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## **SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS – INFLUENCE, ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS DURING STUDENT AND CIVIC PROTESTS IN SERBIA**

The Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) has long been a fundamental part of Serbian culture and identity, but its growing political ties with the government have raised concerns about its role in social movements, particularly during the contemporary student and civic protests. This paper seeks to examine the influence, attitudes, and actions of the SOC within the context of these protests, applying David Martin's theory of political religion, which explores how religious institutions can become politically engaged and align with those in power. The hypothesis guiding this paper is that the SOC's increasing cooperation with the government has compromised its traditional position as a moral and ethical authority, instead supporting the status quo and diminishing the legitimacy of the protest movement's calls for change. The central research question is: *How does the Serbian Orthodox Church's political alignment with the government affects its involvement in the student and civic protests, and what impact does this have on social movements in Serbia?* This research will analyze the public statements of church officials, actions taken by the Church, and responses from protestors to understand the Church's evolving role in political matters. By investigating the Church's ties with government, this paper aims to assess the consequences for social movements in Serbia and the ways in which the SOC's support of the government may have influenced the legitimacy of the protests demanding justice.

**Key words:** Serbian Orthodox Church; student and civic protests; Serbia; politics; religion; government