

## **Abstract**

Goal of this master thesis is to show that the myth of the Great Patriotic War is a source of Russian soft power in Belarus. After the methodology chapter, the thesis continues with connecting the concept of soft power authored by Joseph Nye with the concept of myth which is here defined on the basis of theories of Eliade and Malinowski. The next part discusses Russian soft power in the Post-Soviet area in general and in Belarus in particular. It demonstrates that Russian soft power rests largely on common history shared by Russians and other Post-Soviet nations. As a consequence, the main sources of Russian soft power rest on identities and narratives, including myths. The myth of the Great Patriotic War was at the center of Soviet mythology and it has preserved its dominant position also in the Post-Soviet period, what holds true particularly for Belarus. The following part retraces the evolution of the myth of the Great Patriotic War from its emergence during the Second World War until today. It shows that the essence of this myth is a feeling of togetherness and of community that unites the former Soviet nations. The last part presents an interpretative analysis of five qualitative interviews with Belarusians. The analysis of individual cases to a large extent confirmed that the myth of the Great Patriotic War is a fundamental source of Russian soft power in Belarus, but it also opened several new topics.