

ORTHODOX RELIGIOSITY AMONG ELITE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN RUSSIA AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS

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Among analysts of the religious situation in Russia, it has become common wisdom that, despite the high number of people identifying themselves as Orthodox, the actual religiosity of Orthodox Russians is quite low, with the proportion of actively practicing laypeople hovering somewhere around 3 – 5%. A few researchers have identified the rising popularity of "Orthodox religiosity outside church walls," including religious processions, pilgrimages and even Orthodox markets/*pravoslavnyye iarmarki*; however, the fact remains that only a small percentage of Russian society is likely to have a deep enough understanding of fundamental Orthodox beliefs to consciously incorporate them into political decision making.¹ This "on the ground reality" suggests that the influence of the Moscow Patriarchate's political positions on the electorate is not likely to be very high.² Accordingly, most Western studies of Russian voting behavior have ignored the question of adherence to Orthodoxy altogether; those that have paid attention to it have consistently noted its minimal impact.³ At the same time, the equally consistent presence of an "active-Orthodox" minority in the population (the 3 – 5 % who attend church regularly) has prompted a few scholars to explore the possibility that at least the active Orthodox are affected by the Russian Orthodox Church in their political choices. Here, existing research is contradictory. Christopher Marsh, for example, has found that "whereas Russian

¹ Inna Naletova, "Orthodoxy Beyond the Walls of the Church: A Sociological Inquiry into Orthodox Religious Experience in Contemporary Russian Society" (PhD diss., Boston University, 2006).

² In this essay, I am interested exclusively in the political positions of the Moscow Patriarchate, which is the administrative structure of the Russian Orthodox Church. It should, therefore, not be confused with the Russian Orthodox Church (or ROC) writ large.

³ Vicki L. Hesli and William M. Reisinger *The 1999-2000 Elections in Russia: Their Impact and Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 128; Timothy J. Colton, *Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 85.

citizens are only loosely predisposed towards democratic governance, devout Orthodox Christians as a group are somewhat more favorably inclined towards democracy.”⁴ On the other hand, survey data obtained from the Moscow State University (MGU) sociology department indicate that “devout/active” Russian Orthodox youth (ages 15-30) are less inclined towards democracy than their non-devout Orthodox peers (58.2% and 62%, respectively).⁵

The MGU survey, conducted across 26 regions, reports data on the percentage of active Orthodox that are slightly higher than the conventional wisdom: Of the 1805 respondents, 8% identify themselves as active believers (here, “active” presupposes going to communion once a year and keeping, at a minimum, Great Lent). The importance of this detail lies in the fact that it points to a possible generational factor. As more Russians have grown up in a post-Soviet environment, the percentage of people seriously adhering to the Orthodox faith may perhaps be rising; this might, in the not-so distant future, alter the picture described above in favor of a stronger influence by the ROC on the electorate. If that is the case, it becomes critical to determine whether or not the actively Orthodox are more likely to be influenced by the Moscow Patriarchate in their political views than other categories of the Russian population.

In order to do so, I conducted a survey across nine higher educational institutions in Moscow in the spring of 2006.⁶ These included four Orthodox universities: St. Tikhon Orthodox Humanitarian University (STPBU); the Orthodox University of St. John the Theologian (OU); the Moscow Spiritual Academy and Seminary (MDA); and St. Filaret Orthodox-Christian Institute (St. Filaret’s). I administered the same survey to students at five elite secular universities: The Moscow State University (MGU), the Moscow State Institute for International Relations

⁴ Christopher Marsh, “Orthodox Christianity, Civil Society, and Russian Democracy” *Demokratizatsiya*, 13, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 449.

⁵ “Otnoshenie Molodezhy k Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi” Unpublished data obtained from sociology department of Moscow State University. I am grateful to the Assistant Dean, Igor P. Riazantsev, for sharing the data with me prior to its publication.

⁶ I actually surveyed students across ten universities, but one of them, St. Andrews Biblical-Theological Institute, proved problematic: It is a tiny institution, with only 60 students, of whom I surveyed 20; moreover, despite its “Orthodox” nature the institute is quite ecumenical and more than half of the students were not Orthodox, with not all of them even identifying themselves as believers, making it difficult to categorize the responses from this institute.

(MGIMO), the Moscow Aviation Technical Institute (MATI), the Peoples' Friendship University (RUDN), and the Mendeleev Chemistry and Technology Institute (RHTU). All total, I administered the survey to 792 respondents, across a wide variety of departments, capturing the range of under and upperclassmen at these universities.

The questions asked were structured around the political positions of the Moscow Patriarchate, to determine whether they corresponded in any way to the belief systems of the respondents. The Patriarchate's positions might be best summarized as follows:

1. First, the Moscow Patriarchate has no preference for a type of government, and is willing to work within a democratic environment.
2. Second, the Patriarchate expects to be independent from state control while at the same time demanding state support and cooperation in the endeavor to better society. A certain ambiguity remains regarding the desirability of state church status.
3. Third, while the Patriarchate accepts freedom of conscience as reality it is not positively viewed; relations with other religious groups are to be encouraged as long as they lead to the betterment of Russian society. Some religious groups are viewed as clearly destructive and therefore to be strenuously opposed; the traditional religions (Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and "traditional" Christians) are to be respected (and assisted).
4. Fourth, the media and secular culture generally are called upon to respect the Patriarchate's positions on moral issues, and to refrain from disrespectful criticism of the Russian Orthodox Church (with "respectful" being defined by the Patriarchate).
5. Fifth, the Patriarchate is cautious about certain aspects of globalization and willing to criticize Western actions that are perceived as anti-Russian and/or anti-Orthodox; at the same time the Patriarchate is against political, cultural and economic isolation, and cannot be called xenophobically anti-Western.
6. Finally, the Patriarchate favors socialist ideals of economic justice; at the same time, there is no evidence indicating the Patriarchate's attitude towards state intervention in the economy: The point is that economic organization should be

just, but no form is explicitly rejected as inherently unjust.⁷

In accordance with these parameters, the questions that I posed in the survey were as follows:

1. Today the ideal form of government in Russia is: (Monarchy, Democracy, Theocracy, Dictatorship, Other, Don't Know)
2. For the benefit of society, the government should introduce censorship in the media (Agree, Unsure, Disagree)
3. The West consciously pursues an anti-Russian policy agenda (Agree, Unsure, Disagree)
4. It is important for Russia to have good relations with the United States and Europe (Agree, Unsure, Disagree)
5. Globalization is a negative phenomenon (Agree, Unsure, Disagree)
6. The state should fully control all natural resources (Agree, Unsure, Disagree)
7. The market economy has brought Russia: (Only good, More good than harm, More harm than good, Only harm, Difficult to respond)
8. Ideally, the state is fully responsible for the citizens' welfare (Agree, Unsure, Disagree)
9. I (Agree fully, Agree but not always, Unsure, Disagree) with the proposition that "To be Russian is to be Orthodox"
10. The state should ban harmful sects (Agree, Unsure, Disagree)
11. The Orthodox Church should be constitutionally the state religion (Agree, Unsure, Disagree).

At the secular universities, I added two other questions:

1. Your relationship to religion: (Orthodox, Other Confession, Agnostic, Atheist) and
2. If Orthodox, I attend church approximately: (Once a week, Once a month, A few times a year, Once a year).

In response to this question, 63% identified themselves as Orthodox, 13% as belonging to another confession, 4% as Agnostic, 11% as Atheist and 3% did not respond. Of the Orthodox students, 7% reported attending church once a week, 16% once a month, 46% a few times a year, and 31% once a year. Thus, according to the categories elaborated above, 23% of the Orthodox students surveyed can be considered "Active Orthodox",

⁷ This categorization is based on research conducted for my dissertation at Georgetown University: *Orthodoxy and Democracy in Russia: New Interpretations*, defended in December 2006. I have chosen not to elaborate on my understanding of the Patriarchate's political positions in this article, as I do so in the manuscript of the book that is based on the dissertation (manuscript currently under revision).

while 77% can be considered “Nominal Orthodox.” Of the entire population surveyed, 9% can be considered actively Orthodox. This figure corresponds to the higher end estimates of the actively Orthodox portion of the “youth” population calculated by MGU (at 8%).

The resulting data is presented here under several different angles, each allowing for a further understanding of the relationship between self-identification as Orthodox and a particular set of political views. The first table presents the results of the survey of all 792 respondents taken together.

Table 1. Aggregate results of 9 Moscow Universities (792 respondents)

Preference for type of regime	Monarchy 26 % Democracy 38 % Theocracy 3 % Dictatorship 9 % Other 10 % Don't know 13 % No answer 1 %
The media should be censored	Agree 46 % Unsure 24 % Disagree 29 % No answer 1 %
The West is a purposeful, active adversary	Agree 54 % Unsure 30 % Disagree 15 % No answer 1 %
Russia should have good relations with the US/Europe	Agree 43 % Unsure 33 % Disagree 22 % No answer 2 %
Globalization is a negative phenomenon	Agree 36 % Unsure 44 % Disagree 19 % No answer 1 %
The state should control all natural resources	Agree 88 % Unsure 8 % Disagree 3 % No answer 1 %
The market economy has brought Russia	Only good 5 % More good 48 % More bad 18 % Only bad 1 % Hard to say 27 % No answer 1 %
Ideally, the state is fully responsible for citizens' welfare	Agree 53 % Unsure 24 % Disagree 22 %

	No answer 1 %
To be Russian is to be Orthodox	Agree fully 34 % Agree but not always 35 % Disagree 29 % Not sure 1 % No answer 1 %
Harmful Sects should be banned	Agree 81 % Unsure 12 % Disagree 7 %
Orthodoxy should be state religion	Agree 43 % Unsure 23 % Disagree 33 % No answer 1 %

The results here seem to fit with the official positions of the Moscow Patriarchate. For example, the even distribution between those who favor an authoritarian form of government (38%) and those favoring democracy (38%) seems to follow the Patriarchate's neutral approach towards this issue. In terms of media censorship, only about 30% disagreed, as opposed to the 70% who thought that it might at least possibly be a good idea. At the same time, even though more than half of the respondents are anti-Western, the majority is not keen to support a strong anti-Western policy stance (43% agreeing and 22% unsure about whether or not Russia should have a good relationship with Europe and the US), and is ambivalent about the negative effects of globalization (44% unsure that it is a negative phenomenon), again more or less in line with the Patriarchate's mild but not isolationist anti-Westernism and anti-globalism. The same ambivalence can be seen in regard to the market economy (53% agreeing that it has had a generally positive effect on Russian life) and individual responsibility for welfare (53% feeling that the state should be responsible), all of which is in line with the Patriarchate's neutral stance on economic matters. At the same time the respondents are clearly statist (90%) when it comes to natural resources, a position held by the more conservative flank of the Russian Orthodox Church. Finally, the respondents seem to follow the pattern of the Patriarchate's discourse on church-state relations: Acknowledging the Russian Orthodox Church's predominant role in the formation of Russian culture (70% supporting the notion that "To be Russian is to be Orthodox), anti-sectarian (81%) and ambivalent about the desirability of granting the Church state church status (43%).

Given these seeming intersections, it may be tempting at this stage to posit that, at least among Russia’s college-age population, there is indeed some congruence between the formally elucidated positions of the Patriarchate on the issues under discussion and the political orientations of the Russian population. Data provided by the MGU survey already mentioned appear to confirm this: There, 67% of the respondents think that sects are causing harm to Russian society and should be banned, and 72% view Orthodoxy as the basis of Russian state and cultural traditions.⁸ However, without a further breakdown of the data assigning Orthodoxy a causal role here would be premature, as any number of factors might be contributing to the generally conservative mood of the students surveyed. Accordingly, Table 2 compares the responses of the students of the Orthodox universities to those of the secular institutions. The St. Filaret Institute is by definition on the liberal wing of Orthodoxy, with its students consistently responding from liberal political positions; the institute may therefore be fairly considered an outlier, and is left out of the analysis in this table.

Table 2. Comparison of Orthodox Universities (without Saint Filaret) and Secular Universities (287 respondents and 470 respondents, respectively)

	Orthodox Universities	Secular Universities
Preference for type of regime	Monarchy 46 %	17 %
	Democracy 19 %	48 %
	Theocracy 5 %	1 %
	Dictatorship 7 %	11 %
	Other 6%	11 %
	Don't know 16 %	11 %
	No answer 1 %	1 %
The media should be censored	Agree 74 %	31 %
	Unsure 15 %	30 %
	Disagree 9 %	38 %
	No answer 2 %	1 %
The West is a purposeful, active adversary	Agree 70 %	46 %
	Unsure 23 %	32 %
	Disagree 6 %	20 %
	No answer 1 %	2 %
Russia should have good relations with the US/Europe	Agree 21 %	55 %
	Unsure 41 %	29 %

⁸ “Otnoshenie Molodezhy k Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi”

	Disagree 36 %	15 %
	No answer 2 %	1 %
Globalization is a negative phenomenon	Agree 62 %	22 %
	Unsure 29 %	50 %
	Disagree 7 %	27 %
	No answer 2 %	1 %
The state should control all natural resources	Agree 94 %	86 %
	Unsure 4 %	9 %
	Disagree 1 %	4 %
	No answer 1 %	1 %
The market economy has brought Russia	Only good 1 %	7 %
	More good 33 %	57 %
	More bad 27 %	15 %
	Only bad 1 %	2 %
	Hard to say 37 %	19 %
	No answer 1 %	
Ideally, the state is fully responsible for citizens' welfare	Agree 61 %	50 %
	Unsure 27 %	23 %
	Disagree 11 %	27 %
	No answer 1 %	
To be Russian is to be Orthodox	Agree fully 49 %	28 %
	Agree but not always 33 %	40 %
	Disagree 16 %	30 %
	Unsure 1 %	1 %
	No answer 1 %	1 %
Harmful Sects should be banned	Agree 92 %	78 %
	Unsure 4 %	15 %
	Disagree 4 %	7 %
Orthodoxy should be state religion	Agree 68 %	30 %
	Unsure 16 %	29 %
	Disagree 15 %	40 %
	No answer 1 %	1 %

The differences between the two survey results are striking across all counts. The only question on which the students of the "Orthodox" universities show themselves to be fewer than 10 percentage points more conservative than their "secular" peers is in regard to the desirability of state control of resources: 94% and 86% respectively feel that the state should have this prerogative. It is true that, on the surface, there is also less than a 10 percentage point difference regarding the market

economy: Only 1 % of the “Orthodox” students and 7 % of the “secular” feel that it brought Russia “only good.” However, once the categories “only good” and “more harm than good” are combined, it turns out that whereas only 34 % of the “Orthodox” students feel the market experience has been generally positive, fully 64 % of the “secular” students feel this way. 61% of students at the Orthodox universities feel the state should be fully responsible for citizen welfare, as opposed to 50% of the respondents at the secular institutions; the difference when it comes to banning sects is at 14 percentage points. On all other counts, the “Orthodox” students show themselves at least 20 percentage points more conservative than their “secular” counterparts, with the difference climbing to 30 percentage points or above on the questions of monarchy and relations with the US and Europe. Finally, the differences reach approximately 40 percentage points or more on the question of whether or not the media should be censored, globalization and the desirability of “state Church” status for the ROC. On all these counts, the students of the “Orthodox” universities are far more conservative than their “secular” peers.

What is the cause of such an obvious polarization of attitudes among the respondents? There are two possible answers. One option is that the conservatism of the students from Orthodox institutions stems from their adherence to the Orthodox faith. Such a reply seems plausible given that the students of these three institutions (MDA, St. Tikhon’s, St. John’s) can all be understood to be “active” Orthodox: In all three schools, a commitment to regular church attendance is a requirement. Alternatively, the reason might lie in the institutional culture of the “Orthodox” universities, which may have over the years simply acquired conservative traits independent of specifically religious reasons. To further clarify this issue, it is instructive to compare the political orientations of Orthodox and non-Orthodox students *within* the secular universities, to see if the category “Orthodox believer” has any relationship to a more conservative world view:

Table 3: Comparison of Orthodox believers versus non-Orthodox students at the secular universities (324 and 146 respondents, respectively)

	Orthodox believers	Non Orthodox
Student Preference for type of regime	Monarchy 17 %	17 %
	Democracy 51 %	42 %

	Theocracy 2 % Dictatorship 10 % Other 9 % Don't know 10 % No answer 1 %	3 % 10 % 15 % 13 % 0 %
The media should be censored	Agree 36 % Unsure 32 % Disagree 31 % No answer 1 %	21 % 26 % 53 % 0 %
The West is a purposeful, active adversary	Agree 49 % Unsure 31 % Disagree 18 % No answer 2 %	39 % 36 % 24 % 1 %
Russia should have good relations with the US/Europe	Agree 53 % Unsure 30 % Disagree 16 % No answer 1 %	60 % 27 % 12 % 1 %
Globalization is a negative phenomenon	Agree 23 % Unsure 50 % Disagree 26 % No answer 1 %	18 % 50 % 31 % 1 %
The state should control all natural resources	Agree 89 % Unsure 7 % Disagree 3 % No answer 1 %	78 % 14 % 7 % 1 %
The market economy has brought Russia	Only good 7 % More good 57 % More bad 15 % Only bad 2 % Hard to say 19 % No answer	8 % 55 % 12 % 3 % 21 % 1 %
Ideally, the state is fully responsible for citizens' welfare	Agree 54 % Unsure 21 % Disagree 24 % No answer 1 %	40 % 26 % 33 % 1 %

To be Russian is to be Orthodox	Agree fully 12 % Agree but not always 54 % Disagree 30 % Unsure 3 % No answer 1 %	2 % 22 % 72 % 3 % 1 %
Harmful Sects should be banned	Agree 85 % Unsure 11 % Disagree 4 % No answer	62 % 22 % 14 % 1 %
Orthodoxy should be state religion	Agree 41 % Unsure 28 % Disagree 30 % No answer 1 %	7 % 28 % 64 % 1 %

The Orthodox believers here are shown to be notably more (10 percentage points or more) conservative than the non-Orthodox students across seven of the eleven parameters. This includes the question of media censorship (+15 points), the West (+10 points), state control of resources (+11 points), state responsibility for citizen welfare (+14 points), the “Orthodox” nature of “Russianness” (a total of 66% agreeing that this is the case at least some of the time, as opposed to 24% of the non-Orthodox believing the same), the desirability of banning sects (+23 points) and the desirability of institutionalizing Orthodoxy as the state religion (+34 points).

Interestingly, the difference stays between 10 and 15 percentage points on the purely political and economic questions, and reaches the 20 point or more range when the issues are directly related to religion (Orthodoxy/Russianness, sects, state church status), suggesting that here there may well be something inherent about “Orthodoxy” as a causal factor. As far as the other four questions, the differences between Orthodox and non-Orthodox students do not seem to be appreciable; only on the issue of relations with the US/Europe are the Orthodox more conservative by more than 5 percentage points. Oddly enough, when it comes to form of government, the Orthodox students are actually more democratic: Though the proportion of monarchists in both categories of respondents is equal (17 %), the Orthodox students here are actually 9 percentage

points more in favor of democracy than the non-Orthodox. In general, however, on the question of form of government, there does not seem to be a significant difference between the proportion of respondents openly favoring some form of authoritarianism: (29 % of the Orthodox, 30 % of the non-Orthodox).

Given that the results of comparing the Orthodox students to non-Orthodox are somewhat ambiguous (the Orthodox seem to be more conservative but not nearly in the same proportions as when the Orthodox and secular institutions are compared in Table 5), it is useful to trace the connection between the level of commitment to Orthodoxy of the Orthodox students of the secular universities and their political views. If we follow the hypothesis according to which the conservatism of the Orthodox students is tied to the faith itself (that is, to the students actively following the official political positions of the Church) then higher levels of religious commitment should correspond to higher levels of political conservatism (since the active Orthodox students have, by definition, a deeper understanding of their faith and should be more inclined to follow the Church's lead on political matters). And vice-versa: The lower the level of adherence to Orthodoxy, the more liberal the political orientations should be.

Based on these considerations, the Orthodox respondents of the "secular" universities are divided here into "active" and "nominal" Orthodox. The "active" students attend church a minimum of "once a month" or "once a week" (74 respondents), while the "nominal" students attend church "a few times a year" or "once a year" (250 students). The results of this comparison are presented in Table 4:

Table 4. Secular Universities: "active" Orthodox vs. "nominal Orthodox" (74 and 250 respondents, respectively)

	Active Orthodox	Nominal Orthodox
Preference for type of regime	Monarchy 19 %	17 %
	Democracy 47 %	51 %
	Theocracy 3 %	1 %
	Dictatorship 9 %	11 %
	Other 11 %	9 %
	Don't know 8 %	11 %
	No answer 3 %	0 %
The media should be censored	Agree 38 %	35 %
	Unsure 29 %	33 %
	Disagree 31 %	32 %
	No answer 2 %	0 %

The West is a purposeful, active adversary	Agree 49 % Unsure 34 % Disagree 16 % No answer 1 %	50 % 30 % 18 % 2 %
Russia should have good relations with the US/Europe	Agree 51 % Unsure 29 % Disagree 19 % No answer 1 %	53 % 31 % 15 % 1 %
Globalization is a negative phenomenon	Agree 23 % Unsure 50 % Disagree 26 % No answer 1 %	23 % 51 % 25 % 1 %
The state should control all natural resources	Agree 83 % Unsure 8 % Disagree 8 % No answer 1 %	91 % 7 % 1 % 1 %
The market economy has brought Russia	Only good 3 % More good 39 % More bad 22 % Only bad 1 % Hard to say 34 % No answer 1 %	12 % 58 % 14 % 1 % 15 % 0 %
Ideally, the state is fully responsible for citizens' welfare	Agree 54 % Unsure 27 % Disagree 19 % No answer 0 %	54 % 19 % 26 % 1 %
To be Russian is to be Orthodox	Agree fully 26 % Agree but not always 47 % Disagree 24 % Unsure 2 % No answer 1 %	8 % 56 % 32 % 4 % 0 %
Harmful Sects should be banned	Agree 81 % Unsure 15 % Disagree 4 %	86 % 10 % 4 %
Orthodoxy should be state religion	Agree 50 % Unsure 23 % Disagree 27 % No answer 0 %	38 % 30 % 31 % 1 %

The relationship between the level of commitment to Orthodoxy and conservative values does not clearly follow the proposed hypothesis: There does not seem to be a direct relationship between deepened Orthodoxy and deepened conservatism. First of all, the level of religious commitment does not appear to influence

the attitude of the students here towards the ideal form of government: Both categories of respondents are relatively liberal (about 50% for democracy and 30% for authoritarian forms of governance). Attitudes towards media censorship are not affected either. Also, a higher level of commitment to Orthodoxy does not appear to be related to noticeably heightened anti-Western attitudes or a desire for an actively anti-US/anti-European foreign policy stance. Nor does there appear to be an obvious connection between religious commitment and a negative attitude towards globalization or to the level of belief in the responsibility of the state for citizen welfare.

At the same time, the level of commitment to Orthodoxy possibly relates positively to the perception of the market economy: 70% of the “active” Orthodox students rate the market experience positively as opposed to 62% of the “nominal” Orthodox. Moreover, the “active” students are somewhat more liberal than the “nominal” in terms of the control of natural resources (82% to 91%). On the other hand, the “active” Orthodox students of the “secular” universities are somewhat more conservative than the “nominal” Orthodox when it comes to the role of the Orthodox church in Russian society: 73% either partially or fully agree with the idea that “To be Russian is to be Orthodox” (among the “nominal” Orthodox, 64% responded in the same way). However, slightly fewer of the “active” Orthodox students agreed that sects should be banned (5 percentage points less). Finally, 50% of the active Orthodox would like to see the ROC constitutionally guaranteed as the state religion; in this respect, their views are clearly more conservative than those of their “nominal” colleagues (38%).

Yet more interesting is the comparison of the “actively Orthodox” students of the “secular” universities and the students of the “Orthodox” universities, who may be considered actively Orthodox by definition. If self-definition as a committed Orthodox Christian in Russia is correlated to an adherence to the political preferences of the Patriarchate’s leadership, surely it would show up here, eliminating the alternative institutional culture explanation. The results of this comparison are as follows:

Table 5. Active Orthodox at secular universities/Orthodox Universities (w/o St. Filaret) (74 and 287 respondents respectively)

	Active Orthodox (secular)	Orthodox Universities
Preference for type of regime	Monarchy 19 %	46 %
	Democracy 47 %	19 %

	Theocracy 3 %	5 %
	Dictatorship 9 %	7 %
	Other 11 %	6 %
	Don't know 8 %	16 %
	No answer 3 %	1 %
The media should be censored	Agree 38 %	74 %
	Unsure 29 %	15 %
	Disagree 31 %	9 %
	No answer 1 %	2 %
The West is a purposeful, active adversary	Agree 49 %	65 %
	Unsure 34 %	25 %
	Disagree 16 %	9 %
	No answer 1 %	1 %
Russia should have good relations with the US/Europe	Agree 51 %	19 %
	Unsure 29 %	42 %
	Disagree 19 %	37 %
	No answer 1 %	2 %
Globalization is a negative phenomenon	Agree 23 %	62 %
	Unsure 50 %	29 %
	Disagree 26 %	7 %
	No answer 1 %	2 %
The state should control all natural resources	Agree 83 %	94 %
	Unsure 8 %	4 %
	Disagree 8 %	1 %
	No answer 1 %	1 %
The market economy has brought Russia	Only good 12 %	1 %
	More good 58 %	33 %
	More bad 14 %	27 %
	Only bad 1 %	1 %
	Hard to say 15 %	37 %
	No answer 0%	1 %
Ideally, the state is fully responsible for citizens' welfare	Agree 54 %	61 %
	Unsure 27 %	27 %
	Disagree 19 %	11 %
	No answer 0%	1 %

To be Russian is to be Orthodox	Agree fully 26 % Agree but not always 47 % Disagree 24 % Unsure 2 % No answer 1 %	49 % 33 % 16 % 1 % 1 %
Harmful Sects should be banned	Agree 81 % Unsure 15 % Disagree 4 %	95 % 4 % 1 %
Orthodoxy should be state religion	Agree 50 % Unsure 23 % Disagree 27 % No answer 0 %	72 % 16 % 12 % 0 %

Strikingly, the students of the “Orthodox universities” turn out to be far more conservative than their presumable ideological counterparts in the secular institutions on all counts. Only in one case is the disconnect less than 10 percentage points: 61% of “Orthodox university” students feel that the state should be responsible for citizen welfare, as opposed to 54% of “active Orthodox” from the secular universities. On three other points the “Orthodox university” students are around 15 percentage points more conservative than their colleagues: The negative role of the West (+16), state control of natural resources (+12), and the need to ban harmful sects (+14). On four questions the difference is between 20 and 30 percentage points: The ideal form of government (+27 more monarchists among the “Orthodox university” students), the need to pursue an anti-American/anti-European foreign policy (+24), on the question of Orthodoxy and Russianness (fully 23 percentage points more of the “Orthodox university” students feel this is the case all of the time) and on the issue of Orthodoxy as “state religion” (+22). In the remaining two categories, the difference reaches nearly 40 percentage points: +39 “Orthodox university” students feel globalization is a negative phenomenon, and +37 believe that the government should introduce censorship into the media. While there is a 10 percentage point difference between the responses of those believing the market economy to be unequivocally good, the “Orthodox university” students are 25 percentage points more conservative on this question once the categories “Only good”

and “More good than harm” are combined. Finally, in general, it appears from the responses that while 31% of the secular university “active” Orthodox students favor some form of authoritarian government, that figure reaches 58% among the students of the “Orthodox universities.”

If I am correct, then, the institutional culture of the “Orthodox universities” is such that it at least strongly reinforces existing conservative tendencies among actively Orthodox students, if it does not directly cause them. Otherwise, if adherence to Orthodoxy were strongly linked by itself to a preference for the political ideology of the Patriarchate, there would be no appreciable difference between the two categories of students compared here.

Overall, then, the survey results support the picture in which the Moscow Patriarchate has a limited influence on the political attitudes among Russia’s population. While the active Orthodox surveyed here appear to be as a rule more conservative than their nominally Orthodox (or non-Orthodox) colleagues, the fact that this changes dramatically depending on the institutions surveyed suggests that the influence of the Patriarchate even on this population of Russian citizens is much more limited than one would expect. Ultimately, the majority of the students at the “Orthodox universities” appear to follow the orientations of the more conservative (if not to say fundamentalist) faction within the Russian Orthodox Church. However, it is not clear whether this means very much: While the political subculture here is clearly quite conservative, it is also distant from the political orientations demonstrated by the Orthodox students at the lay universities (both active and nominal). Moreover, most of the students of the “Orthodox universities” are specifically prepared to either enter the priesthood or pursue teaching careers within Orthodox institutions; their colleagues at the “lay” universities, on the other hand, are much more likely to go into politics and – as graduates of Moscow’s elite schools – have an impact on the development of the political system in the Russian Federation. In the end, it becomes clear that one cannot speak of a significant direct impact by the Moscow Patriarchate on the political leanings of the upcoming political elite, even if it does happen to be actively Orthodox.