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European Values Study (RLMS HSE, European Social Survey,
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.6, 3. .153-183. DOI: 10.18413/2408-9338-2020-6-3-0-10.

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Dynamics of religious commitments of young people in Russia

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Abstract. The article analyzes the data collected in four regular sociological surveys (RLMS HSE, The European Social Survey, The European Values Study and Levada Center) in order to assess the dynamics of various indicators of religiousness of young people in Russia. These indicators include subjective assessment of one's own religious belief, religious affiliation, church attendance, and religious socialization. A comparison of tools (question statement, filters) on religiosity criteria is made to determine whether different methods of questioning can lead to different assessment results. In part, we argue that this effect of filtering questions can be found in different assessments of the level of affiliated believers. Comparative data analysis generally shows a slow decline in the proportion of young people with Orthodox affiliation, although there is no similar change in the subjective assessment of religiosity. At the same time, over the past 20 years, assessments of engagement in religious practices and socialization have revealed an increasing process of differentiation of faith groups among young people. The proportion of those who have never attended a religious service among young people has declined significantly due to an increase in the proportion of parishioners on holidays and those who attend services frequently. In general, we conclude that it is possible to discuss the structural changes in the religious landscape that manifest themselves in the differentiation between Orthodox and socialized groups of believers.

Keywords: indicators of religiosity; young people; Orthodoxy; affiliated and practicing believers; religious socialization

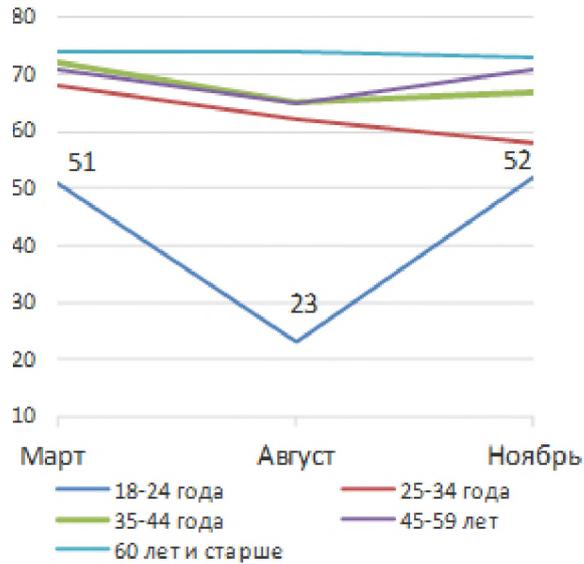
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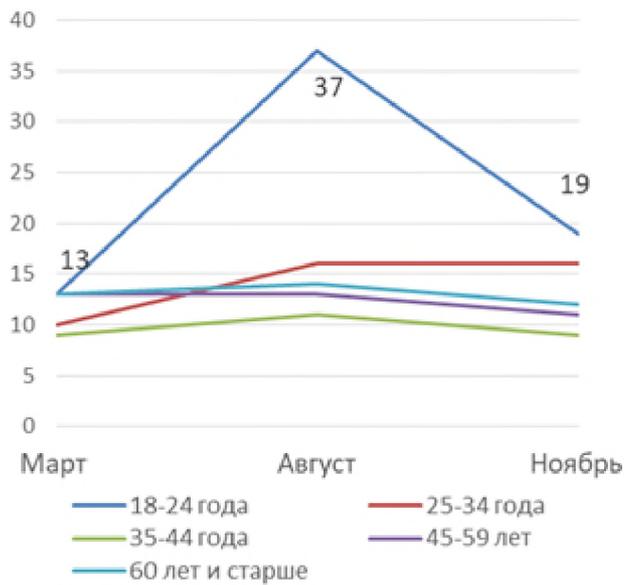
¹ https://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=9847&fbclid=IwAR33_LISEUV19f6HDuOTXv_ptEffwnlNzTTP_S4LmcB7XD1ESd2jCHRhJvE

² <https://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=9847; 2>



1. « » (, 2019) ? -

Fig. 1. What kind of worldview or religion do you follow? - “Orthodoxy” (Russian Public Opinion Research Center, 2019)



2. ? - « » (, 2019)
 Fig. 2. What kind of worldview or religion do you follow? - “Non-believer” (Russian Public Opinion Research Center, 2019)

... , 2013).
 (belongers),
 (« » «
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 (« , 2018),
 « »,
 (, 2001; Halman, Van
 Ingen, 2015).
 (practitioners)
 (socialized)
 ,, 2013; , 2013).
 , 20
 « » «
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 «
 » (, (. 1). ()
 2012).
 (18-29),
 »,
 «
 ^1
 2005 Tomka, 2006; , 2012;

Table 1

/ Data source	Year of data publication	Sample size and type for Russia	/ Data collection method	/ Parameters for assessing religiosity
(HSE)	2003, 2016, 2017 2018	8000-11000 ¹	/ Personal interview	/ Subjective assessment of religiosity, confession, religious practices
(Levada Center)	2002, 2012, 2018	1600	^{2/} Personal interview	/ Subjective assessment of religiosity, confession, religious practices
(EVS)	1999, 2008, 2018	2500, 1500, 1825	^{3/} Personal interview	/ Subjective assessment of religiosity, belonging to a confession, religious practices, religious socialization
(ESS)	2006, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2018	1500	^{4/} Personal interview	/ Subjective assessment of religiosity, confession, religious practices

1

2

18

136

, 52

1600

3

4

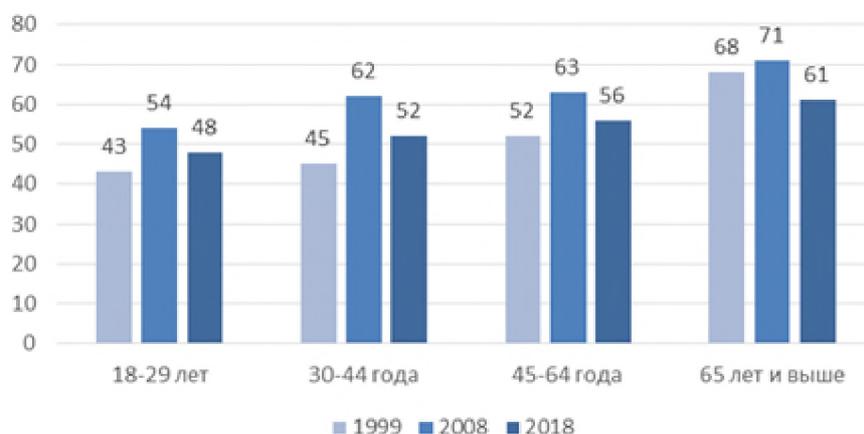
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 • , (, 2015; Vrublevskaya, Moberg, Sztajer, 2019).
 - , , -
(Research Results and Discussion). - , -
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 -
 « » , -
 « -
 ». 18-29 , 20 ,
 « », 7%,
 « »
 « - 13%.
 » (Mazzucchelli, Lomazzi, 6% ,
 2016). « ».
 1999, 2008 2018 , -
 « », « -
 9-10 . » « ».
 1999 2008
 , 2008 2018 .

Table 2

Share of respondents with religious commitments (% of respondents)

		18-29 / years old	30-44 / years old	45-64 / years old	65 / years old and above
	...?/ No matter if you attend a church or not, can you say that you ...?				
1999	/believer	64	62	64	79
2008	/believer	72	75	72	78
2018	/believer	71	77	78	83
1999	/non-believer	32	34	30	17
2008	/ non-believer	20	21	21	16
2018	/ non-believer	19	15	15	12
1999	/ convinced atheist	4	5	6	4
2008	/ convinced atheist	8	4	7	7
2018	/ convinced atheist	10	7	7	5



3. EVS:

(%)²

Fig. 3. EVS: Share of respondents professing a religion (% of respondents)

1

... 1 - ; 2 - : « ; 3 - ».
 «Independently of whether you attend a church or not, would you say you are ...» 1 - Religious person; 2 - Not a religious person; 3 - A convinced atheist.
 : <https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/methodology-data-documentation/evs-methodology>

2

: « - ?» / «Do you belong to a religious denomination?». -
 : <https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/methodology-data-documentation/evs-methodology>.

(belonging).

2018

12%,

76%.

1999 2008 2018

1999 2018

48% 2018 43% 1999 54% 14% 2018 2008.

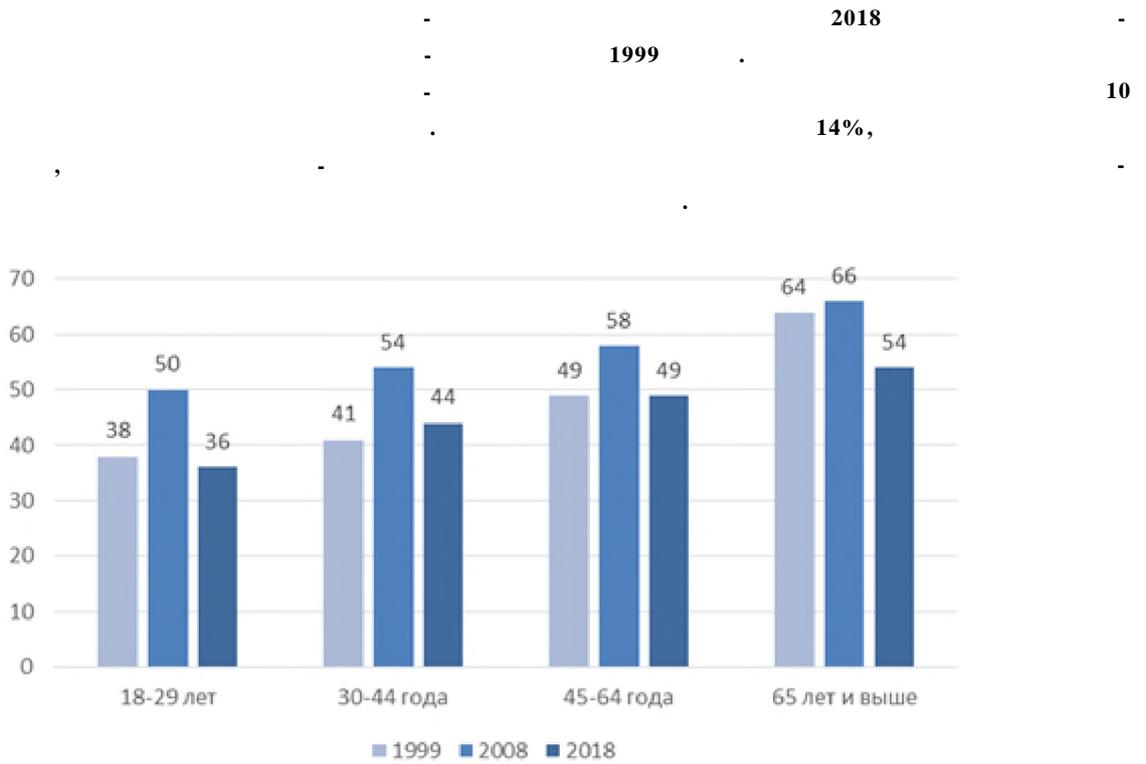
3

(%)

Table 3

Share of respondents professing Orthodoxy and Islam

/ Age	1999		2008		2018	
	Orthodoxy	Islam	Orthodoxy	Islam	Orthodoxy	Islam
18-29 / years old	88	7	91	7	76	23
30-44 / years old	92	6	87	10	85	12
45-64 / years old	93	5	92	6	88	11
65 / years old and above	93	6	93	5	88	8



4. EVS:

(%)

Fig. 4. EVS: Share of respondents with Orthodox affiliation (% of all respondents)

11% 1999 21% 2008 10

(, 2005; , 2012), 2018 , 18 29 ,

(- , 2013).

8% 2018 , 1999

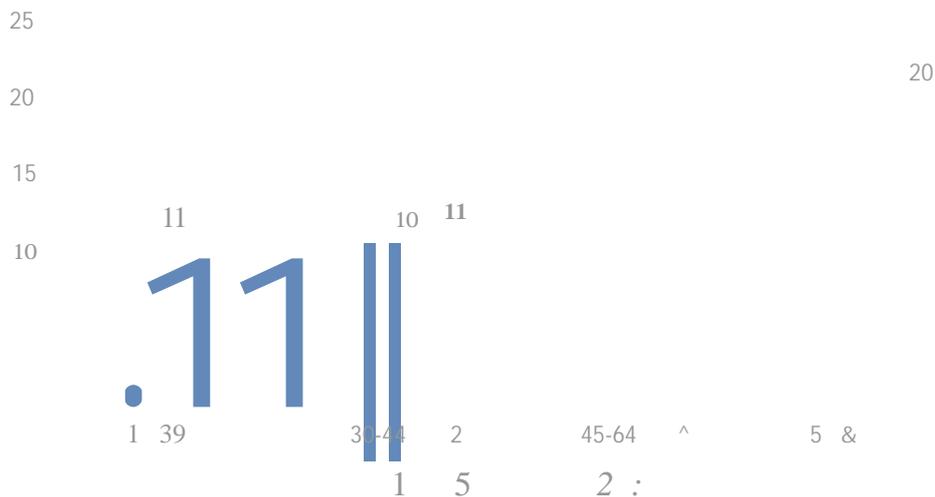
4

20% 1999 37%
 2018
 (. 4).
 65 (. 5).
 4
 (%)¹

Table 4

Frequency of attending religious services by Orthodox respondents by age groups

Year	How often do you attend religious services?	18-29 years old	30-44 years old	45-64 years old	65 years old and above
1999	Once a month or more	11	15	17	20
2008	Once a month or more	21	18	20	26
2018	Once a month or more	21	25	26	37
1999	Never or almost never	24	19	27	33
2008	Never or almost never	17	14	17	20
2018	Never or almost never	20	14	14	15



5. EVS: () (%)
 Fig. 5. EVS: Frequency of attending religious services (once a month and more often) (% of all respondents)

¹ : « ?». : <https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/methodology-data-documentation/evs-methodology>.

5

18-29

5

18-29

Table 5

Frequency of attending religious services by Orthodox

respondents in the 18-29 age group (%)

Frequency of attending religious services by Orthodox respondents in the 18-29 age group (%)	1999	2008	2018
/?/ Apart from weddings, funerals and baptisms, how often do you attend religious services today?			
/ Once a week or more	2	4	6
/ Once a month	9	17	15
/ / Christmas / Easter	23		
/ Other holidays	15	37	33
/ Once a year	18	16	11
/ Less often	9	11	16
/ / Never or almost never	24	17	20
()/ Total	213	170	132

12

1

Table 6

Year	Frequency of attending religious services when you were 12 years old?	18-29 years old	30-44 years old	45-64 years old	65 years old and above
1999	Once a month or more	7	5	7	26
2008	Once a month or more	13	9	4	11
2018	Once a month or more	16	12	13	23
1999	Never or almost never	59	70	67	42
2008	Never or almost never	38	57	58	51
2018	Never or almost never	22	32	43	46

7

12

18-29 (%)

Table 7

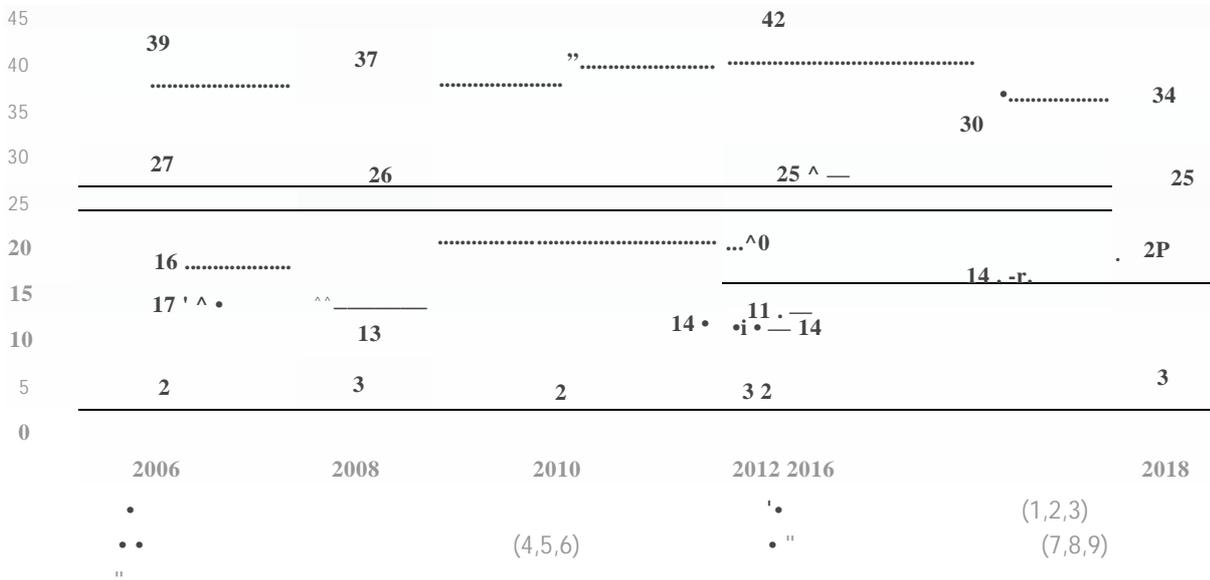
Frequency of attending religious services by Orthodox respondents at the age of 12

Frequency of attending religious services when you were 12 years old?	1999	2008	2018
Once a week or more	4	6	7
Once a month	3	7	9
Christmas / Easter	15	26	40
Other Holidays	5		
On special holidays only			
Once a year	7	10	10
Less often	8	13	12
Never or almost never	59	38	22
() / Total	207	159	121

1

? : <https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/methodology-data-documentation/evs-methodology>

(0 10), (34%) 2018, 2006 (39%).
1. , , (18-29)
17% 12
2018 , 3% - , 2012 , 2018 2006
12 - .



6. ESS: 18-29 (2006-2018) (« ?»)

Fig. 6. ESS: Dynamics of subjective assessments of religious commitments in the age group of 18-29 years (2006-2018) (“How religious are you?”)

1. , :
20% (- 40% 54% 2006
2012 , 6
)
0 (-
)
1,2,3 (), 7,8,9 (-
)
)
4,5,6 ().
https://www.europeansodalsurvey.org/methodology/ess_methodology/source_questionnaire.

41%.
2006 2018 ,

(%)¹

Table 8

Do you consider yourself a follower of any religion or denomination?	2006	2008	2010	2012	2016	2018
18-29 / years old	40	49	50	54	48	41
30-44 / years old	44	50	55	52	57	51
45-64 / years old	51	55	63	59	61	60
65 / years old and above	66	67	71	64	66	70
/ Total	2437	2512	2595	2484	2430	2416

ESS

2006

2018

3%.

2018

18%

4-5%).

2018

14%.

2012

2006

2012

2018

(15%

18-29

12%

65

),

18-29

65

2018

2

(18%

18-29

7%

65

).

41%

32%

EVS,

1

: 11.

yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?

? Do you consider : https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/ess_methodology/source_questionnaire.

(7).

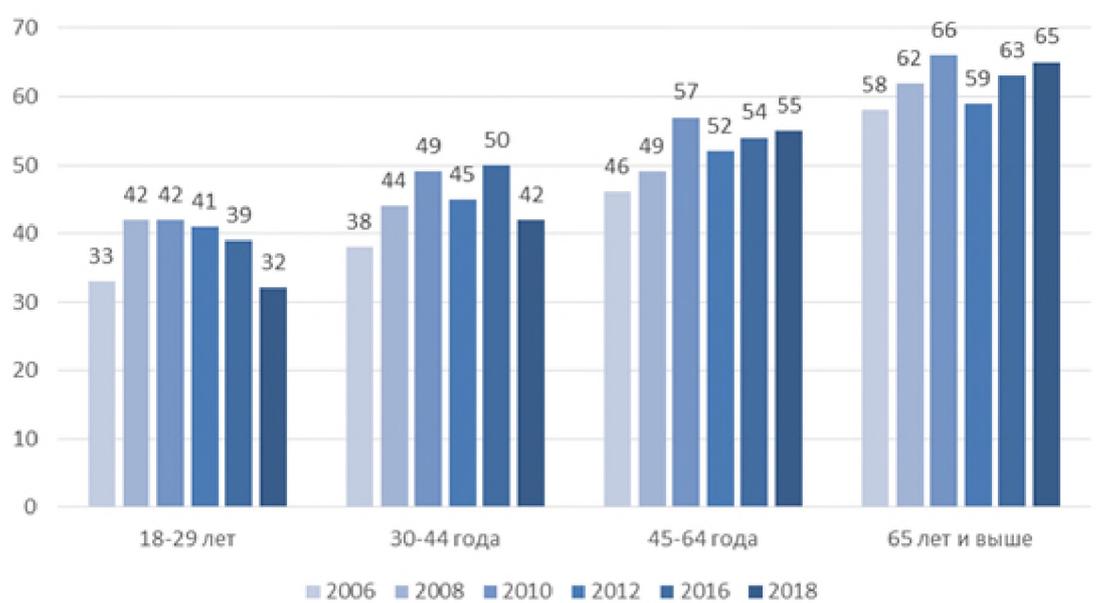
9

(%)

Table 9

Distribution of age cohorts by Orthodoxy and Islam (% of respondents)

Year	What religion do you consider yourself to be?	18-29 years old	30-44 years old	45-64 years old	65 years old and above
2006	Orthodoxy	82	85	90	88
	Islam	15	12	9	12
2008	Orthodoxy	86	88	89	92
	Islam	11	10	10	8
2010	Orthodoxy	83	89	89	93
	Islam	14	8	9	7
2012	Orthodoxy	77	86	87	92
	Islam	19	12	10	7
2016	Orthodoxy	81	87	89	95
	Islam	15	11	10	4
2018	Orthodoxy	78	83	91	92
	Islam	18	13	7	7



7. ESS:

(%)

Fig. 7. ESS: Share of Orthodox confessions within age cohorts (% of all respondents)

14% 22%.

16% 2010 , 2018 7%.

(65+)

28% 2006

37% 2018 ,

23% 15% (.10).

29% 36%.

12

(.11).

10

(%)

Table 10

Frequency of attending religious services by Orthodox respondents by age groups

		18-29 / years old	30-44 / years old	45-64 / years old	65 / years old and above
2006	?/ Aside from special occasions such as weddings or funerals, how often have you attend religious services recently?	14	19	22	28
		11	15	16	23
2008		23	25	23	31
		14	9	11	17
2010		15	21	25	31
		16	12	13	19
2012		22	18	27	29
		13	10	9	16

¹ : «Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how of-

ten do you attend religious services nowadays?». : https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/ess_methodology/source_questionnaire.

		18-29 / years old	30-44 / years old	45-64 / years old	65 / years old and above
?/ Aside from special occasions such as weddings or funerals, how often have you attend religious services recently?					
2016		18	22	30	34
		10	9	8	12
2018		22	25	34	37
		7	11	10	15

11

18-29 (%))

Table 11

Frequency of attending religious services by Orthodox respondents in the age group of 18-29 years

?/ How often do you attend religious services?	2006	2008	2010	2012	2016	2018
/ Once a week or more	4	6	4	5	5	9
/ Once a month	10	18	12	17	13	13
/ Only on religious holidays	29	28	34	32	40	36
/ Once a year or less	46	35	35	33	32	36
/ Never	11	14	16	13	10	7

, - . , 2018

, - (7%) -

, (24%) -

, 3 . : -

, 12 ,

, ,

, .

« » (22%) « »
(42%).
« » 2017
2018
65
40%, 45-64 - 29%,
30-44 - 28% 18-29 - 22%.

Table 12

Attitudes towards religion in the age group of 18-29 years (% of respondents)

?	2003	2016	2017	2018
?/ In our society, there has been a lot of talk about religion lately. What is your attitude towards religion?				
/ You are a believer	24	22	28	22
/ You are more of a believer than an unbeliever	41	46	39	42
/ You are more of an unbeliever than a believer	19	17	15	17
/ You are an unbeliever	12	7	9	10
/ You are an atheist	2	4	5	4
/ I find it difficult to answer	2	3	4	4
/ Total	1545	1725	1604	1512

EVS ESS.

14

(% « » « »)

Table 14

Frequency of attending religious services by Orthodox respondents by age group
(% of “believers” and “rather believers”)

?, - ?/ Do you attend religious services, meetings, or other religious events? If so, how often?	18-29 / years old	30-44 / years old	45-64 / years old	65 / years old and above
2003	3	4	8	7
2016	5	8	11	11
2017	5	9	9	11
2018	5	8	9	10

2003

2018

1,5-2

2016

- 22%¹.

41%

².

1

2003

2003

2

12

, 2019,

, 2019).

: (, 2018;

?».

<https://www.hse.ru/rf/ms/question>

Table 15

Frequency of attending religious services, meetings and other events by Orthodox respondents

/ year	?/ Do you attend religious services, meetings, or other religious events? If so, how often?	18-29 years old	30-44 years old	45-64 years old	65 years old and above
2003	/ Once a month or more	3	4	8	7
	/ Several times a year	20	21	25	21
	/ About once a year	35	28	25	20
	/ Never or almost never	41	46	42	52
2016	/ Once a month or more	5	8	11	11
	/ Several times a year	35	34	37	36
	/ About once a year	19	18	15	10
	/ Never or almost never	22	22	21	29
2017	/ Once a month or more	5	9	9	11
	/ Several times a year	36	37	37	39
	/ About once a year	20	15	14	10
	/ Never or almost never	22	22	23	24
2018	/ Once a month or more	5	8	9	10
	/ Several times a year	38	37	40	38
	/ About once a year	17	16	15	11
	/ Never or almost never	20	20	20	25

(2003 ., 2012 ., 2018 .)

2003 2012 , 71%

56% 2018 .

2003 2012 - , -
 , - (29%) , -
 - , -
 , , - .
 16
 (%)

Table 16

	?	18-29	30-44	45-64	65
	Do you consider yourself to be of any religion? If so, which one?	years old	years old	years old	years old and above
2003	/ Orthodoxy	63	63	68	78
	/ Islam	5	4	3	3
	/ I do not belong to any religion / atheist	26	25	24	18
	/ I find it difficult to answer	2	3	1	0
2012	/ Orthodoxy	71	78	77	82
	/ Islam	7	5	6	4
	I do not belong to any religion /	9	9	9	6
	/ atheist	8	6	5	4
	/ I find it difficult to answer	2	1	0	2
2018	/ Orthodoxy	56	72	72	77
	/ Islam	9	8	8	4
	I do not belong to any religion /	29	17	17	16
	/ I find it difficult to answer	1	1	2	2

7% 2003 14%, - 10-15%. ,
 , 2003 2018 ,

Table 17

Frequency of attending religious services by Orthodox Christians in the age group of 18-29 years
(% of respondents)

Year	Do you attend religious services, and if so, how often?	18-29 years old	30-44 years old	45-64 years old	65 years old and above
2003 ¹	Once a month or more	7	7	10	14
	Several times a year	20	22	25	29
	About once a year	25	20	19	14
	Never or almost never	46	49	45	42
2012	Once a month or more	7	6	13	17
	Several times a year	14	25	21	20
	About once a year	12	14	13	9
	Never or almost never	50	44	40	38
2018	Once a month or more	14	15	19	18
	Several times a year	13	24	23	25
	About once a year	16	16	16	15
	Never or almost never	46	37	34	31

(8%)

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2005. 2. . 38-45.
2018. 2 (144). . 235-252.
2018. 2 (144). . 253-265.
2018. 3. . 15-33.
2014. 56 (6). . 101-118.
- «Patchwork-religiositat» « »:
2015. 6 (62). . 94-112.
2012. 2 (30). . 268-293.
2014. . 80-88.
2015. 3 (59). . 62-80.
2017. 72. . 126-143.
2017. 8. . 95-105.
2018. 2 (144). . 235-252.
2018. 3. . 15-33.
2018. C. 100-112.
2001. 7. . 89-96.
2017. 3 (139). . 177-191.
2020. 3. . 96-116.
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