

Abstract

The study seeks to explore the Russian Orthodox Church's influence on the Western Balkan region from 2005 to 2014, using the soft power theory pioneered by Joseph Nye. The existing cultural ties between majority Orthodox countries in the region and Russian Orthodox Church created an environment that is prone to cultural influence coming from the Church. Using Joseph Nye's description of the public diplomacy mechanism (which is behind soft power application), this work analyzes Russian Orthodox Church activities in the region, establishing that Serbia appeared to be the most prioritized in the Church's public diplomacy, followed by Montenegro, North Macedonia and Republika Srpska respectively. As soft power theory assumes, its application must bring out certain changes, that are produced by the power of attraction. Not surprisingly, Serbia adopted a number of laws that correspond to the stimuli coming from the Church, with less success in the remaining three countries, but with visible results associated with the Church's public diplomacy. The work solidifies the notion that the Russian Orthodox Church has a measurable effect on certain political outcomes in the Western Balkan countries.