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**ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY AND  
GOVERNMENT CAREER  
PREFERENCE AMONG RUSSIAN  
STUDENTS: DOES PUBLIC  
SERVICE MOTIVATION MEDIATE  
THE LINK?**

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## **ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY AND GOVERNMENT CAREER PREFERENCE AMONG RUSSIAN STUDENTS: DOES PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION MEDIATE THE LINK?**<sup>2</sup>

This study attempts to assess the link between Orthodox Christian religiosity and the government career preference in Russia and the role of public service motivation (PSM) as a mediator of this relationship. PSM has been previously shown to predict public sector career preference among Russian students, whereas the link between religiosity, PSM and public sector career choice have not yet been studied in Russia. We use primary data from a student survey conducted at a Moscow-based university (N=804) to show that Orthodox Christian religiosity is positively linked with declared government career preference among students. PSM performs weakly as a mediator accounting for only 13% of the total effect. We also find that within the public sector religiosity is only associated with choosing the government but not wider budget sector organisations. Church attendance matters: frequency of attendance is strongly positively linked with government career preference.

JEL Classification: D73, H83.

Keywords: religiosity, Russia, motivation, civil service, public service motivation, career choice.

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# 1 Introduction

PSM literature was launched by a seminal paper by Perry and Wise (Perry and Wise, 1990). The authors further developed the concept in subsequent publications (Perry, 1996). Research that followed focused largely on the effect of PSM on career choice and career trajectories (Kjeldsen and Jacobsen, 2013; Wright and Christensen, 2010) and impact of PSM on altruistic decisions such as giving behaviour (Clerkin et al., 2009). Relatively smaller attention has been paid to the inquiry into origins of PSM. Studies looking into antecedents of PSM are rare. Perry et al. (2008) concludes that “the number of studies [on the origins of PSM] has not reached a sufficient threshold for a meaningful conclusion” (p.446). Vandenaabeele (2007) highlighted this gap and advocated for an institutional perspective on the antecedents of PSM. Perry (1997) showed that PSM is rooted in institutional context and listed religiosity as one of the prominent factors predicting PSM.

An institutional approach to the study of PSM has been developed by several authors. Some have looked into organisational antecedents of PSM (Chen et al., 2014; Camilleri, 2007; Moynihan and Pandey, 2007), others looked at broader institutions such as family, age cohort, education and political affiliation (Vandenaabeele, 2011), still others investigated the influence of cultural antecedents such as national identities (Ritz and Brewer, 2013).

Surprisingly, the stream of research on religiosity as an antecedent of PSM has almost dried up. Few papers have looked into this link apart from Perry’s own contributions (Perry et al., 2008).

This is even more surprising given that public employees have been consistently shown to be more spiritual than non-public employees on American samples (Bruce, 2000; Houston and Cartwright, 2007; Houston et al., 2008; Freeman and Houston, 2010). Perceiving one’s career as “a calling” rather than a job has been actively studied and linked with religious sentiments (Dik and Duffy, 2009; Elangovan et al., 2010; Duffy et al., 2012; Steger et al., 2010). Public service as a calling is a theme linked to the wide Public Service Motivation literature (Houston et al., 2008; Vandenaabeele, 2008; Thompson and Christensen, 2018).

In this light, this paper makes a contribution to the PSM literature in several respects.

We jointly examine the links between Orthodox Christian religiosity, PSM and career

preferences that gives us a broader understanding of the effects of religiosity on both motivation and behaviour.

We show that the four dimensions of PSM may be viewed as corresponding with the teaching of the New Testament in important respects. We give biblical evidence for this and thus attempt to show the closeness of Christianity (as C. S. Lewis put it - “Mere Christianity” (Lewis, 2001)) with the underlying structure of PSM.

We break the sectors of employment down into more detailed orientations than is usually done. This lets us explore the variations in career preferences within the public sector.

We use two measures of religiosity a) a measure of religious affiliation, and b) a measure of frequency of church attendance. This lets us tap into the behavioural aspect of religiosity and incorporate the intensity of one’s religious practice into the study. This also lets us identify non-practising religious respondents who identify as religious but do not attend ceremonies.

We use a sample of undergraduate students who have not yet entered the labour market and have not yet been socialized on-the-job, this lets us avoid the familiar question of whether it is the working environment that shapes PSM or it is PSM that determines employment choice.

Finally, as the literature on PSM from non-western contexts is still scarce (Van der Wal, 2015) this paper contributes to broadening the scope of PSM research geographically. Previous studies have mostly been conducted in either Protestant or Catholic religious contexts. We include Orthodox Christianity in the domain on PSM-religiosity scholarship.

By studying the link between Orthodox Christianity and career choices in the Russian contexts we are also able to contribute to research on the peculiarities of modern Russian Orthodox religiosity (particularly, the aspect of this scholarship that is concerned with so called “non-practising” Christians in Russia).

## **2 Background and Research Setting**

Russia has been witnessing an increase in religiosity (Evans and Northmore-Ball, 2012; Evans and Mankowska, 2011). According to Marsh (2011) the Orthodox Church in Russia «stands next to the state as its own equal» and is claiming to be the source of the new national

identity (Agadjanian, 2001; Gerlach, 2015). Certain public spheres are experiencing “de-secularization” (Lisovskaya and Karpov, 2010). At the same time, there is a growing preference among young people to choose a career in government (VTsIOM, 2012; Nezhina and Barabashev, 2019). In this context, it is particularly interesting to examine the role of religion in choosing to work for the government and, particularly the role of public service motivation.

We note here, that our concern is with Orthodox Christianity exclusively. Although all main world religions are represented in Russia and local denominations are numerous, our data only allows us to make meaningful claims about Orthodox Christians. They make a majority of our sample.

In sharp contrast with America and Western Europe, in Russia, studies on PSM have only recently started emerging (Jaekel and Borshchevskiy, 2017; Jaekel, 2017; Nezhina and Barabashev, 2019; Gans-Morse et al., 2017, 2018, 2019). The Russian case is of interest here in two respects: 1) the religion is different; 2) the state is different. First, most studies so far have studied the Western world, i.e. mainly Protestant and Catholic Christianity. Second, the Western European states are not similar to the Russian state and relatively little is known about motivations of Russian aspiring civil servants.

In this study we aim to explore the link between Orthodox Christian religiosity and career decision of Russian students, particularly their choice between the public and the private sector. We draw the inspiration for this analysis from the pioneering work of Max Weber, who began his seminal work “The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism” by pointing at the difference between career decision of the Protestants and the Catholics: the Catholics, according to Weber, preferred to “become master craftsmen”, whereas the Protestants were filling the “upper ranks of skilled labour and administrative positions” at factories (Weber, 2001, p.6).

Weber then sets the scene for his inquiry by ascertaining that

“The explanation of these cases is undoubtedly that the mental and spiritual peculiarities acquired from the environment, here the type of education favoured by the religious atmosphere of the home community and the parental home,

have determined the choice of occupation, and through it the professional career”  
Weber (2001, p.6).

In our study we attempt to extend this argument to the Russian Orthodox Christians with a slight modification of aspect. We factor in the State as a major actor on the Russian labour market and explore the link between religiosity and career choice towards the private or the public sectors.

The inquiry in its broadest sense is not entirely novel for Russia, but it has yet scarcely been approached with quantitative methods.

In an insightful paper titled “The Orthodox Ethics and the Spirit of Socialism” Zabaev (2009) argued that there is indeed such an Orthodox ethic that has shaped the Russian society. According to Zabaev (2009, p.66) the State is “the ”backbone“ of the Russian life”, whereas the Russian Orthodox Church has functioned as the bearer of the culture of “humbleness” and “obedience” that, in everyday life “were easily transformed into the readiness to obey the ”senior“” (Zabaev, 2009, p.70). This latter attitude is often ascribed to modern civil servants who embrace strict hierarchies.

In this study we explore the implications of this argument for modern public administration in Russia.

### **3 Literature review**

#### **3.1 Public service motivation**

PSM is a well developed construct. Two seminal papers by Perry and Wise have attracted a lot of scholarly attention and generated a burgeoning literature (Perry and Wise, 1990; Perry, 1996). The scale was initially developed and tested in an American context. A recent systematic literature review identified 323 studies published on the topic of PSM (Ritz et al., 2016). Another review found that although 80 per cent of PSM literature emanates from the USA and Europe, there is a sizeable number of publications from non-western countries (Van der Wal, 2015).

PSM has been defined as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions” (Perry, 1996). Perry’s initial 24-items scale has

been revised by subsequent studies. Kim et al. (2013) offered a revised 16-item version that was adapted to international audiences based on cross-country studies. The revised scale has four sub-dimensions: Attraction to Public Service (APS), Commitment to Public Values (CPV), Compassion (COM), and Self-Sacrifice (SS).

Perry (1997) identified religiosity among major potential antecedents of PSM. This line of research has not, however, been actively explored in the literature. Perry et al. (2008) contributed to the study of the link between religiosity and PSM by examining a sample of “moral exemplars” - a group of national volunteer award winners. They found that religiosity was a strong predictor of PSM and supported their findings with qualitative evidence: “80 percent of the moral exemplars attributed their core value commitments to their religious faith” (p.449).

### **3.2 Religiosity as an antecedent of PSM**

In an earlier article that pioneered the PSM research, Perry (1997) analysed the antecedents of PSM and listed religiosity/spirituality as one such major antecedent.

Perry (1997) distinguished between two facets of religiosity - a religious world-view and involvement in church activities. According to him, two types of religious world-view are possible - individual and communal. Individual worldview manifests in withdrawal from worldly affairs into the realm of individual spirituality, whereas the communal worldview is characterised by active integration of religious doctrine in solving shared societal problems and building relationships with others.

Individual religious worldview was expected to be negatively linked with PSM, whereas the communal worldview was expected to be positively linked with it. Involvement in church activities was hypothesized to be positively linked with PSM.

Perry (1997) used three measures of religiosity: religious worldview (individualist / communal), church involvement and “closeness to God”. Religious worldview was found to have no significant link with PSM. Individual / communal religious worldview had no statistical significance in regressions of PSM scale and sub-scales (Perry, 1997, p. 190). Church involvement was surprisingly found to be negatively and significantly linked with Compas-

sion and Self-sacrifice, while Closeness to God was positively and significantly linked with Commitment to public interest and Self-Sacrifice.

Perry hypothesized that the negative correlation of church involvement with PSM that he observed could be attributed to non-measured parameters of church-goers. He suggested that individuals spending much time in the church may have little time left to devote to civic duties. Frequent church-going could also be a proxy of religious fundamentalism. (Perry, 1997, p. 191).

Another important observation made by Perry is that individuals indoctrinated in the teachings of the Church may respond to PSM items in a “doctrinaire way”. The negative effect observed in the study may suggest that individuals may give answers contrary to what is expected from the point of view of Judeo-Christian ethics (Perry, 1997, p. 191). Metaphorically speaking they may have developed a certain allergy to ethical statements that try to tap into their beliefs and values.

Contrary to these findings Perry et al. (2008) found that religious participation (church attendance, praying, religious community involvement) was strongly and positively associated with higher levels of PSM among volunteers. These conflicting findings call for more research into the nature of the link between religiosity and PSM.

This paper, therefore, contributes to existing literature in important respect. We test the link between religiosity and public service on a large sample of students some of whom have indicated a preference for public sector career. Russian religious context is different and the public sector sphere differs significantly from that of previous studies.

## **4 Hypotheses**

### **4.1 Religiosity and government career preference**

Public employees have been shown to be more spiritual than non-public employees on American samples (Bruce, 2000; Freeman and Houston, 2010; Houston and Cartwright, 2007; Houston et al., 2008). Although, there is conflicting evidence from an earlier study based on the General Social Survey 1982-88. Lewis (1990, p. 223) found that “Government bureaucrats are about as religious as the general population”.



Houston and Cartwright (2007) used data from the 1998 General Social Survey to demonstrate that public employees were more spiritual than non-public employees. This was even more pronounced for government-related positions. Moreover, public employees demonstrated higher compassion for others and even life meaning. Houston et al. (2008) find that public employees were more likely than others to report that they were religious and to “state that they try to carry their religious beliefs over into all aspects of their life” (Houston et al., 2008). In Russia this link is yet to be explored. The Russian case is of particular interest given the peculiar relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the State.

As mentioned earlier in the Background section, we rely on Zabaev (2009) for our hypothesis. Zabaev argued that the values of “obedience”, “humbleness” and “self-sacrifice” that originate in the Orthodox Church have been engrained in the mentality of modern Russian bureaucrats by being “transformed into the readiness to obey the ”senior“” (Zabaev, 2009, p.70). In his paper he traces the roots of this similarity in values back to pre-revolution times. In this paper we try to find traces of this similarity among the modern youth looking for a career in the Russian state bureaucracy.

- H1: Religiosity is positively associated with government career preference.

## 4.2 Religiosity and PSM

In this study we are interested in the role of PSM as a mediator of the link between religiosity and government career choice. By including PSM as our mediating variable we aim to test one of the possible paths through which religiosity may be linked with government career preference.

We base our hypotheses regarding the link between religiosity and PSM dimensions on three foundations: 1) scholarly literature, 2) biblical references that we take as representation of the shared doctrine of Christianity, 3) references in the “Basic principles of social conception of the Russian Orthodox Church” (BPSC) which we consider to be the representation of the doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) as is it is practised in Russia. The latter is important for our study because we consider not only doctrinal but also behavioural aspects of religiosity. Presumably, people, who attend churches more regularly get more

exposure to the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church and BPSC serves as a proxy of this teaching.

For each dimension we attempt to find a corresponding biblical imperative and guidance from the main normative document of the Russian Orthodox Church (“Basic principles of social conception of the Russian Orthodox Church” (BPSC))

Perry (1997) contended that PSM is inculcated by “formative experiences” such as one’s exposure to religious practices, parental role models or professionalisation. Following this conceptualisation of the origins of PSM we hypothesize that PSM is influenced by one’s religiosity. The other part of the mediation (the effect of PSM on career preference) is consistent with the attraction-selection-attrition argument developed in PSM literature. Perry et al. (2010) reviewed the extensive literature that emerged by 2010 over 20 years of PSM research and found that the attraction-selection-attrition argument has been consistently corroborated in the literature.

#### **4.2.1 Religiosity and Attraction to Public Service**

**PSM literature.** Perry (1996) presented the attraction to policy dimension of the PSM scale as one tapping into rational motive to get closer to the formulation of public policy. Civil servants may desire to obtain power associated with the office to be able to influence public policy. The inclination to promote particular government policies has been listed among possible dominant motives of civil servants by Downs (1967) in his book “Inside bureaucracy”. When one identifies one’s interests with promotion of a particular government policy, he may be strongly motivated to work in the public sector.

In the original PSM scale Perry encountered a difficulty in formulating positive statements that tap into attraction to policy making. The original scale only had 3 negative items in APM dimension: item PSM 11 “Politics is a dirty word. (Reversed)”; item PSM 31 “I don’t care much for politicians (Reversed)”; item PSM 27: “The give and take of public policy making doesn’t appeal to me (Reversed)”.

Based on a review of international PSM scholarship Kim and Vandenabeele (2010) argued that the attraction to policy making dimension should be “redefined as attraction to public participation” (p.704). Perry’s initial formulation of this dimension was criticized on the

grounds that it “tapp[ed] dissatisfaction with politicians more than the idea of interest in public policy making” (p.704). Amendments to this dimension have been suggested that focused on one’s disposition to work in the public sector and participate in policy making process.

Kim et al. (2013) replaced the attraction to the public policy making dimension with Attraction to Public Service dimension with a changed focus:

1. I admire people who initiate or are involved in activities to aid my community
2. It is important to contribute to activities that tackle social problems
3. Meaningful public service is very important to me
4. It is important for me to contribute to the common good

The idea of contributing to the common good and the community has been established as the prominent feature of this dimension.

The role of religious activity in promoting the communal spirit has been explored by Perry et al. (2008). They found that among active volunteers the idea of contributing to community is often rooted in their faith. The study found both statistical and qualitative evidence for this link.

**Biblical references.** The Bible urges believers to use their talents in helping others:

- “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).
- “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: «It is more blessed to give than to receive».” (Acts 20:35).
- “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”(Ephesians 2:10).

In reference to the item CPI1 “Meaningful public service is very important to me” it is worth quoting the Bible on one’s calling:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving (Colossians 3:23-24).

**BPSC references.** The Social conception of ROC is grounded in these biblical verses and urges the disciples to pray for the governing authorities in the same way as this was done by generations of early Christians. The State is an “inevitable element of life in the world corrupted by sin” (BPSC, III.2). The state exists for arranging worldly affairs and making the life in this world bearable, whereas the Church is concerned with eternal life. The domains of the State and the Church may overlap, such as when a civil servant is at the same time a devote Christian. In such a case the BPSC refers to the historical case of “the symphony” between the State and the Church in Byzantine empire.

Although The gospel also clearly marks the separation of the domains of authority: “Then he said to them, ‘So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.’” (Mark 12:17), the BPSC states that Christians may actively participate in public administration and are called upon to promote “Christian patriotism”:

The patriotism of an Orthodox Christian should be active. It is manifested in protecting the Motherland from enemies, working for the good of the country, carrying for public life, including via taking part in public administration (BPSC, II.3).

Taking into account this emphasis on mutual compatibility of Orthodox Christianity and working for the government we formulate our next hypothesis.

- H2a: Religiosity is positively associated with the Attraction to Public Service dimension of PSM.

#### 4.2.2 Religiosity and Commitment to the Public Values

**PSM literature.** Perry (1997, p. 184) notes that “Religious foundational beliefs are related directly to several facets of public service motivation, specifically commitment to the public interest/civic duty and compassion”. Kim et al. (2013) reformulated this dimension as Commitment to Public Values (CPV).

**Biblical references.** The Bible unequivocally promotes the ideals of selflessness and putting the interests of others above one's own.

- “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4)
- “The greatest among you will be your servant.” (Matthew 23:11)
- “And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’” (Matthew 25:40)

**BPSC references.** The modern social conception of the ROC reiterates the imperative of serving others with full commitment: “The life in the Church, to which everyone is called, is unfading serving God and people” (BPSC of ROC, I.3)

Perry (1996) uses some clear statements in his CPI dimension: item PSM16 states: “I unselfishly contribute to my community”; items PSM 34: “I would prefer seeing public officials do what is best for the whole community even if it harmed my interests”.

- H2b: Religiosity is positively associated with Commitment to the Public Values dimension of PSM.

#### 4.2.3 Religiosity and Compassion

**PSM literature.** Perry (1996) based his Compassion dimension of PSM on the concept of the “patriotism of benevolence” developed by Frederickson and Hard (1985). They defined patriotism of benevolence as “an extensive love of all people within our political boundaries and the imperative that they must be protected in all of the basic rights granted to them by the enabling documents” (Perry, 1996, p. 7). This concept limits the scope of public servants' compassion to compatriots, whereas the Christian imperative is, naturally, broader as it extends to all humanity.

Perry used a combination of items in his Compassion dimension, some referring to the feeling of compassion to others generally, and some narrowly linked to the support of redistributional government programmes: item PSM2: “I am rarely moved by the plight of the

underprivileged.(Reversed)”; Item PSM8:“To me, patriotism includes seeing to the welfare of others”; item PSM10: “I seldom think about the welfare of people whom I don’t know personally. (Reversed)”.

**Biblical references.** The Gospel explicitly demands Christians to show compassion to one another. Apostle Paul repeatedly calls for compassion and love for others::

- “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” (Colossians 3:12)
- “Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves” (Philippians 2:1-3)
- “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32)
- “Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2).

Apostle James calls for actively helping others:

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (James, 2:14-16)

**BPSC references.** The modern Church promotes charitable activity. In BPSC, charity is listed among the main activities where the Church is co-operating with the State for the benefit of the society. (Chapter 3: “The Church and the State”). Compassion is mentioned alongside charity in the document.

- H2c: Religiosity is positively associated with Compassion dimension of PSM.

#### 4.2.4 Religiosity and Self-Sacrifice

**PSM literature.** In his seminal paper reporting on the development of the PSM scale, Perry is explicit that he mainly fathoms this dimension as including but not limited to pecuniary matters. Items PSM6 states: “Doing well financially is definitely more important to me than doing good deeds. (Reversed)”, while item PSM26 states: “I am prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the good of society” (Perry, 1996).

Kim and Vandenberg (2010) after careful consideration of the body of PSM literature and a review of adjustments that needed to be made to the construct for advancing PSM research internationally, concluded that “self-sacrifice is fundamental to the construct of PSM” (p.705).

**Biblical references.** It is natural to hypothesise that devote Christians should score higher on self-sacrifice dimension. Verses devoted to self-sacrifice are numerous. To name here just a few:

- “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13);
- “Jesus said to him, «If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me»” (Matthew 19:21);
- “And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.” (Acts, 2:44-45).
- The dictum of self-sacrifice is epitomized in Matthew 16:24-25: “Then Jesus said to His disciples, «If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it»”.

Christian doctrine is closely knit with self-sacrifice. In fact, it is the central idea of Christianity that the living God sacrificed himself for the people to pay ransom for their sins. Christians are called to practise self-sacrifice.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

**BPSC references.** The modern Church sanctifies people who suffered for others, who sacrificed themselves to save others from death, or died voluntarily to profess their religion. The BPSC explicitly calls those Christians employed as civil servants to infuse their daily working life with the spirit of self-sacrifice: “A Christian whose labour is in the domain of government administration or political life, is called to enshrine the spirit of self-sacrifice and self-denial into his work” (BPSC, V.3).

- H2d: Religiosity is positively associated with the Self-sacrifice dimension of PSM.

### 4.3 PSM and government career preference

To test the mediating role of PSM in the relationship between religiosity and government career choice we need to estimate the link between PSM and government career choice.

Higher attraction to public sector employment among people with high PSM was among the three propositions made by Perry and Wise (1990). More recent research supported this proposition. Vandenabeele (2008) found this relationship in a large sample of Flemish students.

We have explored this link in an earlier paper (Gans-Morse et al., 2018) using a full 16-item PSM scale. The results show that PSM is, indeed, associated with a higher attraction to the public sector among Russian students. Analysis also shows that PSM is strongly associated with behavioural measures of honesty and altruism (Gans-Morse et al., 2019)

Nezhina and Barabashev (2019) also found PSM to be associated with the intention to work in government. These findings are supported by Jaekel and Borshchevskiy (2017, p.2), who found that “public service motivation is positively correlated with the intention to work in the civil service after graduation” among Russian public administration students.



In a paper that made use of experimental games Gans-Morse et al. (2017) found that students with higher pro-social motivation are likely to prefer working in the public sector.

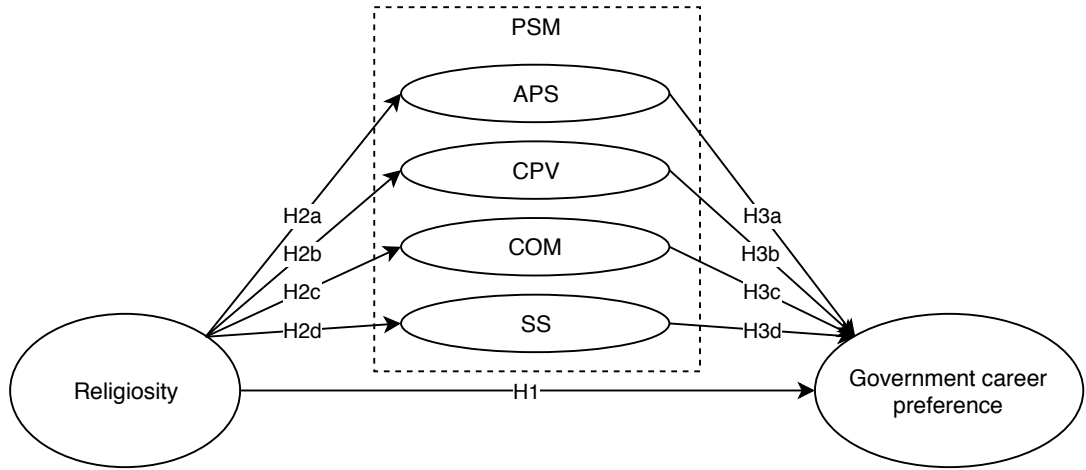
There is, however, recent evidence that the job sector is not an appropriate proxy for values underlying the PSM construct. Christensen and Wright (2011) showed that students were equally likely to select between private, public and non-profit sectors, given that the job role permitted serving others. Kjeldsen and Jacobsen (2013) similarly found that among early career professionals the job sector choice was not linked to PSM, whereas the job role was. They also found a complex effect of early job experience on PSM suggesting that PSM may be severely hampered by on the job experience and that this may be moderated by job characteristics. Wright and Christensen (2010) in a longitudinal study of US lawyers, showed that PSM may increase the chances of one's subsequent jobs to be in the public sector, but it does not predict one's first job employment sector.

The endogeneity bias raises issues with many previous cross-sectional studies that surveyed experienced professionals. It is not clear in such studies whether it was PSM that shaped job decisions or the employment experience that shaped the PSM (Kjeldsen and Jacobsen, 2013).

This paper, Gans-Morse et al. (2017) and Gans-Morse et al. (2018) are based on a survey of students who have not yet entered the labour market. We are thus able to avoid the potential endogeneity bias. Students in most cases have not yet experienced the workplace and their PSM is yet unaffected by the employment.

In this analysis we utilize structural equation modelling (SEM) as opposed to OLS regressions used in previous studies. SEM has been advocated as a better tool for mediation analysis (see methods section).

- H3: PSM is positively associated with government career preference.
- H3a: APS is positively associated with government career preference.
- H3b: CPV is positively associated with government career preference.
- H3c: COM is positively associated with government career preference.
- H3d: SS is positively associated with government career preference.



**Fig. 1: Hypotheses**

## 5 Data Collection and Research Design

### 5.1 Implementation

The study was conducted in Moscow with undergraduate and masters students of one of leading Russian universities. Students were recruited by sending email invitations to their groups address as well as by distributing flyers on campus. Students were allowed and encouraged to invite their friends. Students completed the survey on-line via Qualtrics. 804 students participated. Data were collected between May 27 and June 15 of 2016.

60% of participants were women.

The items on PSM and religiosity were administered as part of a larger survey on student motivations and career preferences. The average time it took to complete the whole questionnaire was 35 min.

**Tab. 1: Sample composition**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Uni. Department</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1st	26	Public Administration	25
2nd	25	Economics	14
3rd	21	Sociology	14
4th	18	Business	12
Masters	10	Political Science	10
		Communications	6
		Other	19

## 5.2 Measuring Public Service Motivation

We employed a 16-item version of the Public Service Motivation (PSM) index developed by Kim et al. (2013). To our knowledge, this is the first time the full PSM scale has been used in Russia. We made a translation for this reason<sup>1</sup>. This version of the index builds on the original index created by Perry (1996) but was designed by an international team of scholars to account for cross-cultural distinctions. The index consists of a series of attitudinal questions measuring four dimensions of PSM: (1) attraction to public service, (2) commitment to public values, (3) compassion, and (4) self-sacrifice. The questions on which the index is based, as well as our translations into Russian, can be found in the Appendix.

## 5.3 Measuring Career Preferences

Career preferences were measured in two ways. First, students were given a choice between the public and the private sector as their preferred sector of employment (coded 1 for public and 0 for private sector). Then they were presented with 9 scales from 1 to 7 representing different career options. They were asked to indicate 1) how likely it was that they choose this career option (preferences), and 2) how likely it was that they would end up working in this sector (expectations).

Nine career paths were evaluated: federal government, regional or local government, the government “budget sector” (e.g., public health, science, education, culture), private corporations, small or medium-sized business, ownership of a private business, banking or finance, consulting, and the non-profit sector.

We performed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the answers to the 9 scales. The results show that regional and federal government preferences load on a single factor, whereas the preference to work for the budget sector loads on another factor. The “public sector” may thus be divided into government career preference (federal, regional and municipal government levels) and budget sector career preference.

For Structural equation modelling we constructed latent variables accordingly: two latent

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<sup>1</sup>Two researchers translated the items independently and then discussed and resolved the differences. The Russian version was piloted on a small number of student volunteers at the university where the research was conducted (during April 2016).

variables were constructed. First - a variables “government career” that used two measurement variables (federal and regional/municipal government scales) and second latent variable that used one measurement variable (budget sector scale). Thus, the public sector is split into two career paths.

#### 5.4 Measures of Religiosity

Religiosity was measured by self-declared association with a religion and frequency of attending religious services.

The questions on religiosity included:

1. Do you belong to a religion or religious denomination? (Yes/No, coded 1/0)
2. To which religious denomination do you belong? (list of major world religions<sup>2</sup>)
3. How often do you attend religious ceremonies? (only asked if person answered “Yes” to question 1)<sup>3</sup>

In this study we only analyse the difference in career preferences between Orthodox Christians (N=339) and atheists (N=416). Respondents who reported belonging to other denominations (N=49) were excluded (see Tab. 2).

Our main exogenous variable is constructed in the following way: we take the measure of frequency of church attendance (actual values 1 to 6, no-one indicated the highest frequency of 7)), and add zeros for non-religious people. We thus get a measure that takes the values from 0 to 6.

A particular subgroup that emerged from the analysis is the subgroup of non-practising Orthodox Christians (N=77) . They answered “Yes” to the first question; identified as Orthodox Christians in the second question, but indicated that they never attend religious services in the third question (the opposite situation, where a person answered “No” to question one, but indicated church attendance, was ruled out by the questionnaire skip

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<sup>2</sup>Categorical variable: Orthodox Christianity, Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Other

<sup>3</sup>1 = Never or practically never 2 = Less frequently than once a year, 3 = Once a year, 4 = Only on important holidays, 5 = Once a month, 6 = Once a week, 7 = Twice a week and more often.

**Tab. 2: Religious denominations (frequency)**

<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Non-religious	416	51.7	51.7
Orthodox Christianity	339	42.2	93.9
Islam	16	2	95.9
Buddhism	7	0.9	96.8
Catholicism	5	0.6	97.4
Protestantism	4	0.5	97.9
Judaism	1	0.1	98
Other	16	2	100
Total	804	100	

**Tab. 3: Frequency of attendance of religious services among Orthodox Christians**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1	Never or practically never	77
2	Less frequently than once a year	44
3	Once a year	59
4	Only on important holidays	110
5	Once a month	39
6	Once a week	10
7	Twice a week and more often	0
Total		339

logic. Only religious people were asked the question about frequency of service attendance). More discussion is given in section 7.2.

Non-practising Orthodox Christians have become subject of some scholarly attention recently (Markin, 2018, 2017). According to national surveys the majority of Russians self-identify as Orthodox Christians (according to recent surveys - around 70%, see Markin (2018)), but those regularly participating in the Holy Eucharist make up only a small minority<sup>4</sup> of the population. The remaining vast majority either never attend church or come irregularly.

### 5.5 Differences across departments on key variables

Analysis of means shows that there are some considerable differences between departments in terms of the key variables. . that Public Administration department stands out in terms of all the variables: religious affiliation, frequency of religious attendance, PSM index and

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<sup>4</sup>2% participate in the Eucharist once a month; 14% - once a year (Markin, 2018)

job sector preferences. Summary statistics is given in Table 4, t-tests results are presented in Table 5. Public administration students on average are more religious, attend churches more frequently, have higher PSM score and are more likely to prefer a public sector job.

Pair-wise . that the Public Administration and Business departments are not different in terms of mean religiosity and frequency of religious services. They differ, however, in the job sector preference significantly (PA:  $M=0.46$ ,  $SD=0.5$ ; Bus:  $M=0.09$ ,  $SD=0.29$ ;  $t(285)=7,930$ ,  $p<0,001$ ), and somewhat different in mean PSM (PA: $M=3.69$ ,  $SD=0.54$ ; Bus: $M=3.57$ ,  $SD=0.54$ ;  $t(296)=1,746$ ;  $p=0.082$ ). PA students are more likely to choose a public sector job and score higher on PSM.

Sociology and Economics departments are strikingly similar in terms of the share of religious students (both:  $M=0.47$   $SD=0.5$ ), and frequency of church attendance (Econ: $M=3.17$ ,  $SD=1.37$ , Soc:  $M=3.09$ ,  $SD=1.36$ ). Sociology students score a little higher on PSM index (Soc:  $M=3.65$ ,  $SD=0.54$ ; Econ:  $M=3.47$ ,  $SD=0.58$ ;  $t(224)=2,411$ ,  $p=0.017$ ) and significantly higher on public sector career preference (Soc:  $M=0.18$ ,  $SD=0.38$ ; Econ:  $M=0.05$ ,  $SD=0.23$ ;  $t(181)=2,962$ ,  $p=0.003$ ).

PolSci students are not different from Sociology students on all key variables. Compared to Economics students, they are more likely to choose a public sector job (PS:  $M=0.27$ ,  $SD=0.44$ ; Econ:  $M=0.05$ ,  $SD=0.23$ ;  $t(190)=-4.353$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), while on other key variables they are not significantly different.

The department of public administration scores the highest in terms of the share of religious students (57%) (Table 4).

## 5.6 Common method variance

The data were collected using one source - an online student survey, the results may thus be susceptible to common method bias (a bias attributable to the measurement instrument, not the measured construct) (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To evaluate the extent to which CMV affects our data we performed a single-factor test. Single factor explains just slightly over 30 per cent of the variance (if all variables are included) and 34 per cent of the variance of PSM 16 items taken separately. This is below the 50 per cent threshold suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003). We should also note that job sector preference, religiosity and PSM items were

Tab. 4: Summary statistics

Department	N	M	SD	Min	Max
<i>Do you belong to a religion?</i>					
<i>Binary choice: 1=yes, 0=no</i>					
PA	201	.57	.50	0	1
Soc	113	.47	.50	0	1
Econ	113	.47	.50	0	1
Bus	97	.55	.50	0	1
PolSci	79	.44	.50	0	1
Comm	49	.49	.51	0	1
other	149	.37	.48	0	1
Total	801	.48	.50	0	1
<i>How often do you attend religious services?</i>					
<i>1 - never, 7 - two times a week and more often</i>					
PA	113	3.37	1.48	1	6
Bus	53	3.00	1.54	1	6
Soc	53	3.09	1.36	1	6
Econ	53	3.17	1.37	1	6
PolSci	35	2.69	1.57	1	6
Comm	24	2.58	1.38	1	5
other	55	2.60	1.45	1	5
Total	386	3.03	1.48	1	6
<i>PSM - average across 16-items</i>					
PA	201	3.69	0.54	2.13	5.00
Soc	113	3.66	0.54	2.06	5.00
Econ	113	3.47	0.59	1.81	4.88
Bus	97	3.57	0.54	1.75	4.63
PolSci	79	3.61	0.52	1.88	4.94
Comm	48	3.73	0.57	2.06	4.94
other	149	3.61	0.56	2.06	4.94
Total	800	3.62	0.56	1.75	5.00
<i>Job sector preference</i>					
<i>Binary choice: 1=public, 0 = private</i>					
PA	201	.46	.50	0	1
Soc	113	.18	.38	0	1
Econ	113	.05	.23	0	1
Bus	97	.09	.29	0	1
PolSci	79	.27	.44	0	1
Comm	49	.06	.24	0	1
other	149	.21	.41	0	1
Total	801	.23	.42	0	1

**Tab. 5: Comparison of Public Administration department and other departments. T-tests results**

	Public admin Dept		Other Depts		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
religiosity	0.57	0.50	0.46	0.50	2,698	0.007
religious services	3.37	1.48	2.91	1.45	2,852	0.005
PSM	3.69	0.54	3.60	0.56	2,087	0.037
job sector pref.	0.46	0.50	0.15	0.36	8,046	0.000

administered in different parts of the questionnaire with ample space between them. Thus, we conclude that CMV does not invalidate our findings.

Another source of potential common method bias is social desirability. This concern has not been specifically addressed in the design of the questionnaire and may, thus, present a reservation as to the validity of the findings. This has to be acknowledged. However, the questions of how social desirability affects answers on job sector preference and religiosity is a substantive question. Is it socially desirable in modern Russia to identify oneself as religious and indicate one’s preference for a public sector employment? The normative transparency of these questions is unclear. There is no way of answering this question without further research that specifically targets the issue of socially desirable answers in respect to religiosity/public sector job preference.

## 6 Analysis

Analysis was conducted in Stata 14.

SEM was used to analyse the links between the variables. Government career preference as a latent variable with two underlying items - federal and regional/municipal government career preference. PSM sub-indices were included in the model as multi-item latent variables and used as mediators of the relationship between religiosity and career preference. Control variables included: age, gender, class year, GPA score, city size, family income, public administration department dummy.

The classic mediation test suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) requires us first to test the direct link between the dependent and the independent variable. However, SEM allows for direct and indirect effects to be estimated in a single model. This is considered superior



to the traditional step-wise approach (Aguinis et al., 2017; Rucker et al., 2011). Linear regressions was also performed and yielded similar results (see Appendix 3).

## 7 Results

### 7.1 Career orientation and religiosity. OLS.

Single-variable regressions show that religiosity is only associated with federal and regional government preferences/expectations but not with the choice of budget organisations. No other career choice is associated with religiosity.

Table 4A reports results for career preferences, Table 4B - for expectations (Table 6).

### 7.2 Practising and non-practising Christians

In our sample we had a measure of the frequency of church attendance. This let us select a sub-sample of individuals who identified as religious but did not attend religious ceremonies. Following the recently established convention (Markin, 2018) we label this group as “non-practising”. We can now compare atheists, non-practising and practising Christians.

To disambiguate between practising and non-practising Christians we construct two dummy-variables: the first one takes the value of 1 for non-practising religious people and the second one takes the value of 1 for practising religious people. For brevity we report only significant coefficients. Coefficients were only significant for federal and regional government career preferences (Tab. 7 Models (1) and (2))

To assess the effect of intensity of religious practice we further report the results for religious people with the attendance of churches variable measured on a 6-point scale (Tab. 7 Models (3) and (4)).

We find that religiosity is not significantly associated with government career preferences for non-practising respondents (there is only marginally significant result for federal government), whereas practised religiosity is strongly linked with both federal and regional government career preference. Models (3) and (4) show that frequency of church attendance matters for Orthodox Christians. Higher frequency is associated with higher preference for government jobs. Religiosity is not linked with other job preferences (budget, private or NGO).

**Tab. 6: Career preferences/expectations and religiosity. OLS.**  
**Only atheists and Orthodox Christians**

		A. Preferences								
		DV - religiosity (1/0)								
Sector	Orientation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Public	Federal gov	.144***								
	Regional gov		.156***							
	Budget org			.005						
Private	Corporate				.045					
	SME					.014				
	Owner						0.065 <sup>†</sup>			
	Finance							.037		
	Consultancy								.041	
3rd sector	NGO									.012
	N	755	754	755	755	755	755	755	755	754
	R2	.021	.024	.000	.002	.000	.004	.001	.002	.000
	ANOVA sig	.000	.000	.884	.216	.705	.075	.310	.256	.752
		B. Expectations								
		DV - religiosity (1/0)								
Sector	Orientation	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
Public	Federal gov	.176***								
	Regional gov		.120***							
	Budget org			.019						
Private	Corporate				.007					
	SME					.033				
	Owner						.056			
	Finance							.027		
	Consultancy								.003	
3rd sector	NGO									.023
	N	755	754	754	755	755	754	755	755	754
	R2	.031	.015	.000	.000	.001	.003	.001	.000	.001
	ANOVA sig	.000	.001	.595	.856	.363	.123	.464	.942	.529

Standardized Beta coefficients reported. Standard errors in parentheses. <sup>†</sup> significant at  $p < 0.1$ , \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Only Orthodox Christians and Atheists included

**Tab. 7: OLS. Practised and non-practised religiosity and Frequency of attendance of religious ceremonies - the effect on federal and regional government career preferences**

	DV - preferences			
	Federal (1)	Regional (2)	Federal (3)	Regional (4)
Non-practising Orthodox	.065 <sup>†</sup>	.055		
Practising Orthodox	.145***	.164***		
Frequency of services (Orthodox)			.171**	.178**
N	755	754	262	261
R2	.018	.023	.029	.032
ANOVA sig	.000	.000	.005	.004

Standardized Beta coefficients reported. Standard errors in parentheses. <sup>†</sup> significant at  $p < 0.1$ , \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . Only Orthodox Christians and Atheists included in Models (1) and (2). Only Orthodox Christians included in Models (3) and (4)

These results may be of potential interest for the recently emerged body of literature on “weak religiosity” and “non-practising Orthodox Christians” in Russia (Markin, 2018). One can see here a potential for further research that would look particularly in the difference that religious practice make for various life choices. It has been suggested by some that a concept of “religious capital” may be useful in explaining the effects of socialisation in religious communities (Caputo, 2009; Dinham, 2012; Park and Smith, 2000).

### 7.3 Mediating effect of PSM

#### 7.3.1 PSM dimensions

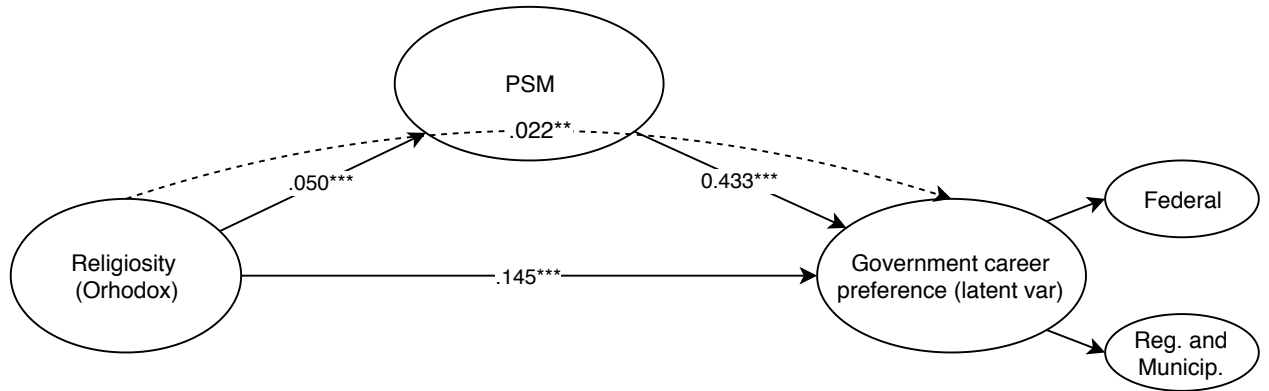
The four dimensions of PSM are strongly correlated (see Tab. 8). For our purposes this means that the mediation effect of PSM should be estimated separately for each of the four dimensions to avoid collinearity issues.

**Tab. 8: PSM dimensions. Bivariate correlations**

	APS	CPV	COM	SS	PSM
APS	1	.475	.518	.553	.843
CPV	.475	1	.396	.260	.662
COM	.518	.396	1	.474	.774
SS	.553	.260	.474	1	.775
PSM	.843	.662	.774	.775	1

All correlations significant at  $p < 0.001$  level

### 7.3.2 Indirect effect

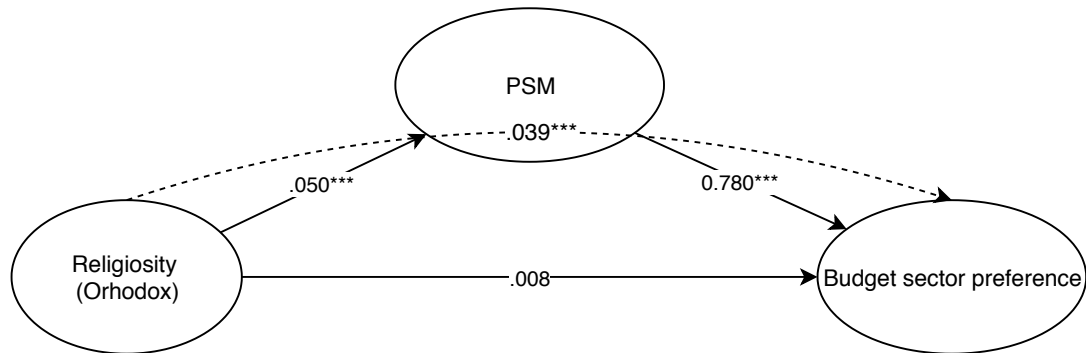


**Fig. 2: SEM results. Indirect effects. Government**

N = 741. Only Atheists and Orthodox Christians included. Non-Standardized coefficients reported. † significant at  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . The dashed line indicates the indirect effect of religiosity on government career preference via PSM

We estimated the indirect effect of religiosity on government career preference via PSM (Fig. 2). The indirect effect is statistically significant but accounts only for 13% of the total effect (.022 of total 0.167). PSM weakly mediates the relation between religiosity and government career preference.

For the budget sector, religiosity has no direct effect on career preference, and a minor indirect effect via PSM.



**Fig. 3: SEM results. Indirect effects. Budget sector**

N = 741. Only Atheists and Orthodox Christians included. Non-Standardized coefficients reported. † significant at  $p < 0.1$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . The dashed line indicates the indirect effect of religiosity on budget sector career preference via PSM

### 7.3.3 PSM dimensions as mediators

We also estimate the mediation effect of the four PSM dimensions for both government and budget sector career preferences (Tab. 9).

**Tab. 9: Four dimensions of PSM separately. Direct and indirect effects**

	<b>Exogenous var</b>	<b>Outcome var</b>	<b>Direct effect</b>	
1	Religiosity	PSM	.050***	
2	Religiosity	APS	.052***	
3	Religiosity	CPV	.038**	
4	Religiosity	COM	.061***	
5	Religiosity	SS	.052***	
6	Religiosity	Government	.145***	
7	Religiosity	Budget sector	.008	
8	PSM	Government	.433***	
9	APS	Government	.432***	
10	CPV	Government	.154	
11	COM	Government	.158†	
12	SS	Government	.205**	
13	PSM	Budget sector	.780***	
14	APS	Budget sector	.608***	
15	CPV	Budget sector	.353***	
16	COM	Budget sector	.260**	
17	SS	Budget sector	.508***	
	<b>Exogenous var</b>	<b>Mediating var</b>	<b>Outcome var</b>	<b>Indirect effect</b>
18	Religiosity	PSM	Government	.022**
19	Religiosity	APS	Government	.022**
20	Religiosity	CPV	Government	.006
21	Religiosity	COM	Government	.009
22	Religiosity	SS	Government	.010*
23	Religiosity	PSM	Budget sector	.039***
24	Religiosity	APS	Budget sector	.031**
25	Religiosity	CPV	Budget sector	.013*
26	Religiosity	COM	Budget sector	.007*
27	Religiosity	SS	Budget sector	.026**

† significant at  $p < 0.1$ , \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . Only Orthodox Christians and Atheists included. N=752

We see that religiosity is strongly associated with all four dimensions of PSM and with Government career preference (but not with Budget sector career preference (Tab.9, lines 1-7)).

Commitment to public values and Compassion are not associated with Government career preference (Tab.9, lines 10,11).

All four dimensions of PSM are strongly associated with Budget sector career preference (Tab.9, lines 13-17).

Indirect effect of Religiosity on Government career preference reported previously for PSM in general is in fact only due to APS and SS dimensions (Tab.9, lines 19,22), the other two dimensions do not give the indirect effect.

Religiosity effects Budget sector career preference only indirectly via the four dimensions of PSM (Tab.9, lines 23-27), but these effects are small in size.

### **7.3.4 Conclusions**

We can, therefore, make the following conclusions:

1. *Hypothesis 1 supported.* Religiosity is significantly correlated with the desire to choose a government career (Figure 2). However, religiosity is not linked with the choice of the budget sector as a career (Figure 3).
2. *Hypotheses 2a, b, c, d supported.* Religiosity demonstrates high correlation with all PSM sub-indices, but particularly with Compassion (COM), (Tab. 9, lines 1-5);
3. *Hypothesis 3a supported.* The link between PSM and government career preference is due only to a strong association of one dimension (APS) and a marginally significant association with SS. The other two sub-indices are not predicting government career choice (Tab. 9, lines 8-12).
4. All four dimensions of PSM are associated with budget sector career preference (Tab. 9, lines 13-17).
5. Overall, PSM is a weak mediator of the relationship between religiosity and government career preference (it accounts for only 13% of the total effect). It mediates the relationship for the budget sector (where there is no direct effect of religiosity on career preference).

## 8 Discussion

It is interesting to note that religiosity is correlated with government career preference and with the four components of PSM. At the same time, APS is the only component of PSM that is significantly associated with government career choice.

Budget sector career, on the other hand, is positively associated with all four dimensions of PSM, but there is no link between career preference and religiosity for the budget sector.

The nature of the link between religiosity and government career preference requires further investigation. What is responsible for the link between Orthodox Christian religiosity and the desire to work for federal/regional/municipal government but not for the budget sector?

We attempted to factor in the PSM as a mediator of the relationship between religiosity and government career choice, but the results are somewhat puzzling. PSM, indeed, mediates the relationship, but this is mainly due to one dimension - the APS (and a marginally significant link via SS). This link may be considered self-evident, because by design APS is supposed to measure attraction to public sector employment. For Russia, however, this is far from trivial. APS dimension is designed with a very noble image of civil servant in mind. One needs only to consider the wording of the APS items:

- I admire people who initiate or are involved in activities to aid my community
- It is important to contribute to activities that tackle social problems
- Meaningful public service is very important to me
- It is important for me to contribute to the common good

This suggest that persons attracted to government careers do share quite a public-minded image of civil service. This finding is somewhat contrary to what has been found by previous researchers in Russia. Jaekel and Borshchevskiy (2017) found that power and influence are among major motivations of students striving to work in government. Our results suggest a more complex image of a young civil servant's motivation.

Budget sector career appears to be associated with all sub-dimensions of PSM. This points at a sharp distinction between those who are aiming at government jobs and those interested in working in the budget sector. This distinction brings up the ongoing and long lived debate about the nature of meaning of the term “public sector” when it is used in the Russian context. Our results suggest that the Russian “public service” is not at all homogeneous. The fact that PSM is strongly associated with the desire to work in the budget sector may be interpreted as suggesting that what is designated in the West as the “public sector” is more akin to what in Russia is called the “budget sector” (schools, hospitals, theatres, etc.) and is distinct from government proper (ministries, executive bureaus, etc.). Not only are these two domains distinct organizationally, they also seem to attract different people.

What we see here is this: future Russian budget sector workers are public-minded, but non-religious. Whereas future bureaucrats proper are religious but have little PSM.

### **8.1 Direction for further research**

Our results raise three main questions

1. Why are the two dimensions (COM and CPV) of PSM not associated with government career choice in Russia?
2. What are the mechanisms behind religiosity - government career preference link in modern Russia? PSM does not seem to offer a good explanation.
3. What accounts for the difference between the government and the budget sector in terms of the link with religiosity?

Perry (1996) envisaged the PSM as something pertaining to employees of public institutions. We see, however, that, as far as the Russian government is concerned, two out of four dimensions of PSM are not linked to government career choice. This brings up the questions: what does motivate the future Russian civil servants? They exhibit APS-type motivation: they want to contribute to their communities, the common good, and tackle social problems; but they are no different from their private-sector-oriented peers in terms of compassion, and commitment to public values (self-sacrifice is weakly linked with government career choice).



It seems that the future Russian bureaucrats are lukewarm to the interests of future generations (CPV6), the plight of the underprivileged (COM2), or putting civic duty before self (SS3) (see Appendix for full wording of the scales).

Does this point to cultural inapplicability of PSM measure for the Russian context? Do we need to develop other measures that are better suited for the particular motivation structure of Russian civil servants?

To highlight just one avenue for inquiry. Self-sacrifice (as measured by PSM inventory) is strongly with the desire to work for budget sector organisations but only weakly linked with the choice of government career. At the same time, religiosity is not linked with budget sector career preference (Fig. 3). What should we make of these results? Zabaev (2009, p.70) argued that “self-sacrifice” is one of the major values engrained in the Orthodox ethic, but we see that SS is very weakly linked with religiosity-career choice relationship when it comes to government. At the same time, atheists with high levels of self-sacrifice prefer the budget sector organisations.

Another question concerns the nature of the underlying link between religiosity and government career preference. PSM does not sufficiently explain this relationship. The mediating effect is small. We need, therefore, to develop other explanatory models. They may benefit from a broader theoretical perspective. Psychological and value-based variables may be explored. It may well be that people with particular psychological traits or values may be attracted to both the Church and the State.

Another potential avenue for exploration is the particular constellation of governmental and clerical interests in modern Russia. We began this paper by highlighting the growing prominence of the Russian Orthodox Church in public discourse. We now return to this argument.

In modern Russia the Church and the State are in a close relationship and this relationship may effect major decisions that people make today. One such decision is career choice. If people perceive the strong association between the Church and the State as something that permeates their every-day experiences, they may adjust their decisions to this context.

Perhaps, it is fashionable today in Russia to identify with the Church and the government.

Another explanation is also in order. It may be that religious people do indeed strongly feel the patriotic sentiment and this drives them towards government employment.

All these potential explanations may be explored in future research.

To our knowledge, this study is the first to quantitatively examine the link between government career choice and religiosity and the mediating role of PSM. Certainly so for the post-Soviet countries and Orthodox Christianity. Our findings appear of high interest in the context of the changing nature of the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state. The significant role of religiosity in predicting government career choice among future civil servants may indicate the rise of a new type of a bureaucrat – one that is motivated by traditional cultural values.

Our findings are also of high interest for those studying public administration education, since we find that religion appears to be a significant factor in choosing public administration as an educational path.

## **8.2 Limitations**

These findings are based on a survey that relied on declared religiosity and declared government employment/career preference. The observed link may be due to the fact that it may currently be socially desirable in Russia to declare religiosity as well as a propensity to work in government. The link may, therefore, indicate a strengthening willingness of people to conform to the religious and statist sentiments (or a growing societal pressure for it). In fact, previous research has assumed that religiosity measures in Russia may be affected by social desirability (Mersianova and Schneider, 2018). In our opinion, the issue requires careful investigation to estimate the size and direction of the effect of social desirability. Similarly, PSM is highly susceptible to social desirability bias. Further studies should attempt to mitigate this.

Another limitation that should be acknowledged is the conceptual issue of defining atheists in this study. In the current analysis we compare Orthodox Christians with Atheists assuming that those who self-identify as Atheists may be included in one group. It may be argued that an Atheist from a predominantly Christian community may differ from an Atheist in a predominantly Muslim/Buddhist community. It is as if one may ask: “What

kind of God do you not believe in?”. It is conceivable that an answer to this question may indicate some sort of a general ethical background of the respondent. Such detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this study.

Finally, we should acknowledge that using quantitative methods of this kind we are unable to establish the direction of causality. Qualitative research may try to disentangle this relationship.

## 9 Conclusion

The link between religiosity and public sector career preference in Russia is strong among Orthodox Christians. The public sector, however, is not homogeneous in this respect. Religious people are attracted to the government (federal as well as regional), but not to budget sector organisations. The underlying mechanism requires further investigation. This paper explored one potential explanation - the mediating effect of public service motivation. Orthodox Christians score higher on PSM (overall as well as the four sub-indices). However, the mediation is weak: the indirect effect via PSM accounts only for 13% of the total effect. PSM sub-dimensions vary in the strength of their link with government and budget sector career preferences. Government career is strongly associated only with APS dimension (and marginally with SS), whereas budget sector career preference is associated with all four dimensions of PSM.

Attendance of religious ceremonies matters in term of the link with government job preferences. Non-practising Orthodox Christians (those who do not attend churches, but nonetheless self-identify as religious) do not show a higher preference for government careers. Those who attend churches do report higher preference for government careers. Higher frequency of church-going is associated with higher preference for government careers.

Our results highlight the importance of modern religious practices among Russian Orthodox Christians and once again point at the prominent role of the Russian Orthodox Church in shaping modern Russian society.

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## Appendix 1. PSM scale. Russian translation

The translation has been made by Gans-Morse et al. (2018). Below is the translation of the 16-item scale developed by Kim et al. (2013). Two researchers translated the items independently and then discussed and resolved the differences. The Russian version was piloted on a small number of student volunteers at the university where the research was conducted.

Tab. 10: 16-item PSM scale, Russian translation

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<b>Attraction to public service</b>	
APS1	Я восхищаюсь людьми, которые инициируют мероприятия или участвуют в мероприятиях, направленных на улучшение жизни в нашем обществе или районе
APS2	Участие в деятельности, направленной на решение социальных проблем, – важное дело
APS3	Служение обществу наполняет работу смыслом, это важно для меня
APS4	Мне важно вносить вклад в общее благо
<b>Commitment to public values</b>	
CPV1	Я считаю, что равенство возможностей для граждан очень важно
CPV2	Важно, что граждане могут рассчитывать на непрерывное предоставление социальных услуг
CPV3	Формируя социальную политику, очень важно учитывать интересы будущих поколений
CPV4	Этичное поведение – основа основ для государственного чиновника
<b>Compassion</b>	
COM1	Я сочувствую тем, кто живёт в плохих условиях
COM2	Я сопереживаю людям, попавшим в трудное положение
COM3	Я очень огорчаюсь, когда вижу, что с людьми поступают несправедливо
COM4	Очень важно думать о благополучии других людей
<b>Self-Sacrifice</b>	
SS1	Я готов приносить жертвы на благо общества
SS2	Я считаю, что служение обществу превышает заботы о себе
SS3	Я готов рискнуть своим благосостоянием, чтобы помочь обществу
SS4	Я соглашусь с хорошим планом по улучшению жизни бедных людей, даже если мне придётся потратить свои деньги

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Source: (Kim et al., 2013; Gans-Morse et al., 2018)



## Appendix 2. PSM scale. English version.

Tab. 11: 16-item PSM Scale, English version

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### Attraction to public service

APS1: I admire people who initiate or are involved in activities to aid my community

APS2: It is important to contribute to activities that tackle social problems

APS3: Meaningful public service is very important to me

APS4: It is important for me to contribute to the common good

### Commitment to public values

CPV1: I think equal opportunities for citizens are very important

CPV2: It is important that citizens can rely on the continuous provision of public services

CPV3: It is fundamental that the interests of future generations are taken into account when developing public policies

CPV4: To act ethically is essential for public servants.

### Compassion

COM1: I feel sympathetic to the plight of the underprivileged

COM2: I empathize with other people who face difficulties

COM3: I get very upset when I see other people being treated unfairly

COM4: Considering the welfare of others is very important

### Self-sacrifice

SS1: I am prepared to make sacrifices for the good of society

SS2: I believe in putting civic duty before self

SS3: I am willing to risk personal loss to help society

SS4: I would agree to a good plan to make a better life for the poor, even if it costs me money.

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Source: (Kim et al., 2013)

## 10 Appendix 3. OLS regressions results

OLS produced substantially similar results.  $R^2$  is relatively low.

**Tab. 12: Regression results: religiosity, PSM and job sector preference**

	DV - Public-private career preference					
	1 - public, 0 - private					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Religious (yes/no)	0.168*** (0.029)	0.159*** (0.030)	0.145*** (0.030)			
PSM			0.079** (0.027)			0.123* (0.048)
Orthodox services				0.172*** (.017)	0.143* (0.017)	0.121* (0.017)
Age		0.128 <sup>†</sup> (0.019)	0.117 (0.019)		0.269* (0.035)	0.255* (0.035)
Male		-0.024 (0.031)	-0.0012 (0.031)		-0.051 (0.054)	-0.033 (0.054)
Class year		-0.096 (0.023)	-0.084 (0.023)		-0.173 (0.041)	-0.152 (0.041)
GPA		0.022 (0.022)	0.016 (0.021)		-0.053 (0.038)	-0.069 (0.038)
Average EGE		-0.196*** (0.002)	-0.190*** (0.002)		-0.216*** (0.004)	-0.211*** (0.004)
City Size		-.053 (0.010)	-.063 <sup>†</sup> (0.010)		-.047 (0.017)	-.050 (0.017)
Family income		-.036 (0.008)	-.025 (0.008)		-0.120* (0.013)	-0.112 <sup>†</sup> (0.013)
$R^2$	0.028	0.076	0.087	0.030	0.133	0.146
$R^2$ -Adjusted	0.027	0.066	0.075	0.027	0.108	0.120
N	804	706	706	339	296	296
F-statistic	23.169***	7.215***	7.374***	10.294***	5.481***	5.451***

Standardized Beta coefficients reported. Standard errors in parentheses. <sup>†</sup> significant at  $p < 0, 1$ , \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Tab. 13: Regression results. PSM on religiosity

	PSM (1)	APS (2)	CPV (3)	COM (4)	SS (5)	PSM (6)	APS (7)	CPV (8)	COM (9)	SS (10)
Religious (yes/no)	0.127*** (0.041)	0.091* (0.058)	0.07† (0.047)	0.144*** (0.051)	0.087* (0.06)	0.177** (0.022)	0.109† (0.03)	0.146* (0.026)	0.087 (0.025)	0.194*** (0.032)
Frequency of attendance										
Age	0.103 (0.026)	0.184* (0.037)	-0.003 (0.03)	0.024 (0.032)	0.088 (0.038)	0.117 (0.043)	0.275* (0.06)	-0.028 (0.051)	0.005 (0.05)	0.076 (0.064)
Male	-0.116** (0.043)	-0.144*** (0.06)	-0.058 (0.049)	-0.194*** (0.052)	0.031 (0.062)	-0.141* (0.066)	-0.206*** (0.092)	-0.161** (0.079)	-0.172** (0.077)	0.075 (0.098)
Class year	-0.118 (0.032)	-0.169* (0.045)	0.008 (0.037)	-0.044 (0.039)	-0.132† (0.047)	-0.175 (0.051)	-0.296* (0.071)	-0.019 (0.061)	-0.021 (0.059)	-0.165 (0.076)
GPA	0.054 (0.03)	0.088* (0.042)	-0.001 (0.035)	0.011 (0.037)	0.057 (0.044)	0.126* (0.048)	0.133* (0.066)	0.029 (0.057)	0.132* (0.055)	0.092 (0.07)
Average EGE	-0.058 (0.003)	-0.095* (0.005)	-0.011 (0.004)	-0.008 (0.004)	-0.053 (0.005)	-0.043 (0.005)	-0.098† (0.008)	-0.026 (0.007)	0.006 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.008)
City Size	0.094* (0.014)	0.084* (0.02)	0.032 (0.016)	0.067† (0.017)	0.096* (0.02)	0.028 (0.021)	0.019 (0.029)	0 (0.025)	-0.008 (0.025)	0.064 (0.031)
Family income	-0.105** (0.012)	-0.079* (0.016)	-0.078* (0.013)	-0.089* (0.014)	-0.079* (0.017)	-0.065 (0.017)	-0.02 (0.023)	-0.084 (0.02)	-0.059 (0.019)	-0.044 (0.025)
$R^2$	0.058	0.064	0.016	0.079	0.027	0.083	0.097	0.059	0.067	0.065
$R^2$ -Adjusted	0.047	0.054	0.005	0.068	0.016	0.057	0.072	0.033	0.041	0.039
N	706	706	706	706	706	296	296	296	296	296
F-statistic	5.342***	5.983***	1.415	7.45***	2.45*	3.243**	3.861***	2.257*	2.565**	2.493*

Standardized Beta coefficients reported. Standard errors in parentheses. † significant at  $p < 0.1$ , \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

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