

## **Abstract**

This dissertation uses Critical Discourse Analysis to examine China's strategic use of desecuritized language in its 16/17+1 foreign policy targeting the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region. Through the lens of securitisation theory and strategic narratives, the analysis suggests that China's foreign policy narrative targeting the CEE countries is strategic in nature and is a representation of China's ambition to form a new global order. As such, the desecuritisation strategies are used instrumentally to alleviate 'China threat' perception, increase the attractiveness of China in the region, and to further achieve its economic and geopolitical goals. Among political elites in the Visegrád 4 countries, namely Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, the level of reception of China's strategic narratives varies. The pro-China attitude at the governmental level is mainly motivated by economic incentives promised in the Chinese narrative as well as the governments' own political agendas. In a parallel process, converse anti-China sentiments and re-securitisation of China in the countries are largely connected to the primacy of the trans-Atlantic relationship with the US as well as the importance attached to European values.

## **Keywords**

Chinese foreign policy, Central and Eastern European Countries, desecuritisation, strategic narratives, international norms, 16/17+1 format