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Russia's "soft power" policy towards Kazakhstan in the research field on Central Asia

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Abstract. An important component of bilateral Kazakh-Russian relations is the cultural, humanitarian, and educational sphere. In foreign policy, these directions are traditionally classified as "soft power". In this sense, the research question aimed at considering one of the modern trends of Russia's "soft power" about neighboring countries and its interpretation in the studies of scientists is relevant. The authors consider some of the views of the academic community on Russian "soft power" with the aim of a general understanding of how Russian soft power has prospects for spreading its influence in Kazakhstan. This article aims to analyze some opposing academic views and show their strength and limitations. A critical analysis of the strategic documents of the Russian Federation points to repeated references to the importance of soft power in the description of Russia's foreign policy priorities. Using the example of Kazakhstan, the article discusses the main strengths and weaknesses of Russian "soft power" and its effectiveness. It is important to note that this paper is not aimed at reconstructing the general theoretical idea of «soft power». The authors strive to show different approaches and assessments of researchers about Russian «soft power» policy using the example of Kazakhstan as a country where Russian «soft influence» prevails the most.

Keywords: foreign policy, Russia, Central Asia, Kazakhstan, soft/anti-soft power, cultural, humanitarian cooperation.

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Introduction

In conditions of international instability and a series of serious regional crises, which, in the words of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, are comparable to an "unprecedented geopolitical storm" and the phenomenon of "global dysfunction", Kazakhstan continues to adhere to the basic principles of the UN Charter, the principle of multi-vector policy, pragmatism in foreign policy [1]. One of the priority vectors of Kazakhstan's foreign policy is the Russian Federation, relations with which determine commitment to strategic partnership and interaction in a wide range of different areas of cooperation [2].

At the same time, the security factor in relations with Russia, with which Kazakhstan is connected by the world's longest land border, is taken into account. Accordingly, the principle of peaceful neighborliness with Russia and an understanding of its soft power policy in Central Asia is important for building equal and balanced ties with the neighboring state. In this sense, relations with Russia, as with any other state, are built on the principles of pragmatism. Thus, along with political, trade, economic, military, information, and other areas of cooperation, an important component of these relations is the cultural, humanitarian, and educational sphere [3]. In foreign policy, the latter areas are traditionally attributed to the so-called "soft power".

According to the concept of "soft power" by Joseph Nye Jr. [4] is the ability of the state to get what it wants through attraction rather than through coercion. The use of "hard power" rarely brings palpable results in international affairs. Influencing the behaviour of foreign powers can, in most cases, be obtained basically by using "soft methods", by coordinating and setting up common actions. Nye pointed to the fact that the United States, as the most powerful nation, was influencing other nations to identify US interests as theirs.

The study of Russia's "soft power" concerning neighboring countries in the context of worsening regional crises and the search for normalization of international politics is of scientific and practical relevance. The role of the concept of "soft power" as a strategy of Russian foreign policy and the formation of its image abroad seems of particular salience. Russia's activities are analyzed through the prism of the "soft power" tools used in the region, including investments in educational, scientific, and cultural programs, as well as humanitarian actions. Russia has a set of "soft power" tools that, to one degree or another, allow it to influence objects, including the countries of the Central Asian region, specifically Kazakhstan. Using the example of Kazakhstan, one can trace Russia's aspirations to become the most attractive partner for the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Without pretending to provide a comprehensive coverage of the topic, in this article, we present the formulation of the problem of "soft power" in modern international relations using the example of Russian "soft power" policy in Kazakhstan. It is important to note that this study is not aimed at reconstructing the general theoretical idea of "soft power", but rather is intended to show a different vision of this concept using the example of Kazakhstan, as a country where Russian soft influence prevailed to the greatest extent. The authors of this paper consider some of the views of the academic community on Russian "soft power" with the aim of a general understanding of how Russian soft power has prospects for spreading its influence in Kazakhstan. This article aims to analyze some opposing academic views and show their

strength and limitations. The novelty of the approach lies in studying how researchers assess the practical use of Russian "soft power" in relation to Kazakhstan and what its prospects are. This approach correlates with the stated goal and objectives, which find a specific solution in this article.

Literature review

To complete the study and understand the interpretation of Russia's "soft power", official documents such as the concept of foreign policy of the Russian Federation [5], speeches by Russian President V. Putin, his decrees on "state policy to preserve and strengthen traditional Russian spiritual and moral values", on the concept of Russia's humanitarian policy abroad and others were analysed [6, 7, 8]. In a comparative context, the conceptual documents of the Republic of Kazakhstan [2], speeches and writings of the President K.J.Tokayev are important [1, 9].

The basic source and theoretical basis of the research were the works of the author of the concept of "soft politics," Joseph Nye, which gained popularity and relative evidence in the academic environment. The concept of "soft power" has long been a kind of trend in the field of international relations studies. In many of his writings, Joseph Nye explained soft power as "getting others to want the results one wants; how it co-opts people rather than coerces them," or "soft power," according to Nye, is the means to achieve success in world politics" [4, 10, 11]. In his writings, Joseph Nye explains "soft power" as how to "make others want the results that a person wants; how "soft power" co-opts people rather than compels them," and how "soft power" can be a means of achieving success in world politics" [12, 13].

The problem of the influence of Russia's "soft power" on foreign societies, including neighboring countries, has been the subject of scientific research by Western authors, especially in the last two decades. Russia's activities in the Central Asian region are analyzed by determining the effectiveness or inefficiency of the "soft power" tools used. Foreign publications compare Russian soft and hard power and how these two phenomena relate to the Russian factor in international relations: This is the problem of Russia's entry into a multipolar and neoliberal world, especially in the first decade of the new century, and now – defending "its place" among the leading powers of the world, especially after the active use of "harsh" methods of influence on Ukraine. The results of a research project by a group of Russian political scientists, together with Andrey Makarychev and André Mommen (Belgium) on the study of Russia's "soft" and "hard" forces since 2014 have not lost their relevance [14]. The approaches to the study of the mechanisms of "soft power" in Russia's foreign policy towards the countries of Central Asia, proposed by Agata Włodkowska-Bagan [15], can also be noted for their contribution to the study of the regional problems of Central Asia. Along with them, in our study, we turned to the conclusions of such authors as Manuel Castells [16], Giulio M. Gallarotti [17, 18], Victoria Hudson [19], Marlen Laruelle [20, 21], and others.

Central Asian authors in studies on Russian foreign policy point to certain effective aspects of the spread of "soft power" in the region: Makhkamov M.M. [22], Laumulin M.T. [23], Sultanov B.K. [24], Gubaidullina M.Sh. [25], Ospanova A.N., Rakhmatulin O.I. [26]. Russian researchers

analyze the strategy and tools of their country's "soft power", as a rule, in comparison with other leading states, critically evaluate its effectiveness: Sergunin A., Jarabeshkin L. [27], Omelicheva M. Y. [28], Denisov I.E., Zuenko I.Yu. [29], etc.

By sampling and systematizing information sources, the thesis of increased attention to Russia's "soft power" tools, especially in public diplomacy, is confirmed. The flow of information in the media, similar to ideologically politicized propaganda, has increased quantitatively. For example, even such a publication as "Intelligence. Online Spotlight/Russia", which traditionally publishes on the activities of the world's intelligence services, regularly writes about manifestations of Russian "soft power". Thus, Rossotrudnichestvo is presented exclusively as an activity aimed at obtaining intelligence or as espionage [30], which is then repeated even by reputable Western media.

So, the instruments of various forms of Russia's "soft power" are a way of implementing Russian foreign policy in Central Asia. An analysis of the literature allows us to conclude that only a few aspects of the concept and policy in the field of Russia's "soft power" in Central Asia, especially in certain countries of the region, have been studied in sufficient depth and comprehensively.

Research methods

The study is based on a discursive-comparative approach, which allows not only to identify the features of Russia's "soft power" towards Kazakhstan, but also to compare its effectiveness through the prism of the views and assessments of researchers. A systematic approach to the work allows us to consider Russia's "soft power" policy in the Central Asian region and Kazakhstan as an important part of its application in the international arena as a whole.

The main way to obtain empirical information for the analysis of international politics has become such a common method as instrumental observation (official and unofficial information of a foreign policy and diplomatic nature via the Internet, television). Let us point out the method of studying documents and official materials using content analysis when solving the problems of collecting, systematizing, processing, and analyzing publications on problems of international life and the role of soft power in it.

Discussion

Russia's "Soft Power". In the modern world, issues of "soft power" are becoming increasingly important. Thanks to the work of Joseph Nye, the conceptual concept of "soft power" has already become a distinctive trend in the field of international relations studies, and, according to some scholars, can be considered quite effective in certain areas of cultural diplomacy [15-18, 20, 21, 24-27, 29].

Studying the non-military aspects of international politics, we use the concept of "soft power" in relation to the sphere of cultural attractiveness, revealing the positions of Kazakhstan or Russia in the international community, determining their increasing influence and authority in international institutions. "Soft power" is nowadays used within the context of cultural affairs.

Russia recently has adopted a new foreign policy concept (March 2023), which specifically emphasized Russia's humanitarian cooperation with the world as a whole and its regions, particularly those where it has traditionally exerted an influence [5, 7, 8]. The new Foreign Policy Concept underscores the significance of the Russian language, culture, and history as the foundational characteristics of Russia as a state-civilization with a thousand-year history. These features are attributed not only to the Russian people but also to other communities that collectively form a cultural-civilizational community known as the "Russian world". This clearly shows how much public policy needs the very concept of soft power to retain spheres of influence on the one hand, and to increase influence on the other.

The non-state sector has its number of key actors. These are funds that were created by the state, the "Russian World", and the A.M. Public Diplomacy Support Fund. Gorchakov, the Fund for Support and Protection of the Rights of Compatriots Abroad, the Presidential Grants Fund (a separate area for public diplomacy), and the Presidential Fund for Cultural Initiatives (some supported projects have an international dimension). All traditional Russian confessions, primarily the Russian Orthodox Church, are actively involved in humanitarian work.

There are various, not always coordinating efforts with each other, associations of friendship societies, a small number of think tanks, institutions of public diplomacy (of which, for example, recently the Eurasian Peoples' Assembly can be distinguished), etc.

Vladimir Putin often mentions these "soft power" influence structures that operate domestically and internationally. It seems important to begin with the interpretation of soft power concept, which was demonstrated by Putin for the Valdai Club "Russia in a Changing World," as a leading opinion among Russian political elites: in his understanding, soft power includes all tools and mechanisms to influence the foreign policy of another country without the use of military force [6]. The actions of foreign "pseudo-NGOs," according to the Russian president, are aimed at weakening the internal situation and overthrowing the ruling government, as in the case of the Arab Spring and color revolutions.

The practical approach to soft power of Russia has led to a massive expansion seen in media directed at foreign markets, such as the television broadcaster RT and the radio station Voice of Russia (now merged with RIA Novosti to form Sputnik). Sputnik has developed into a state-funded network of media platforms, producing radio, social media, and news agency content in local languages in 34 countries. The main goal of Russian foreign media was originally to provide international dissemination of the Russian worldview as an alternative to the Western perspective offered by CNN and the BBC.

Thus, certain structures are involved in the implementation of soft power programs (projects) in Russia, acting based on established norms and practices in this area, which indicates the presence of signs of institutionalization of soft power. M.M. Makhkamov proposed to consider this process in several contexts. Firstly, it is the formulation of a system of views on the concept of "soft power" in socio-political discourse, as a result, positions are set on activities in this regard. Secondly, it is the establishment of norms and laws governing activities in the field of the implementation of "soft power". Thirdly, it is an institution of state and non-state organizations that perform the functions of implementing "soft power" [22, p.151].

Researchers' views on Russian "soft power" and its application in the Central Asia region

From the perspectives of Western academic society, even recognizing the fact that it is very difficult to understand what information can be interpreted as hidden propaganda, manipulation, soft power should not discredit an opponent, and offer own version as the only true one [20]. Thus, they refer more to the manifestation of "anti-soft power", a force that cannot be attributed to soft power.

We should not discard soft power as Russia's foreign policy tool, - André Mommen believes, even against the backdrop of the de facto application of military force in Crimea (the Crimea's annexation to Russia in 2014 - M.G.). Rather, one should engage in a critical debate on varieties of regime-specific interpretations of soft power [14, p. 5]. André Mommen admits that "the Russian government paid under Putin much attention to an upgrading of its soft power than under President Yeltsin. Promotion of Russia as a 'product' is mainly backed by creating cultural meetings, art exhibitions, sports mega-events, etc., promoting Russian culture abroad. Mommen sees two major points that demonstrate the vulnerability of Putin's understanding of soft power [14, p. 7-8].

First, it is used not for engineering new communicative spaces of shared norms, ideas, and values, but rather for a top-down imposition of Russian worldviews and foreign policy principles on Russia's neighbours, allies, and partners. In this respect, soft power might correlate with the Russian neo-imperial project.

Secondly, Russia uses soft power not for the sake of fostering Europeanization and comprehensive modernization, but rather for voluntarily detaching itself from the group of democratic nations sharing common normative approaches to world politics.

In foreign discourse, Russian soft power is criticized precisely as Russia's normative power over Central Asia, mostly within an ideological framework. Russia's becoming a major exporter of natural gas and oil made both assets a backbone of its foreign economic policy, on which it constructed a good part of its diplomacy and its cultural relations with the countries of the near abroad and Western Europe.

Recognizing that "Central Asia is one of the regions of the highest priority in Russia's foreign policy," Polish researcher Agata Włodkowska-Bagan argues that the new rivalry that unfolded after the Cold War caused Russia to strive to maintain its influence in the Central Asian region. To this end, since 2004, Russia has intensified its means and methods, including soft power tools. Włodkowska-Bagan has identified the factors of influence of Russia's foreign policy in Central Asia and those areas where Russia most effectively achieves its goals: These are the political and military, economic and cultural spheres [15, p.18-19].

Russian research experts from MGIMO research institutes and centers note the activity of Western "soft power" centers in Central Asian countries, mainly in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, the Russian concept of "humanitarian cooperation", fixed in the Concept of Russia's Foreign Policy, fundamentally differs from "soft power" and is as loyal as possible to the sovereignty of the Central Asian countries. For example, Russian and Uzbek experts note both the strengths and vulnerabilities of "soft power". They pay attention to the potential of Russian humanitarian policy. Thus, the discussion on the topic "International humanitarian cooperation between Uzbekistan and Russia" caused the problem of education and the question concerning Russian universities' alumni's activities working in Uzbekistan (IIS

MGIMO: Safranchuk I.A., Knyazev A., etc.). Tens of thousands of Uzbek citizens study at Russian universities, but their influence in the information sphere and government agencies, in research, and government programs is less noticeable than among graduates of universities in Western countries. One of the participants in the discussion compared these associations with the "fifth column", which caused heated debate, and then opinions were divided into opposing ones. The experts concluded that "their [Western] soft power" and "our humanitarian cooperation" [CIS] are different in understanding and action [31].

Boram Shin from Jeonbuk National University (South Korea) writes about the origins of cultural diplomacy in "Central Asian Writers on a Mission: Soviet Cultural Diplomacy in WWII Years." Central Asia's interactions with regions outside the Soviet borders during the Cold War have been largely ignored, despite evidence of the vital role it played in Soviet engagement with decolonising nations in Asia, as a model for a developed, decolonized, socialist nation. Central Asia was essential to Soviet cultural diplomacy, as Moscow sought to establish an anti-imperialist alliance with decolonizing countries in Asia and Africa. The paper explores the implications of encounters of Central Asians in Asia on the Soviet interpretation of post-WWII Asia and the role of Central Asia in promoting anti-imperialist solidarity domestically and internationally [32].

On the contrary, according to A. Sergunin, L. Jarabeshkin [27], M. Omelicheva [28], V. Huseynov [33], Russian "anti-soft power" enjoys success in Central Asia, Middle East, and even in African continent, where her declared political values – multilateralism, anti-imperialism, and non-interference – are particularly well received by policymakers among these states, despite failing to be upheld in Russia's neighborhood. It relates mainly to the country's anti-Western stance in the past and present. Also, the illiberal paradigm of democracy is pulling and attracting smaller states to Moscow's side. For example, according to Hiro [37], "the Central Asian states, finding the American liberal democracy a price too high, followed the Russian model ... in which states, through the vote of their people, can choose the social system they feel best for them. Unlike liberal democracies, with institutions committed to upholding liberties through a system of checks and balances, the Russian model is conceived of as a strong elected executive who coordinates institutions of national power."

Meanwhile, Marlen Laruelle, an American specialist in the study of Russia, noted that the specificity of Russia's soft power is that it is not universal, but "niche" in nature. It is characterized by its focus on a specific audience and appeal to a fairly limited range of Russian resources. These include the history and culture of Russia, the Soviet legacy, modern conservative political identity, as well as the status of a rebel against the liberal order in the international arena. These four aspects determine the scope of Russian soft power. According to Laruelle, the Russian soft power impact at a high governmental level is expressed in copycats of legislation [20, p. 14-16]. For instance, Russia's normative agenda by itself has also influenced Kazakhstan's and Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary discussions on their versions of Russia's anti-gay and anti-NGO laws. Two governments submitted these anti-gay bills; however, Kazakhstan's did not pass, Kyrgyzstan's did. Thusly, Russia reflects the language of democracy utilized in the West, and meanwhile refracts its utilization for its interests [20, 21].

The initiative to create an international organization for the Russian language

In 2023, the President of Kazakhstan, K. Tokayev proposed the idea of creating an international organization for the Russian language. In his opinion, "the common cultural and humanitarian

space has been and remains an important unifying factor of the CIS. At the same time, one of the components of the success of our mutually beneficial cooperation in this dimension is the established balance of harmonious development of the languages of the peoples in the CIS countries and the Russian language as well" [3].

The idea was not spontaneous, it is based on the existing world experience. Indeed, such international structures have been created for the development of French, German, Spanish, and many other languages. "The idea of establishing an international organization for the Russian language, in his opinion, is not aimed at creating an alternative to the state language policy of the CIS countries, including Kazakhstan. It is symbolic that 2023 was declared the Year of the Russian Language in the CIS». Considering that Russian is one of the official languages of the United Nations and has the status of an international language, it acts as a serious consolidating factor in maintaining friendly relations between states, also an effective tool for the development of regional cooperation and trust. It is important that the organization has a legal personality and will be open for accession by other countries outside the CIS. It should be recalled that the basic documents of the Commonwealth of Independent States indicate the formation of a common cultural, humanitarian space and cooperation. Undoubtedly, the Russian language is an important factor in matters of soft power; this is confirmed by all foreign and domestic experts. The language helps people to directly access information from Russia, and helps them feel part of a common cultural space.

The attitude of Kazakhstanis towards Russia

Over the last 10–15 years, the political context of mutual perception of Russia and Kazakhstan has changed significantly. Even though both countries adhere to the priorities of the leading strategic partnership, several contradictory trends affect the development of mutually beneficial relations between the two countries. The first one is the decrease of the Russian language.

But at the same time, judging by a survey of highly educated segments of Kazakh society, including among ethnic Kazakhs of the post-Soviet generation made by Victoria Hudson: 90% of the surveyed students of higher educational institutions considered Russian their native language or spoke it fluently, which favorably distinguished them from those with a similar level of English proficiency (36%). In addition, 76% of respondents agreed (48% of them categorically) that Russian is their preferred language of interethnic communication. Thus, although much has been said about the decline of the Russian language in the post-Soviet space, including Kazakhstan the situation is completely different [19, p. 470-475, etc.].

According to a study from 2021 by Savelyeva M. and Utenkova Z., in general, for most of the surveyed Kazakhstanis, the word "Russia" means primarily "fraternal people", "old friend", and is also associated with a vast territory and a great power [34, p. 8]. Among the strengths of Russia, Kazakhstanis respondents noted the power of the armed forces, the availability of diverse natural resources, as well as a rich history. The image of Russia is quite positive on a rational level. Kazakhs see her as a "reliable strategic partner", a "friendly neighbor," and an "eternal friend". As the survey shows, the attitude of the majority of the surveyed Kazakhstanis towards Russia has not changed even after the annexation of Crimea; only 5% had a negative attitude, which they assessed as aggressive interference in the internal politics of Ukraine. Overall, the Kremlin's strategy of anti-westernism enjoys quite popularity in the state, where people easily accept Russian narratives based on traditional values, conservatism, and multiculturalism acceptance.

From May 3 to May 12, 2023, the Demoscope Express Public Opinion Monitoring Bureau, together with the PaperLab research center, conducted another survey of citizens on the topic "The attitude of Kazakhstanis to the war in Ukraine." During the survey, respondents were asked if their attitude towards Russia has changed since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, and if so, in which direction. Half of the citizens (51.5%) have not changed their positive attitude towards Russia. One third of Kazakhstanis (32.6%) have it worsened. And only 4.7% of respondents said that their attitude towards Russia has improved since the beginning of the war [35].

As for Internet sources, the fact confirmed by the Hudson survey, which showed that 50% of respondents "never" used television to access information about global events, compared with 95% who "sometimes" or "often" turned to Russian Internet sources for this purpose, once again confirms the above-mentioned statement.

The Future of "soft power after Ukraine": to Joseph Nye and others

In an article entitled "Soft Power After Ukraine" (May 3, 2022), Nye stated with great conviction that the events in Ukraine are a perfect example of how a country that used "stick" instead of "carrot or honey" is now recovering from the consequences of its lost former reputation [13]. Now Russia is reaping the consequences of the imposed economic sanctions by western states, and as the current situation shows, the essence of soft power theory is fully justified in such circumstances: hard power only undermines the country's soft power and the state loses by many indicators, therefore such a short path does not justify its means. Likewise, in international politics, the effects of soft power tend to be slow and indirect. [10, 11]. In the short run, sticks are more effective than honey, and hard power trumps soft power. If I can attract you, soft power may prove a far less costly way to get your money. In the long term, honey sometimes trumps sticks. If a country represents values that others find attractive, it can economize on the use of sticks and carrots. The war in Ukraine is bearing out these lessons... But more to the point, soft power, too, has already played a role in the conflict... How this will play out in the long term will depend in part on the outcome of the war. For now, however, Russia and China seem to have suffered a loss of soft power [13].

The scientist has remained unperturbed in his beliefs since 2004, calling the soft power of the Russian Federation "... tasteless candy wrapped in an attractive cover". However, according to Hudson [19], Denisov [29], Huseynov [33], scientist mostly misses the most important root, that causes country's attractiveness - this is the very existence of material, military preconditions for the formation of soft power. Therefore, the relationship between hard power and soft is very shaky and uncertain, the former affects the latter, and vice versa, which makes it very difficult to assert that soft power is independent of hard power.

André Mommen writes that Putin's "soft-power" project has not been completely buried after the conflict with Ukraine in 2014. Due to the internationalization of capital and culture, Russian businessmen. They are also sponsoring "soft-power projects" by investing large sums in sports events [14].

Thus, Western scientists such as Henry Hall Stuart, Castells [16], Gallarotti [17, 18], Fairclough [12], place special emphasis on the cultural offer to society, and pay special attention to narratives that should be accepted or not by society. The judgment of Western scientists is limited by the fact that they take into account their own experience of projecting "soft power" and do not see the "full picture". In particular, they do not take into account those countries in which there is and will be Russian cultural influence, do not take into account the public opinion

of Russian citizens themselves, and also neglect the religious, historical, and cultural specifics of the post-Soviet region.

The ignorance of the Western world about the Russian vision of geopolitics and the modern world order was also exposed by a recent interview held by Tucker Carlson with Vladimir Putin. The interview had a great impact on the Western public, since the information given during the interview turned out to be new to them. Critical statements by Western politicians about the interview of Russian President Putin with American journalist Tucker Carlson played into the hands of his popularity [36].

There was no widespread public discussion of this interview in Kazakhstan. However, the sanctions aspect in the confrontation between Russia and the West is more important for Kazakhstan. The policy of "soft power" with a special military operation against Ukraine and confrontation with the Western world has significantly reduced its influence and importance in Russia's external environment. Nevertheless, in certain sectors of bilateral relations, Russia's "soft power" continues to dominate. The proof is the growth of political and scientific interest, including the activity of the media and research on this issue, especially abroad.

Conclusions

The key criterion for determining the degree of influence of "soft power" is "attractiveness", that is, how much a subject can win over an object to exert a certain influence on it.

The current state of cooperation between Russia and the countries of Central Asia is based on the analysis of many areas, which, along with political, trade, economic, military, and information, necessarily include humanitarian, cultural, educational, and other spheres. In foreign policy, the latter areas are traditionally attributed to the so-called "soft power". Russia has a set of "soft power" tools that, to one degree or another, allow it to influence objects, including the countries of the Central Asian region, specifically Kazakhstan.

The countries of Central Asia, especially Kazakhstan, are most vulnerable to the perception of various forms of Russian "soft power": social, state, political, cultural, etc. This is justified by geopolitical, economic, historical, and cultural reasons. Cultural and humanitarian cooperation is an important part of the bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, and it is developing in all directions.

Nevertheless, the trend towards strengthening Russia's "anti-soft power" is increasingly obvious. Russia, despite numerous Western criticisms, has its idea of what soft power should be, and enjoys success in terms of using it in Kazakhstan. The Russian political establishment, together with President Putin, actively uses the concept of "soft power" in public speeches, thus conceptualizing the phenomenon.

The perspectives of Western scientists are more inclined to manifestations of the "anti-soft power" by the Russian Federation, which is inherently ineffective and therefore cannot be called soft. In their opinion, the "soft" approach in foreign policy is based on Russia's material interests, dictated by its exporting industries and its largely non-competitive domestic industries and services.

Many Western researchers believe that today it has become extremely difficult to prove that the Russian Federation has "soft power" in its arsenal. In their opinion? A previously law-abiding country that insisted on the ideas of a sovereign world, non-interference in the internal affairs

of any individual country, and propagated these values as fundamental to which it adheres, completely discredited itself in the eyes of the international community after February 24, 2020.

Expert opinions of a number of scientists on "soft power" issues, criticizing to one degree or another the manifestation of Russian "soft power" in the form of propaganda, manipulation, and other hard forms, do not follow the basic principles of the concept developed by Joseph Nye. Comparing opposing opinions, it turns out that "propaganda", manipulation, and other harsh forms are always present in "soft power", but manifest themselves to varying degrees.

To sum up, it can be concluded that the strategy of anti-westernism enjoys quite popularity in the Central Asian region, and serves and serves as a kind of legitimizing justification for state leaders seeking to maintain their power. Despite lengthy discussions, Russia has not been able to formulate a clear and attractive image of the future for the world, which is an alternative to the Western or Chinese model.

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Paizova A. – defining the goals and objectives of a scientific article, working with the use of research materials and methods.

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Орта Азия туралы зерттеу өрісіндегі Қазақстанға қатысты Ресейдің «жұмсақ күш» саясаты

Аңдатпа. Екі жақты Қазақстан-Ресей қатынастарының маңызды құрамдас бөлігі мәдени-гуманитарлық және білім беру саласы болып есептеледі. Сыртқы саясатта бұл бағыттар дәстүрлі түрде «жұмсақ күш» ретінде жіктеледі. Бұл тұрғыда Ресейдің көрші елдерге қатысты «жұмсақ күшінің» қазіргі тенденцияларының бірін қарастыруға және оны ғалымдардың зерттеулерінде түсіндіруге бағытталған зерттеу мәселесі өзекті болып табылады. Авторлар академиялық қоғамдастықтың ресейлік «жұмсақ күш» туралы кейбір көзқарастарын ресейлік «жұмсақ күштің» Қазақстанда өз ықпалын тарату перспективалары бар екенін жалпы түсіну мақсатында қарастырады. Бұл мақаланың мақсаты – кейбір қарама-қарсы академиялық көзқарастарды талдау және олардың күші мен шектеулерін көрсету. Ресей Федерациясының стратегиялық құжаттарын сыни талдау Ресейдің сыртқы саяси басымдықтарын сипаттау кезінде жұмсақ күштің маңыздылығына бірнеше рет сілтемелерді көрсетеді. Мақалада Қазақстан мысалы негізінде ресейлік «жұмсақ күштің» негізгі мықты және әлсіз тұстары әрі оның тиімділігі қарастырылады. Бұл мақала "жұмсақ күштің" жалпы теориялық идеясын қайта құруға бағытталмағанын атап өткен жөн. Авторлар зерттеушілердің Ресейдің «жұмсақ күш» саясатына әртүрлі көзқарастары мен бағаларын Қазақстанның ресейлік "жұмсақ ықпал" басым болатын ел ретіндегі мысалында көрсетуге тырысады.

Түйін сөздер: сыртқы саясат, Ресей, Орта Азия, Қазақстан, жұмсақ/анти-жұмсақ күш, мәдени-гуманитарлық ынтымақтастық, қоғамдық дипломатия.

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**Политика «мягкой силы» России в отношении Казахстана в области исследований
Центральной Азии**

Аннотация. Важной составляющей двусторонних казахстанско-российских отношений является культурно-гуманитарная и образовательная сфера. Во внешней политике эти направления традиционно классифицируются как «мягкая сила». В этом смысле актуален исследовательский вопрос, направленный на рассмотрение одной из современных тенденций «мягкой силы» России по отношению к соседним странам и ее интерпретации в исследованиях ученых. Авторы рассматривают некоторые взгляды академического сообщества на российскую «мягкую силу» с целью общего понимания того, как российская «мягкая сила» имеет перспективы распространения своего влияния в Казахстане. Цель этой статьи - проанализировать некоторые противоположные академические взгляды и показать их силу и ограничения. Критический анализ стратегических документов Российской Федерации указывает на неоднократные ссылки на важность мягкой силы при описании внешнеполитических приоритетов России. На примере Казахстана в статье рассматриваются основные сильные и слабые стороны российской «мягкой силы» и ее эффективность. Важно отметить, что данная статья не направлена на реконструкцию общей теоретической идеи «мягкой силы». Авторы стремятся показать различные подходы и оценки исследователей к российской политике «мягкой силы» на примере Казахстана как страны, где российское «мягкое влияние» преобладает в наибольшей степени.

Ключевые слова: внешняя политика, Россия, Центральная Азия, Казахстан, мягкая/анти – мягкая сила, культурное, гуманитарное сотрудничество, публичная дипломатия.

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