can be closed in the ideas

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\(^{65}\) M. Sobczyński, *Changing the function of international borders on Polish soil from the time of the Republic of Poland to Poland’s accession to the Schengen Agreement*, ‘Prace Geograficzne’ 2008 No 218, p. 40.

\(^{66}\) J. Hrynkiewicz, *Państwo i naród - o sytuacji demograficznej Polski*, in: *Racja stanu*, B. Jusiak (ed.), Poznań 2011, p. 131. Continues: Careful cleaning of curricula from the history and native literature does not give rise to the knowledge of symbols, myths, values, to create a coherent historical vision of the nation, based on culture, tradition, history, religion, common values.


\(^{68}\) In Poland, however, the gap between the richest and the poorest is constantly increasing. J. Klimczak, *Economic transformation as marginalization. Economic and social consequences of the Polish time of transformation*, ‘Progress. Journal of Young Researchers’ 2017 No. 1, p. 34. Vide: S. Stodolak, *Polish middle class is reviving. It is to her that we owe the economic leap*, Forsal.pl [online], 6.10.2018, https://forsal.pl/artykuly/1288936,jakie-jest-znaczenie-klasysredniej-dla-rozwoju-polskiej-gospodarki.html [access: 9.02.2019].

of the great space that meet the principles of coherence of the message (judgments, experiences, convictions and opinions in the narratives), the group perception of reading codes and organizing them into a sensible whole\textsuperscript{70}.

The internal orientation towards the idea of a large scale Polish Republic is primarily the construction of national mythology. Each nation, as a social group, needs two basic myths: the founding myth and heroic myths. In both cases, the Republic of Poland, having myth-creating potential, does not fill the narrative gap. Myth is a form of collective consciousness that pushes nations to great deeds\textsuperscript{71}. National mythology is shaped by an appropriate historical policy\textsuperscript{72}. Contemporary Poland lacks a founding myth\textsuperscript{73}. It happened as a result of political changes, which in fact were a modification of power after 1989\textsuperscript{74}. There were no violent movements, overthrow of the government, bloodshed, no revolution, even a velvet one. Contemporary Poland has not settled with its past, but on the mythological grounds it appears to be a continuation of the People’s Republic of Poland\textsuperscript{75}, and the society is sentimental about Edward Gierek’s rule\textsuperscript{76}.

The lack of the founding myth seems to be the greatest pain of the Republic of Poland, since it is impossible to refer to its essence, there is nothing to distinguish it from its predecessor. Thus, according to the logic of institutional continuity, the roots of the contemporary Republic reach the end of World War II. That is why Poles so easily accept the ideas of the Great Sphere in the form of the Fourth Republic or the ‘green island’, because they bring to mind the new beginning and the golden age. Nevertheless, another utopia is needed, based on the foundation myth, which in times of virtual experience may be more real than ever. As Jan Sowa indicates, [...] \textit{The Republic is a utopia. It is, but the world in which we live - the world of human rights, universal suffrage, social security and respect for personal freedoms [...] is nothing more than a realized utopia}\textsuperscript{77}.

Internally directed Polish \textit{soft power} must focus on building myths, e.g.: the myth of the round table, the myth of the civilization cloud, the myth of the end of Western civilization, the myth of the heroic fight against Germany, the myth of the heroic fight against communism, the myth of Home Army soldiers, the myth of Polish soldiers on World War II fronts, the myth of cursed soldiers, the myth of ‘Solidarity’ and others. It should be pointed out that myths do not lie about reality, but serve to emphasize and


\textsuperscript{75} D. Waniek, \textit{Founding Myths...}, op.cit., p. 38.


\textsuperscript{77} J. Sowa, \textit{Another Republic is possible! Spectres of the past, visions of the future}, Warsaw 2015, p. 272.
symbolize broad historical and memorial narratives, the message of which should be closed in a few concise clusters: cultural and geopolitical codes.

These myths can be directed both internally and externally. With regard to the latter, other narratives would have to be developed, those whose properties will affect on different planes. For example: the myth of a safe country, the myth of a country that does not know terrorism, the myth of a country that is tolerant of religion and worldview, the myth of a country of honor and heroism. In the case of the last myth about such a narrative in the West it is not difficult, because the feature of value belongs to the traditional stereotype of a Pole.

Following in the footsteps of Israel and Germany, an externally oriented mythological offer should be developed. Myths of the Nazis and the Holocaust are now an unquestionable element of political discourse. Next to them, their own narratives must exist - they must be generated - about the betrayal of Poland by the West in 1939, in Yalta, Potsdam and Tehran. The point is to arouse a sense of responsibility. It should be stressed that during the Second World War Poland suffered the greatest sacrifice (in terms of the percentage of the loss of society to the general public), that the Polish government never collaborated with the Germans, and that Polish soldiers always fought ‘for our freedom and yours’ on all fronts, that the process of stopping communism in 1920 and its dismantling in the 1980s began with Poland, and - most importantly - that democracy, cooperation, confederation of states and functioning in a permanent union of states Europe learned from the example of the empire of the Republic of the Two Nations. After all, noble democracy is a hybrid combining elements of direct and indirect democracy. The idea of a large scale Republic of Poland should be expressed in the attitude of a scapegoat, a requirement for special treatment, and a preference for the sacrifice suffered. The society inhabiting it should be seen as modern: tolerant, open to migrants (the largest migration from Ukraine), committed, pro-democratic, pro-citizen, heroic, etc.

The presented narratives should be properly prepared and distributed by an institution intended for this purpose, apolitical, acting in accordance with the Polish raison d’État, providing opinions, analysis and information on the information struggle. The postulate to create the Machine of Narrative Security of the Republic of Poland may be

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79 Myth of a peaceful dream, Mr. Lewandowski, Kill the King! Assassination of Michał Piekarski on Sigismund III Vasa, Warsaw 2012, pp. 76-107.
82 In the case of the myth of the scapegoat, it should be pointed out that current societies are giving up the myth of progress only to fall into the much worse myth of eternal return. R. Girard, The Scapegoat, Łódź 1987, p. 84. This gives hope for the rebirth of a number of Polish national myths: the myth of an ideal society, the myth of the shield of Europe, the myth of a utopian island, etc.
difficult to meet due to party accusations against the operation of this institution. The name itself is also quite problematic.

The creation of the image of the Republic of Poland as a big-space idea and Polish soft power should be directed towards the states of the interseas. They may be addressed by narrations referring to the common past, positive bilateral experiences (negative experiences from other countries - searching for a common enemy, consolidating mythical narratives in this area), cooperation, as well as myths of reconciliation or myths of common heroes. The recipients of these narratives should be the elites and societies of Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. Therefore, cultural cooperation, international exchanges, greater openness and trust of societies become a necessity. With regard to Ukrainians, migration can be used as a temporary phenomenon that should improve the image of Poland and Poles in Ukraine. A positive, multidimensional and continuous dialogue, supported by sectors and institutions, is necessary with other countries.

The second direction of Polish soft power should be the area of the Tri-Coast. In this case, Poland should appear as a guarantor of regional military security, and after the UK leaves EU structures - as a solid partner of the United States in the European Union and the Central European region. However, security in the sense of social need includes other areas: economic, cultural, social, energy. The narrative offer should indicate that the sovereign Republic is a guarantor of supply, cooperation, business partner, intermediary with the greatest power of influence among foreign partners, as well as an investor. All these activities should be undertaken by means of soft post-controlled diplomacy, supported by political myths derived from the ideas of the big space. The possibility of alliances (with the USA, China, Germany) and their role in building a strong image of Poland should also be considered.

The third direction of the development of the idea of the Republic should be the countries of the West - Germany, France, Great Britain, because in them a sense of responsibility for the Second World War can be aroused, their colonial past, i.e. an attitude alien to the Republic in the period when it itself was an empire, should be emphasized, and it should be pointed out that they are not partners because they show globalization and neo-colonial tendencies towards the countries of the Central and Eastern European region. These accusations must be contrasted with the heroic defense of the Polish state in 1939, providing assistance to the West, strongly presenting the Republic of Poland as a victim, Poland’s pursuit of democracy, promoting it and maintaining democratic standards at a high level and ‘democratizing democracy’, i.e. emphasizing the position of the Republic of Poland as a leader in the region and guarantor of security.

87 The victim has a strong political accent. As Andrzej Chodubski stated, it pays off to be (real or created) victim, because it facilitates self-presentation, gives a number of possibilities through positioning. A.J. Chodubski, On mimetic explanation of political reality, ‘Studia Gdańskiej’ 2013 t. 32, s. 214.
88 J. Owl, Another Republic of Poland is possible! Spectres of the past, visions of the future, Warsaw 2015, p. 269.
The ideas of the Republic should also be directed at the world powers: USA, China and Russia. Each of these countries requires separate narratives, methods, expenditures and means of myth distribution. In Russia, Poland’s narrative potential is large, but it needs to be intensified by increasing its presence and renewing its dialogue and strengthening cooperation. For the U.S., Poland does not currently seem to be an attractive partner (although it sees itself as such), one with which political or economic gains would be associated. Therefore, as a leader of the developing countries of the Tricity region, it should usurp its consent to speak out on political issues in this area, but this requires appropriately developed information and diplomatic agendas. For China, on the other hand, Poland is a transit country (bridge, transition) and should place emphasis on cooperation through appropriate economic agreements and participation in the New Silk Road strategy. Moreover, cooperation with China can be treated as a bargaining chip in relations with the USA: from Warsaw to Beijing it is in a straight line 6951 km, to Washington and 7189 km.

To meet the demands presented requires, as the nobility did, the creation of stable apolitical structures in the country. Religious tolerance, political cooperation, the idea of freedom and equality - these values turned out to be such an attractive offer in the Republic of Poland for its eastern neighbors that they have permanently united with Poland into one organism. Military weakness was replaced by bravery and sacrifice. The Republic proved that its strength is the nation. Nowadays, this may not be enough, so a policy of deterrence should be used. However, not the concept of ‘Polish fangs’, because the possibility of building a conventional potential for deterrence against an opponent that is much stronger militarily and, in addition, being a nuclear state, although seemingly attractive, seems to be a fantasy and phantasmagoria rather than a real alternative. The alternative can be tactical and conventional, but above all atomic, deterrence. Such a strategy - as one might think - will fully allow for the promotion of pacifist ideas in the region. The countries allied to the Republic of Poland - the country that did not cause war with any of its neighbors and which suffered the greatest sacrifice during World War II, a pacifist country for centuries - will have greater confidence in it and will maintain more positive relations with it than with Germany or Russia.

Poland lacks challenges and authentication. After its accession to NATO and the EU, the period of geostrategic thinking and acting ended. New geopolitical ideas are not emerging, while those implemented - Jagiellonian and Promethean - do not correspond to the current international situation. A positive action - in line with the raison d’être of state, non-party - for the benefit of state and regional security should be the pursuit of nuclear technology for the needs of energy security and the security of the state and the

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89 We must agree with Rafał Kopiec and Przemysław Mazur that when we talk about the main geopolitical players, who pay at most moderate attention to Poland, we mean above all the triangle: China (of course), the United States (which may be painful for the apologists of the unconditional alliance with this country), and to some extent also Russia. J. Kopeć, P. Mazur, Military deterrence in the 21st century. Poland-NATO-Russia, Cracow 2017, p. 8.

90 Ibidem, p. 123.


92 A. Włodkowska-Bagan, Strategic Culture..., op.cit., p. 76.
region, emphasizing its deterrent potential and questioning the American concept of nuclear sharing\textsuperscript{93}. The narratives presented should point out that the Republic - a betrayed but heroic country, the one that defied the USSR and Germany and overthrew communism - should have nuclear weapons in its arsenal not so much for the sake of possessing them, but because it is convinced that its possession of such weapons will guarantee regional security. A code strip in the form of a format: The Republic of Peace-atoms (other: atom for peace, atom for security) should become a subject of national and international discussion (appropriately directed by Polish services and institutions), a permanent element of international discourse.

To sum up, the Rzeczpospolita, as a large scale idea, is a format of the size of a country in the axiological rather than spatial understanding (referring to codes, narrations, mental maps and geopolitical visions). It is expressed in the soft poster image creation of the state and nation. The Republic does not arouse negative associations, because it has never before strived for conquests, gaining zones of influence, imperialistic actions. On the contrary, it has opposed and opposes such phenomena in the region, upholding democracy, sovereignty of states and respect for their equality and freedom in decision-making. The Republic, as a large scale idea, is a manifestation of geopolitical culture, realized by locating narratives and geopolitical codes in international discourse. It should be expressed in the creation of a geopolitical vision focused on national and regional security - the creation of an image of Poland as a guarantor of security and a regional leader. The geographical features of the concept should be supplemented and replaced by a universal axiology for the region, focusing as much as possible on bilateral symbolic links. The Republic of Poland, as a large-spatial idea, perceived through the prism of the networking of contemporary international relations, concentrates non-geographical and supra-spatial properties, thus becoming the epitome of state centric values.

From a historical point of view, the Republic is a successful concept of a noble society, which has translated into the international position of the Crown and Lithuania and has developed lasting - even in the face of annihilation - alliances and interstate unions. The Republic guaranteed respect for individual rights and the freedom and equality of all noble citizens in a period of state inequality. The Republic of the nobility was a democratic state among the despotic and authoritarian states, so it was far ahead of its time in terms of social, cultural and political system.

Currently, the Republic can be presented as an offer of cooperation, ideas, democratization. In such an approach, it requires a conceptual development of a package of narrations and codes, which thanks to structural measures will be distributed in a viral way in globalized international relations. The article presents examples of mythical-narrative possibilities. The soft power of cultural, democratic and legal attractiveness has been used by the EU in the framework of the Eastern Partnership\textsuperscript{94}, but it has failed due to the divergence of particular interests of countries. This gives Poland the opportunity to fill a niche and use the EU’s achievements to date in discourse with Eastern countries. However, Poland’s soft power needs to be complemented by general axiology and pop

\textsuperscript{93} R. Kopeć, Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe, ’Strategic Review’ 2016 No 9, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{94} R. Youngs, Europe’s Eastern Crisis. The Geopolitics of Asymmetry, Cambridge 2017, s. 58.
culture, as is done, for example, by India, which promotes ideas of peace derived from Hinduism, or Brazil, which promotes pacifist solutions (it promotes sport, mainly football, and carnival directly associated with them).

*The soft power* of large-space ideas makes sense when the state talks about itself and not about the space of other states. It creates lasting alliances, based not only on particular goals (because they are variable), but also on values, beliefs and cultural community (broad networks of dependencies, relations, cooperation, images and international stereotypes).

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