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Topic: Educational diplomacy in the process of shaping the image of Japan on the example of relations with selected educational institutions in Poland

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Nowadays, the arguments relating to building a social image, based on indicators of the intellectual and scientific potential of society, play a central role in diplomacy. Educational diplomacy is a crucial element of these activities. Building an efficient state education system, its proper functioning is one of the elements that guarantee the social, economic and cultural development of the state.

The subject of my PhD thesis is “Educational diplomacy in the process of shaping the image of Japan on the example of the activities in selected educational institutions in Poland” It explains how cooperation in the field of education contributes to improving the image of the state.

The first research hypothesis concerns cooperation between Polish and Japanese universities and high schools in both countries. It focuses on international programs implemented at Polish and Japanese universities and secondary schools and verifies the thesis that international cooperation is underestimated in secondary schools.

The second hypothesis concerns the educational policy in Japan and Poland. The documents related to the development of educational policy in Poland and Japan and the possibility of cooperation between schools in two such distant countries are analyzed. The observations made during visits to Japan with high school students are also part of the thesis.

In order to verify the third hypothesis that activities undertaken to develop interests and knowledge about Japan bring good results, but on a small scale, a survey among educational institutions that cooperate with Japan in Poland is conducted and similarly, a survey among students of Japanese schools is carried out. In addition, “enthusiasts” of mutual cooperation, principals of schools that cooperate in this field are interviewed and the available statistics are analyzed.

The basic question to be answered in the thesis is how and to what extent educational cooperation can foster the development of relations between Poland and Japan, and whether programs implemented in high schools can change the image of Japan in our country. Moreover, it is discussed what role educational diplomacy plays in public diplomacy, how the functioning and quality of educational systems of countries affect or may affect their image and position in the international arena.

So far, no comprehensive research has been conducted on the relationship between international cooperation in the field of education contacts, my study tries to fill this gap.

The part of sources used in the thesis were monographs and scientific articles on public diplomacy, the authors like Beata Ociepka, Michał Kobierecki, Natalia Broś and others are often mentioned in the thesis and are great inspiration for further research. The work of Polish educational institutions which cooperate with Japan is mentioned in the thesis. Surveys, interviews, consultations with their directors and people dealing with contacts with Japan and implementing educational projects in the field of cooperation and promotion of Japan in Poland are a big part of my work. Interviews and conversations with high school principals and people responsible for the organization of the school system in Japan are highly informative in the research. A total of 7 study visits were initiated. They are described as very fruitful, among others, with the Polish Consul in Japan, professors at Japanese universities, and principals of Japanese high schools. Being a long-time high school teacher and organizer of international contacts between Polish and Japanese schools I got interested in the mechanism of functioning of such contacts and their role in international public relations. Through long-term cooperation with Japanese schools, I have also observed the way Japan is perceived in Poland and Poland in Japan, and the evolution of mutual perception. That is why, the analysis of the partner countries and the impact their activities have on public diplomacy and building the image of the state are deeply discussed in the thesis.