



**BARTOSZ KOWALSKI**

Uniwersytet Łódzki

ORCID: 0000-0002-5991-8663

bartosz.kowalski@wsmip.uni.lodz.pl

## Domestic contestation in Poland's foreign policy towards China in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine

Wewnętrzna kontestacja ról w polityce zagranicznej Polski wobec Chin w kontekście inwazji Rosji na Ukrainę

**Keywords:**

Poland's foreign policy, Poland-China relations, role theory, war in Ukraine, China-Central and Eastern Europe, China-Russia relations

**Słowa kluczowe:**

polityka zagraniczna Polski, relacje polsko-chińskie, teoria ról, wojna w Ukrainie, Chiny i Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia, relacje chińsko-rosyjskie

## **Domestic contestation in Poland's foreign policy towards China in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine**

Between 2017 and 2023, the Polish authorities presented two main foreign policy visions towards China. The main division line was between President Andrzej Duda – a supporter of Poland's engagement with China – and the government of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who explicitly advocated a policy of containment. This article examines these divisions from the perspective of the domestic horizontal contestation of national roles in foreign policy.

## **Wewnętrzna kontestacja ról w polityce zagranicznej Polski wobec Chin w kontekście inwazji Rosji na Ukrainę**

W latach 2017–2023 wśród polskich władz ścierały się dwie główne wizje prowadzenia polityki wobec Chin. Główna oś podziału przebiegała między ośrodkiem prezydenckim Andrzeja Dudy – rzecznika zaangażowania Polski we współpracę z Chinami oraz rządem premiera Mateusza Morawieckiego, który wyraźnie opowiadał się za polityką powstrzymywania Chin. Niniejszy artykuł analizuje te podziały w perspektywie koncepcji wewnętrznej kontestacji horyzontalnej ról narodowych w polityce zagranicznej.

## Introduction

In 2015, the right-wing populist party, Law and Justice (PiS), won the presidential (in May) and parliamentary (in October) elections, achieving absolute domination of the Polish political landscape.<sup>1</sup> Until 2017, both Prime Minister Beata Szydło and President Andrzej Duda maintained friendly relations with China, continuing the policy line of the previous government of the Civic Platform (PO) and the Polish People's Party (PSL), outlined in the Sino-Polish Strategic Partnership which was reached by the President of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hu Jintao, and Polish President Bronisław Komorowski in December 2011.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the early period of the PiS government (and its coalition partners within the United Right alliance) saw the upgrading of bilateral relations with China to a comprehensive strategic partnership, which was sealed during PRC President Xi Jinping's visit to Poland in June 2016.<sup>3</sup> Official declarations went hand in hand with regular meetings at the highest level during this period. In 2015, President Andrzej Duda visited China, followed a year later by Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski, who spoke enthusiastically about the prospects for Poland's relations with China.<sup>4</sup>

- 1 The author would like to express gratitude to Adrian Brona (Jagiellonian University) and two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on the earlier drafts of the article. This research was supported by the University of Łódź's research grant IDUB, No. B2212001000110.07.
- 2 *Wspólne oświadczenie Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej w sprawie ustanowienia partnerskich stosunków strategicznych*, "Embassy of the PRC in the Republic of Poland" [online], 13 I 2012 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[http://pl.china-embassy.gov.cn/pol/zt/zfvisit/201201/t20120113\\_2370725.htm](http://pl.china-embassy.gov.cn/pol/zt/zfvisit/201201/t20120113_2370725.htm)>. The second PO-PSL government between 2011 and 2015 was much more enthusiastic about China than the first government of the same coalition between 2007 and 2011, when Poland attempted, among other things, to boycott the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games over human rights violations in Tibet.
- 3 *Wspólne oświadczenie w sprawie ustanowienia wszechstronnego strategicznego partnerstwa między Rzeczpospolitą Polską a Chińską Republiką Ludową*, "Prezydent" [online], 20 VI 2016 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[https://www.prezydent.pl/download/gfx/prezydent/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5378/258/1/20\\_06\\_16\\_wspolne\\_oswiadczenie\\_pl\\_polski.pdf](https://www.prezydent.pl/download/gfx/prezydent/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5378/258/1/20_06_16_wspolne_oswiadczenie_pl_polski.pdf)>.
- 4 *Witold Waszczykowski w Chinach: Polska ma potencjał, by stać się ważnym partnerem Pekinu*, "Dziennik" [online], 24 IV 2016 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/swiat/artykuly/518908,witold-waszczykowski-w-chinach-polska-ma-potencjal-by-stac-sie-waznym-partnerem-pekinu.html>>.

At the same time, Poland was actively involved in the 16+1 (14+1) format,<sup>5</sup> whose annual summits were held with the participation of the highest-ranking Polish officials: President Andrzej Duda in 2015 and Prime Minister Beata Szydło in 2016 and in 2017. In addition, Poland became a founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and, like other Central and Eastern European countries, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Polish government's commitment to relations with China was confirmed when Prime Minister Szydło attended the inaugural Belt and Road Forum in Beijing in April 2017. The development of contacts between central governments overlapped with numerous interactions between local level authorities – Chinese provinces and cities and their Polish counterparts.<sup>6</sup>

However, in November 2016, despite the general enthusiasm of the Polish authorities towards cooperation with China, the Military Property Agency, which was then under the authority of the Polish defence minister, Antoni Macierewicz, cancelled the tender for a Chinese investment in a logistics hub in Łódź, a city located in central Poland, citing the need for additional analysis.<sup>7</sup> The key factor behind the cancellation of the tender appears to be the doubts publicly raised against China by Antoni Macierewicz, even before he was sworn in as head of the Ministry of Defence. In October 2015, in an interview with a Polish media outlet in Canada, Antoni Macierewicz denied that a Chinese hub was being

5 The China-Central and Eastern European cooperation format was established in 2012, under the name 16+1, which then expanded to include Greece in 2019, and changed its name to 17+1. However, when Lithuania left the Chinese multilateral platform in 2021, followed by Latvia and Estonia the following year, the numerical composition of the format was reduced to 14+1. In view of the ongoing erosion of the format, the Chinese side began to avoid using the format's numerical name. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, the author uses the original name 16+1 throughout the text.

6 T. Kamiński, A. Skorupska, J. Szczudlik, *The subnational dimension of EU-China relations*, The Polish Institute of International Affairs, Warsaw 2019: <<https://pism.pl/upload/images/artykuly/e4d13af8-3898-48b8-8fdc-a092854bebf2//1570962783474.pdf>> [accessed: 31 VII 2023].

7 *Agencja Mienia Wojskowego odwołała przetarg*, "TVP3 Łódź" [online], 7 XII 2016 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://lodz.tvp.pl/28130484/agencja-mienia-wojskowego-odwolala-przetarg>>.

built in Łódź, drawing attention to the threats to Poland's security posed by China's expansion through the New Silk Road and the increasing cooperation between China and Russia, which he believed were acting in concert with Western European countries to push the United States out of Eurasia and deprive Poland of its independence.<sup>8</sup> Although Minister Macierewicz did not refer to this argumentation in the parliamentary debate on Poland's foreign policy in February 2017, he repeatedly emphasised the security considerations behind withholding the Chinese investment in Łódź.<sup>9</sup>

However, a more distinct change in Poland's policy towards China, did not occur until Mateusz Morawiecki became Prime Minister in December 2017. From then on, one could observe the demarcation of differences in policy towards China between the Prime Minister and the President of Poland, which in this article are analysed through the lens of the theory of horizontal contestation of national roles in foreign policy.

### Theoretical background

The precursor of the application of the national role theory to IR is Kalevi Holsti, who in 1970 defined national roles as the typical patterns of attitudes and decisions of governments towards other states in foreign policy. According to this researcher, national roles are

the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional systems. It is their "image" of the appropriate orientations or functions of their state toward, or in, the external environment.<sup>10</sup>

8 Antoni Macierewicz o Nowym Jedwabnym Szlaku: likwidacja Polski jako niepodległego podmiotu, „Inwestycje Kolejowe” [online], 3 IX 2015 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gqX57MdcuY>>.

9 B. Kowalski, *From railway dreams to a reality check. Achievements and challenges of Sino-Polish relations at the local level – the case of Łódzkie-Sichuan partnership*, [in:] *China's Belt and Road Initiative strategic and economic impacts on Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Eastern Europe*, ed. A. Gerstl, U. Wallenböck, Routledge, London 2020, p. 204–205.

10 K. J. Holsti, *National role conceptions in the study of foreign policy*, "International Studies Quarterly" 1970, vol. 14, No. 3, p. 245–246.

According to this conception, decisions and actions taken by the state in foreign policy can be seen as attempts to play national roles and, consequently, typical decisions should at least be consistent with the roles adopted.<sup>11</sup> Holsti identified 17 major national roles based primarily on the statements of the most senior foreign policy makers (presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers), although in some cases ambassadors or other officials were also included, insofar as their statements reflected the views of the leaders.<sup>12</sup>

As Marijke Breuning points out, in contrast to the first generation of role theory in international politics, which focused on the influence of the external environment on conceptions of national roles, today, the influence of internal factors or personal experiences (preferences) of decision-makers is also emphasised. This shift relates to the subject-structure issue in international relations, i.e. the answers to the questions of to what extent the international system influences the foreign policy of states (and their decision-makers), and to what degree is it the decision-makers (based on their own beliefs and professed values) who have the ability to shape the role of their states in the international environment, and even to influence others in that environment?<sup>13</sup> While the precursors of role theory in IR were primarily structuralists, at present, the dominant assumption is that subject and structure are mutually constitutive, being influenced by the constructivist approach and the unitary level of analysis.<sup>14</sup>

Although the concept of national roles has traditionally implied the multiplicity of roles that a state can simultaneously play, within this theoretical paradigm, a consensus among elites regarding the national role has prevailed. However, with the development of theories of national roles that take into account the relationship between subject and structure, Cristian Cantir and Juliet Kaarbo have drawn attention to the possibility of an internal contestation of national roles, which can occur horizontally (within the ruling elite) or vertically (between elites and the public).<sup>15</sup>

11 Ibidem, p. 247.

12 Ibidem, p. 256, 260–271.

13 M. Breuning, *Role theory*, [in:] *Routledge handbook of foreign policy analysis methods*, ed. P. A. Mello, F. Ostermann, Routledge, Abingdon–New York 2023, p. 188.

14 Ibidem, p. 190.

15 C. Cantir, J. Kaarbo, *Contested roles and domestic politics: Reflections on role theory in foreign policy analysis and IR theory*, "Foreign Policy Analysis" 2012, vol. 8, issue 1, p. 5–24.

Therefore by taking into account internal factors, it is possible to identify multiple variants of the concept of national roles and how they are strategically used by internal actors to gain support for their policies, as well as political or personal goals.<sup>16</sup>

### Structure and objectives of the article

This article examines the horizontal dimension of the contestation of national roles vis-a-vis China, between the two key centres in Polish foreign policy: Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and his government, and President Andrzej Duda.<sup>17</sup> The timeframe of the analysis covers the first and second governments of Prime Minister Morawiecki (December 2017 – November 2023), who was in power concurrently with President Andrzej Duda. To this end, two main types of national roles were selected, i.e. defender of the faith and mediator-integrator, which seem to most closely reflect Polish foreign policy towards China. In Holsti's typology, the role of defender of faith is ascribed to governments that

view their foreign policy objectives and commitments in terms of defending value systems (rather than specified territories) from attack. Those who espouse the defender of the faith national role conception presumably undertake special responsibilities to guarantee ideological purity for a group of other states.<sup>18</sup>

I also consider the role of regional leader, ascribed to a sense of special responsibilities in relations with other states in the region, and faithful ally, which is utilised "only where a government makes a specific commitment to support the policies of another government."<sup>19</sup>

16 Ibidem, p. 18–19.

17 Although, according to Article 146 of the Polish Constitution, the government conducts the domestic and foreign policy of the state, at the same time Article 133 indicates similar competences of the President, who "in the field of foreign policy cooperates with the Prime Minister and the relevant minister."

18 Ibidem, p. 265.

19 Ibidem, p. 261, 267.

The main method adopted in the study is a discourse analysis of the most important actors in Polish foreign policy towards China: the President and his advisors, as well as the Prime Minister and members of his government, primarily the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but also the ministers of Defence and the Interior. In order to verify the assumption of a horizontal contestation of national roles between the main actors in Poland's foreign policy, I attempted to answer the following research questions: What national roles did the Prime Minister as well as selected ministers in his government and the President adopt during the period under study? How did the Polish government's perception of China evolve and what were the main factors of continuity or change in national roles? Furthermore, how were these roles used to achieve specific political and/or personal goals of key decision-makers in Polish foreign policy?

The article is divided into four main parts structured in a chronological and thematic manner, in analyzing the following phases of Polish foreign policy towards China: the rise of tensions against the backdrop of the US-China rivalry (2018–2019), cooperation in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, overlapping with a shift in Poland's relations with the US and the EU (2020–2021), and in the context of the war in Ukraine (2022–2023).

### **Poland in defence of the “free world” against China**

A clear re-evaluation of Polish foreign policy towards China took place with Mateusz Morawiecki becoming prime minister in December 2017. For example, in July 2018, the Prime Minister did not attend the 16+1 Summit in Sofia, instead choosing to attend a pilgrimage event of the religious and politically ultra-conservative radio station Radio Maryja at Poland's Jasna Góra Monastery in Częstochowa. Apart from Lithuania, which was celebrating a national holiday at the time, only Poland downgraded its representative at the summit, delegating Deputy Prime Minister Jarosław Gowin<sup>20</sup>.

20 B. Kowalski, *What's next for the China-CEE 16+1 platform?*, “The Diplomat” [online], 17 VII 2018 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://thediplomat.com/2018/07/whats-next-for-the-china-cee-161-platform/>>. On the other hand, in 2019, Mateusz Morawiecki represented Poland at the 16+1 summit in Croatia, where he said that he had a constructive conversation with Premier Li Keqiang, communicating to him



The process of cooling relations with China started in the context of Poland's strengthening of its strategic cooperation with the United States. In November 2018, the Polish defence minister, Mariusz Błaszczak, who was in Washington for talks on strengthening the US military presence in Poland, said in an interview with Polish Television that the US would benefit from the establishment of a permanent military base in Poland, as "it would help halt the progress of the Russian empire, which together with China is forming a coalition against the free world."<sup>21</sup> That same month in Hamburg, during a discussion on transatlantic relations with then Vice Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Prime Minister Morawiecki stated that "China is challenging the free world of democracy and the Transatlantic Alliance. We must find a way to maintain the right level of deterrence, not against the forces of the free world, but against China and Russia."<sup>22</sup> Both statements demonstrates how the role of defender of the faith has been strategically used by the Defence Minister and the Prime Minister to justify the need for closer security cooperation with the US and to receive US military support.

However, the most serious crisis in bilateral relations to date was triggered by the detention of a Chinese employee of the Polish branch of telecom giant Huawei, Wang Weijing, in January 2019, on suspicion of spying for China. Five years on, the case, which has been taking place against a backdrop of US-China rivalry, has not been resolved – there has been no verdict in Wang's closed-door trial, nor has there been any decision made by the Polish authorities on the amendment of the law on 5G network security and regulations that would formally exclude Chinese entities from it.<sup>23</sup>

expectations on China's lifting of barriers for Polish exporters and entrepreneurs and lobbying for an influx of Chinese tourists to Poland. *Mateusz Morawiecki po szczycie 16+1 w Dubrowniku*, „Kancelaria Premiera” [online], 12 IV 2019 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4D91Mt-A1HM>>.

- 21 *Fort Trump coraz bliżej?*, „Wiadomości” [online], 13 XI 2018 [accessed: 10 XII 2023]: <<https://wiadomosci.tvp.pl/39936650/fort-trump-coraz-blizej>>.
- 22 *Poland is both pro-American and pro-European – Polish PM in Hamburg*, “The First News” [online], 17 XI 2018 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.thefirstnews.com/article/poland-is-both-pro-american-and-pro-european---polish-pm-in-hamburg-3341>>.
- 23 Further see: S. Czubkowska, *Chińczycy trzymają nas mocno*, Znak, Kraków 2022, p. 17–50.

In contrast, President Duda has been rather reluctant to take a position on Poland's cooperation with Huawei. One of the rare examples was a January 2019 statement indicating unanimity with the government on this issue. Inscribing himself as defender of the faith, Andrzej Duda rather diplomatically assessed at the time that for historical and identity reasons, he was closer to cooperation with European or US companies than to Asian manufacturers, without explicitly mentioning China.<sup>24</sup>

However, Prime Minister Morawiecki was much more assertive regarding this issue, signing a joint declaration on 5G security with US Vice President Mike Pence in September of the same year. This document, although non-binding, implicitly excluded Poland's cooperation with Huawei and ZTE.<sup>25</sup> The dangers of cooperation with China, including 5G, were also highlighted by the Minister of Interior and Administration and Coordinator of Special Services, Mariusz Kamiński. In December 2019, at a meeting at the Wilson Center in Washington, Minister Kamiński sharply criticised the short-sightedness of some European countries that depended on Chinese capital, who he stated, ignored the fact that China was ruled by the Communist Party. Here, Minister Kamiński took on the role of defender of the faith, referring to his own student experience in anti-communist opposition in Poland, pointing out that China is still ruled by the same party that massacred his peers in Tiananmen Square in 1989.<sup>26</sup>

24 P. Orlikowski, *Prezydent o sieci 5G i zatrzymaniu pracownika Huawei*. "Musimy być bardzo ostrożni", "Money" [online], 23 I 2019 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/prezydent-o-sieci-5g-i-zatrzymaniu-pracownika-huawei-musimy-byc-bardzo-ostrozni-6341323727693441a.html>>.

25 *U.S.-Poland joint declaration on 5G*, "Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej" [online], 2 IX 2019 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.gov.pl/attachment/fcfa15a-04b1-4837-a318-9c0e737cb37b>>.

26 *Minister Kamiński ostro o Chinach i 5G*. "Ogarnia mnie przerażenie", "Bankier" [online], 10 XII 2019 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc/Minister-Kaminski-ostro-o-Chinach-i-5G-Ogarnia-mnie-przerazenie-7787534.html>>. Opposing the hawks faction in the ruling camp was MP Marek Suski – a close associate of PiS chairman, Jarosław Kaczyński. Suski has headed the Polish-Chinese Parliamentary Group for many years, makes no secret of his enthusiasm for Chinese achievements and takes part in various meetings under the aegis of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on party cooperation.

Regarding 5G, Mateusz Morawiecki used his role as a defender of the faith to alert the European public of the threat posed by authoritarian China and thus convince them that cooperating with the US was in their best interests. In July 2020, in the pages of the British newspaper, "The Telegraph", the head of the Polish government warned of the risks to Europe's security posed by cooperation with 5G technology providers which were controlled by an authoritarian regime. However, again, neither China nor the telecom companies were mentioned by name. According to Prime Minister Morawiecki, a wake-up call on this issue was the Covid-19 pandemic, which demonstrated the need for secure supply chains in pharmaceuticals and medical devices. In his view, "the alliance with the United States brought prosperity and peace to post-war Western Europe", and should also be continued by Europe in the technological dimension, especially when it came to building 5G networks.<sup>27</sup> The PRC ambassador to Poland, Liu Guangyuan, almost immediately replied to the article in the pages of the daily newspaper, "Rzeczpospolita", attributing the behaviour of Poland and other European countries on 5G to American hegemony, deeming the blocking of Huawei a political action and comparing it to leaving the technological iron curtain.<sup>28</sup>

### Cooperation with China during the Covid-19 pandemic

Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Polish authorities, like many other countries, sought access to China's protective and medical supplies needed to combat Covid-19. China looked to use these needs both for domestic policy purposes, covering up its initially botched response to the pandemic outbreak and legitimising the rule of the CCP, and internationally – in a systemic competition with liberal democracies.<sup>29</sup> In exchange for access

27 M. Morawiecki, *All of Europe must stand with America on 5G*, "The Telegraph" [online], 15 VII 2020 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/07/15/europe-must-stand-america-5g/>>.

28 Liu G., *Nie dla "żelaznej kurtyny" technologii 5G*, "Rzeczpospolita" [online], 17 VII 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.rp.pl/opinie-ekonomiczne/art8872921-nie-dla-zelaznej-kurtyny-technologiei-5g>>.

29 B. Kowalski, M. Reksć, *Pandemic diplomacy and patron-client relations in Sino-Serbian cooperation*, "China Information" 2023, vol. 37 (2), p. 190–194: <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0920203X231155148>> [accessed: 31 VII 2023].

to various medical supplies and vaccines, the PRC authorities extorted various political concessions from countries using Chinese resources, demanding that the authorities of these countries refrain from criticising China internationally and/or participating in gratitude ceremonies for medical aid.<sup>30</sup>

Against this backdrop, Poland's president and prime minister presented different conceptions of national roles. Although Mateusz Morawiecki personally welcomed the first plane from China with a cargo of protective medical supplies to Warsaw in mid-April 2020, unlike many countries in the region he did not do so in the presence of representatives of the Chinese embassy. The Prime Minister was thus apparently wary of personally legitimising Chinese aid, although at the same time he sought to use the arrival of the medical supplies for his own political purposes, i.e. to demonstrate his effectiveness in organising supplies amidst global competition for resources. Nonetheless, at a press conference on the tarmac of Warsaw's Okęcie Airport, the Prime Minister thanked President Duda for his talks with Xi Jinping, which had helped to "decongest communication channels" and speed up shipments from China.<sup>31</sup>

This was a reference to the Andrzej Duda – Xi Jinping telephone conversation of 25 March 2020, in which the Polish president assumed the role of faithful ally, stating that China had taken timely and decisive action to stop the spread of the coronavirus effectively and supported Poland in the face of urgent medical needs. The conversation with President Duda and his expression of gratitude were reported on the front page of the "People's Daily", the CCP's press organ, which suggested that the Polish president's words were used for legitimacy purposes in domestic politics.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, in March 2021, after another conversation with Xi Jinping, the president's office reported that Andrzej Duda raised the issue of Polish-Chinese cooperation in the fight against

30 B. Kowalski, *China's mask diplomacy in Europe: Seeking foreign gratitude and domestic stability*, "Journal of Current Chinese Affairs" 2021, vol. 50 (2), p. 214–218: <<https://doi.org/10.1177/18681026211007147>>.

31 *Konferencja prasowa premiera Mateusza Morawieckiego*, "Onet News" [online], 14 IV 2020 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCP1OMGqkOE>>.

32 习近平同波兰总统杜达通电话 Xi Jinping tong Bolan zongtong Duda tong dianhua ["Xi Jinping spoke by phone with Poland's President Duda"], "Renmin Ribao" ["People's Daily"] [online], 25 III 2020 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[http://paper.people.com.cn/tmrb/html/2020-03/25/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20200325\\_4-01.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/tmrb/html/2020-03/25/nw.D110000renmrb_20200325_4-01.htm)>.

the pandemic and probed the possibility of purchasing Chinese vaccines at the request of Prime Minister Morawiecki.<sup>33</sup> One can therefore infer that in times of crisis, Prime Minister Morawiecki avoided public engagement with China, but acted in concert with the President, who in turn took on the role of China's faithful ally by making a "concrete commitment to support the policies of another government."

### China as part of the balancing act in relations with the US and the EU

Despite the cooperation in securing Chinese medical supplies, the two centres of power demonstrated varying degrees of interest in multilateral cooperation with China. In February 2021, President Duda attended the 16+1 format summit (online) at Xi Jinping's personal invitation, although the Polish Foreign Ministry reportedly advised him against this decision, and over a third of countries downgraded the rank of officials participating in the meeting. At the summit, the Polish president assumed the role of mediator-integrator and at the same time regional leader. Stressing that each state in the region has "the right to define for itself the ceiling of expectations and the scope of possible cooperation [with China]", he assessed that, "no important event concerning Central Europe can take place without the presence of Poland."<sup>34</sup>

33 *Rozmowa z Przewodniczącym Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej Xi Jinpingiem*, "Prezydent" [online], 1 III 2021 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosc/wydarzenia/rozmowa-z-przewodniczacym-chinskiej-republiki-ludowej-xi-jinpingiem,2067>>.

34 *IX Szczyt Przywódców Europy Środkowowschodniej i Chin z udziałem Prezydenta RP*, "Prezydent" [online], 9 II 2021 [accessed: 13 XII 2023]: <<https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosc/wydarzenia/rozpoczal-sie-ix-szczyt-przywodcow-europy-srodkowowschodniej-i-chin-z-udzialem-prezydenta,2046>>. See also: W. Ferfecki, *Chiński labirynt Prawa i Sprawiedliwości*, "Rzeczpospolita" [online], 1 III 2021 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.rp.pl/kraj/art8659511-chinski-labirynt-prawa-i-sprawiedliwosci>>. One should note, that the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the government has so far not translated into a decision to leave the format, despite China's support for Russia during the war in Ukraine, which was one of the reasons for Estonia and Latvia's exit from the 16+1 in August 2022. See for example, U. A. Bērziņa-Čerenkova, *Mild wording but harsh timing: Latvia and Estonia's exit from 16+1*, "China Observers" [online], 12 VIII 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://chinaobservers.eu/mild-wording-but-harsh-timing-latvia-and-estonias-exit-from-161/>>.

A similar role was soon played by the Polish MFA. In May 2021, shortly after Lithuania left the 16+1, citing the lack of economic benefits and the negative impact of the format on the coherence of the EU foreign policy towards China,<sup>35</sup> Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau travelled to Guizhou for a meeting with the head of Chinese diplomacy Wang Yi. According to a brief communiqué from the Polish MFA, during the conversation, the ministers agreed that the 16+1 format “after necessary adjustments, should be an important pillar of cooperation between Europe and China.”<sup>36</sup> At the same time, Minister Rau declared that “Poland, as one of the beneficiaries of the development of the world order after 1989, will continue cooperating with allies and partners in creating and maintaining the conditions for peaceful international cooperation.”<sup>37</sup>

In turn, according to the PRC Foreign Ministry, Wang Yi stressed that he “highly values Poland’s international and regional influence” and “supports Poland in playing a greater and more active role in international and regional affairs.”<sup>38</sup> Minister Rau, on the other hand, stated that Poland would be encouraging Chinese companies to invest and would not apply discriminatory practices towards them, thus implying that Huawei was still being considered as a contractor for building 5G networks in Poland. In addition, the head of the Polish MFA expressed support for the ratification of the Comprehensive Investment Agreement (CAI) between the EU and China<sup>39</sup>, of which the US administration has been critical.<sup>40</sup>

35 S. Lau, *Lithuania pulls out of China’s “17+1” bloc in Eastern Europe*, “Politico” [online], 21 V 2021 [accessed: 15 XII 2023]: <<https://www.politico.eu/article/lithuania-pulls-out-china-17-1-bloc-eastern-central-europe-foreign-minister-gabrielius-landsbergis/>>.

36 *Minister Rau z wizytą w Chinach*, “Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej” [online], 29 V 2021 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/minister-rau-z-wizyta-w-chinach>>.

37 Ibidem.

38 王毅同波兰外长拉乌举行会谈 *Wang Yi tong Bolan waizhang Lawu juhāng huìtan* [“Wang Yi holds talks with Polish Foreign Minister Rau”] “Foreign Ministry of the PRC” [online], 29 V 2021 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/wjzbhd/202105/t20210529\\_9137390.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/wjzbhd/202105/t20210529_9137390.shtml)>.

39 Ibidem.

40 S. Płóciennik et al., *EU-China comprehensive agreement on investment: political and economic implications for the European Union*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, Warszawa 2021, p. 16.

Indeed, it is the deterioration of relations with the United States that appears to be the main reason for the Polish Foreign Ministry's change in rhetoric towards China. The first months of the presidency of Joseph Biden in 2021, whose election victory over Donald Trump was welcomed tepidly by the Polish authorities, was a period of intensified Polish-Chinese contacts, both at the level of foreign ministers (prior to the aforementioned visit of Minister Rau, two telephone conversations took place in January and March at the ministerial level) and heads of state (in addition to his participation in the 16+1 summit, President Duda also spoke to Xi Jinping on the telephone). Poland's heightened interest in the opportunities offered by the Chinese financial market, which intensified during the conflict with the European Commission over the disbursement of massive funds from the National Recovery Plan (NRP) against the backdrop of the rule of law dispute, also seems to fit into a similar logic. Both the issuance of yuan-denominated Polish bonds on the Chinese market (around USD 450 million) and the loans from Chinese banks taken out in February 2022 and – already after the outbreak of war in Ukraine August – by the state-owned gas company PGNiG (a total of around PLN 177 billion), took place at a time when, as a result of the dispute with Brussels, Poland was awaiting the unfreezing of very significant European funds.<sup>41</sup>

### **Continuity and change in Polish policy towards China in the context of the war in Ukraine**

Less than three weeks before the outbreak of war in Ukraine, President Duda was the only EU country leader to attend the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Beijing. The visit took place despite many of Poland's Western partners boycotting the event due to human rights violations in China, and especially with regard to the repression against the Uyghurs. During the bilateral meeting in Beijing, Xi Jinping thanked Andrzej Duda for responding positively to an invitation he received five

41 W. Gadomski, *Zamiast środków unijnych w euro chińskie pożyczki w juanach dla Polski?*, "Bank" [online], 24 VIII 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://bank.pl/zamiast-srodkow-unijnych-w-euro-chinskie-pozyczki-w-juanach-dla-polski/?id=420596&catid=25926>>.

years earlier, describing his relationship with the Polish president as a gentlemen's friendship that sticks to its commitments.<sup>42</sup>

Ahead of President Duda's trip to Beijing, his foreign policy advisor Jakub Kumoch, taking on the role of mediator-integrator, explained that it is Poland's sovereign right to pursue, its own policy towards China and argued that, very friendly relations with the country do not contradict the Polish-American alliance.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, a year later, having already left the President's office, Jakub Kumoch explained that the visit to Beijing was an attempt to bring China in as a mediator between Ukraine and Russia and served to draw Xi Jinping's attention to the fact that a Russian attack on Ukraine would be detrimental to China's trade interests.<sup>44</sup> The role of mediator-integrator was also implied by Presidential Minister Andrzej Dera, who explained that in addition to economic issues, President Duda, "presented the crisis around Ukraine to Xi Jinping from a European and NATO perspective, because the Chinese leader probably only has information from the other [i.e. Russian] side."<sup>45</sup>

Despite dissatisfaction with China's attitude towards the war<sup>46</sup>, the role of mediator-integrator was also maintained by the MFA. Following Zbigniew

42 习近平会见波兰总统杜达 *Xi Jinping huijian Bolan zongtong Duda* [Xi Jinping met with Polish President Duda], "Foreign Ministry of the PRC" [online], 6 II 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[https://www.mfa.gov.cn/zyxw/202202/t20220206\\_10639406.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/zyxw/202202/t20220206_10639406.shtml)>.

43 *Poland's President to attend Beijing Olympics amidst U.S. boycott*, "Reuters" [online], 18 I 2022 [accessed: 13 XII 2023]: <<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/polands-president-attend-beijing-olympics-amidst-us-boycott-2022-01-18/>>.

44 W. Rogacin, *Jakub Kumoch: Od początku wiedzieliśmy, że Ukraina nie upadnie*, "I" [online], 24 II 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://i.pl/jakub-kumoch-od-poczatku-wiedzielismy-ze-ukraina-nie-upadnie/ar/c1-17316819>>.

45 *Andrzej Duda spotkał się z przywódcą Chin Xi Jinpingiem. Prezydencki minister o szczegółach rozmowy w Pekinie*, "TVN 24" [online], 6 II 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://tvn24.pl/swiat/pekin-andrzej-duda-spotkal-sie-z-przywodca-chin-xi-jinpingiem-prezydencki-minister-o-szczegolach-rozmowy-5587640>>.

46 In May 2022, a Chinese delegation led by Huo Yuzhen, special envoy for the 16+1 format, was not received by the Polish MFA. Instead of talks with the MFA, the Chinese delegation met with, among others, Marek Suski, who, three weeks later, while criticising the EU on Polish Television (TVP) for its alleged ineptitude, stated that China was ready to provide financial and in-kind assistance to Ukrainian refugees in Poland, probing Polish local governments for this purpose. According to Marek Suski, the amount of proposed aid from China was



Rau's conversation with Wang Yi in June 2022, the Polish MFA stated that the two countries had noted differences in the UN vote (thus referring to China's support for Russia in the organisation) and indirectly called on China to condemn the Russian aggression against Ukraine. However, the head of Polish diplomacy did not criticise China's stance towards the war, focusing primarily on economic cooperation. Minister Rau assured Wang Yi that Poland was open to dialogue with China, and gave a list of economic problems for which Poland had been waiting to be addressed for many years,<sup>47</sup> including, inter alia, reducing the huge bilateral trade deficit, increasing the inflow of Chinese investments (especially in greenfield projects), improving access to the Chinese market for Polish products and Polish companies in operating the China-Europe railway.<sup>48</sup> In the same month, the MFA announced that Poland would remain in the 16+1, although it would selectively engage in the work of the format.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, at the end of July 2022, Andrzej Duda spoke with Xi Jinping, mainly to discuss the consequences of Russian aggression against Ukraine.<sup>50</sup> In his assessment of China's attitude towards the war, the Polish President was even more restrained than the Polish Foreign Ministry.

supposed to be relatively small, but was intended to symbolically show that China does not blindly support Russia. *Kwadrans Polityczny*, "TVP VOD" [online], 24 V 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://vod.tvp.pl/informacje-i-publicystyka,205/kwadrans-polityczny-odcinki,274096/odcinek-1413,S01E1413,394179>>. Finally, in November the same year, Jiang Yu (Huo Yuzhen's successor) was received by the Polish MFA. See: 姜瑜特别代表工作组访问中东欧七国 *Jiang Yu tiebie daibiao gongzuo zu fangwen ZhongDongOu qi guo* [Working Group led by Special Envoy Jiang Yu to visit seven Central and Eastern European countries], "China-CEEC Cooperation" [online], 24 XI 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[http://www.china-ceec.org/chn/msc/dsj/202211/t20221124\\_10980532.htm](http://www.china-ceec.org/chn/msc/dsj/202211/t20221124_10980532.htm)>.

47 See: A. Brona, *Nierealne oczekiwania. Bilans i perspektywy stosunków polsko-chińskich*, Klub Jagielloński, Warszawa 2020.

48 *Minister Rau rozmawiał z szefem chińskiej dyplomacji*, "Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej" [online], 13 VI 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.gov.pl/web/chiny/minister-rau-rozmawial-z-szefem-chinskiej-dyplomacji>>.

49 M. Grzegorzcyk, *Polska zostaje w 16+1*, "Puls Biznesu" [online], 21 VI 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.pb.pl/polska-zostaje-w-16-1-1153870>>.

50 *Rozmowa telefoniczna Andrzeja Dudy z Xi Jinpingiem*, "Prezydent" [online], 29 VI 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/rozmowa-telefoniczna-andrzeja-dudy-z-xi-jinpingiem,57175>>.

Andrzej Duda drew attention to the negative security and economic consequences of the Russian-led war for Central and Eastern Europe, including its trade relations with China, and stressed China's ability to play an active role in preventing the global food crisis that Russia wanted to trigger.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, after the outbreak of the war, President Duda consistently played the role of mediator-integrator. It has been pointed out that one of the reasons for Andrzej Duda's reluctance to antagonise China may also be due to his personal ambitions, related to his plans for an international political career after the end of his presidency in 2025.<sup>52</sup>

Compared to the President and the Foreign Ministry, Prime Minister Morawiecki expressed much stronger rhetoric, presenting himself as defender of the faith. In June 2022, on the "Politico" website, he expressed concerns about Sino-Russian cooperation and China's aspirations to change the international order, alone or in tandem with Russia. Referring to the axiological antinomy dividing authoritarianism and democracy, the Polish Prime Minister indicated that the defence of Ukraine would reaffirm the maintenance of global leadership by the "transatlantic free world" and a belief "in the universality of values such as freedom and the right of national self-determination."<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, Mateusz Morawiecki warned that if Russia was not stopped by the West, China would take advantage of the situation and seize Taiwan.<sup>54</sup>

A more blunt critical attitude of China, was demonstrated by the Prime Minister of Poland on 13 April 2023, in a speech to the Atlantic Council in Washington, where he stated that "if Ukraine falls, it gets conquered,

51 Ibidem.

52 Andrzej Duda's reluctance to antagonise China, especially over human rights, is to some extent dictated by his personal ambitions and plans for a further international political career, e.g. in the structures of the United Nations. To achieve this goal, the Polish president will need both the support of the US and at least the tacit approval of China. See: A. Stankiewicz, *Co Duda robi po prezydenturze? Ma na oku pracę za granicą*, "Onet" [online], 30 VI 2020 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/tylko-w-onejcie/co-duda-zrobi-po-prezydenturze-ma-na-ok-u-prace-za-granica/cvk7pq6>>.

53 M. Morawiecki, *The future of the West is in question*, "Politico" [online], 27 VI 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/06/27/future-west-morawiecki-ukraine-00042564>>.

54 Ibidem.

the next day China can attack Taiwan.”<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, having assessed that China, together with Russia, was working to subvert the international order, the Polish Prime Minister said that, “Russia seeks first and foremost the destruction of Ukraine, so that Ukraine cannot be a base for strengthening [the] Western presence, and this aspiration is most likely shared by Communist China.”<sup>56</sup> Although Mateusz Morawiecki declared that he respected China, which is “a great country”, he stressed that right now “[Poland] do not share exactly the same set of values [with China].”<sup>57</sup> The Polish Prime Minister also expressed his grave concern about Xi Jinping’s support for Vladimir Putin, hoping that China will not cross a red line by supplying arms to Russia.<sup>58</sup>

On the same day, Foreign Minister Rau presented information to the Sejm on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in 2023<sup>59</sup>, however, unlike the prime minister, he presented a position closer to the role of mediator-integrator. The head of Polish diplomacy emphasized the importance of political dialogue with China in the context of Russian aggression in Ukraine. Pointing to China as a country that “bears a special responsibility for the maintenance of world peace”, Minister Rau expressed the expectation that China “will react more actively to Russia’s destruction of this peace.”<sup>60</sup>

Much more critical of the PRC was Deputy Foreign Minister Wojciech Gerwel, who met with the Chinese government’s special envoy Li Hui

55 *Poland's Prime Minister: Western Europe needs to commit to Ukrainian victory and beware of China*, “Atlantic Council” [online], 13 IV 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=215cicp8Pmw>>. The Polish Prime Minister’s juxtaposition of the situation of Ukraine and Taiwan drew immediate criticism from the PRC embassy. See: *Oświadczenie Rzecznika Ambasady Chin w Polsce na temat błędnej wypowiedzi dotyczącej kwestii Tajwanu wygłoszonej przez polskiego urzędnika*, “Embassy of the PRC in the Republic of Poland” [online], 14 IV 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[http://pl.china-embassy.gov.cn/pol/sghd\\_1/202304/t20230414\\_11059027.htm](http://pl.china-embassy.gov.cn/pol/sghd_1/202304/t20230414_11059027.htm)>.

56 *Ibidem*.

57 *Ibidem*.

58 *Poland's prime minister...*

59 *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2023 r.*, “Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej” [online], 13 IV 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/informacja-ministra-spraw-zagranicznych-o-zadaniach-polskiej-polityki-zagranicznej-w-2023-r>>.

60 *Ibidem*.

in Warsaw in May 2023. The Polish diplomat articulated not only the PRC's disregard for the legal and international situation in the face of war, but also pointed to China's selective adherence to its own normative canon proclaimed in international politics.<sup>61</sup> Although Wojciech Gerwel positively acknowledged that China initiated dialogue with Ukraine, he also declared that China's equating of victim with the aggressor was unacceptable. Furthermore, Poland expressed its firm support for Ukraine's peace proposals and called on China – as a member of the UN Security Council and the chief advocate of the five principles of peaceful coexistence – to condemn Russian aggression and restrain Moscow's actions.<sup>62</sup> In its critical assessment of China's policy towards Ukraine, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs thus moved closer to the role of defender of the faith presented by Prime Minister Morawiecki.

## Conclusions

The article demonstrates that increasing the diversity of national political actors who can play national roles (and various combinations of these roles) in foreign policy is one of the most valuable contributions to this strand of research. During the analysed period, the main axis of division (horizontal contestation) was between the presidential office of Andrzej Duda – a proponent of Poland's engagement with China – and the government of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, which explicitly advocated a policy of containing China. The dichotomous division into engagers (mediator-integrators) and containers (defenders of the faith) is naturally a generalisation. The two main roles in Polish policy towards China intertwined, as well as the actors playing them. This is exemplified by Jakub Kumoch, who took up the position of Polish ambassador to the PRC after leaving the presidential office, and Marcin Przydacz, who moved in the opposite direction, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the office of President Andrzej Duda.

61 *Wiceminister Wojciech Gerwel przyjął specjalnego wysłannika rządu Chin ds. Eurazji*, "Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej" [online], 19 V 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/wiceminister-wojciech-gerwel-przyjal-specjalnego-wyslannika-rzadu-chin-ds-eurazji>>.

62 *Ibidem*.

Although the government of Prime Minister Morawiecki, especially the defence and internal ministries, cautiously approached relations with the PRC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often played an intermediary role between the attitude of the President and the Prime Minister, at certain times even acting as a third hub in Polish foreign policy towards China. At the same time, it should be noted that, despite the war in Ukraine, there was no shortage of supporters of economic cooperation with the PRC in the Polish government, above all in circles associated with the agri-food, railway and mining sectors, which sought a friendly attitude from the Chinese administration.<sup>63</sup>

President Duda and Prime Minister Morawiecki's government, although representing the same political camp, have repeatedly adopted different attitudes (national roles) towards China, demonstrating the complexity of the Polish-Chinese relationship and showing the changing internal and external conditions of this relationship over time. Almost throughout all of his tenure as Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki emphasised Poland's commitment to defending the "free world" against China (and Russia), which was used to justify increased military support from the US. However, when there was a need to maintain good relations with China in 2020 and early 2021, which was calculated to gain privileged access to protective and medical supplies to combat the pandemic, Prime Minister Morawiecki worked with President Duda, who took on the role of China's faithful ally.

At the same time, the Polish authorities sought to keep open channels of multilateral and bilateral political cooperation with China, something

63 Ł. Sarek, *Polska – stabilny partner Chin w Europie*, "Asia Explained" [online], 4 XII 2021 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://pl.asiaexplained.org/2022/08/04/polska-stabilny-partner-chin-w-europie/>>. The need for a political umbrella to remove Chinese trade barriers is demonstrated by the case of the embargo on Polish beef. When, in June 2023 China announced to lift the ban on imports from Poland after 22 years, Jacek Zarzecki, president of the Polish Union of Meat Cattle Breeders and Producers, announced that, in addition to the actions of relevant state and industry institutions, a breakthrough in the case would not have been possible without the diplomatic involvement of President Duda. See: P. Piwowarek, *Po 22 latach Chiny zniosły embargo na polską wołowinę. "Ogromny potencjał"*, "Portal Spożywczy" [online], 16 VI 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.portalspozywczy.pl/mieso/wiadomosci/po-22-latach-chiny-zniosly-embargo-na-polska-wolowine-quot-ogromny-potencjal-quot,226899.html>>.

which could also be used as an element of leverage in relations with the EU (against the backdrop of the rule of law dispute) and the US, as demonstrated by the intensification of Polish-Chinese contacts after Joseph Biden's election victory.

Nonetheless, in the face of the war in Ukraine and the imminent threat from Russia, Poland unequivocally sought to maintain close security ties with the United States, as reflected in Prime Minister Morawiecki's critical rhetoric towards China. In addition, because of China's continued support for Russia during the war, President Duda has become more restrained in his relations with Xi Jinping<sup>64</sup>, although he has never publicly criticised China. A similar attitude towards China was displayed by Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, although it should be noted that at a lower level, the Polish Foreign Ministry displayed more assertive rhetoric. Expressing criticism in a meeting with Xi Jinping and other senior Chinese politicians would probably have caused major repercussions for mutual relations and could have been perceived as a direct attack on the PRC leader himself.

In contrast, the assertive rhetoric expressed by Deputy Foreign Minister Wojciech Gerwel in talks was not picked up by the Chinese propaganda apparatus. This indicates a certain caution on the part of Mateusz Morawiecki's government, which did not seek a direct clash with China at the highest political level, even if this would allow the administration to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the US. One can, therefore, point to criticism of China by the government, but expressed through less prominent diplomatic channels or, as in the case of the Prime Minister himself, in the media or at expert forums.

An additional question that deserves consideration from the perspective of the concept of national roles and its internal determinants is how the personal beliefs of key decision-makers translated into their policies towards China. Similar to Ministers Macierewicz and Kaminski, Prime Minister Morawiecki seemed to always declare an anti-communist stance, which may explain his scepticism towards cooperating with China and his assumption of the role of defender of the faith. In contrast, Andrzej Duda, who has also emphasised his anti-communism, has been positively

64 For example, Andrzej Duda refrained from conveying public congratulations on Xi Jinping's "election" to a third term as CCP General Secretary.

disposed towards China from the beginning of his presidency, sometimes going against the Polish government. A certain rationale in this respect may be the calculation that, thanks to his good personal relations with the Chinese leader, it will be easier for him to gain support for his position in international organisations after the end of his term as Polish president. However, the picture of personal motivations of Polish politicians in this regard is unclear.

These findings confirm that the traditional research on role theory, which focused almost exclusively on the state as a coherent unit of analysis, has obscured a good deal of internal disagreements and differences. The concept of horizontal contestation allows for the considerable broadening of this research's perspective and to point to the changing role of internal and external factors over time in the formation of national roles adopted by the main centres of power in a state.

## Bibliography

- Agencja Mienia Wojskowego odwołała przetarg*, "TVP3 Łódź" [online], 7 XII 2016 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://lodz.tvp.pl/28130484/agencja-mienia-wojskowego-odwolala-przetarg>>.
- Andrzej Duda spotkał się z przywódcą Chin Xi Jinpingiem. Prezydencki minister o szczegółach rozmowy w Pekinie*, "TVN 24" [online], 6 II 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://tvn24.pl/swiat/pekin-andrzej-duda-spotkal-sie-z-przywodca-chin-xi-jinpingiem-prezydencki-minister-o-szczegolach-rozmowy-5587640>>.
- Antoni Macierewicz o Nowym Jedwabnym Szlaku: likwidacja Polski jako niepodległego podmiotu*, „Inwestycje Kolejowe” [online], 3 IX 2015 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gqX57MdcuY>>.
- Bērziņa-Čerenkova U. A., *Mild wording but harsh timing: Latvia and Estonia's exit from 16+1*, "China Observers" [online], 12 VIII 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://chinaobservers.eu/mild-wording-but-harsh-timing-latvia-and-estonias-exit-from-161/>>.
- Breuning M., *Role theory*, [in:] *Routledge handbook of foreign policy analysis methods*, ed. P. A. Mello, F. Ostermann, Routledge, Abingdon–New York 2023.
- Brona A., *Nierealne oczekiwania. Bilans i perspektywy stosunków polsko-chińskich*, Klub Jagielloński, Warszawa 2020.
- Cantir C., Kaarbo J., *Contested roles and domestic politics: Reflections on role theory in foreign policy analysis and IR theory*, "Foreign Policy Analysis" 2012, vol. 8, issue 1.
- China's Belt and Road Initiative strategic and economic impacts on Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Eastern Europe*, ed. A. Gerstl, U. Wallenböck, Routledge, London 2020.

- [Dziewiąty] IX Szczyt Przywódców Europy Środkowowschodniej i Chin z udziałem Prezydenta RP, "Prezydent" [online], 9 II 2021 [accessed: 13 XII 2023]: <<https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/rozpoczal-sie-ix-szczyt-przywocow-europy-srodkowo-wschodniej-i-chin-z-udzialem-prezydenta,2046>>.
- Czubkowska S., *Chińczycy trzymają nas mocno*, Znak, Kraków 2022.
- Ferfecki W., *Chiński labirynt Prawa i Sprawiedliwości*, "Rzeczpospolita" [online], 1 III 2021 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.rp.pl/kraj/art8659511-chinski-labirynt-prawa-i-sprawiedliwosci>>.
- Fort Trump coraz bliżej?, „Wiadomości” [online], 13 XI 2018 [accessed: 10 XII 2023]: <<https://wiadomosci.tvp.pl/39936650/fort-trump-coraz-blizej>>.
- Gadomski W., *Zamiast środków unijnych w euro chińskie pożyczki w juanach dla Polski?*, "Bank" [online], 24 VIII 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://bank.pl/zamiast-srodkow-unijnych-w-euro-chinskie-pozyczki-w-juanach-dla-polski/?id=420596&catid=25926>>.
- Grzegorzczak M., *Polska zostaje w 16+1*, "Puls Biznesu" [online], 21 VI 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.pb.pl/polska-zostaje-w-16-1-1153870>>.
- Holsti K. J., *National role conceptions in the study of foreign policy*, "International Studies Quarterly" 1970, vol. 14, No. 3.
- Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2023 r., "Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej" [online], 13 IV 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/informacja-ministra-spraw-zagranicznych-o-zadaniach-polskiej-polityki-zagranicznej-w-2023-r>>.
- Kamiński T., Skorupska A., Szczudlik J., *The subnational dimension of EU-China relations*, The Polish Institute of International Affairs, Warsaw 2019: <<https://pism.pl/upload/images/artykuly/e4d13af8-3898-48b8-8fdc-a092854bebf2/1570962783474.pdf>> [accessed: 31 VII 2023].
- Konferencja prasowa premiera Mateusza Morawieckiego, "Onet News" [online], 14 IV 2020 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCp1OMGqkOE>>.
- Kowalski B., *China's mask diplomacy in Europe: Seeking foreign gratitude and domestic stability*, "Journal of Current Chinese Affairs" 2021, vol. 50 (2): <<https://doi.org/10.1177/18681026211007147>>.
- Kowalski B., *From railway dreams to a reality check. Achievements and challenges of Sino-Polish relations at the local level – the case of Łódzkie-Sichuan partnership*, [in:] *China's Belt and Road Initiative strategic and economic impacts on Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Eastern Europe*, ed. A. Gerstl, U. Wallenböck, Routledge, London 2020.
- Kowalski B., *What's next for the China-CEE 16+1 platform?*, "The Diplomat" [online], 17 VII 2018 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://thediplomat.com/2018/07/whats-next-for-the-china-cee-161-platform/>>.
- Kowalski B., Rekść M., *Pandemic diplomacy and patron-client relations in Sino-Serbian cooperation*, "China Information" 2023, vol. 37 (2): <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0920203X23115148>> [accessed: 31 VII 2023].



- Kwadrans Polityczny, "TVP VOD" [online], 24 V 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://vod.tvp.pl/informacje-i-publicystyka,205/kwadrans-polityczny-odcinki,274096/odcinek-1413,S01E1413,394179>>.
- Lau S., *Lithuania pulls out of China's "17+1" bloc in Eastern Europe*, "Politico" [online], 21 V 2021 [accessed: 15 XII 2023]: <<https://www.politico.eu/article/lithuania-pulls-out-china-17-1-bloc-eastern-central-europe-foreign-minister-gabrielius-landsbergis/>>.
- Liu G., *Nie dla "żelaznej kurtyny" technologii 5G*, "Rzeczpospolita" [online], 17 VII 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.rp.pl/opinie-ekonomiczne/art8872921-nie-dla-zelaznej-kurtyny-technologii-5g>>.
- Mateusz Morawiecki po szczycie 16+1 w Dubrowniku, „Kancelaria Premiera” [online], 12 IV 2019 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4D91Mt-AIHM>>.
- Minister Kamiński ostro o Chinach i 5G. "Ogarnia mnie przerażenie", "Bankier" [online], 10 XII 2019 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc/Minister-Kaminski-ostro-o-Chinach-i-5G-Ogarnia-mnie-przerazenie-7787534.html>>.
- Minister Rau rozmawiał z szefem chińskiej dyplomacji, "Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej" [online], 13 VI 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.gov.pl/web/chiny/minister-rau-rozmawial-z-szefem-chinskiej-dyplomacji>>.
- Minister Rau z wizytą w Chinach, "Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej" [online], 29 V 2021 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/minister-rau-z-wizyta-w-chinach>>.
- Morawiecki M., *All of Europe must stand with America on 5G*, "The Telegraph" [online], 15 VII 2020 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/07/15/europe-must-stand-america-5g/>>.
- Morawiecki M., *The future of the West is in question*, "Politico" [online], 27 VI 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/06/27/future-west-morawiecki-ukraine-00042564>>.
- Orlikowski P., *Prezydent o sieci 5G i zatrzymaniu pracownika Huawei. "Musimy być bardzo ostrożni"*, "Money" [online], 23 I 2019 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/prezydent-o-sieci-5g-i-zatrzymaniu-pracownika-huawei-musimy-byc-bardzo-ostrozni-6341323727693441a.html>>.
- Oświadczenie Rzecznika Ambasady Chin w Polsce na temat błędnej wypowiedzi dotyczącej kwestii Tajwanu wygłoszonej przez polskiego urzędnika, "Embassy of the PRC in the Republic of Poland" [online], 14 IV 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[http://pl.china-embassy.gov.cn/pol/sghd\\_1/202304/t20230414\\_11059027.htm](http://pl.china-embassy.gov.cn/pol/sghd_1/202304/t20230414_11059027.htm)>.
- Piwowarek P., *Po 22 latach Chiny zniosły embargo na polską wołowinę. "Ogromny potencjał"*, "Portal Spożywczy" [online], 16 VI 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.portalspozywczy.pl/mieso/wiadomosci/po-22-latach-chiny-zniosly-embargo-na-polska-wolowine-quot-ogromny-potencjal-quot,226899.html>>.
- Płóciennik S., Przychodniak M., Szczepanik M., Wnukowski D., Zaręba S., Błoński Ł., Strzelecki J., Wąsiński M., *EU-China comprehensive agreement on investment: political and economic implications for the European Union*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, Warszawa 2021.

- Poland is both pro-American and pro-European – Polish PM in Hamburg*, “The First News” [online], 17 XI 2018 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.thefirstnews.com/article/poland-is-both-pro-american-and-pro-european---polish-pm-in-hamburg-3341>>.
- Poland's President to attend Beijing Olympics amidst U. S. boycott*, “Reuters” [online], 18 I 2022 [accessed: 13 XII 2023]: <<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/polands-president-attend-beijing-olympics-amidst-us-boycott-2022-01-18/>>.
- Poland's Prime Minister: Western Europe needs to commit to Ukrainian victory and beware of China*, “Atlantic Council” [online], 13 IV 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=215cicp8Pmw>>.
- Rogacin W., *Jakub Kumoch: Od początku wiedzieliśmy, że Ukraina nie upadnie*, “I” [online], 24 II 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://i.pl/jakub-kumoch-od-poczatku-wiedzieliśmy-ze-ukraina-nie-upadnie/ar/c1-17316819>>.
- Routledge handbook of foreign policy analysis methods*, ed. P. A. Mello, F. Ostermann, Routledge, Abingdon–New York 2023.
- Rozmowa telefoniczna Andrzeja Dudy z Xi Jinpingiem*, “Prezydent” [online], 29 VI 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/rozmowa-telefoniczna-andrzeja-dudy-z-xi-jinpingiem,57175>>.
- Rozmowa z Przewodniczącym Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej Xi Jinpingiem*, “Prezydent” [online], 1 III 2021 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/rozmowa-z-przewodniczacy-m-chińskiej-republiki-ludowej-xi-jinpingiem,2067>>.
- Sarek Ł., *Polska – stabilny partner Chin w Europie*, “Asia Explained” [online], 4 XII 2021 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://pl.asiaexplained.org/2022/08/04/polska-stabilny-partner-chin-w-europie/>>.
- Stankiewicz A., *Co Duda robi po prezydenturze? Ma na oku pracę za granicą*, “Onet” [online], 30 VI 2020 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/tylko-w-onecie/co-duda-zrobi-po-prezydenturze-ma-na-oku-prace-za-granica/cvk7pq6>>.
- U. S.-Poland joint declaration on 5G*, “Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej” [online], 2 IX 2019 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.gov.pl/attachment/fcfa15a-04b1-4837-a318-9c0e737cb37b>>.
- Wiceminister Wojciech Gerwel przyjął specjalnego wysłannika rządu Chin ds. Eurazji*, “Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej” [online], 19 V 2023 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/wiceminister-wojciech-gerwel-przyjal-specjalnego-wyslannika-rzadu-chin-ds-eurazji>>.
- Witold Waszczykowski w Chinach: Polska ma potencjał, by stać się ważnym partnerem Pekinu*, “Dziennik” [online], 24 IV 2016 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <<https://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/swiat/artykuly/518908,witold-waszczykowski-w-chinach-polska-ma-potencjal-by-stac-sie-waznym-partnerem-pekinu.html>>.
- Wspólne oświadczenie Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej w sprawie ustanowienia partnerskich stosunków strategicznych*, “Embassy of the PRC

- in the Republic of Poland" [online], 13 I 2012 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[http://pl.china-embassy.gov.cn/pol/zt/zfvisit/201201/t20120113\\_2370725.htm](http://pl.china-embassy.gov.cn/pol/zt/zfvisit/201201/t20120113_2370725.htm)>.
- Wspólne oświadczenie w sprawie ustanowienia wszechstronnego strategicznego partnerstwa między Rzeczpospolitą Polską a Chińską Republiką Ludową*, „Prezydent” [online], 20 VI 2016 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[https://www.prezydent.pl/download/gfx/prezydent/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5378/258/1/20\\_06\\_16\\_wspolne\\_oswiadczenie\\_pl\\_polski.pdf](https://www.prezydent.pl/download/gfx/prezydent/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5378/258/1/20_06_16_wspolne_oswiadczenie_pl_polski.pdf)>.
- 姜瑜特别代表工作组访问中东欧七国 *Jiang Yu tebie daibiao gongzuo zu fangwen ZhongDongOu qi guo* [‘Working Group led by Special Envoy Jiang Yu to visit seven Central and Eastern European countries’], “China-CEEC Cooperation” [online], 24 XI 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[http://www.china-ceec.org/chn/msc/dsj/202211/t20221124\\_10980532.htm](http://www.china-ceec.org/chn/msc/dsj/202211/t20221124_10980532.htm)>.
- 王毅同波兰外长拉乌举行会谈 *Wang Yi tong Bolan waizhang Lawu juhang huitan* [‘Wang Yi holds talks with Polish Foreign Minister Rau’] “Foreign Ministry of the PRC” [online], 29 V 2021 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/wjzbhd/202105/t20210529\\_9137390.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/wjzbhd/202105/t20210529_9137390.shtml)>.
- 习近平会见波兰总统杜达 *Xi Jinping huijian Bolan zongtong Duda* [‘Xi Jinping met with Polish President Duda’], “Foreign Ministry of the PRC” [online], 6 II 2022 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[https://www.mfa.gov.cn/zyxw/202202/t20220206\\_10639406.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/zyxw/202202/t20220206_10639406.shtml)>.
- 习近平同波兰总统杜达通电话 *Xi Jinping tong Bolan zongtong Duda tong dianhua* [‘Xi Jinping spoke by phone with Poland's President Duda’], “Renmin Ribao” [‘People's Daily’] [online], 25 III 2020 [accessed: 13 VII 2023]: <[http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2020-03/25/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20200325\\_4-01.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2020-03/25/nw.D110000renmrb_20200325_4-01.htm)>.

