



# **The Post-Soviet Russian Orthodox Church: Politics, Culture and Greater Russia (Routledge Contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe Series)**

*Katja Richters*

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In recent years, the Russian Orthodox Church has become a more prominent part of post-Soviet Russia. A number of assumptions exist regarding the Church's relationship with the Russian state: that the Church has always been dominated by Russia's secular elites; that the clerics have not sufficiently fought this domination and occasionally failed to act in the Church's best interest; and that the Church was turned into a Soviet institution during the twentieth century. This book challenges these assumptions. It demonstrates that church-state relations in post-communist Russia can be seen in a much more differentiated way, and that the church is not subservient, very much having its own agenda. Yet at the same time it is sharing the state's, and Russian society's nationalist vision.

The book analyses the Russian Orthodox Church's political culture, focusing on the Putin and Medvedev eras from 2000. It examines the upper echelons of the Moscow Patriarchate in relation to the governing elite and to Russian public opinion, explores the role of the church in the formation of state religious policy, and the church's role within the Russian military. It discusses how the Moscow Patriarchate is asserting itself in former Soviet republics outside Russia, especially in Estonia, Ukraine and Belarus. It concludes by re-emphasising that, although the church often mirrors the Kremlin's political preferences, it most definitely acts independently.

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