

Chapter IV

CONCLUSION

The role of religion in society is unmistakable, as seen with the case of Russia in this thesis. Russia's situation is not comparable to other countries, especially Western-states due to the cultural and historical differences among them. Throughout its history, Russia has had and continues to have an intimate relationship with the ROC both domestically and internationally, as it becomes a tool for the state to pursue its goals. This relationship is also the reason why they do not follow its own constitution where it is written that Russia is a secular country, due to the significance of religion to be utilized by the state. This relation is realized through Russian activities and policies in Ukraine and the broader Eastern European region. In the case of Ukraine itself, the ROC has major interests within the issue due to the cultural significance Kiev has on the foundation of the ROC which serves as a ground for the Russian state and the church to cooperate to intervene in Ukrainian affairs.

This thesis recognizes that the ROC plays a huge role in developing Russian soft power, especially in Slavic countries and Orthodox majority states. The ROC is also one of the main „producer” of Russian soft power, most notably within the European Plain countries and the Balkan states where the Orthodox faith is the majority within these regions. The so-called church diplomacy conducted in Serbia as well as Bulgaria is to stimulate the ROC's authority among its sister-churches. This also ties back to Russian interest in protecting the

rights of ethnic Russian diasporas within countries in Eastern Europe, and even beyond with the existence of ROCOR. Russian interests translated itself into church teachings in where the clergymen promote Russia to be an exceptional country and of which is the last bastion of Christendom. Perhaps one of the most important point and link that the Russian state and the ROC has is the adoption of *Russkiy Mir* and the usage of *Russkaya Doktrina*, to establish a Russian world in Russia's Near Abroad. It is a resurgence of ideas of past glories during the time of the Tsars where the state and the church works in tandem to achieve its divine goal and to claim its rightful place within the world as a major player within the international stage.

The implementation of soft power within this case serves to explain how religion influences a state's image and attraction which resulted in other countries to follow it without any form of military aggression. Religion as a part of culture is one of the key components of soft power itself and the actions and decisions it makes would then influences the political values of the countries alongside its foreign policy. Therefore, it can be concluded that the ROC indeed shapes Russian foreign policy within the Eastern European region.

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