

Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

Practising Without Belonging?

Entrepreneurship, Morality, and Religion in Contemporary Russia

Tobias Köllner



LIT

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Since perestroika, Russia's economy has undergone significant transformation. The state-organised and centrally planned economy of the Soviet Union has been replaced by a national economy based on market principles, and new forms of business have emerged from private entrepreneurial initiatives. During this same period, Russia has experienced a parallel process of religious revival or 'rebirth'. Individual religiosity has increased, and religious feasts, processions, and events of all kinds have reappeared in public.

Inspired by Max Weber's Protestant ethic thesis, this book examines the intersection of Russia's economic transformation and religious revival. Does religious belief drive entrepreneurs to establish new businesses? How do church teachings shape business practice? Are the ethics and morals of Russian businessmen distinctly 'Orthodox'? As revealed through the ethnographic study of businessmen in the city of Vladimir, the relations between Church and state, politics and religion, and belief and practice, are deeply ambiguous. The religiosity of businessmen is characterised by a constant tension between the desires to seek individual gains and to uphold social and moral values. Russian Orthodoxy, as it is practised by contemporary businessmen, is characterised by efforts to comply with official church teachings concerning prayer, penance, and forgiveness, but it is also characterised by a fear of evil forces, a concern for national history and cultural heritage, and barely disguised efforts to profit financially and politically.

Russian businessmen 'practice without belonging'. They rarely attend church services or integrate themselves in parish communities, even when they fund church construction and other activities. Instead, the religious practices of businessmen are guided through the establishment of a personal relation with a spiritual teacher (*dukhovnyi nastavnik*). These relationships often provide a more satisfying form of guidance than that offered during regularly scheduled church services, and they provide mutual markers of prestige for businessmen and the priests who serve them. The substitution of personalised spiritual guidance for regular church attendance also helps to perpetuate stereotypes about the sinfulness of businessmen and business practices, and produces 'multiple moralities' among Orthodox believers.



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Cover Photo: Opening ceremony of the new church, Vladimir (04. 11. 2008) (Photo: Tobias Köllner).

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Note on Transliteration

The Russian transliterations used in this book follow the Library of Congress system, except for a few well-known names which are transliterated in a different way when used in the media, such as ‘Yeltsin’ instead of ‘El’tsin’. If not indicated otherwise, all translations and transliterations in the text are my own.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Beginning in the 1980s, the liberations of glasnost and perestroika set off multiple reform processes in the Soviet Union. These reforms hastened the country's disintegration, and led to the emergence of an independent Russian Federation and fourteen other new states. The reforms also had far reaching impacts on communities within Russia. Among these, two parallel processes were especially striking: the economic reforms that were carried out by the state, and the religious revival that followed the state's granting of religious freedom to formerly regulated groups and institutions. Inspired by the simultaneity of these processes, this book examines the intersection of economic transformation and the revival of Orthodox religion. As revealed through the ethnographic study of businessmen in the city of Vladimir, the relations between Church and state, politics and religion, and belief and practice, are deeply ambiguous. Thus, a recurring topic in the book is the religiosity of businessmen that is characterised by a constant tension between seeking individual gains and upholding social or moral values.

Russia's economic reforms have been particularly profound because they not only changed the economy itself, but directly impacted the country's political organisation and legitimacy.[1] During perestroika, the state-organised and centrally planned economy was gradually replaced by an economy based on private economic initiative and allocation through various markets for goods, capital, and labour. Step by step, new forms of business emerged (cooperatives in the perestroika period, later also private companies), and most of the formerly state-owned corporations were privatised or declared bankrupt. Accordingly, the role of the Russian state in the economy, though still very important, diminished and gave way to private entrepreneurial initiatives. In 2008, more than 2.5 million individual entrepreneurs, 1,065,000 micro enterprises (up to 15 employees), and 227,700 small

[1] According to Katherine Verdery (1996: 63), centralised planning in the socialist period not only provided citizens with what they needed, including food, housing, and medical care, but legitimated the one-party rule of the Communist Party.

enterprises (up to 100 employees) were registered as employing more than 12.5 million people.[2]

The Soviet Union also underwent a parallel process of religious revival – often described as 'religious rebirth' (*religioznoe vozrozhdenie*) – during perestroika. Religion, formerly 'domesticated' (Dragadze 1993), and limited to the private sphere in the officially atheist state, reappeared in public in the late 1980s. In 1988, Russia publicly celebrated a millennium of Christianity, and the state withdrew from its long attempts to ban the Russian Orthodox Church from the public sphere.[3] In contemporary European Russia, where I conducted fieldwork in 2006 and 2007, as much as 82 per cent of the ethnic Russian population now claims a personal identification with Orthodoxy (Filatov and Lunkin 2006: 35). The actual meaning of this identification is diverse, and includes committed religious believers who strictly follow the Church's prescriptions, as well as people for whom Orthodoxy is merely an element of ethnic identity (see also Borowik 2002; Mitrokhin 2004, 2009; Filatov and Lunkin 2006). Russia's religious revival has also left heavy imprints on the landscape. A clear and tangible sign of the Church's expansion and strength is the impressive reconstruction of already existing churches, and the building of new churches, monasteries, and religious monuments. Compared to fewer than 7,000 functioning parishes and 21 monasteries belonging to the Moscow Patriarchate in 1988, the figures multiplied to nearly 30,000 parishes and 804 monasteries in 2008.[4]

In this book, I examine the interrelation between these two processes of social change. Both scholars and my informants have tended to consider the religious revival and the re-emergence of private economic activity as mutually exclusive phenomena. Yet classic social theory, influenced by Max Weber's writings, suggests that economy and religion have sometimes existed in a relationship called 'elective affinity' (Weber 1988a, 2001). Even when no causal relationship is evident, the fact that economy is embedded in social conditions suggests that developments or changes in one sphere (economy, morality, or religion) might well influence change in another sphere. My reading of these classic theorists, combined with more recent studies on changing patterns of religious belief and expression that borrow

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[2] See the Russian Federal Service for State Statistics at: http://www.gks.ru/wps/portal/OSI_P/DEM, accessed on 12 February 2010.

[3] In 988, Prince Vladimir of Kiev, head of the Kievan Rus', converted to Byzantine Christianity, and his conversion is frequently described as the 'baptism of Russia' (*kreshchenie Rusi*). In 1988, the anniversary of the first millennium was held and gained some government support. At the same time, churches were re-opened and the implicit ban on religious propaganda in the public sphere was lifted.

[4] See the official website of the Russian Orthodox Church, http://www.mospat.ru, accessed on 21 October 2008.

on economic metaphors of the 'market', triggered this investigation into where and how the spheres of economy and religion influence, reinforce, and complement each other in multiple ways. More precisely, the present work is an attempt to trace the contours of the relationship between Orthodoxy and entrepreneurship by looking at the sphere of morality. This enables us to capture the dynamics, paradoxes, and nuances – the surrounding moral discourses and everyday practices – and to explore some of the consequences for post-Soviet Russian society. In doing so, I will take into consideration how decision making in the economic sphere is connected to religious and other moral teachings and, vice versa, how economic logic enters the Russian Orthodox Church at certain points.

Anthropologists and other social scientists have traditionally seen the development of capitalism as constituting a decisive break with the human past. Images of reciprocal exchange, social obligations, and communality in pre-capitalist societies are contrasted with images of the pursuit of excessive individual self-interest, exploitation, and avarice in capitalist ones. Often, the introduction of capitalist economies is connected to notions of decreasing social bonds, a collapse of morality, and a diminishing role of the community. In varying degrees, this diagnosis can be found in the classic writings of Karl Marx (1986 [1867, 1885 and 1894]), Emile Durkheim (1957a [1915]), Marcel Mauss (1990 [1925]), Max Weber (1988a, b [1920]) and Karl Polanyi (2001 [1944]). Capitalism, as described by these authors, is 'disembedded', indifferent to moral premises, and an 'iron cage'. In contrast, my research on the reintroduction of capitalism into post-Soviet Russia revealed no insurmountable rift between capitalist and non-capitalist economies. I argue that all economies, in varying degrees, are embedded in social contexts and possess moral premises (see also Browne 2009). In this interpretation, the moral principles of any society are constantly changing, which can be described by anthropologists carrying out long-term observations.

Before the reintroduction of capitalism, Russia experienced more than seventy years of socialism. As many authors have convincingly argued, despite all insufficiencies and discrepancies, socialism provided a type of moral community, some integration, and a widely accepted societal ideal for most people experiencing it (Hann 2002; Humphrey 2002a; Wanner and Steinberg 2008). Small wonder, then, that the unexpected and sudden collapse of the Soviet Union provoked feelings of loss, disorder, and moral decay among many Russians. Nevertheless, the prevailing sense that Russia has become an immoral society is misleading because new moral principles are emerging and many groups offer new sources of orientation and new forms of affiliation. Although nationalist, Communist, and New Age groups also exist, the Russian Orthodox Church is by far the dominant player in the

moral sphere in European Russia. Clergymen, lay people, and religious philosophers are eager to define what economic action ought to be like, and promote their views through the media, the internet, and freely distributed booklets. However, none of the new sources of morality has fully supplanted socialist morality. As a result, multiple moralities influence everyday discourses and behaviour, which, at times, come into conflict. The idea of multiple moralities is in contrast to earlier Durkheimian notions of morality as a set of widely shared and accepted social norms. Instead, anthropologists have tended to focus on different sources of morality and possible conflicts between various sources (Howell 1997; Zigon 2006, 2011). Thus, in recent anthropological literature, morality is not limited to the definition of good and evil, but instead is analysed in relation to action and how it 'constitutes the self and makes for action in the world' (Howell 1997: 4). More precisely, morality 'can be made to contain and express both discourse and practice' (Howell 1997: 4).

But before further engaging with the anthropological literature, let me consider Max Weber's classic and influential analysis on the interrelation of economy, ethics, and religion. Weber examined the advance of rationalisation and the emergence of capitalism in early modern western Europe. Because rationalisation met strong resistance, Weber assumed that only religious sanctions, and one particular type of soteriology, could have enabled the emergence of an active, rational, this-worldly asceticism (Weber 1988a: 12, 56, 84–163, 1990: 321–348). Weber tested his hypothesis by examining the influences of religion on economic ethics in Buddhism, Hinduism, Protestantism, and other religions. This comparative research led him to develop the Protestant ethic thesis as presented in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. There Weber argued that some Protestant groups produce an 'ethically coloured maxim for the conduct of life' (Weber 2001 [1930]: 17; see also Weber 1988a: 33) and have 'a special tendency to develop economic rationalism' that is also characteristic of modern capitalism (Weber 2001: 7; see also Weber 1988a: 23).[5] He considered particular forms of Protestantism (e.g. Calvinism) to stimulate the formation of the 'spirit of capitalism', which, under particular circumstances, could lead to the emergence of modern capitalism (a relationship Weber called 'elective affinity'). According to his understanding, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and the connection to a certainty of grace (*Gnadengewissheit*) as visible in

[5] Throughout his work Weber does not develop a coherent concept of a lifestyle approach (*Lebensführungsansatz*), but uses various terms like 'conduct of life' (*Lebensführung*), 'lifestyle' (*Lebensstil*), 'method of life' (*Lebensmethodik*) and 'way of life' (*Lebensweise*) (see also Hermann 2006). In English most of these terms are translated as 'lifestyle', but some authors claim that they have different meanings (see for example Abel and Cockerham 1993).

economic success had an especially significant influence on the conduct of life (Weber 1990: 326ff.). Calvinism developed a system which rationalised life, made man lonely in his inner condition, and disenchanted the world (*Entzauberung der Welt*) (Weber 1990: 308; 2001: 178; 1988a: 95, 114, 156ff.). The Protestant ethic thesis put special emphasis on the importance of religion for economic action and tried to show the interplay of spiritual and economic preconditions for the development of modern capitalism.[6] Weber's influence is so strong that many scholars in the social sciences continue to apply Weber's concepts and categories under new circumstances and in new settings (Bellah 1969; Schluchter 1988a, 1988b, 2005; Buss 1989, 2003; Gellner 1995, 2002; Roberts 1995; Bourdieu 2000; Albert et al. 2005).

Almost all the elements of Weber's argument have been thoroughly criticised. The Protestant ethic thesis, for example, has been criticised for lacking empirical and historical evidence, and for its 'eurocentrism' (Schluchter 1988a, b). To some extent, Weber's analysis can only be considered an example of 'heuristic eurocentrism' because his research question was to explain the emergence of rationalism and modern capitalism as an occidental peculiarity. 'Heuristic eurocentrism' should, of course, be differentiated from 'normative eurocentrism' (Schluchter 1988a: 87f., 94; see also Schwinn 2005: 318). Weber himself acknowledged the need to separate scientific explanations from normative statements (*Werturteilsfreiheit*), but in some parts of his work both forms of eurocentrism intermingle. For example, some of Weber's concepts, like the church-sect distinction, have clearly 'occidental' origins and are difficult to apply in other contexts (Schluchter 1988b: 60). Moreover, the extraordinary role of religion for the emergence of modern capitalism has been proposed without further qualification (Tyrell 1990). In addition, Weber's studies on the economic ethics of other religions tend to follow the work of earlier German authors like Hegel, Wittfogel and Marx, who describe Chinese, Indian, and Oriental societies as largely static (Rossi 2005: 116f.). In this reading, these societies lack any independent impetus for rational development; modern capitalism could be adopted, but not invented by them. Furthermore, and in contrast to some of his contemporaries like Durkheim, Weber mostly ignored anthropological research and perceived the so-called *Naturvölker* as largely uniform (see also Rossi 2005: 115).

Although I have used Max Weber's works to develop the research questions and initial framing for this study, the genesis of a particularly

[6] In addition to religion, Weber also considered the influence of other factors on economic transformation, such as the role of cities and of guilds. In addition, Weber acknowledged that while he had emphasised the religious aspect of transformation, more materialist explanations were not to be excluded (Weber 2001: xxxix; see also Weber 1988a: 12).

'Orthodox ethic' is not a central topic (see for example Buss 1989, 2003). Similarly, I found no substitutes for Calvinist asceticism, like those identified by Bellah (1969) in his study on Tokugawa religion. Indeed, the single period of anthropological fieldwork is not well suited for developing a genealogical explanation of Russian capitalism. Ethnography is much better suited for presenting a snapshot of the 12 months between August 2006 and August 2007. Therefore the aim of this study is relatively modest in comparison to Weber's work. It seeks only to depict the various interrelations between capitalist economy, Orthodox religion, and morality that are visible in everyday interactions, practices, and moral discourses of Russian businessmen and Orthodox believers. I identify the points where Orthodoxy and economy meet, and analyse how they may be related to one another.

Even in this more modest scope, some of Weber's broad concepts and interpretations are particularly relevant and stimulating. In particular, Weber's understanding of economy and religion as intertwined societal spheres is important, as is his broad understanding of religion's potential influences on economic action. Throughout his works Weber put emphasis on individual choice and examined action in relation to the meaning given by the individual (Weber 1990: 1–11). The individual is not independent, and action is often 'oriented towards the former, current and future action of others' (Weber 1990: 11). According to Weber this is called social action (ibid.). In contrast to Durkheimian notions, Weber did not see the individual as determined by society, and kept the balance between individual choice and social orientation. Later, the core of Weber's ideas was further developed, and Bernhard Streck (1985) emphasised the role of transactionalists who considered people to uphold some social norms at the same time that they subvert other norms for their own benefit. In the words of Jeremy Boissevain, man is 'a manipulator, a self-interested operator, as well as a moral being' (Boissevain 1974: 6). People often follow the moral values and rules of their respective society because they truly believe in them, but any 'sociological model which suggests that people normally act in this way' (1974: 7) cannot accurately account for actual behaviour in most societies.

To some extent, I address the legal situation of religious organisations, religious freedom, and the development of a 'religious marketplace' in Russia, as well as the public role of religion (Casanova 2001), and the rivalry between religious groups. The main focus, however, is on businessmen (*predprinimateli* or *biznesmeny*) and their businesses (*predpriiatiia*), and more particularly on how businessmen perceive and express their religious beliefs, practices, and commitment. Following Max Weber, many scholars, especially from institutional economics, have stressed the roles of religion and ethics in surmounting contractual problems, and for establishing trust in

trade relations (e.g. Greif 1989, 2006). This theoretical tradition raises questions about the relevance of a businessman's religious ethic for his economic success, and about the predominance of membership in a particular group among entrepreneurs.

Examining the religious beliefs and practices of individuals opens a range of questions about the conceptualisation of the religious sphere. How does religion intersect with public and private spaces (Luckmann 2000; Casanova 2001)? In what ways is it embedded (Thurnwald 1932)? And is it possible that businessmen are 'believing without belonging' (Davie 2003)? How and where do businessmen practise their religion: in private or in public; in parishes, at home or in the enterprise? Do employees practise religion at work or in the enterprise, and how do they evaluate other forms of religiosity in the enterprise? Do entrepreneurs also adjust their business practices in response to the moral censure of the Church, priests, or fellow parishioners? Relatedly, do businessmen accept, reject, or reinterpret the axiological teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church concerning the pursuit and use of material wealth?[7] If – as other anthropologists have argued – economy and politics across the postsocialist region are still deeply entangled, does the state's relationship to the Church also affect businessmen's religious practices (Sampson 1996; Zschoch 1998; Burawoy and Verdery 1999: 14; Humphrey 2002a: 7; Kaneff 2002; Lankauskas 2002; Mandel and Humphrey 2002: 12f.; Vladimirova 2006; Steinberg and Wanner 2008)? How does the state's support for, or restrictions on, religion affect the public role of businessmen? Is religion also an arena in which political alliances are consolidated (Malinowski 1984), and prestige and status are awarded (Mauss 1990)?

The Russian Orthodox Church is not a monolithic entity, but is composed of different persons and groups at the local, eparchial, and patriarchal levels. Often these persons and groups hold ambiguous, and even conflicting, attitudes on various topics. Therefore the question arises as to what extent entrepreneurs make use of this diversity, by associating with more sympathetic priests and disregarding others. Many priests also feel the need to broker relations with businessmen. Since Russia has no religious tax system, parishes must rely on other sources of income. Priests experience considerable pressure to generate their own salaries and the costs of parish upkeep by selling religious paraphernalia, offering religious services, or

[7] I prefer to use the term 'axiological teachings' instead of 'dogma' because Orthodoxy allows for the incorporation of church doctrine and local traditions (cf. Stewart 1991: 7). Focusing on Orthodox Greece, Stewart noted that the understanding of the Devil was flexible and assimilated new representations if these did not contradict the basic principles (1991: 141).

attracting private donations – often from businessmen. What are the implications of the donations made by businessmen? Do businessmen use their donations, or other mechanisms, to influence the opinions of local clergymen? Or do priests have such a strong influence on society and public opinion, that businessmen seek opportunities to donate to retain a good public image?

Finally, the question of socialist values and practices is central to my work. A substantial proportion of today's entrepreneurs are over the age of 40. They were already young adults during perestroika, and many were members of the Communist Party, held leading positions in former state corporations, and had been leaders in Komsomol groups. In these positions of leadership, they were heavily indoctrinated with the state's atheist propaganda and sometimes had the responsibility to instruct others (Gerber 2002; Yurchak 2002; Dittrich, Schrader and Stojanow 2006). How did they make the transition from leading atheists to believers in their private and public lives? How do they depict their turn to religion? What motivations do they stress, and where do they locate the continuity and change in their own lives? How do they now evaluate Soviet anti-religious propaganda and Marx's description of religion as the 'opiate of the people'?



Map 1. Location of the field site of Vladimir.

Problems of Economic Transformation

This study draws together key questions and concepts about the religious, moral, and ethical constraints on, and incentives for, the market behaviour of businessmen. Businessmen constitute a social category that might be expected to best approximate the behaviour of *homo oeconomicus*. In post-Soviet Russia, however, businessmen experience significant incentives, even imperatives, to perform their religiosity in the organisation and operation of

their businesses, marketing strategies, public relations, and political and social ambitions. In the following section, I consider how the embeddedness of economy helps to make sense of the centrality of religion in the development of business during Russia's postsocialist transition. I argue that it is essential to consider the interconnections between religion, morality, and ethics, and their intersection with economy to produce a moral economy. Moral economies require moral actors; thus, in describing the broad features of Russia's moral economy, the roles which businessmen play outside the economic sphere, in politics, society, and the Church, become more intelligible.

Embeddedness

Anthropology and other social sciences have long occupied a critical position vis-à-vis neoclassical economics, and have continually attacked the primacy of *homo oeconomicus* in neoclassical visions of the development and transformation of national economies. The problem is two-fold. First, can the collective action of individual rational actors alone account for broad patterns of economic development? Second, do individual actors really behave according to the same principles in societies with widely varying forms of social and political organisation? For more than a century, these two problems have been continually debated in various combinations.

This debate, for example, was most famously conducted in the Methodenstreit within the German Nationalökonomie at the turn of the twentieth century. In this version of the debate, the Historical School and Gustav von Schmoller saw no universally applicable rules for individual economic behaviour, and stressed the importance of the specific historic setting, while Carl Menger and the Austrian School stressed the importance of utility maximising for individual action throughout history. The topic later recurred within economic anthropology in the formalist-substantivist debate of the 1950s–70s, where formalists argued that the logic of the market ruled in all human societies.[8] In contrast, substantivists like Karl Polanyi saw no evidence for that claim in societies where there was no market economy and where kinship ties dominated.

Polanyi argued, instead, that the economy historically has always been 'embedded' in economic and non-economic institutions (2001: 60; Polanyi

[8] Karl Bücher is considered one of the early key figures for economic anthropology. For more details, see Backhaus (2000), Spittler (2008: 81–96), and especially Gross (2000). The latter studies the work of Karl Bücher in the light of the formalist-substantivist debate.

et al. 1971: 250).[9] Yet Polanyi also described European economies as becoming increasingly disembedded after the repeal of the Speenhamland Law in 1834, when nature, society, and humanity were converted into the 'fictitious commodities' of land, money, and labour.[10] As a committed social reformer, Polanyi was concerned that the creation of 'self-regulating' markets would produce pathological economic behaviours and generate widespread social anomie.

In his concern for demonstrating the socially disruptive effects of market growth, however, Polanyi gave little attention to defining embeddedness as an analytical concept. This task has been undertaken by others, such as Mark Granovetter who developed a concept of embeddedness that stressed the role 'of concrete personal relations and structures (or "networks")' in 'generating trust' and 'discouraging malfeasance' (Granovetter 1985: 490). Granovetter focused on the influence of actors' social networks on their behaviour in the market, and ignored the 'complex alchemy of politics, culture, and ideology' that Polanyi and Thurnwald had initially envisioned (Krippner 2001: 782). Granovetter's approach to 'structural embeddedness' has now superseded the importance of other approaches to embeddedness (e.g. cultural, cognitive, and political) within economic sociology (Zukin and DiMaggio 1990).

Yet many social scientists are still sceptical about the utility of the concept of embeddedness (Krippner 2001; Beckert 2003, 2009; Gemici 2008). As Jens Beckert wrote, we need 'the development of conceptual tools to address differences between economic configurations' because demonstrating that 'at the end of the day, all economies are embedded' is not sufficient for explaining these differences (2009: 53). Here it is useful to reconsider the classic works of Durkheim, Weber, and Thurnwald, and to incorporate their broader understandings of 'embeddedness' to include moral discourses, the embeddedness of demand, the evaluation of economic success, and the embeddedness of production (Robotham 2005), as well as the embeddedness of market exchange in politics, religion, and social relations. If such a broader approach to embeddedness were followed, Chris Hann (2002) has argued that we would significantly improve our understanding of postsocialist transformations without the need to rely on essentialist notions of culture. Present explanations of why particular policies, especially those related to 'shock therapy' succeeded in some contexts, but failed in others,

[9] Polanyi was not the first to use the term, which had previously been used by Richard Thurnwald (1932: 45, cited in Firth 1972: n. 1).

[10] According to Polanyi (2001: 71–80), land, labour, and money were not commodities, and had never been produced to be sold on the market. In nineteenth century England, they entered the market, but remained 'fictitious'.

often still rely on culture as a 'mysterious residual variable' (Hann 2002: 8) without being able to explain how culture affects individual economic behaviour.

Morality and Economy

In this study, I have found it useful to pair the concept of embeddedness with morality. Moral values influence discourses, local notions of good and bad, and actual behaviour in the economic sphere, as well as elsewhere. Marxist historian E. P. Thompson is perhaps best known for making this point with his concept of the 'moral economy'. Thompson argued that every society has exhibited a 'popular consensus as to what were legitimate and what were illegitimate practices', and that this consensus 'was grounded upon a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community' (1971: 79; see also 1991: 188).

Thompson's work, however, was foreshadowed, and borne out, by anthropological studies that demonstrated how entrepreneurship is rooted in concrete situations and social relations. Focusing on Sami groups in northern Norway, for example, Frederik Barth and his colleagues developed the concept of 'ethnic entrepreneurship' (1963). The authors noticed social and moral factors that enabled and restricted the possibilities of entrepreneurs in their respective communities. They examined how entrepreneurs extend ethnic and kinship relations in order to acquire the necessary resources for opening a business and for keeping it profitable, but they also observed that ethnic co-residents and relatives ask for special prices, or for a share of the entrepreneur's profits. These demands constitute a strong limitation for the development of the enterprise. Hence only some entrepreneurs were successful in maintaining social distance with their clientele, and in drawing support from their ethnic and kinship networks. Moral obligations between kin and members of the same ethnic group thus enable and constrain the establishment of business. Research on the trader's dilemma in Asia (Evers and Schrader 1994; Hefner 1998) confirmed and extended the observations made by Barth and his colleagues. For example, Hans-Dieter Evers and Heiko Schrader noted a contradiction between the necessity to make a living by commercial exchange, which means profit, and the moral obligation to share earnings with kin and neighbours (Evers and Schrader 1994: 5). In order to be successful in trade, traders must maintain both solidarity and social distance with customers through various means.

Morality in the economic sphere thus extends to encompass the classic themes of reciprocity and gift-exchange that dominate economic anthropology (Sahlins 1972; Firth 1975; Gregory 1982; Malinowski 1984; Parry 1986;

Mauss 1990 [1925]; Weiner 1992; Appadurai 1999; Godelier 1999; Kopytoff 1999; Hann and Hart 2009). In Russia, for example, business activities are shaped and tempered by the pressure that businessmen feel from priests, society, and their political superiors to make substantial financial donations to the Church. Yet, as I describe in later chapters, even charitable activities are entwined with hierarchies of distinction, status, and prestige. As elsewhere, the efforts of businessmen in Russia to acquire, display, consume, and redistribute material wealth in moral ways produce social confirmation and critique that is tangible to businessmen as their fortunes rise and fall in business and politics (Thurnwald 1932; Bourdieu 1984; Malinowski 1984; Marx 1986; Mauss 1990; Veblen 2004 [1899]). Since one's economic activity 'places' one within class and social structures, it is also a source of meaningful identity and orientation. In contexts of rapid social and economic change, economic innovation, and entrepreneurial activity are often responses to status insecurity (Geertz 1963; Sampson 1996). Across Eurasia, individuals who entered the 'market' as traders, entrepreneurs, and business owners in the early postsocialist period have particularly experienced sharp moral dislocation and dissonance in their efforts to reconceptualise honesty (and shame), property, money, value, and labour, in the new moral economy (Humphrey and Mandel 2002; Kaneff 2002; Pine 2002; Sneath 2002). In Russia, I argue, the turn towards Russian Orthodoxy among businessmen, has also had the surprising effect of producing some continuities with the socialist moral economy.

The topic of morality is also useful for expanding the concept of how economic behaviour is shaped. Durkheim and Weber considered morality to be an important topic, but it has been relatively neglected by anthropologists as a subject in its own right (Durkheim 1961; Zigon 2007: 132). Since the late 1990s, however, there has been a renewed interest in the anthropological study of morality and ethics (Howell 1997; Rivkin-Fish 2001; Laidlaw 2002; Wanner 2003, 2005; Robbins 2004, 2007b; Rogers 2004; Zigon 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011). Part of the earlier reluctance to engage with morality is linked to the term's association with distinguishing 'good' from 'evil'. Recent authors, however, have pursued the comparative study of moralities by focusing on how local concepts of morality are articulated in discourse, through censure and sanctions, in verbal interactions, in the evaluation of personal conduct, in the distinction of social groups, and in conjunction with subjective experiences such as suffering or happiness (Parkin 1986; Howell 1997; Humphrey 1997; Rapport 1997; Strathern 1997; Edel and Edel 2000). In the case of Russian businessmen, fear of bodily harm, illness, and injury, or the experience of misfortune and suffering, may provoke the desire to behave 'morally' and spur an increased engagement with the practices of

Russian Orthodoxy, and, in turn, shapes business activities. In pursuing the topic of morality, I therefore especially follow the lead of Signe Howell who asserted that 'morality constitutes the self and makes for action in the world' (1997: 4). Morality involves a dynamic relationship between moral values (which may be relatively stable and widely shared) and actual behaviour (which includes the enactment, evaluation, and reconfiguration of values by individuals). While some authors distinguish morality from ethics (e.g. Zigon 2008), I have not found it necessary to do so because my informants use the respective terms (*nravstvennost'* and *etika*) interchangeably.

Postsocialism

With the demise of state socialism, the countries belonging to the former Soviet bloc underwent massive economic, social, and political changes. In the economic sector, the political decision makers followed the dominant neoliberal ideology and initiated the privatisation of land, communal property, and state companies (Boycko et al. 1995; Åslund 2002; Dunn 2004). In addition, the market was opened and imported goods changed consumption patterns considerably (Humphrey 2002a; Lankauskas 2002). In the political sector, a trend towards more participative forms of government became visible and most countries implemented democratic reforms. Nevertheless, there is little connection between political elites and voters, which can lead to mistrust and accusations of corruption (Kollmorgen 2003: 24). For these reasons, the 'shock therapy', implemented by many governments (most famously in Russia and Poland) in the early 1990s, is often seen in a critical light by social scientists (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Wedel 1999; Hann 2002; Mandel and Humphrey 2002).

Since the early 1990s, however, substantial differences have developed between the postsocialist countries, especially in terms of economic development. For many anthropologists, the comparative and analytical utility of the concept of 'postsocialism' is thus 'withering' away (Verdery 2002: 15). Caroline Humphrey (2002b) has also asked if the category 'post-socialist' is still useful so many years after the fall of state socialism, and in the face of such different economic, political, and social developments in the countries that stretch from the Pacific Ocean to the Berlin Wall. What, she asked, is the scientific value of a category that conjoins Mongolian nomads and Czech IT developers (2002b: 12)? Some economists have already dispensed with the term because they consider the postsocialist transformation as an episode of modernisation, already completed. Yet the empirical evidence seems to suggest otherwise. Differences across the region indicate that postsocialist transformation was not a unidirectional process, and adequate comparisons between the different countries still have to be drawn (Hum-

phrey 2002b: 12–15). It seems more likely that postsocialism is a complex, long-term, and open-ended process that is not yet completed (Kollmorgen 2003: 20ff., 2007; Schrader 2003, 2004).

Morality again appears as an important element in the embeddedness of the postsocialist economies. Many people in the former socialist states still relate their present situation to the socialist past – their former positions, upbringing, work experience and moral values (Burawoy 1996; Muller 1996; Hann 2002; Humphrey 2002a; Wanner and Steinberg 2008). Indeed, socialism is still a 'basic point of reference in the "lived history" of most residents of the former Soviet Union and its allies' (Hann 2006: 1). Thus the continued relevance of postsocialism as an analytical concept precisely involves the pairing of economy and morality. Across the region, there is both a pronounced common remembrance of socialist ideology and practice, and a common experience of the reform process which generated high unemployment, growing income differences, and financial insecurities (Pine and Bridger 1998). As Chris Hann has argued, 'the *everyday moral communities* of socialism have been undermined but not replaced' (2002: 10, italics in original).

Religious Revival and the Market

Just as economic transformation ultimately raises questions about the moral and ethical constraints and incentives that are faced by individual actors in the market, changes in religious practice raise questions about the penetration of market logic into religion. The coupling of economic reform and religious revival in the postsocialist period thus provides a particularly provocative opportunity to reconsider the interconnections between religious and economic practices. Postsocialist Russia is also a country in which Eastern Orthodoxy has been and remains the dominant religion, providing an even better opportunity to assess the interconnections between capitalism and Christianity.

Dragadze (1993) has shown that religiosity did not vanish in the Soviet Union during the socialist period, but was 'domesticated', and withdrew to the private sphere. With the relaxation of anti-religious laws in the perestroika years and after the demise of socialism, many of the countries of the former Soviet bloc underwent what is often called a 'religious rebirth' (*religioznoe vozrozhdenie*). The social significance of religion increased as the religious infrastructure developed, expressions of religiosity reappeared in public (prayers and processions, references to Orthodoxy on many occasions and widespread coverage of religious events in the media), and new institutions fostered cooperation between religious, political, and economic groups. In many cases, the new activities make explicit connections to pre-socialist

practices and traditions, real or imagined. Likewise, Irena Borowik has argued that the religious revival is 'above all a return to tradition' (2002: 505).

In addition, the postsocialist countries experienced a sudden influx of new religious groups. New laws permitting religious freedom supported the re-emergence of traditional religions, but also attracted non-traditional religious groups from other countries that challenged the position of hitherto dominant churches (e.g. Pentecostalists in Russia; Jehovah's Witnesses in Poland). Public opinion often reacted negatively towards this influx of new religions, and political power holders were eager to enact new laws that privileged more established religious groups and supported nation-building. Therefore, the politics of ethnicity and nationality, as well as the relation between politics and religion, became fiercely debated topics in the postsocialist setting (Verdery 1999; Buzalka 2007). Taking into account all these developments, Chris Hann (2006) asked whether there was something that could be called a 'postsocialist religious question', common across the postsocialist region. Hann concluded that the differences outweigh the commonalities, but there are nevertheless common patterns. These are, first, an increased social significance of religion in the public sphere; second, the particular role of the state in relation to religion; third, the relation between religion and national and ethnic sentiments; and, fourth, the newly important role of religious education, as many people now aspire to learn about their own religion. Thus, the common patterns in the transformation process indicate some overlap between the topics of postsocialism and religion.

The emerging anthropology of Christianity is marked by an overfocus on the ethnography of Protestant and neo-Protestant groups (Robbins 2003, 2007a; Cannell 2006; Engelke and Tomlinson 2006; Hann 2007b; Keane 2007). Strands of Eastern Christianity number well over 200 million believers, but are a very much neglected field in Western research (see also Hann and Goltz 2010: 1), and anthropological analysis could gain significantly from their study.[11] Orthodox churches, though divided into a variety of local traditions and not united in a single church structure like Catholicism, have a common perspective on what constitutes Orthodoxy in distinction from Catholicism and Protestantism; are united around liturgical practice; and belong to a 'community of sacraments' (cf. Naumescu 2007: 16). In this way, theology in the Orthodox Church puts major emphasis on practice (Hann and Goltz 2010: 15). The Church allows for a variety of beliefs, interpretations, and innovations so long as they do not contradict the basic

[11] Eastern Christianity includes not only the Orthodox denominations and Orthodox churches like the Russian Orthodox Church but also the 'Uniates' who accept the Pope's authority but follow the Orthodox rite.

unifying principles (cf. Badone 1990: 131; Stewart 1991: 141; Naumescu 2007).

The most important topics in recent theoretical debates in the anthropology and sociology of religion are centred on themes like the privatisation or individualisation of religion, secularisation and de-secularisation, and the model of the religious market (see for example Hann 2000; Casanova 2001; Asad 2003; Pollack and Olson 2008). Most authors have engaged with these topics in one way or the other, and they will be introduced in more detail in the following section.

Secularisation

The pioneering studies on change and modernisation produced by Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, both noted a decreasing importance of religion in modern society. From their perspective, religion was losing its integrative power and its central position in society. This process is often referred to as secularisation, but the term itself, as Lübbe (2003) has shown, is loaded with various connotations that have changed considerably over time.[12] For some authors, secularisation is a continuous process characterised by ever-declining levels of religious belief and practice, ongoing institutional differentiation, and an increasing confinement of religion to the private sphere. In the sociology of religion, secularisation was understood as a unidirectional development, with an ever-diminishing role of religion and faith. However, neither Durkheim nor Weber actually claimed the process of secularisation to be inevitable, irreversible, or (even) desirable (cf. Pollack 2008: 2f.).

A major attack on this version of secularisation theory was launched by José Casanova (2001), who noted a 'deprivatisation' of religion in the

[12] For example, Weber noted that a growing rationalisation of all spheres of society characterised modernity. In the religious sphere, this meant the elimination of magical elements, as he thought had already occurred in Judaism and in some Puritan churches (Weber 1988a: 94ff.). Weber called the ongoing process of rationalisation, the 'disenchantment of the world' (2001: 178; 1988a: 94, 114, 156ff.). Nevertheless, Weber developed no end-of-history theory, as he noted similar secularising tendencies in monastic asceticism that had preceded later forms of worldly asceticism (Weber 1988a: 195f.).

Like Weber before him, Peter L. Berger describes the economic sphere as the starting point for the process of secularisation (Berger 1990). From the 'liberated territory' of economy (Berger 1990: 129), secularisation took over other spheres of society. Spheres concerning the family, death, marriage, or war, are still loaded with religious symbols, while other spheres like the economy, everyday politics, or education are no longer dependent on references to religion. Secularisation theory, that drew on the models proposed by Weber and Durkheim, became one of the foundational principles in the sociology of religion after the Second World War, and many sociologists have claimed that there is an ongoing concomitance between modernisation and the decreasing importance of religion (Wilson 1975, 1985; Dobbelaere 1981).

1980s. He argued that historical developments like the Islamic Revolution in Iran, or the public re-emergence of Protestant fundamentalism in American politics, pointed to a reversal of secularisation theory. Thus he distinguished three forms of secularisation: secularisation as religious decline; secularisation as differentiation; and secularisation as privatisation (Casanova 2001: 7). Whereas he found no empirical evidence that modernisation necessarily entails religious decline or privatisation, he found substantial evidence that modernisation had produced much differentiation. He did not reject the secularisation thesis completely as he agreed with the 'core and the central thesis of the theory of secularization [that] is the conceptualization of the process of societal modernization as a process of functional differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres ... from the religious sphere' (Casanova 2001: 19).

The experiences in eastern Europe and Russia largely conform to the points raised by Casanova. Although general conclusions are difficult to draw, the frequency of participation in rituals has been addressed in several sociological surveys in eastern Europe and Russia (Borowik and Babiński 1997; Furman 2000; Borowik and Tomka 2001; Kääriäinen and Tomka and Zulehner 2001; Zharkov 2005; Filatov and Lunkin 2006). These surveys indicate slowly rising levels of religious participation, as well as increasing references to religion in public rituals, and, thus provide yet another challenge to simplistic notions of secularisation as a unidirectional process. However, they also provide evidence that the level of religiosity, however measured, often remains low, and that in many cases, religiosity is weakly tied to the Church's prescriptions, signifying tendencies of privatisation.

Individualisation, Privatisation, and Public Religion

Weber and Durkheim argued that modern science, capitalism, and the state had emancipated themselves from ecclesiastical control. In addition to providing the foundation for secularisation theory, their work has also inspired other efforts to account for what appear to be interconnected changes in economy, politics, and religion – such as the theories of the privatisation or individualisation of religion. Proponents of the individualisation theory, like Thomas Luckmann (2000), have not claimed that modernity is necessarily accompanied by a general decline in religiosity, but that religion retreats to the private sphere. Luckmann observed social change where religion, formerly institutionalised in the form of a church, gradually dissolved in modernity, and gave way to individual forms of worship and religiosity. Thus, Luckmann argued that religion, in the end, became a matter of private concern for the individual who obtained more freedom of choice between different forms of religion. In modern industrial societies, the religious

cosmos has become a 'department store of last meanings' (Luckmann 2000: 145) that is only influenced by one's biographical background.

Drawing on Luckmann's findings, a discrepancy between a considerable persistence of religious beliefs and a declining rate of ritual participation and institutional attachment was observed in European societies. Focusing on post-war Britain, Grace Davie (2003) termed this development of declining institutionalised religiosity and continuous individual spirituality 'believing without belonging'. According to her observations, two contradictory reactions emerged: first, a tendency which confirms Luckmann's findings that consumerism extends into the sacred sphere and people 'shop around for ... spiritual needs', and second, a pattern where the notion of consumerism is rejected altogether and the sacred is perceived as an alternative and different way for ordering one's goals, aspirations, and activities (Davie 2003: 39f.).

The privatisation of religion is not a continuous and one-dimensional process, as noted by José Casanova (2001). Casanova observed that alongside privatisation, a process of 'deprivatization' also takes place, 'whereby religion abandons its assigned place in the private sphere' (Casanova 2001: 66). He criticised the binary classification between public and private religions because the spheres actually interpenetrate. Thus, at times, it is difficult to classify 'whether one is witnessing political movements which don religious garb or religious movements which assume political forms' (Casanova 2001: 41).

In Russia, there are similar tendencies for religion to become more privatised and more public at the same time. On the one hand, there are eclectic beliefs and low rates of institutional affiliation with Orthodoxy, and on the other, high respect for religion in the public sphere and a growing participation of Orthodoxy in public events (Borowik 2002; Lindquist 2006). Moreover, religion is often linked to national or ethnic sentiments and has become thoroughly politicised and used for nation-building (Borowik and Babiński 1997; Tolz 1998; Filatov 1999; Mitrofanova 2005; Köllner 2013). Therefore, some authors have suggested that it has been a 'fashion' (*moda*) to be Orthodox during postsocialism (Anderson 1994: 85).

The Religious Market

In the market model, the ideas about religion as the 'department store of last meanings' were further explicated. According to the market model, traditional religions lost their protected position in society during the process of modernisation. When traditional religion was no longer protected, non-traditional religions entered the country and began to proselytise, leading to the development of a religiously plural society (Berger 1990: 135). In the

new situation, traditional allegiances were no longer taken for granted because members could associate voluntarily with one or more religious groups. One of the first writers to use economic terms and the market model for religious phenomena was Peter Berger (1990 [1967]). In his view, 'the pluralistic situation is, above all, a *market situation*' (1990: 138, italics in original). In his analysis, he applied economic expressions and treated religious traditions as 'consumer commodities' that must be sold to a clientele. However, he also noted the importance of traditional ties and some limitations to religious choice, both of which he referred to with the term 'product loyalty' (1990: 145).

Roger Finke and Rodney Stark (1988) and Laurence Iannaccone (1997) have also discussed religious pluralism. All three concluded that religious pluralism does not necessarily lead to a decline in the social significance of religions. In contrast, competition in a 'religious marketplace' could be a stimulus for religious affiliation. Accordingly, pastors may behave as religious entrepreneurs, and churches may behave like firms that have to meet the expectations of religious customers in order to be successful. The 'religious market' has also been criticised, however, on at least four points. First, the model tends to ignore the cultural dimension of religion (cf. Pollack 2008: 11). Second, it underestimates the importance of socialisation, evident in the fact that most people stay in their religious group of origin (cf. Pollack 2008: 11). Third, problems emerge in attempts to apply it empirically, by measuring costs and gains. Finally, some countries, such as Poland or Ireland, cannot be adequately explained by the model because they have relatively high indices of religiosity, but low levels of religious competition and pluralism.

The Russian Orthodox Church opposes the market model very strictly, and perceives Russia and a large part of the former Soviet Union to be its 'canonical territory'[13] where any proselytisation by other denominations is an affront.[14] In many cases, the Russian Orthodox Church feels threatened

[13] Historically, autocephalous Eastern Orthodox churches have been assigned a 'canonical territory', which delimits their spheres of influence (cf. Agadjanian and Rousselet 2005: 40). For centuries, the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church was connected to the Russian Empire and Russian ethnic settlements, and expanded accordingly. In contemporary postsocialist Russia, the concept is mainly used by the Church to delimit the spheres of influence of other religious groups, so that it can continue to claim predominance over Russia and ethnic Russians. In this way, the issue of proselytism became a key topic because the Church considers Russians to be '*endemic* Orthodox, by birth, by culture, and history, if not by faith and practice' (Agadjanian and Rousselet 2005: 44, original emphasis).

[14] For example, the establishment of four Catholic dioceses in Russia in early 2002 worsened the relations between the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the Roman Catholic Church considerably. The ROC felt threatened and declared it to be an encroachment upon its canonical territory. Apparently the ROC asked the state authorities for support because in 2002 the

by other denominations and feels challenged in its dominant position. Hence, the experience of competition leads to the *perception* of a 'religious market'. It is important to stress that the market is perceived as being more developed than it actually is; the Russian Orthodox Church is by far the largest and most influential religious organisation in contemporary Russia, and more than 82 per cent of ethnic Russians claim Orthodoxy as their primary religion. As Melissa Caldwell (2004) has demonstrated, however, the Russian Orthodox Church has felt pressure from Protestant organisations that have successfully attracted new members by offering free English courses, meals, and literature. The Russian Orthodox Church now also feels obliged to offer free meals, and to provide health care and housing to people in need – activities that have not historically been part of the Church's work (see also Lindenmeyr 1990). Yet the weaknesses of the market model are also evident in Russia, as one starts to ask how many people really change their religious affiliation, if people apply cost-benefit-analysis, or how large the percentage of newly introduced religious groups is (see also Pelkmans 2006: 30).

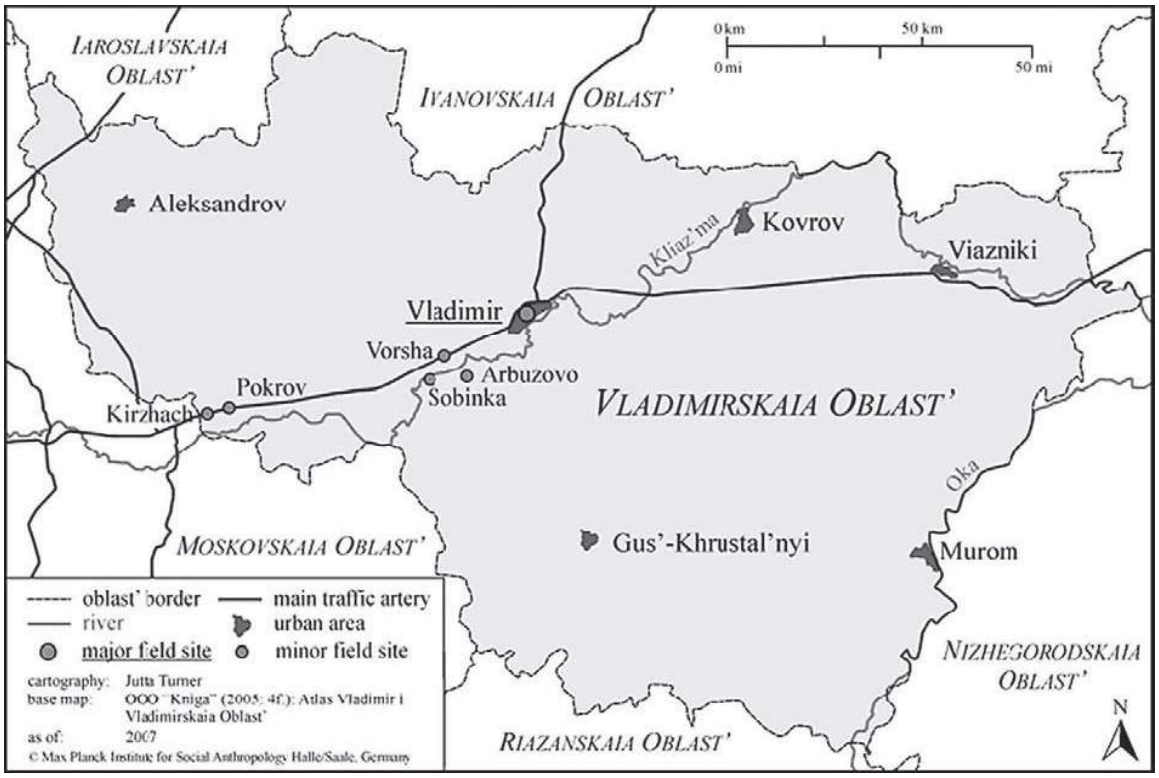
Fieldwork in Vladimir, Historic Capital of the Holy Rus'

My field site was the city of Vladimir and its surroundings. The city, the capital of the district (*oblast'*) of the same name, is situated about 180 kilometres east of Moscow. During the time of my fieldwork, the city had about 330,000 inhabitants, of whom 214,000 were capable of working.[15] The number of inhabitants is steadily decreasing in both the city and district as a whole, due to low birth rates and population movements to bigger cities, namely Moscow. The surrounding villages underwent an especially sharp decline in population at the end of socialism. Due to worsening work conditions and low pay, young people left and leave the countryside for more prestigious employment in urban centres. Equally affected by the end of state socialism was the rural infrastructure. Most of the kindergartens and primary schools were closed, and the quality of life in rural settings decreased significantly. The houses of culture that had served as local community also closed, and, are used only occasionally for fairs and other events (cf. Donahoe and Habeck 2008).

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obligatory registrations and visa of Catholic priests were denied or not prolonged (see Mitrofanova 2005: 178). Also, the head of the Catholic parish in Vladimir at this time, a Jesuit from Italy, had to leave the country.

[15] According to the city administration (see http://www.vladimir-city.ru/economy/, accessed on 08 October 2007).



Map 2. Vladimir Region (oblast') with the largest cities and all field sites.

History

Vladimir is famous for its role in Russia's political and religious history. For this reason, it attracts tourists from within Russia and abroad. Vladimir was founded in 990 by Prince Vladimir Sviatoslavovich of Kiev, 'The Red Sun'. In the thirteenth century, the political and religious centre of the Rus' shifted from Kiev to Vladimir, and the city became the capital of the north-western part of the Rus'. From these early days, two churches and the Golden Gate remain; all three sites are on the UNESCO world heritage list.[16] In 1238, Vladimir was conquered and burned by the Mongols. It was rebuilt, but the capital moved to Moscow in 1330. Nevertheless, the coronation of the grand princes still took place in Vladimir until the end of the fifteenth century. From the sixteenth century, the city lost most of its former importance, and only became the capital of the province (*guberniia*) in 1778. In the following years, it served as an administrative centre, but had little economic importance. The town was often depicted as quiet and little, mainly inhabited by clerks, clergymen, and craftsmen. Although a railway station on the line from Moscow to Nizhnii Novgorod was opened in Vladimir in 1862, industrialisation and economic development took place mainly in the surrounding

[16] The buildings are famous for the white limestone used, and the period is also referred to as the 'whitestone architecture period'.

cities (Gus'-Khrustal'nyi, Viazniki, and Aleksandrov). The situation changed drastically after the October Revolution of 1917, when Vladimir became the capital of the region (*oblast'*) and underwent heavy industrialisation. Many new factories were built: a large bakery in 1929, a chemical plant in 1932, a factory for car parts in 1932, an engineering factory in 1936, a tractor factory in 1945, a factory for electrical engines in 1955, and a factory for electric devices in 1955. In the following years, an entire new district was created, which considerably changed the face of the city. The fall of socialism again affected the city considerably as many of the factories were closed, privatised, or downsized, and dismissed large numbers of employees. The governor of the district was a Communist until quite recently.[17] The mayor of the city, elected in 2002 is, however, a member of the United Russia Party (*Edinaia Rossiia*).[18]

References to the city's history and traditions are not limited to a circle of intellectuals, but play a role in everyday life as well. Some entrepreneurs, for example, explicitly referred to traditions stemming from the previous centuries (e.g. the *domostroi*, an anthology of righteous behaviour inside the household) (Johnston 1994; Slonov 2006). Traditional merchants (*kuptsy*) were also imagined as moral models through frequently invoked phrases such as, the 'word of the merchant' (*slovo kuptsa*), and practices such as the lending of money by shaking hands (*rukopozhatiem*). There is also a more religious connotation in the re-emergence of a tradition to strike bargains in the church, 'in front of god' (*pered Bogom*). This might take place with or without the explicit knowledge of the priest. Most entrepreneurs, however, consider this to be a fake and do not relate it to similar pre-revolutionary practices.

Economy

The general economic figures for Russia show an impressive growth of the GDP after the crisis in 1998 – on average about 7 per cent per year in the last five years before the international economic crisis in 2008. Nevertheless, production in many sectors has not yet reached its late Soviet levels. Many Russians therefore question whether Russia has really adjusted its economy to the international market. Most local people hold ambivalent attitudes

[17] During the time of my fieldwork only two of Russia's governors remained in place from the early postsocialist years. One was in the district of Volgograd, and the other was in Vladimir.

[18] The United Russia Party was formed in April 2001, when two parties (Fatherland and Unity) merged. The most famous figure is Vladimir Putin, the party's chairman. Since 2002, the party has become more important in the city and Vladimir Region. In 2008, it won about two-thirds of the seats in the regional parliament.

because the extraction of gas, oil, and other natural resources is by far the most important economic sector, while the industrial sector decreased significantly after the fall of the Soviet Union. The manufacture of basic consumer goods is especially far below its 1991 level. Textile production is at 25.2 per cent of its previous level; machinery and equipment at 46.8 per cent; wood at 47.6 per cent; and food products at 77.8 per cent.[19]

Vladimir Region has few natural resources to extract, but was heavily engaged in industrial production, and underwent profound economic change after the demise of socialism. At the time of my fieldwork, all but one state-owned factory had been privatised, and had dismissed most of their staff. In the Soviet Union, as in other socialist countries, emphasis was put on heavy industries. After the collapse of the military-industrial complex, most of the engineers were no longer needed and lost their jobs. Thus many people were forced to change profession and opened individual businesses, often selling basic goods like clothes, electric devices, fruits, or vegetables in local markets. In the following years, these individual businesses underwent some changes: some grew larger and moved to more prestigious locations; other businessmen hired assistants to run their shops, but changed their own profession and are now employed as bureaucrats, insurance agents, or managers. Despite this development, many of this first generation of entrepreneurs still perceive their business activities as temporary, and have little pride in their achievements. In contrast, my observations indicate that many young Russians would like to become businessmen and think early about possibilities to open their own business.

The closeness to Moscow is another particularity of the region, and – as recent investments show – an important factor for regional development. Especially in the western part of the region, Western companies opened new factories to supply the central Russian market. For example Stollwerck invested in a chocolate factory in Pokrov, and television sets are produced in Aleksandrov by the Turkish company BEKO. In the city of Vladimir itself, the proximity to Moscow is mainly felt through investments in real estate. After the trade sector, the real estate sector is the second largest in Vladimir and attracts substantial investment, as several housing projects and two new shopping malls (erected in 2007) indicate. The capital for these investments often originates from companies originally based in Moscow.

The focus of my work was on small and medium-size enterprises.[20] In April 2007, there were 6,748 small enterprises in the city of Vladimir: 48 per

[19] Source: http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/2007/b07_12/14-03.htm, accessed on 06 November 2007 and again on 09 July 2009.

[20] For details on legal definitions of small and medium-size enterprises and their organisational-legal forms, see chapter 2.

cent were occupied with general trade, food, or the provision of domestic services (called *bytovoe obsluzhivanie*, these services include washing, ironing, and repairing shoes or clothes); 15.1 per cent in the real estate sector; 13.8 per cent in construction work; 12.6 per cent in production work; and 5.4 per cent in other spheres.[21] The large number of enterprises in real estate and construction work is especially striking. During my fieldwork, Russia underwent a rapid increase in the price of housing. This process started in centres like Moscow or St Petersburg and spread to Vladimir Region as Muscovites invested in property and flats.

Muscovites were able to easily invest in Vladimir Region because of income differences between the capital and the province. According to official figures, the average monthly income in Vladimir was 9,122 roubles in 2006.[22] This is less than a third of the average monthly income in Moscow, which amounts to 30,486 roubles.[23] Of course, official figures have to be handled with care, and my own observations indicate that many professionals and skilled labourers receive salaries much lower than the average (7,000 roubles was the salary of a university dean; editorial staff in the newspaper earned about 4,000 – 5,000 roubles; a master joiner in the furniture industry earned 10,000 roubles in the city of Vladimir but 4,500 roubles in the surrounding rural areas). Salaries for state or communal employees, like teachers, and doctors, are so low, that they foster corruption. Although there is a problem with the reliability of official figures, the difference between Vladimir and Moscow seems to be correct. For this reason, many people, especially young ones, commute to Moscow daily or stay the whole week with relatives there.

Church and Religion

Socialist leaders, following a Marxist interpretation, described religion as superstition slowing down modernisation. Consequently, the expression of religious commitment in socialist times was banned from public spaces, and most churches were closed or used for other purposes, such as museums, radio stations, or warehouses. How religious commitment changed during socialism in Vladimir Region is visible in periodic surveys of religiosity that were taken during the Soviet period. An examination of religious commitment in 390 families in the 1930s showed that a majority of individuals (53.9

[21] According to http://www.vladimir-city.ru/economy/, accessed on 08 October 2007.

[22] According to http://www.vladimir-city.ru/economy/mon/itogi.pdf, accessed on 08 October 2007.

[23] According to http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?docsid=761136, accessed on 23 November 2007.

per cent) still considered themselves to be believers (31.3 per cent identified as non-religious and 14.9 per cent as undecided). This picture changed in the following years, as surveys from the 1960s and 1970s indicate, when 89.5 per cent of men and 67.1 per cent of women in Vladimir Region declared themselves to be non-religious (Konstantinov 2003: 9). The situation again changed in the perestroika period, during what local authors describe as a religious renaissance (*renessans*) or rebirth (*vozrozhdenie*) (Konstantinov 2003; Minin 2004; Arinin 2005a, 2005b; Fevraleva 2005; Ionova 2007). The widespread romantic picture of a religion that survived in remote places, however, is misleading because the recent revival largely depends on religious and political centres like Sergiev Posad, Vladimir, or Moscow (Benovska-Sabkova et al. 2010). Due to its historic importance, Vladimir and the surrounding region played an important role for the Orthodox religious revival in Russia. Not only the city itself, but also the nearby towns of Suzdal' and Rostov Velikii, famous monasteries like Bogoliubovo, and old churches like the Church of the Intercession on the River Nerl', are considered to be part of the Orthodox heartland. Therefore, at particular events, Vladimir is referred to as the 'heart' or 'soul of Russia' (*serdtse/dusha Rossii*). In some instances Vladimir Region is even described as holy land (*sviataia zemlia*) and this evokes the image of 'Holy Rus'' (*Sviataia Rus'*).[24]

According to the Council of Religious Affairs in Vladimir Region, on 1 January 1990, there existed 80 religious organisations belonging to 5 different confessions (Orthodox, Old Believer, Catholic, Muslim, and Lutheran).[25] During the time of my fieldwork in 2007, the number had risen to 342 religious organisations belonging to 16 confessions.[26] The latest survey

[24] According to Averintsev (1989) and Duncan (2000), the idea of Holy Rus' is connected with the concept of Moscow as the Third Rome. Initially the idea of the Holy Rus' was connected with the universality of a Christian empire (Averintsev 1989: 39). Only in the nineteenth century did it change its meaning from a cosmic category to a national one (Averintsev 1989: 41). In its national understanding, the idea of Holy Rus' draws on notions of the suffering and poverty of the Russian people (*narod*), and, in addition, it is depicted as a unifying force in Russian history. The image of a Holy Rus' is also connected to living memories of suffering during the Second World War, and during the late socialist and early postsocialist years. Suffering (*stradanie*), in this context, is given a clearly religious dimension and draws on Orthodox notions of patience (*terpenie*) and poverty, as practised in monastic life. Suffering is understood as a shared feeling and a common experience that could be overcome by the common foundation of the Russian people in Orthodoxy and national unity.

[25] According to the official website of the administration of Vladimir Region. Online available at: http://u-ossmi.avo.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=23&Itenid=27, accessed on 20 February 2010.

[26] Personal communication from Professor Evgenii Igorevich Arinin who is a member of the Council of Religious Affairs in Vladimir Region.

of religious affiliation in Vladimir Region was carried out by researchers from Vladimir State University and Lomonosov Moscow State University for the Council of Religious Affairs in 2004:

Confession	Percentage of attendees
Russian Orthodox Church (ROC Moscow Patriarchate)	78%
Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (ROAC)	5.6%
Baptists	3%
Pentecostalists	3%
Seventh-day Adventists	3%
Charismatic Protestant Groups	1.9%
Old Believers	1.6%
Judaism	0.6%
Jehovah's Witnesses	0.6%
Catholicism	0.3%
Lutheran Protestant Church	0.3%
Islam	0.3%
Hare Krishna Groups	0.3%

The number of Orthodox organisations in Vladimir Region (78 per cent ROC + 5.6 per cent ROAC) is comparable to the identification with Orthodoxy for the whole of Russia where about 82 per cent of ethnic Russians claim identification with the Orthodox religion (Filatov and Lunkin 2006: 35). What is more unusual is the high number of Protestant organisations (Baptists, Pentecostalists, charismatic groups, and Adventists), which account for about 12 per cent of the population's affiliation. One peculiarity of Vladimir Region is the existence of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (ROAC). It was founded as a splinter group by a charismatic Orthodox priest in the vicinity of Vladimir. The priest had been a member of the Orthodox Church, but stood for election in a political campaign and was criticised by other Orthodox hierarchs for his political ambitions. The priest then split from the Orthodox Church and founded an autonomous Church, with several parishes in the surrounding villages joining him. There are no liturgical differences between the two Churches, and the Russian Orthodox Church does not recognise the ROAC's autonomy. Priests continually try to persuade their colleagues and individual parishes that have defected to return to the ROC.

Although Orthodoxy is by far the largest religious denomination and is given special priority (*prioritet*), the existence of other denominations is officially acknowledged by the state and Vladimir Region is portrayed as multi-religious (*polikonfessional'nyi*) in formal documents. State authorities and church hierarchs also aim to describe the relations between various

denominations as good and friendly. Such friendly relations dominated at a conference held in Vladimir on 15 December 2006. Many of the above-mentioned denominations took part in the conference, focused on the 'Formation of Settings for a Tolerant Consciousness and the Problems of Inter-denominational Dialogue'.

However, in everyday context such friendly relations between different denominations are more difficult. Even at the conference mentioned above, some tensions became obvious following the public presentations. The Russian Orthodox Church had organised a dinner and the Catholic priest wanted to join his Orthodox colleagues, but was not allowed to enter. On other occasions, some of the Orthodox priests who explained the situation to me accused him of proselytising in 'their territory'. This accusation was also put forward against some Protestant groups, and the relationship between Protestant groups and Orthodox believers is generally laden with conflict. Moreover, there seems to be a limit of tolerance when non-Orthodox groups come into the public sphere. The local Muslim parish, for example, faced problems when planning to build a new mosque. In the end, the Muslim community was granted permission to renovate an abandoned house, provided that it was not noticeable from outside that it was a mosque. Sometimes difficulties not only occur between different denominations, but between groups with different moral backgrounds.

In Vladimir Region in the early 2000s, 57.6 per cent of respondents identified themselves as believers, 15 per cent as nonbelievers, and 27.4 per cent as undecided (Zharkov 2005). Women (61 per cent) identified themselves more often than men (53.4 per cent) as believers and less often as nonbelievers (11.9 per cent and 18.8 per cent). The influence of age on religious affiliation was not lineal: starting with 58 per cent believers in the youngest age group (16–24 years), it rose to 63.7 per cent believers in the second age group (25–34 years) and fell to 54 per cent in the third age group (35–49 years), but climbed to 57.2 per cent in the last age group (50 years and older) (Zharkov 2005: 238). Education also had an influence on religious affiliation and was highest among respondents with unfinished middle or finished higher education and lowest among graduates in technical vocational colleges (Zharkov 2005: 243f.).

The fact that more people identified themselves as Orthodox than as believers shows the extremely diverse degrees of religious knowledge and commitment, as well as differences in understandings of religion (Sokolova 2005: 281; Rousselet and Agadjanian 2006; see also Filatov and Lunkin 2006). Although most of my informants declared an identification with Orthodoxy, they also combined various religious symbols with one another or were keen to attach unusual meanings to Orthodox paraphernalia: I saw

icons where the cross was replaced by an evil eye (*sglaz*), Chinese talismans and lucky charms complementing priestly blessings, and Orthodox paraphernalia like candles and crosses being used for magical rituals or fortune-telling. The plethora of religious beliefs is reflected in the 2004 survey of religious beliefs in Vladimir Region, where a majority of respondents believed in one god, but others believed in numerous gods, in the evil eye, in UFOs, in the transmigration of souls, in fortune-telling, chiromancy and cartomancy, in magic and occult forces, in Satan, and in other religious phenomena (Zharkov 2005: 239f.). For most of my informants, attachment to Orthodoxy served more as an ethnic marker, and the open display of religious feelings was often considered shameful.

Through the distribution of small booklets and journals, the Russian Orthodox Church teaches the crucial importance of daily prayers and priestly benediction (*blagoslovenie*) for any activity. The Church's concept of 'inchurchment' (*votserkovlenie*) plays a pivotal role in this respect, which characterises the process of deeply engaging with church activities and following clergymen's prescriptions strictly.[27] At the time of my fieldwork, Orthodox parishes dominated in respect to the quantity of parishes (12), and the number of parishioners in the city of Vladimir. The biggest and most famous parish is Dormition Cathedral (*Uspenskii sobor*); it is open to tourists on weekend afternoons from one o'clock until five o'clock, but is used strictly for church activities at all other times. However, and in contrast to the ROC's teachings, the number of 'inchurched believers' (*votserkovlennye liudi*), is rather small. According to a survey organised by the ROC's Vladimir eparchy, less than 0.5 per cent of the inhabitants attend a church service every Sunday.[28] My own observations among businessmen support the results of the survey and reveal a high level of embarrassment for open display of religiosity; most businessmen have only loose connections with their parish. This is in strong contrast to the number of people who are baptised as Orthodox Christians, which is about 80 per cent of the inhabitants.[29] In contrast to normal Sundays, at Easter, the main religious holiday in Orthodoxy, churches are crowded with believers who want their coloured eggs and Easter cakes (*kulichi*) to be blessed by priests.

The number of businessmen among practising believers is small, and a survey lists a figure of only 2.5 per cent (Fevraleva 2003: 43). Despite their obvious absence in everyday parish life, businessmen were, nevertheless, considered to be an important part of the parish. Through their financial support, they were able to build personal relations with priests, who, in

[27] For more details on the concept of *votserkovlenie* see chapter 4.
[28] Personal communication from Father Aleksii Golovchenko.
[29] The eparchy records baptisms. Personal communication from Father Aleksii Golovchenko.

return, delivered religious services like prayers (*molitvy*), blessings (*blagoslovenie* and *osviashcheniia*), and baptisms (*kreshcheniia*) in the enterprise, at home, or in closed churches. Within the relationship, priests often took the role of a spiritual teacher or father (*dukhovnyi nastavnik*), and tried to influence the behaviour of businessmen through advice and suggestions. However, the role of the priest as spiritual teacher was often ambivalent because businessmen, due to their financial importance, were also able to exercise pressure, e.g. by choosing a particular priest who desisted from criticising entrepreneurial misconduct too harshly. Moreover, believers and priests criticised businessmen and their attitude towards the Church; businessmen were accused of treating the ROC like a client in the market that provided a particular, spiritual service (*dukhovnaia usluga*), and had the expectation, 'the more I pay, the more I expect to get in return'. These issues will be explored further in chapter 4.

Methodology

During 12 months of intensive fieldwork, participant observation was the backbone of my work. During the research, the focus was twofold because I paid attention to entrepreneurs, as well as to Orthodox parishes and priests. I observed entrepreneurs in everyday situations in the market and believers in the parish. But since many activities, especially in business, are hidden from the public, I faced serious limitations in the beginning. For this reason, research on many specific points was often confined to observation, and only rarely drew on participation.[30] Ethnographic research in places of business often excludes active participation for personal and official reasons; reservations, confidentiality, and limited use are equally important sources of limitations as health insurance, work regulations, and liability policies. Even when an anthropologist only plans to observe, the explicit agreement of the owner or top managers is required. Participation, where possible, not only depended on the agreement of the owner, but had to meet the needs of the company as well. In many cases, this entrance to the field 'from above' had the side effect that I was equated with the management by employees, who were initially less open to me.

As it turned out in my case, most entrepreneurs were free to arrange their daily schedule according to their inclinations. Therefore, time was available if one met personal interests, was introduced by a trusted intermediary, and followed their way of life (ad-hoc meetings). As a result, I de-

[30] Mulder van de Graaf and Richard Rottenburg (1989: 30f.) called observations in companies where participation is impossible 'watching observation' (*dabeistehende Beobachtung*) and contrasted it to participant observation.

cided to put more emphasis on participation and applied for a traineeship in several companies. After some refusals in production enterprises, I was accepted as a trainee in a newspaper company where I worked from January until August 2007 as a journalist and wrote articles about several topics. This participation in everyday work-life enabled me to gain a lot of insights about the everyday practices from Russian business and to establish friendships with businessmen and colleagues. Thus, I could hear about their problems, understandings, and opinions. Moreover, Boris,[31] the owner of the newspaper company, was the head of a regional business association. This brought me into contact with many businessmen and opened a lot of doors. But in order to avoid too much 'snowballing' I also followed other paths. Besides my own efforts to meet new people, I drew on scholars from the local university who introduced me to the head of the regional department dealing with entrepreneurs. As I noticed later, he was a personal enemy of Boris and the business association he headed was founded in direct response to the other. I had to be very cautious in order to avoid an overlap that would have destroyed my relationship with both men and their networks.

Because many of the religious practices were hidden and businessmen often considered religious feelings to be shameful, semi-structured interviews proved to be of utmost importance. Interviewing disclosed many local understandings and notions to me. Thus, I tried to combine both techniques as much as possible: interviewing and participant observation at work, during lunches, or at meetings at various dachas. During the interviews it proved fruitful 1) to start with questions about others; 2) to bring examples that showed awareness and knowledge about actual practices and sensitivities; and 3) to organise talks where we exchanged experiences rather than followed a question-answer pattern. Interviewing was no ad-hoc enterprise but had to be built on many initial steps (information collection, mobile number, and introduction by an intermediary). Moreover, I almost never interviewed my informants 'cold' (Obeyesekere 2004: 10), but met them several times, and built up a personal relationship before I conducted semi-structured interviews. I also tried to cross-check information by talking to other entrepreneurs, employees, and their acquaintances.

During the course of the year, I conducted 62 interviews or longer conversations with people from various backgrounds. Most people I met more than once, and with some I am still in contact. During the research, I mainly followed the ethnographic research cycle as developed in grounded theory. James Spradley (2005: 27ff.) suggested a linear sequence of eight steps to be repeated in a cyclical pattern: 1) define a research problem, 2)

[31] All names are pseudonyms.

formulate hypotheses, 3) make operational definitions, 4) design a research instrument, 5) gather the data, 6) analyse the data, 7) draw conclusions, and 8) report the results. With some variations, I also followed such a cyclical pattern and used former data in order to develop new questions, or to formulate new problems and run through the research cycle several times.

If people agreed, I recorded our conversation. But not every situation was equally suitable for this. Although sometimes it would have been possible to use the recorder, I decided against doing so because people felt disturbed or under pressure only to give good and reasonable answers. I made no use of the recorder when I expected negative results. To ensure that my data were somewhat representative, I selected entrepreneurs according to their age, gender, origin, educational background, status, and according to the type and size of their enterprise. This work is not based on random sampling, and was heavily dependent on people's willingness to cooperate with me. In addition to businessmen, I talked to people from various backgrounds: school teachers and university researchers, a scholar from the historical museum, pensioners, journalists, and my colleagues in the newspaper company. I could also draw on acquaintances of my wife, who worked in one of the local universities as a German teacher, and the staff of the kindergarten that my son attended. This allowed me to come into contact with people who were neither inchurched nor entrepreneurs, and helped me to balance my view.

Although I met and spoke with a wide range of individuals, this book focuses specifically on entrepreneurs. In contemporary Russia, two terms for entrepreneur coexist: the local term *predprinimatel'* and the adopted term *biznesmen*. Although *biznesmen* in general is a neutral term, it also can be used pejoratively, as in expressions like 'this businesswoman' (*takaia biznesvumen*) or 'our businessmen' (*nashi biznesmeny*) to denote a particular difference in style, appearance and moral conduct. Whereas *biznesmen* is the colloquial term in everyday conversation, *predprinimatel'* prevails in the scientific literature. Within the Russian scientific literature two strands can be distinguished. The first interpretation is commonly associated with 'to do something' and 'to take initiative' (*predprinimat'/predpriniat'*) or with an 'entrepreneurial spirit or desire' (*predpriimchivost'*) (Zarubina 1998, 2001; Timofeev 2002; Guliaeva 2003; Lapusta 2004). Often this interpretation draws on Western classics like Adam Smith, Joseph Schumpeter and Max Weber (see for example Sogmonov 1994; Novikovoi and Trutneva 2001; Lapusta 2004). But there is also a second interpretation that regards Russian businessmen as ethnically distinct. This strand of writing about businessmen is often accompanied by a list of positive characteristics which are consid-

ered to be specific traits of ethnic Russians (Bezobrazov 1882[32]; Guliaeva 2003; Kotilko et al. 2003). I will not follow the second interpretation here.

Authors who emphasise the unique characteristics of Russian businessmen are often engaged in creating a Russian identity independent from Western economic models. Many popular and scientific books that take this perspective also argue that Russian entrepreneurship came into existence over a thousand years ago (e.g. Platonov 1995). Such accounts recognise few differences between traders in the twelfth century, who had a state monopoly and nineteenth century factory owners who faced international competition. Some of these authors, like Arslanov (2007) or Cherneiko (2006), argue for a 'third way' situated somewhere between state socialism and capitalism, which should be based on Russian traditions. While most of these writings are quite vague, some entrepreneurs nevertheless try to link their contemporary ways of doing business to an imagined pre-revolutionary 'tradition' of entrepreneurship and Orthodoxy.

For my work, however, I neither draw on essentialised national notions of entrepreneurship, nor on classical Western interpretations. Rather, I prefer to use the term 'entrepreneur' in a technical way: an entrepreneur is someone who seeks profit through economic activity, has an influential position inside the enterprise (for example as a director), and owns at least a share of the enterprise. The entrepreneur takes risks. This definition differentiates entrepreneurs from anonymous shareholders as well as managers. Shareholders of big corporations are unable, and often also unwilling, to influence day-to-day decisions. As a rule, they have little knowledge about ongoing processes inside the enterprise and are mainly driven by the expectation of profit for their investment. In contrast, managers run the everyday affairs of the enterprise, but hold insignificant shares in it. If managers are employed, a constant tension between the interests of the owners and the interest of the management is inherent. Indeed, my observations reveal a high rate of embezzlement where managers do make use of their privileged position, and the trust put in them by the owners, in order to enhance their salaries. Therefore, I have chosen a narrow definition of entrepreneurship that excludes non-economic forms of entrepreneurship, focuses on small-scale enterprises, and minimises the importance of heroic and innovative moments proposed by Schumpeter and Weber (cf. Barth 1963; Bailey 1971; Evers and Schrader 1994; Dittrich, Schrader and Stojanow 2006).

The people who informed this study ranged in age from their early twenties to more than seventy years old. About half of them fit my definition of entrepreneurs, described above. Of these, some had just started their own

[32] Bezobrazov declares Russian entrepreneurs to have 1) a feeling of moderation, 2) practical calculation, 3) self-control, 4) a sober character, and 5) a strong will (1882: 65).

business, while others had organised their first deals while working in the Komsomol youth organisation. Nearly all the entrepreneurs I worked with had finished university[33]; most of them were former engineers. About 30 per cent of them were women, and 70 per cent were men. I was struck by the number of entrepreneurs who also engaged in politics. Two of my informants were current members of the district parliament, and one was a former member of the district parliament. Except for Boris, all the politically active businessmen I knew were members of the United Russia Party.

Because I perceive the economy as deeply embedded, I followed the general trend in anthropology and focused on the community rather than on individuals alone. Thus, I did not focus on entrepreneurs exclusively, but took into consideration their surroundings as much as possible: employees, other entrepreneurs, and their acquaintances. This helped me to correct a certain bias in my interviews because hardly anyone described him- or herself as morally questionable. Quite the opposite, many tried to tell me only about their good deeds. Although I generally trusted the answers given, and some even felt free to talk about their own inadequate behaviour or the moral hazards they faced, I preferred to cross-check their answers with real behaviour or remarks of their acquaintances, if possible.

Problems with access to the field and to informants were, of course, not unique for my research and were experienced by other scholars working in Russia as well. This was reflected in their approach to the field and in their methodology. Some authors decided to deal with general images of entrepreneurs rather than with entrepreneurs themselves (Ries 2002), while others mainly made use of surveys (Radaev 1994, 1996; Dana 2005; Dittrich, Schrader and Stojanow 2006). In this respect, the approaches chosen by Alena Ledeneva (1998) and Barbara Zschoch (1998) are exceptional. Ledeneva carried out interviews on the sensitive topic of *blat* relations (networks) in trains, mainly with entrepreneurs and managers. Her technique kept the anonymity of her informants and allowed her to ask intimate questions, and made it impossible to situate the interviews in context and relate them to actual practice. In contrast, Barbara Zschoch's research tried to involve participant observation as she worked in a travel agency for five months. Nevertheless, interviewing remained the most important source of her data, and her observations were restricted to relations between the entrepreneur and his employees, or between employees and clients, with very little attention to relations between entrepreneurs.

Priests of the Russian Orthodox Church and Orthodox believers have been equally important for my work. I conducted interviews with 22 believ-

[33] As one entrepreneur told me, 'Idiots never came into business!' (*Duraki v biznes ne popali!*).

ers and 6 Orthodox priests. Except for one head of a monastery, all of them served in the parishes I visited. Four parishes I visited regularly and several others occasionally. Two of the parishes were situated in the city and two in adjacent villages. Thus, I tried to combine individual interviewing with observations of group relations inside the parishes, entrepreneurial organisations, or working conditions.

In addition, I established contacts with a Catholic, an Old Believer, and a Seventh-day Adventist congregation. The Catholic parish had about 100 practising believers and another 250, or so, who felt close to it.[34] Unlike most urban Orthodox parishes, the Adventist congregation was a close-knit community, and I was immediately taken in by parishioners. According to my observations, there were 120–150 people attending the Adventist Church on Saturdays – more than attended most Orthodox services. Following Weber (1988a), I expected to find more entrepreneurs in Protestant communities than in Orthodox or Catholic ones, but this proved not to be the case. Therefore, I visited the Adventist parish several times, but conducted no interviews.

Outline of Chapters

This book consists of six thematic chapters. The introduction is followed by chapter 2 which gives background information on entrepreneurs and enterprises. It also describes and analyses work in the newspaper company where I was working for about eight months. Chapter 3 deals with the relation of Orthodoxy to the world, as illustrated through the parable of Martha and Mary, the two sisters of Lazarus. One sister is considered to renounce the world, while the other is actively engaging with it. Russian Orthodoxy is often described as a world-renouncing religion – and this image is cultivated by the Church itself – but the real picture is more complex. In this way, I contend, understandings of the Russian Orthodox Church as a monolithic entity are misleading, and it is useful to distinguish different levels and interest groups inside the Church that hold divergent and sometimes conflicting views. One prominent group headed by Kirill Gundiaev, now Patriarch of the ROC and former head of the Department of External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, formulated a theological response to world issues, which rejected a world-renouncing position. The most important document in this respect is the so-called 'Bases of the Social Concepts of the Russian Orthodox Church' (*Osnovy sotsial'noi kontseptsii Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi*) that was adopted by the Bishops' Council in 2000. Among other topics it deals with axiological teachings of the ROC on economy, entrepre-

[34] For the figures I draw on my own observations and on those of Father Sergii Zuev.

neurship, work, and profit. The publication of such a document became possible because the ROC gained more autonomy from state dirigisme after the demise of the Soviet Union and because the ROC was confronted with expectations from believers and other social groups to position itself in the newly established social order. In the 'Bases of the Social Concepts' and other more elaborate works, the ROC tries to define moral premises for private economic activity. A central concern for believers in this context is the question of what is considered to be sinful behaviour. In addition to sophisticated works that address an expert audience, I will also take into account booklets from the many church shops and articles from internet sources. These publications often try to influence everyday behaviour by updating examples from the Bible for the twenty-first century. Priests also give advice to parishioners and entrepreneurs. The authority of a spiritual teacher (*dukhovnyi nastavnik*) guides individual behaviour by giving meaning to one's actions in concrete situations, and provides answers to questions about taxes, just prices, usury, and whether property owning prevents salvation.

In chapter 4, I try to shed some light on religious practices, with special reference to entrepreneurs, and show the importance of and interconnection with underlying religious beliefs. Nevertheless, this chapter is not meant to give an all-encompassing overview of all religious practices and beliefs existing in Russia. According to axiological teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church, salvation outside the Church is not possible. Thus, the importance of attending church services is underlined, and emphasis is put on the concept of 'inchurchment'. But as several surveys show, church attendance as one important precondition for religious practices inside the church remains low in postsocialist Russia. Accordingly, the significance of the Eucharist (*prichastie*) and the confession (*ispoved'*) is limited. Therefore the most widespread religious practices used by entrepreneurs, as well as by many others, take place outside the church walls, but are carried out by church representatives. These are mainly blessings with holy water (*osviashchenie*) of various items (offices, office equipment and machinery, homes, cars, etc.), lighting candles, and the use of icons at home and in offices. Often these practices are considered to give protection against various forms of evil (*zlo*) or punishment (*nakazanie*), and to chase away feelings of anxiety (*bespokoistvo*). However, Orthodoxy is often perceived as one option among others – 'just in case' (*na vsiakii sluchai*). Drawing on distinctions between religion and magic, I argue that some trends in current Orthodoxy have strong traits of magical behaviour. Many practices like blessings, lighting candles, and the use of the 'easy hand', are bound to the idea of influencing the divine (e.g. to force bad spirits out or to attract luck in

doing business), or of striking a deal with the divine, where both sides benefit.[35] Therefore, I have tried to show that lighting candles and making blessings establish a feeling of self-assuredness and control in situations that are highly precarious. Religion, thus, provides hope in insecure situations, and by giving self-assuredness helps to regain agency in a context where alternatives are blocked and economic success is dependent on windfall profits and personal relations to persons in power.

Chapter 5 is concerned with the topic of church reconstruction, and its connection to understandings of penance in contemporary Russian society. During socialist times, many churches fell into decline or were used for other purposes. Therefore the demand for financial support is one of the most pressing issues for the Russian Orthodox Church. But the meaning attached to donations is contested and raises moral discourses on the local level. The discourses reflect tensions between donations made by rich men ('churches built with gold'), and labour contributions by the poor ('churches built with tears'). This is based on a traditional conflict in Orthodoxy, as expressed in the Nestor chronicle, between high respect for ascetic or monastic ideals, and disapproval of wealth and its current use (Trautmann 1948). In this chapter, I try to show the social importance of moral discourse for situations in everyday life.

Chapter 6 deals with the special religious practice of pilgrimage (*palomnichestvo*), which underwent a revival after the relaxation of Soviet laws banning religious practice from the public sphere. In contemporary Russia, some enterprises go on pilgrimages collectively. Sometimes the whole trip is organised and paid for by the entrepreneur. However, these pilgrimages carry diverse and sometimes even conflicting meanings for the participants: for some employees it is just a day off, while for others, it offers the possibility of having a religious experience. Some entrepreneurs try to foster a community spirit; some try to bring employees in contact with Orthodoxy; others want employees to participate in religious rituals that will protect the enterprise as a whole. Therefore, the goals and effects of pilgrimages include religious experiences at the pilgrimage site, the strengthening of group cohesion, and the transmission of national and religious values and history. The similarities between pilgrimages and the educational work (*vospitatel'naia rabota*) during trips for the whole working group (*kollektiv*) in socialist times are remarkable. Not surprisingly, a moral discourse has emerged among entrepreneurs and believers, over whether these trips should be termed 'pilgrimage' at all. Many believers criticise employees who use

[35] Elsewhere this has been described as *do ut des* – 'I give so that you can give' (Mauss 1990: 17; Weber 1990: 258).

the day only for fun by drinking vodka, jumping into holy springs, and shouting.

What follows in chapter 7 is the description of public events like the opening of a monument and the celebration of national holidays like the Day of National Unity. Thus, state and Church attempt to address the public, and to produce a particular religious tradition through coordinated politics of remembrance and public rituals. In this way they foster nation-building and the construction of something like an Orthodox community. But in addition to these attempts from above, it is important to look at the role of entrepreneurs in these events. Through the organisation and participation in such rituals, they are able to improve their position in the local community by establishing connections with the national centre. In this way, businessmen serve as important mediators and financiers for these events. Thus, my observations show that developments on the local level followed the trend on the national level, and are embedded in the wider agenda. However, an understanding of the participation of entrepreneurs in these rituals as purely instrumental is misleading. The relation is more complex, and in many cases, the boundary between instrumental use and personal beliefs becomes blurred. So I will try to show that the rituals and the transmitted meanings also relate to questions of Orthodox religion.

Important for the development of the argument throughout the text are two main findings. The first is a recurrent topic throughout the book and relates to the fact that the religiosity of businessmen is characterised by a constant tension between seeking individual gain and upholding social or moral values. In this way, the motivation to practise religion often is traversed by attempts to achieve personal benefits. In different ways, this topic is addressed in the single chapters. Another important finding of the book relates to the particular way in which entrepreneurs practise religion. In contrast to most believers, entrepreneurs have only loose membership ties with the parish community. As my data suggests, for most entrepreneurs the relation to their spiritual teacher seems to be more important than the parish community. Drawing on the work of Grace Davie (2003), I have called this kind of religiosity ‘practising without belonging’.

Chapter 2
Entrepreneurs and Enterprises

This chapter provides a general overview of the businessmen I worked with and their enterprises. Although I will introduce many of my informants in more detail in the following chapters, a general overview is useful in order to situate them in the general setting. The given information concerns the informant's age, the type of enterprise, its legal form, the year in which it was founded or taken over by its current owner, and the number of employees. Moreover, this chapter shows some of the current developments and general trends in local business. In the final section of the chapter, I introduce, in more detail, the newspaper company where I worked for eight months.

Enterprise Status, Organisational-Legal Form, and Size

In Russia, business organisations are distinguished according to their status, organisational-legal form, and size. The status describes the ownership of the company: state (*gosudarstvennyi*), municipal (*munitsipal'nyi*), private (*chastnyi*), or a mixture of several forms. According to legal regulations, enterprises are also considered private if the state, municipality, or a religious organisation owns less than 25 per cent of it. All of the enterprises where I conducted research were entirely privately owned, and had no state, municipal, or church co-ownership.

The organisational-legal form of an enterprise defines questions of ownership, liability, nominal capital, and sometimes tax exemption. The legal foundation for entrepreneurial activity was laid during the late Soviet period. In 1988, an act on the establishment of cooperatives legalised private entrepreneurship that had formerly been restricted to the unofficial second economy.[36] On 25 December 1990, another law, 'On enterprises and entrepreneurial activity', was ratified. The law has been revised several times, and distinguishes five main types: the individual entrepreneur (*individual'nyi*

[36] For a more detailed examination of the concept of the second economy, see Sampson 1987.

predprinimatel' – IP), the limited liability company (*obshchestvo s ogranichennoi otvetstvennost'iu* – OOO), the cooperative limited liability company (*tovarishchestvo s ogranichennoi otvetstvennost'iu* – TOO), the open joint-stock company (*otkrytoe aktsionernoe obshchestvo* – OAO), and the closed joint-stock company (*zakrytoe aktsionernoe obshchestvo* – ZAO).

Individual entrepreneurs form no corporate body and are fully liable for underwriting their company's property. Individual entrepreneurs assume all the financial risks for their company, but in contrast to all other legal forms, no nominal capital (*ustavnyi kapital*) is needed for their establishment. Due to their small size and full liability, individually owned enterprises are also mainly preoccupied with trade in local markets, or in the provision of household services like cleaning or repair work. Entrepreneurs with more complex enterprises and some starting capital prefer limited liability and cooperative limited liability companies (OOO, TOO), whose liability only extends to their nominal capital. In 2007, the nominal capital of an OOO was 10,000 roubles (about 300 euros). At a national level, individual entrepreneurs and limited liability companies are the most common legal forms found among small enterprises.

My research sample primarily focuses on the activities of entrepreneurs in limited liability companies. Only four individuals in the sample (Artem, Iurii, Nina, and Viktor) operated other forms. Two (Nina and Viktor) lacked the necessary starting capital and were individual entrepreneurs (IPs), and one (Artem) was a shareholder in a closed joint-stock company (ZAO). The fourth entrepreneur (Iurii) had formed a holding company of several limited liability enterprises with his two brothers. While most limited liability companies are formed for profit, it is also possible to establish a non-profit organisation as a limited liability company. My sample includes one entrepreneur (Tatiana) who runs a business school as a non-profit limited liability company.

Additionally, the size of an enterprise determines the level of state support that it is eligible to receive. In contrast to the large companies of the socialist economy, small and medium-size private enterprises were often touted as the bright hope for postsocialist countries. International institutions, Western and local analysts, and governments all pinned their hopes for economic restructuring, the generation of economic growth and the reduction of social distress on the fast growing private sector (Brezinski and Fritsch 1996; World Bank 2002; UN 2003; OECD 2004). Although small and medium enterprises have not been a panacea for all of Russia's social and economic problems, they still provide a valuable opportunity to understand how businesses are operated on both economic and social grounds. Small enterprises are more accessible to researchers, and the personal deci-

sion making and managerial styles of owners are more easily recognised. In contrast to big companies, where assessments and decisions are carried out by more anonymous boards, decisions in small and medium-size enterprises are often taken by the individual entrepreneur and depend on personal relations and networks.

Enterprises in my sample exhibit a wide variation, from single-person businesses to one holding with 4,200 employees. According to Federal Law No. 88, passed on 14 June 1995, 'On state support for small entrepreneurship in the Russian Federation', an enterprise is considered to be a small enterprise based on the number of employees: 30 in retail trade and domestic service, 50 in wholesale trade, 60 in science and agriculture, and 100 in production, transport and construction. Therefore, all enterprises in my sample, except Artem's and Iurii's, match the legal requirements and are considered to be small enterprises. Artem's and Iurii's enterprises are medium-size.

Small enterprises are explicitly supported by the state. They have privileged access to business organisations that support production for export, licensing activities, the certification of new products, and employee training. Moreover, small enterprises are eligible for financial support by the state, participation in state programmes, and receive special access to new technology and scientific results. Most entrepreneurs consider the state's attempts at support to be insufficient, and in the absence of publicly available figures about fund distribution, it is difficult to discern the fairness or effectiveness of the state's efforts. In 2006, Vladimir Region, which boasts more than 10,000 small enterprises, received a total of only one million roubles (about 30,000 euros).

The Entrepreneurs and their Enterprises

During fieldwork I tried to contact as many entrepreneurs as possible who had different backgrounds, and especially attempted to include as many industrial sectors as possible. But because I ultimately relied on people's readiness to cooperate, my material is not a representative sample for business in Vladimir Region. Here is a list of the types of enterprise examined, followed by a chart outlining the major characteristics of each entrepreneur's business: construction business (3x); hotel and restaurant (3x); business education (3x); real estate office (3x); trade company (2x); farming (2x); travel agencies (2x); a newspaper company (where I worked); a publishing and printing house/advertisement/newspaper company; a holding engaged in food production, groceries, television and radio stations, and newspaper; a job placement office; an investment centre; an engineering office; a bakery; an audit company; a window construction firm; a notary; an IT company.

Entrepreneur	Age	Sector	Number of Employees	Legal Form	Year of Foundation
Alexander	early forties	construction	about 70 (seasonal changes)	OOO	1992
Artem	about sixty	restaurants, hotels, car repair, shops	600	ZAO	1991
Boris	about fifty	newspaper	25	OOO	1991
Gennadii	late forties	construction	about 85 (seasonal changes)	OOO	1992
Iurii	early fifties	food, media, advertisement, real estate, trade	4,200	holding	1997
Ivan	mid fifties	real estate	4	OOO	1998
Natasha	mid forties	job agency, business rating	–	OOO	2002
Nikolai	about sixty	engineering	35	OOO	1997
Nina	about fifty	real estate	–	IP	2004
Pavel	early forties	construction	about 50 (seasonal changes)	OOO	1992
Tatiana	mid fifties	business education	25 permanent staff and 40 lecturers	OOO	1997
Sergei	about fifty	real estate	16	OOO	1999
Viktor	mid forties	trade	–	IP	2003

Table 1. Background information on entrepreneurs and their enterprises.

Personal Background of Entrepreneurs: Gender, Age, and Education

In total, I conducted interviews or longer conversations with 28 entrepreneurs: 21 men (75 per cent) and 7 women (25 per cent). Although I did not

use random sampling and do not claim my data to be representative, the sample does reflect several general patterns. It reflects, most clearly, male dominance in business (see also Zschoch 1998: 59f., 89; Gerber 2002: 18, 25; Dittrich et al. 2006: 104), and gender variation in respect to sector. Women dominate in education and tourism, while men dominate in construction and engineering.

In contrast to Theodore Gerber (2002: 24) who noted a negative effect of age on the probability of becoming self-employed, my sample does not reveal such clear patterns. Entrepreneurs of middle or older age dominate in my sample, but Vladimir's young entrepreneurs (in their twenties and thirties) are underrepresented. Young entrepreneurs form a considerable percentage of the city's businessmen, but I gained little access to them because most were 'too busy', or unwilling to answer questions about their business activities. Moreover, young businessmen were largely missing from the business associations through which I met most of the entrepreneurs in my sample. Nevertheless, my observations indicate that opening one's own business depends less on age, and more on the ability to raise the necessary starting capital. Many of the entrepreneurs in my sample had been involved in business activities for several years before they were able to open an official business. This is still the situation faced by young entrepreneurs, who are officially absent from the business world, because they often start their business in semi-legal and unofficial ways.

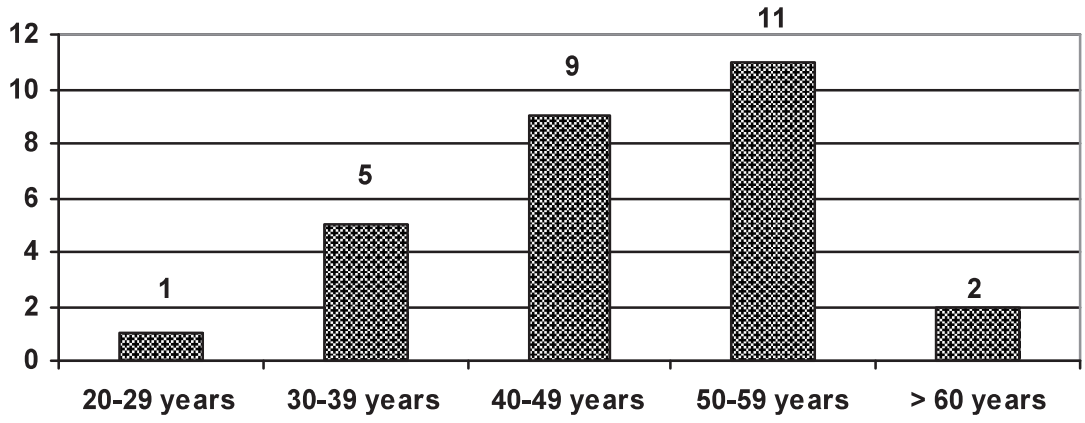


Table 2. Age distribution of sampled entrepreneurs.

My sample, however, does bear out the findings of other studies concerning the educational background of entrepreneurs. A majority of entrepreneurs in my study had finished programmes of higher education. Out of twenty-eight respondents, twenty (71.4 per cent) held one or more university degrees. Most entrepreneurs finished technical university degrees in the socialist

period, and added another specialisation later (e.g. economics, real estate, law). Other studies focusing on entrepreneurship in Russia show similar patterns. For example, Eckhard Dittrich, Heiko Schrader, and Christo Stojanov found that 73 per cent of their respondents held a university degree, and a further 6 per cent had begun but not completed a university education (2006: 104). Theodore Gerber also noted a positive effect of education on the probability of becoming self-employed, which was especially pronounced among the self-employed who had employees (2002: 24). And Barbara Zschoch (1998: 60f., 90) referred to several surveys indicating that the share of businessmen with higher education is 60–70 per cent. Therefore, the results of national surveys and my data suggest that education is one of the crucial factors for the successful development of the enterprise. Moreover, higher education is a source of pride and some entrepreneurs consider it a necessary precondition for opening a business. I was told on more than one occasion: 'Idiots never came into business!' (*Duraki v biznes ne popali!*).

'Worms' and 'Caterpillars'

Most models of entrepreneurial activity envision 'economic units in the private sector on a continuum from the smallest, single-person business to the largest company' (Róna-Tas 2002: 41). According to this entrepreneurial paradigm, a single-person business is a stage in the process of entrepreneurial expansion, and has the potential to grow into a large company. As an alternative, Ákos Róna-Tas suggested a labour market approach, and distinguished two kinds of small or medium enterprises, 'worms' and 'caterpillars'. For Róna-Tas, worms were forms of business with self-employed people that 'will never grow out of the boundaries of their households' (2002: 40), while caterpillars 'initially may look very much like the self-employed, but … then metamorphose into full-fledged businesses' (2002: 40).

Many of the enterprises in my sample are 'worms', in large part because they were founded during periods of economic crisis, in 1991-1992, 1997-1998, and after 2002. Most entrepreneurs in my sample were forced (*vynuzhden*) into self-employment because they were threatened by unemployment or found themselves waiting months to receive wages. This coincides with more general findings from eastern Europe, where the opening of a business often runs counter to the business cycle because other opportunities are largely missing (see e.g. Róna-Tas 2000). Therefore, the motivation to open one's own business among entrepreneurs in my sample was often linked to a need or desire to support the entrepreneur's family, and the management of the business is not driven by higher profit expectations. If

employees in these companies are hired at all, they often belong to the entrepreneur's inner circle of friends or relatives, and are not employed through market structures. Once the initial circle of relatives and friends found their place in the enterprise, it did not expand into new spheres or markets.

In contrast to the enterprises formed by push factors as depicted above, 'caterpillar' enterprises like Artem's or Iurii's companies were formed by a pull factor of generating higher incomes. Often these entrepreneurs could draw on stable networks of support and possessed the necessary qualifications. When employees are hired, emphasis is put on market structures and their qualifications. Trust does not constitute such a severe handicap as in very small companies and is handled through institutional arrangements. Often the number of employees is growing because the enterprise is actively expanding the market for its products.

Work in the Newspaper Company

In order to supplement the general information given above, I want to describe one company in more detail. For eight months, I worked as an intern in a newspaper company. I had initially planned to hold an internship in a local enterprise as part of fieldwork, but this was far more difficult to achieve than I had expected. Without the help of a trusted intermediary, access to entrepreneurs was not possible at all, and even with an intermediary, acceptance was far from certain. One attempt to work in an engineering company, owned by the husband of one of my wife's colleagues, failed completely because he refused to meet, even informally, when he heard about my interest in the spheres of morality and religion. Even worse, it caused trouble between the couple because the wife had been supportive of my project. It took several months before Ivan, the owner of a real estate business and a good acquaintance of mine, introduced me to Boris in mid-December 2006. Boris was the head of a newspaper company, and was interested in my work.

Boris, Head of the Newspaper Company

Ivan, my intermediary, formerly worked in Boris's newspaper company. While he was there, Ivan had generated most of the company's profits through the placement of real estate announcements, evaluations, and sales. After some years, he had accumulated the necessary starting capital, and left Boris's company to open a real estate business. Ivan was not alone in using work at the newspaper as a springboard to self-employment; I met at least six other entrepreneurs who had followed a similar path into independence.

They started entrepreneurial activities under the newspaper's roof, then eventually opened an independent business, but stayed in contact with Boris. The successful entrepreneurs had opened a travel agency, real estate, advertisement businesses, trading companies, and a printing house. Nor is the newspaper unique; other entrepreneurs I met had begun their businesses while working for someone else, with whom they often remained in good relations. Indeed, good relations with one's former boss seem critical for continued business success: of all the former newspaper workers, only the owner of the printing house spoke disparagingly about his former boss. I suspect that he feels free to criticise Boris because he is now a member of the regional parliament and can draw on a social network that reaches Moscow. Other new business owners continue to depend on their former boss for support in local business networks.

When Ivan introduced me to Boris, I was surprised about the formality between both – they addressed one another using the personal name and patronymic, and talked without any signs of warmth as would be usual among friends.[37] When I later asked Ivan if he regarded Boris as a friend, he said no, explaining that he considered their relation to be one of *blat* (*po blatu*). Most of the other entrepreneurs' behaviour towards Boris was similar. As Alena Ledeneva (1998) has shown, *blat* relations do not necessarily exclude friendship, but cannot be equated with it. Doing something 'by *blat*' (*po blatu*) means to 'obtain (*dostat'*) or arrange (*ustroit'*) something using connections' (Ledeneva 1998: 12). *Blat* arrangements are sometimes used to accomplish illegal activities, but they are also used to circumvent formal or official means of obtaining goods or services that are perceived as too impersonal, cumbersome, time-consuming, or unlikely to succeed.

Boris was born in 1959, in a village about 40 kilometres from Vladimir. After having finished secondary school, he served two years in the army, where he first met Dima, the current editor-in-chief of the newspaper company. When Boris had finished service in the army, he studied engineering in Moscow and Vladimir, and then entered the Russian Academy of Public Administration. The Academy, which has been renamed twice since 1977, is an elite school that trains future high-level bureaucrats, and Boris was only able to enrol because he had finished his engineering studies with distinction.[38] Even today, Boris benefits from the contacts he made during

[37] In Russia, there is only a highly official way of addressing someone with Mister (*gospodin*) that is very uncommon. Russians among each other use the personal name and the patronymic to address unknown people.

[38] Since 2010, the official name of the academy is the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (*Rossiiskaia akademiia narodnogo khoziaistva i gosudarstvennoi sluzhby pri Prezidente RF*).

his studies, some of whom are now high-ranking officials in the presidential administration. After finishing his studies at the academy, Boris worked in a factory, where he had a leading function in the Komsomol youth organisation. In his function as a Komsomol secretary in the 1980s, Boris first encountered private entrepreneurial activities, even though they were still officially forbidden by Soviet law.[39] In 1991, Boris opened his newspaper company as one of the first private businessmen in Vladimir. For the establishment of the newspaper, relations with people in power proved to be essential in order to receive the necessary permissions. Otherwise, opening a newspaper was relatively easy because no large financial investments like machinery or heavy equipment had to be made. Unlike many others, Boris was not forced into self-employment, but was led into business through his political activities.

In the early 1990s, Boris became heavily involved in local politics through acquaintances from the university, presidential academy, his work with the Komsomol, and the army. He left the Communist Party, and became one of the fiercest opponents of the governor on the local level.[40] Boris's newspaper, initially a commercial, profit-oriented enterprise, increasingly became an important instrument for his political ambitions, and the newspaper constantly agitated against the governor of Vladimir Region. In the following years, political differences between Boris and the governor grew into personal antipathy, and they became fierce opponents. By 2007, the political tint of the newspaper was so strong, that employees would joke with the editor-in-chief by asking, 'What is the scandal of the week?' As a result of Boris's increasingly strong engagement in local politics, circulation rates dropped, which had a negative effect on the advertisement sales that generated most of the newspaper's income. I witnessed the toll of this decline on a daily basis because I shared an office with the agent who was responsible for the sale of advertisements. He was constantly worried about the newspaper's loss of income from advertisements, and was pitied by his colleagues, who secretly called his job a 'drudgery' (*sobach'ia rabota*, literally 'a dog's work').

In contrast to the commercial losses generated in the newspaper company, which were initially balanced by other commercial activities like Ivan's real estate business, Boris's political ambitions were more successful – at least in the beginning. He was twice elected as a member of the regional parliament (1996–2000 and 2000–2005), representing the SPS Party (Union

[39] See also Yurchak (2002) and Chepurenko and Vilensky (1996: 63) for more details on Komsomol commercial activities.

[40] Until January 2008, Vladimir Region was ruled by a Communist governor.

of Right Forces – *Soiuz pravykh sil*)[41], and took a leading role in the opposition against the dominating Communist Party. Until 2002, when a candidate from the United Russia Party gained the position, the mayor of Vladimir had also belonged to the SPS – much to Boris's benefit.[42] In 2000, Boris ran an unsuccessful gubernatorial campaign, but lost to the incumbent Communist governor who was re-elected with more than 66 per cent of the votes. In 2002, he initiated another fruitless campaign to become the mayor of Vladimir. Due to his formerly leading role in political conflicts and his publicity, most people knew something about Boris from television reports or newspaper articles, and had a strong opinion for or against him. He was a controversial figure, and this sometimes complicated my research and dealings with the regional administration.

Boris considers himself to be an Orthodox believer. Although I never learned of any relations that he had with churches in Vladimir, he was still in contact with a parish near his home village that had remained open under socialism.[43] His mother was still alive, and he claimed that he sometimes attended church services when he visited her. But actually, I never met him during a service – only afterwards or in the neighbouring cemetery. The local priest, the head of the regional religious authorities (*blagochinnyi*), was his confessor. Boris also donated money for the erection of a greenhouse, so that the priest and his family could grow vegetables for their own consumption and for sale on the local market. The sale of vegetables was intended to generate additional income for the priest and the parish.

Although Boris was a very practical person and liked to talk about the shortcomings of Russia's laws and their implementation, he also stressed the importance of morality for doing business. An important expression of morality for him, he said, was to give to the church and to people in need. He donated money to the local church, to an orphanage, to a hospital, to the parish near his place of origin, and to Vladimir's annual city festival. Donations, he told me, also improve one's reputation (*reputatsiia*) as an entrepreneur and the trust in one's goods and services. Indeed, the wall behind the

[41] The Union of Right Forces Party (SPS) was founded in 1999 when several opposition parties merged that were associated with privatisation and the market economy. Today the party is mostly irrelevant (gaining less than 1 per cent of votes in the Duma elections in 2007).

[42] The United Russia Party was formed in April 2001 when two parties (the Fatherland and Unity Parties) were united.

[43] This follows a general pattern. Most entrepreneurs were born in surrounding villages, but moved to Vladimir in socialist times in order to study or to work in one of the big state companies. Nevertheless, the connection with their place of origin (often called 'little homeland' [*malaia rodina*] delimiting it from Russia as 'homeland' [*rodina*]) is maintained, sometimes even after their parents' death.

desk in his office was filled with certificates (*gramoty*) and letters of gratitude (*pis'ma blagodarnosti*), as a visible display of his charitable activities.

The Newspaper Company

I was introduced to the newspaper's staff by Boris, with the result that most employees were initially sceptical, reserved, and even unfriendly. Although I explained my endeavour as much as possible, most employees did not consider scientific research to be the real reason of my stay in the newspaper company. It was only after some weeks that I was accepted by all employees; then, I was greeted, included in everyday gossip, and received invitations for lunch and to meet after work in cafés or at home.

The newspaper company is situated in the city centre. Two years earlier, the company had been expelled from a rented property. Although Boris had paid the rent regularly, the city administration of Vladimir, which owned the building, cancelled the contract and left the company only four weeks to move out.[44] Boris was convinced that the decision was related to his constant campaigning against the governor and the Communist Party. In addition, the former mayor, an acquaintance of his, had retired and could not protect him anymore.

Boris was shocked and thought everything was lost. Employees told me that they had never seen him in such a state of despair. But it did not last very long because within a short period of time, he could afford to buy the building where the newspaper is now situated. In total, about 25 employees were working for the company at the time of my fieldwork, but there was constant turnover among staff members, because employees were always looking for other job opportunities. Moreover, there were other signs of inequality between workers and sources of discontent. The spatial arrangement of the company, for example, reflected the level of personal relationship that employees had with Boris, and marked two distinct bodies within the company. The offices in the front mainly hosted employees who had been hired for their professional capabilities and experience (journalists, IT, advertisement), while the offices in the back were reserved for relatives, friends, and close acquaintances of the owner. Most of the latter group held

[44] Most of the buildings and land in Vladimir are still owned by the state (at the municipal, regional, or federal level), and most entrepreneurs who rent offices fear government interference or expulsion. I was often told, for example, about the fate of a regional branch of the Italian-Russian Chamber of Commerce. The organisation's office building was reconstructed with money from Italy, and in return, the building was to be rented for free to the Chamber of Commerce for 25 years. Shortly after the building's reconstruction was completed, the regional administration took a one-sided decision to cut the time which was free of charge to eight years.

different professions before joining the newspaper, and needed training to work in their current positions. The bookkeeping department, for example, was run by the owner's brother and the brother's wife; the company's organisation and its financial oversight were in the hands of one of the owner's cousins, and the editor-in-chief had completed army service with the owner. In many enterprises, I found the same pattern, in which relatives were placed in positions where they were dealing with sensitive topics – first and foremost the bookkeeping.

Employees recognised the distinctions made between professionals and the owner's friends and relatives. For the professionals, differences in payment were a special and constant source of annoyance. Their salaries were low by all standards – between 4,000 and 8,000 roubles per month (roughly 125–250 euros), while the average income in Vladimir amounted to 9,122 roubles in 2006.[45] The professionals claimed that the relatives received higher salaries, but I had no opportunity to verify this claim. In addition to presumed differences in salary, the professional employees were constantly frustrated by the old equipment they used. Some of the computers were already more than ten years old, often stopped working, and their software programmes were incompatible with one another. This caused tensions to flare when the owner's relatives received new flat screens and the owner bought a big new television for his own office. But despite the difficulties and tensions in the collective, the employees were also proud of achieving good results with poor equipment.

A further source of indignation for most of the professional employees was the difference in educational background. While most of the professional employees had finished higher education or held university degrees, this was not a requirement for the owner's relatives. Income and educational differences led to accusations like, 'They are doing nothing but nevertheless receive money', or 'They are allowed to do whatever they want'. As a result, the professional employees were constantly changing because most employees also worked for other companies and were applying for other jobs. In February 2007, two colleagues left the company within four weeks. The owner, however, took little notice because new staff was hired and filled the

[45] This is the official average, taken from the city's website, http://www.vladimir-city.ru/economy/mon/itogi.pdf, accessed on 08 October 2007. My own observations, however, indicate a much lower average income because many employees earned much less than the official average income (workers in child care institutions sometimes earned only 1,500 roubles).

positions. In contrast to the constant fluctuation in one part of the company, the inner circle remained intact and showed no signs of disintegration.[46]

Another source of dissatisfaction among workers concerned the payment of salaries. Employees received most of their salary as cash, 'in envelopes' (*v konvertakh*). Most employees were ambivalent about this practice because although they appreciated avoiding taxes and health insurance fees, their future pensions and social welfare benefits would be calculated on the much lower official salaries that were paid into their bank accounts.[47] Many employees accepted the practice in general, noting that tax evasion was widespread and even practised by state institutions.[48] But everyone criticised the newspaper's practice of reporting the scandalous misconduct and corruption of others, while following the very same patterns. Employees perceived this as hypocrisy (*litsemerie*).

In March 2007, Vladimir's municipal authorities began another attempt to fight tax evasion as practised with the payment 'in envelopes'. Advertisements in buses and in the streets announced that from 20 March 2007, a 'telephone of trust' would be available each Tuesday evening from five o'clock until seven o'clock. Everyone was invited to report payments in envelopes to the city authorities and complete anonymity was promised to employees taking part. Nevertheless, the success of the campaign was limited. None of the employees I knew at the newspaper company, or other companies, reported anything because they feared losing their jobs and expected no improvement in other companies. The attempt seemed to have a ritual character, and was repeated periodically every time a new federal programme against tax avoidance was initiated.

Employees at the newspaper were more concerned with practical dealings, as a second dilemma indicates. Salaries were often paid after a delay, and it was not unusual to receive only a portion (down payment) in the course of the following month. Employees survived these times through various techniques. They tried to spend as little money as possible by not buying lunch in a cafeteria, or by not buying new books and journals that served as the basis for crosswords, editorials, and some articles. In addition, most employees were relying on networks of friends and kin who lent them money until they received their next salary. The employees used the late

[46] In 2008, when my fieldwork had already come to an end, the newspaper company underwent a tax inspection. Some employees feared non-payment and involvement in Boris's tax affairs, and left the company. Dima, until then part of the inner circle, also left the company and started work in a competing newspaper. The tax inspectors, however, found no violation of laws and acknowledged 'full compliance to the law'.

[47] Russia has a flat tax system, with a levy of 13 per cent on all salaries.

[48] Acquaintances of mine working at the university in Vladimir during my fieldwork also received their payment in an 'envelope' and held no work contract.

salary payments as grounds for criticising the company owner and questioning his entrepreneurial qualities. In contrast to former employees who had become entrepreneurs (e.g. Ivan), Boris was seen as a politician and not as a real entrepreneur. Employees especially mentioned his lack of responsibility (*otvetstvennost'*) because they expected him to take care of his employees by organising sufficient and punctual payment. Because he failed to do so, he was accused of caring more for himself than for his employees.

During my work in the newspaper company, I noticed an obvious discrepancy between the irregular and low payments for employees, and the owner's ability to afford a building in the city centre, a large BMW jeep, and personal driver. Clearly the owner was not short of cash. Or was he? In order to answer this question, I rely on the owner's explanations and remarks to me and others, on what employees told me, and on my own observations. According to widespread opinion among current and former employees, the newspaper ceased to be profitable in economic terms as Boris became increasingly engaged in local politics. Economic profits lost prime importance and gave way to political campaigning against opponents. The main source of income, advertisements placed in the newspaper, decreased and generated lower profits. During my internship, prices ranged from 10 roubles (0.30 euro) per square centimetre for black-and-white print, to 20 roubles (0.60 euros) for coloured advertisements. The newspaper appeared once a week, and had about 32 pages. On average, it included about 600 square centimetres of black-and-white advertisements and 750 square centimetres of coloured advertisements. This amounted to a weekly income of about 20,000 roubles (600 euros), which is far too low to cover the newspaper's expenses. Already when calculating the average income of the professional employees that had no personal relation to the owner, the expenses amount to 150,000 roubles per month. This is twice as high as the calculated monthly income of about 80,000 roubles. But why did the newspaper company not declare bankruptcy?

In addition to heading the newspaper company, Boris was president of an independent non-profit business organisation (*Nekommercheskoe partnerstvo prediprinimatelei malogo i srednogo biznesa Vladimirskoi oblasti*), another reason why I had decided to do my internship in his company. Although the business organisation advertised meetings and juridical support every week in the newspaper, only one meeting actually took place – a private party on New Year's Eve on 13 January 2007[49], where I met some of my future informants. I soon realised that the business organisation only existed on paper. Nevertheless, five people were employed by it: a president

[49] In Russia the Gregorian calendar was in place until the October Revolution. Until today, festive days and days of saints relate to the old calendar.

(Boris), a jurist (a cousin of Boris), a bookkeeper (Boris's brother's wife), two acquaintances who were responsible for public relations to the city and regional administration and the all-Russian business organisation 'OPORA' ('support'). All five individuals also worked at the newspaper company, and seemed never to do additional work for the business association. I suspect that some of the newspaper's income came from the monthly membership fee that businesses paid to join the business association. But, then, two questions arise: who was willing to pay 250 roubles (about 7 euros) for a business organisation that only existed on paper, and how could these modest fees generate the minimum of 70,000 roubles each month that was necessary to cover the newspaper's expenses?

In order to answer these questions, I rely on the descriptions given by employees, other entrepreneurs, and members of the business organisation. All of these individuals were convinced that the business organisation was made for money laundering (*otmyvanie deneg*). Some members of the business organisation claimed that they had not paid membership fees, but still received receipts. They maintained that through the business organisation, Boris was able to channel money from political parties into the newspaper. They explained: because the official newspaper of Vladimir Region glorified the incumbent governor and the Communist Party, other parties found it difficult to win elections. The United Russia Party, for example, had gained ground in the region during the early 2000s, but was unable to win elections decisively in 2005 (it gained only 21 per cent of the seats in the regional parliament). In order to counterbalance 'misrepresentations' reported in the official regional newspaper, Boris's newspaper received financial support from the United Russia Party. However, as mass media enterprises must declare all donations they receive (Article 10, § 9 in the law 'On mass media' [*O sredstvakh massovoi informatsii*]), the money was given in secret and channelled through the 'business organisation'.

This account of the relationship between the newspaper's finances, business organisation, and Boris's political engagements became more plausible for me after the newspaper was visited by the Main Federal Inspector for the Vladimir Region (*Glavnyi federal'nyi inspektor po Vladimirskoi oblasti*), Gennadii Vladimirovich Veretennikov, on 23 March 2007. Such inspectors were installed under the presidency of Vladimir Putin, and in fact limited the power of governors considerably. They were subordinate to the president and responsible to him alone. If inspectors reported grave abuses of power, the president could recommend that the federal parliament (the Duma) should remove elected governors from power, a situation that seriously undermined governors' authority. The inspectors, however, were not only loyal to the president, but they had their own political affiliations and

personal networks, which both facilitated and compromised their mission. In this case, Gennadii Vladimirovich Veretennikov, an inspector since 2004, was a member of the United Russia Party, and one of Boris's acquaintances from the Russian Academy of Public Administration.

The inspector's visit was not announced in advance to most of the employees. Nevertheless, everyone enjoyed the meeting for three reasons. First, was the novelty of the event – hardly anyone had met the inspector personally, although everyone knew him from television. Second, it was a welcome interruption of everyday routine and, third, there was a pleasant atmosphere with tea and cake for everyone. When the inspector arrived, Boris greeted him with great respect and introduced him the employees. Boris and Gennadii Veretennikov then took seats at Boris's desk and all the employees were seated around prepared tables opposite them. Gennadii Veretennikov honoured the work of the newspaper and paid tribute to the ongoing struggle against the Communist governor. He stressed the importance of independent newspapers for Vladimir Region, but as he continued to talk, it became clear that he only meant to say that newspapers should be independent from the Communist authorities. The United Russia Party, he explained, had no newspaper or publishing house in the region, and it needed help from Boris's newspaper to counteract local Communist influence. He showed us various statistics as evidence of the poor economic performance and condition of Vladimir Region, and attributed these to the governor's incompetence. After the presentation, he urged each of us to collect and publish material that would discredit the governor and the Communist Party. In the end, he predicted that in the coming year, the governor would either join United Russia or be removed from his post. I was later shocked to see that he had been right. In January 2008, the governor, Nikolai Vladimirovich Vinogradov, left the Communist Party after 35 years of membership. After a meeting on 16 February 2009 with the leadership of United Russia, which was, after the elections in 2009, the leading party in Vladimir Region (about 60 per cent), he was finally approved in his position as governor. Boris Gryzlov, head of the United Russia Party, announced:

> After consultation with the region, we reached the decision that our goals coincide with the goals of the regional administration. In return, the governor of Vladimir assured United Russians [*edinoross* – member of the United Russia Party] of his cooperation with the Party [United Russia] in the future (*Kommersant* No. 29 from 18 February 2009).

Despite his engagement with the United Russia Party, and acceptance of its financial support, Boris was also critical of many of the party's practices. He disagreed with what he called the totalitarian tendencies in current politics.

In many conversations, he mentioned how he had appreciated Boris Yeltsin's presidency because of its liberal policy. It was a time, he believed, that had allowed for active political participation. One day he came to me in despair, asking me what to do, and for whom to vote.

> For years, I have been fighting against the Communist Party and its governor, and now exactly these Communists are the only real opposition against President Putin. Could I now vote for them? What are the other opportunities? Should I vote for Zhirinovskii and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) or for the A Just Russia Party (*Spravedlivaia Rossiia*)?[50] But they both support Putin and do not initiate their own projects. Can this be called democracy at all, when, actually, there is no choice?

Work and the Collective

For the different departments of the newspaper, the working day began at different times. Whereas most departments started work between eight o'clock and nine o'clock, the editorial staff arrived quite late. Most of them started work between ten o'clock in the morning and one o'clock in the afternoon, and left after only a few hours. Most people had other jobs as well, and so they had to split working hours between the different workplaces. Except for the editor-in-chief, all editors were women. The editors also shared their office with a telephone agent and an IT person – both men. These two individuals began work early, but the IT person was also well known for his extended lunch breaks, sometimes lasting up to four hours. But no one criticised him openly, nor did Boris seem to notice. Similarly, the other employees spent much of their time engaged in non-work related activities: they played on the computer, took long breaks, and went for regular smokes (*perekur*). I often joined them, and in this way, got to know the latest news and gossip about Boris, other members of the company, and current issues. Other employees extended the lunch break in order to read, or to buy other newspapers and journals, which they used to inspire their own articles. During my internship, I wrote articles for the newspaper, but tried not to become involved in political matters. Therefore, I wrote a number of articles about Germany on topics such as feasts like Easter and St Valentine's Day, the pension system, and the work of the town council.

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[50] Vladimir Vol'fovich Zhirinovskii, born 1946 in Alma-Ata (Kazakhstan), is the head of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) which was founded in 1989. He is often regarded as a nationalist due to his notorious insults to other ethnic groups and his public statements that reclaim the Russia which existed within the boundaries of 1917. A Just Russia Party is considered to be a social democratic party and was formed in 2006, when several parties united (Homeland [*Rodina*], Russian Party of Life, and Russian Pensioners' Party).

Wednesday was the exception to the relaxed and individualistic work pace, because on that day the newspaper had to be finished. Accordingly, everyone arrived before lunch and worked until the editor-in-chief agreed with everything. Sometimes he asked for several corrections to be made, and so the final newspaper was finished late at about eight o'clock in the evening. Although Boris read all the articles in the forthcoming issue and discussed their content with Dima, he seldom interfered in day-to-day matters personally. He had a final look at the newspaper on Wednesday evenings, and then delivered it to the printing house whose owner was a former employee of the company. The newspaper appeared on Fridays, and in the morning most people in the company were busy reading it.

In the newspaper company, a hidden agreement seemed to prevail between entrepreneur and employees, which granted them a lot of freedom as long as the work was done properly and finished on time.[51] This practice reduced possible conflicts and allowed for periodic engagement; when the newspaper had to be finished, everyone was present, but this was not the case at other times. When, for example, one of the employees was ill on a Wednesday, the day the newspaper had to be finished, it was not unusual for their relatives (often daughters) to do their work. This ensured that the newspaper would be finished on time, and that the employee would still receive his or her full salary for the month.

On one occasion, this agreement was broken when the wrong colour ink was repeatedly used in the advertisements of an important client. The client, Sberbank, used a particular green in its bank offices and for advertisements, which made it easily recognisable. Petr, the person in charge of IT matters, was held responsible because he was in charge of the correct implementation and cooperation with the printing house. Boris, the chief accountant (Boris's brother), the editor-in-chief, and the telephone agent, stood next to Petr and argued with him. Boris was especially angry and blamed Petr for the mistake: 'How come the colour is changing every time? Why do I pay you when it goes wrong so often?' To my surprise, Petr showed no signs of regret, but shouted at Boris, full of indignation: 'It is not my fault when they [the printing house] are not able to print it correctly! Don't blame me!'. Dima, the editor-in-chief, interfered and tried to calm them. Boris left the room and Petr was still muttering, but turned to his computer in order to solve the problem. As it turned out later that day, Petr could solve the problem and was able to satisfy Boris's demands, so the quarrel was quickly forgotten.

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[51] Birgit Müller (2002: 53–72) noticed similar unwritten agreements between management and workers in socialist collectives, which she called the 'plan-fulfilment pact' (*Planerfüllungspakt*).

Furthermore, the collective was known for its tendency to organise good parties. Non-employees were also invited on several occasions including several birthdays, the Day of the Defender of the Motherland [Men's Day] on 23 February, Women's Day on 8 March, May Day on 1 May, Victory Day on 9 May, and 40 days of commemoration of Yeltsin's death on 1 June.[52] These celebrations were held in the newspaper's offices, and sometimes at an employee's dacha. A striking feature of all events was their secular connotation – Easter and other religious holidays were never celebrated in the newspaper's premises and seemed to have much less importance for people personally. At Easter, the main religious holiday in Orthodoxy, even those who had icons in their offices visited the churches only during the day to receive blessing for their Easter cakes (*kulichi*), not for the night service when Christ's resurrection was celebrated. Most people knew about the religious holidays and their interpretation only to such an extent as was necessary for including a short article in the newspaper. Moreover, most of them followed patterns from socialist times at Easter and visited the graves of their ancestors on a Saturday before Easter – a practice the Russian Orthodox Church tries to eliminate because it is considered to reflect pagan beliefs. After some time, everyone in the newspaper knew about my research on religion, and some employees turned to me with related questions. Some asked me about the meaning of particular icons, and one woman turned to me because she wanted to light some candles for her relatives, but did not know where to go, or what exactly had to be done. I accompanied her to the church, showed her how to cross herself at the church's entrance, bought some candles, and explained the meaning of the icons. Finally, she decided to light the candles in front of an icon of Mary because she considered her to be more gentle (*milaia*) than Jesus, St Nicholas, or the other saints.

Morality and Ethics at Work

At work, sometimes debates about freedom (*svoboda*) emerged between employees, or between them and Boris. Most employees considered too much freedom responsible for negative developments in Russia. Freedom was understood negatively as a lack of regulation by the state, which was considered to have better knowledge of people's actual needs. If prices increased, this was interpreted as a negative consequence of freedom and democracy where everyone could follow his or her selfish goals, and where

[52] Boris Yeltsin died on 23 April 2007. The former mayor, an acquaintance of the newspaper owner, met Yeltsin once when he still was in office and remembered the meeting as a positive event. Therefore, Boris and the former mayor organised a commemoration meeting in a restaurant where everyone was invited for a snack and vodka.

there was no need to take responsibility for others. Hotter debates erupted over the degree of freedom experienced during Vladimir Putin's presidency, especially in comparison to the Yeltsin period, as the following discussion between Boris and three employees shows. One employee and Boris claimed that freedom of speech had been respected under Boris Yeltsin's presidency, and that now, 'the KGB is in power' (*KGB u vlasti*). A second employee, a telephone agent, was annoyed and replied angrily: 'And before, in Yeltsin's time, it was better? It was said that there existed a freedom of speech – but who needs it? (*Komu eto nuzhno?*) How does it help me?' The agent's statement reflects a widespread opinion among employees, most of whom claim to be indifferent to political changes.[53] Employees claimed that economic conditions had improved since about 2000, the year when Vladimir Putin became president, and credited the improvements to him. They thought that better economic possibilities and rising salaries and pensions were much more important than any of the political propositions. But some of the employees, like Boris, were deeply engaged in politics, and strictly opposed to the policies of the United Russia Party and Vladimir Putin himself. These individuals also distributed pamphlets and books, not available in any book stores, that were critical of Putin.

A widespread Russian stereotype about Germans is that they are 'hard working and diligent', and my presence seemed to spur many conversations about work and business ethics in Russia, in which employees compared what they knew about work in Western countries. Moreover, most employees compared the current situation to socialist times. Work ethics in socialist times were often described as higher and work regimes as stricter (e.g. in the use of time clocks).[54] Certainly here it is important to note that most employees had worked in production industries before, which required completely different schedules and organisation of work. Similarly, the quality of goods was perceived to have been better in socialist times: 'Today everyone can produce what he wants – even low quality if it can be sold'. Nevertheless, most employees also believed that the quality of work and the workplace depended on individuals. If people were willing to work hard, good results could also be achieved in the current political situation. In contrast, the

[53] Political parties and their representatives were considered to be equally corrupt and selfish by most of my interlocutors. The former President Putin, in contrast, was perceived to be quite honest and sincere. Current political developments often were hotly debated at work, but actual participation in political activities like elections or engagement in political parties was low.

[54] Despite the praise of the work ethics under socialism, many derogatory proverbs were known to them about these times. 'Work is no wolf – it will not run to the forest' (*Rabota ne volk – v les ne ubezhit*), or 'Wherever you work, the most important is not to work' (*Gde by ni rabotat', lish' by ne rabotat'*).

working atmosphere in the newspaper was described as very relaxed, which was both criticised and appreciated by employees. Often the low payment was held responsible for their behaviour.

Another important example is related to the crossword puzzle in the newspaper, and clearly shows the tension between moral notions and everyday practice. Readers sent the right answer to the newspaper and every right answer was eligible for a prize, normally about 100 roubles (approximately 3 euros). The clients were taken care of by a woman who received the answers and sorted them every week. When she explained everything to me, she told me that it happened 'almost without cheating' (*pochti bez obmana*). I asked her what she meant by 'almost', and she answered: 'This is pretty easy and depends on the amount of money in the till. If there is not enough for everyone, I have to eliminate some of the right [answers].' This example shows that although the woman is critical of cheating in general, circumstances force her to exclude right answers, if no money is available. Nevertheless, she is trying her best to be as honest as possible.

Conclusion

Like other studies on entrepreneurship in transition countries, this study presented general background information on the age, gender and education of entrepreneurs, and the size, legal regulations, and structures of their enterprises. Moreover, it gave an ethnographic account of the practical dealings and the everyday life of entrepreneurs and employees at work in the newspaper company. It showed the actual work practice, the relations between employees and the entrepreneur, and between the newspaper and its advertisers and patrons. In this sense, the descriptions given here are important for the examples, discourses, and descriptions of other entrepreneurs that will be mentioned in the following chapters. Drawing on Ákos Róna-Tas's distinction between 'worms' and 'caterpillars' (2002: 43), the newspaper company can be characterised as a hybrid form. On the one hand, it has several characteristics of the caterpillar type because pull factors have been important for its foundation, the owner shows high commitment to the enterprise, and the enterprise is separated spatially from the household. But on the other hand, characteristics of the worm type are equally important, as indicated by the limited size, and the dominance of family and friendship ties for the recruitment and payment of employees, especially those in key administrative positions.

Moreover, this chapter tried to show how people, entrepreneurs, and employees try to 'make do' by searching for better job opportunities, borrowing money, starting their own business, or simply continuing in difficult situations. Similarly, I interpret Boris's engagement with the United Russia

Party, despite his criticism, as a survival strategy to save his unprofitable newspaper company. The same applies for his strategic use of *blat* networks. The key colloquialism in contemporary Russia for this practice is 'to turn', or 'to spin' (*krutit'sia*). Spinning, in this context, refers to the ability to adapt to ever changing rules, alliances, and regulations, and to use them blatantly for one's own purpose (see also Ries 2002: 289f.). Therefore, most Russians attach a negative connotation to spinning because it is believed to involve moral relativism. Moral relativism is also part of my next chapter where I examine two conflicting ethics: *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa*. Both ethics, I argue, are important for the perceptions that entrepreneurs, priests, and believers, each hold of the others.

Chapter 3
The Image of Martha and Mary: Russian Discourses on Spirituality and Rationality

> 'For both Martha as well as Mary, although very different, were equally beloved by the Lord'.
> (*Ibo Marfa i Mariia khotia i razlichny byli mezhdu soboiu, odnako obe byli vozliubleny Gospodom.*)
>
> - Sergei Bulgakov, *Dva Grada*

Every time I explained that I was looking for possible connections between economy and religion, Orthodox believers and priests immediately associated my project with the Protestant-ethic thesis introduced by Max Weber, and protested vehemently. They told me that Orthodoxy was different from Protestantism. Thus, many Orthodox people contrasted what they saw as the greater emphasis on spirituality in Orthodoxy with their impressions of Catholicism and Protestantism as blatantly rational, 'this-worldly', and instrumental forms of religiosity. As in some Western interpretations of Orthodoxy (e.g. Harnack 1904, 1913; Buss 1989, 2003; Troeltsch 1994), I found that my informants also tended to describe Orthodoxy in the abstract as a stronghold of spirituality, contemplation, asceticism, and mysticism, despite the ambivalences of their own beliefs and practices. However, my observations in contemporary Russia indicate a much fuzzier picture and ambivalent attitudes among Orthodox believers and priests. The reconciliation of worldly engagement with mysticism has long been discussed within Russia as a problem for Orthodoxy. For example, Sergei Bulgakov, a Russian priest and religious philosopher (1871–1944), was among the first Russians who tried to reconcile both aspects of religious life, contemplation and active engagement in the world.[55] By drawing on the parable in the Bible

[55] Some of my older informants introduced me to Bulgakov's works. According to Philip Walters (1988: 84f.), the ideological vacuum following Stalin's death and de-Stalinisation provoked the rediscovery of the Russian nineteenth and early twentieth century heritage.

about the two sisters of Lazarus (Lk 10, 38–42), Martha and Mary, Bulgakov stressed the equality and similarity of Orthodoxy and Protestantism as 'sisters', as the quote given above indicates.

Bulgakov's approach is still a useful one in contemporary Russia, and merits a re-reading of the original parable from the Gospel of Luke.

> As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!'.
> 'Martha, Martha', the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her' (*New International Version* [*NIV*], Lk 10, 38–42).

This parable is often interpreted as an expression of the right balance in the attitude of religion towards 'the world': between contemplation (*vita contemplativa*) and activity (*vita activa*).[56] In this parable, contemplation prevails over activity, but only a few lines above this text, the parable of 'The Good Samaritan' (Lk 10, 29–37) answers the same questions in the opposite way. Most people who have approached the interpretation of these passages agree that the parables are meant to appear together, and that the Christian faith demands both contemplation and activity. Similarly, Orthodoxy in contemporary Russia is torn between renouncement, asceticism, and spirituality, on the one hand, and pragmatism, rationality, active engagement in the world, and the fulfilment of practical needs, on the other. Although Orthodoxy is often associated exclusively with spirituality (see e.g. Harnack 1904, 1913; Buss 1989, 2003; Troeltsch 1994), this perception is misleading. On the contrary, the tension is clearly revealed in the practical dealings and moral discourses of Orthodox people, as I analyse in this chapter.

The tension between spirituality and worldly activity also appears in the discursive opposition of businessmen and believers. Believers and clergymen often defined their approach to religion in opposition to that of businessmen, but I observed the importance of renouncement and pragmatism for *both* social groups, leading to nearly identical accusations and ideals vis-à-vis one another. In the first part of this chapter, I describe the existing

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Among the rediscovered authors were important Slavophiles like Vladimir S. Solov'ev, Nikolai A. Berdiaev, and Sergei N. Bulgakov.

[56] Besides extensive coverage in theology, the tension between contemplation and activity gained interest in philosophy and the social sciences, as indicated by the works of Friedrich Nietzsche (2008) and Hannah Arendt (2006).

axiological teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church concerning business and economic activity. In the second part, I turn to the discourses of priests, believers, and businessmen about each other, and about their practical dealings in everyday situations.

In the eyes of many believers, the ethics and practices of clergymen and businessmen are considered to be irreconcilably opposed. Whereas priests are considered to be engaged in contemplative practice like liturgy and prayer, businessmen are thought of as being occupied exclusively with money-making and other practical dealings. At a second glance, however, this clear-cut opposition begins to fall apart, as the economic and the religious sphere meet in many ways. Priests, for example, have to care for many more practical things than is usually acknowledged. At the very least, priests must generate funds to operate the parish building, undertake necessary renovations, and pay their own salaries. In addition, some priests also organise charitable activities within the parish for the elderly or the needy. To the extent that these activities are acknowledged, most believers express sympathy, and support the efforts of priests to generate extra income. On the other hand, businessmen are not as exclusively oriented towards practical dealings as most believers like to claim. Many businessmen hold religious beliefs and regularly invite priests to conduct blessing ceremonies for their enterprises (see chapter 4). Moreover, many businessmen organise pilgrimages for their employees (see chapter 6). In addition, the 'worldly' concerns of businessmen are sometimes positively evaluated, as when they donate money for the construction of churches (see chapter 5). These examples begin to point to the ambivalent relation between Orthodoxy and business activities, which can only be explained through a more detailed description of actual practices and discourses.

Axiological Teachings on Work, Wealth, and Property

In the Bible, as the parables of Martha and Mary and the Good Samaritan show, there is an ambivalent attitude towards worldly activities. This ambivalence was central to medieval Russian Orthodoxy, where it was expressed in two different approaches to monasticism, and has continued into the present period. In the medieval period, the eremitical practice of monasticism represented by the figure of Antonii Pecherskii 'of the Caves', coexisted with more active strands, such as those led by Feodosii Pecherskii and Sergii of Radonezh, which engaged in charitable, social, and political activities (see also Kenworthy 2008: 28f.). The dispute over the degree to which Orthodoxy should engage with the world reached its climax in the sixteenth century in the debate between the Possessors and the Non-Possessors (Angold 2006; Rock 2006: 269ff.; Kenworthy 2008: 29f.). The conflict culmi-

nated in the question of whether monasteries should be allowed to possess land. The first position, emphasised by Iosif Volotskii, became the dominant one, and called for monastic landowning in order to raise the income necessary for charitable and social activities. His opponent, Nil Sorskii, denied the necessity of property for monasteries, and demanded contemplative prayer and retreat from the world to hermitages (*skity*, Ch. Slavonic). One result of the victory of the Possessors was the strong entanglement of the Russian Orthodox Church with the state, which led to a more active engagement of the Church in worldly affairs (see also Rock 2006: 271).

Over the next 200 years, the attention given to charitable activities continued to shift within the Church and monastic orders. In the eighteenth century, influences of the German and French Enlightenment gained ground under Catherine the Great. Ecclesiastical estates were secularised, which severely hampered social and charitable activities by monastic communities (Kenworthy 2008: 30ff.). The result was a retreat to liturgy and sacramental service. The nineteenth century saw an intensive upsurge of monasticism that lasted until the 1917 Revolution (Kenworthy 2008: 32f.). However, the type of monasticism changed, as Brenda Meehan-Waters (1990) noted a shift from contemplative practice (entering a convent) to charitable activity (nursing, teaching, and care of the poor and orphaned) within Russian women's religious communities in the second half of the nineteenth century. Scott Kenworthy (2008: 33), however, has argued that men's monasticism changed less and continued to focus on contemplative prayer or liturgical worship. Nevertheless, the emphasis on contemplative prayer in male orders did not exclude charitable activities, as revealed by the work of Ioann of Kronstadt. In the nineteenth century, Ioann of Kronstadt combined charitable and social activities with asceticism, contemplative prayer, and sacramental participation (Kitsenko 2006; Surskii 2008). After 1917, all religious organisations were prohibited from undertaking social and charitable activities, and the role of the Russian Orthodox Church was reduced to liturgical functions.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Russian Orthodox Church has been searching for a new role in Russian society (Agadjanian 2003; Agadjanian and Roudometof 2005; Caldwell 2005; Zabaev 2005). Many believers take an ambivalent position, as they would like the Church to have a greater engagement in the world and more actively evaluate current affairs, but they also value the Church's spiritualism and disinterestedness. Nevertheless, for the economic sphere, the moral judgement of the Church is demanded and perceived as a helpful corrective to Western management techniques and individual profit maximising. Until the fall of the Soviet Union, the Church had little opportunity to intervene in negotiations about workers' salaries or working conditions. After the demise of state socialism, however, religious

teachings dealing with the economy became a dominant source of criticism against capitalism, and an inspiration for alternative economic modes. Booklets and video tapes circulated in church circles, books were published, conferences were held, and in 2000, the Church published the 'Bases of the Social Concepts of the Russian Orthodox Church' (*Osnovy Sotsial'noi Kontseptsii Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi*) (*Osnovy* 2000), part of which is dedicated to questions pertaining to the economy. According to my observations, the recent elaboration of axiological teachings has been influenced by two developments. First, the Russian Orthodox Church was able – for the first time since 1917 – to address topics and make claims in public which were of its own choosing. Second, the Church was under pressure because many people demanded answers, and had urged the Church to take an active stance in the new social, political, and economic order.

In the late 1990s, the Church began to recognise the need to not only criticise economic activity, but also to present a positive assessment. Besides the 'Bases of the Social Concepts', one of the most prominent voices in this shift towards a positive engagement with economic activity was that of Veniamin Simonov – a monk (Hegumen Philip), professor of economy at Lomonosov University in Moscow, and consultant to the Russian government. In 2005, Simonov published a book in which he demanded the formulation of a positive Orthodox understanding of the economy. According to Simonov, economic activity does not have to be avoided, but can be understood as one possible way to salvation (Simonov 2005: 22). Accordingly, work as a form of economic activity has to be understood as a process immanent to man, which encourages spiritual advancement through meekness (*smirenie*) and penance (*poslushanie*) (Simonov 2005: 23). Simonov recognised that the monastic ideal is not suitable for everyone, and argued that individual and society must be 'resocialised' by the development of another form of economy that would accord with Orthodox teachings (Simonov 2005: 25).

Simonov's sophisticated arguments have had a more restricted circulation and less impact on everyday life than more general teachings published by the Church and the World Russian People's Council. The most popular official church document addressing economic behaviour is the 'Bases of the Social Concepts', published in 2000, that formulated an independent view of the Russian Orthodox Church on the economic sphere. Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, who was enthroned in 2009, was one of the primary shapers of the document in his former role as Head of the Department for External Church Relations. Western analysts Alexander Agadjanian and Kathy Rousselet have identified Patriarch Kirill's contribution in the apparent 'global divide between two mega-concepts or worldviews:

(neo)liberalism and traditionalism' (2005: 32). The document especially criticises a liberal emphasis on the freedom of the human person 'as absolute value and measure stick of the truth' (*Osnovy* XVI.3.), noting that such a perspective resulted in man's original fall from grace and other negative events like the construction of the Tower of Babel. Thus, the document describes the ideal Christian as someone who 'is not entrusted with an active freedom of autonomous choice' (Agadjanian and Rousselet 2005: 35). In addition, the universalism of Western secular (neo)liberalism is contested and opposed to notions about the uniqueness of religious traditions (Agadjanian and Rousselet 2005: 35ff.). Rather, the 'Bases of the Social Concepts' emphasises the importance of the community's welfare, at both the level of the Church and the nation. The document also levels an uncomfortable attack against the universalism of Western secular and (neo)liberal perspectives, in order to establish the uniqueness and legitimacy of the Orthodox tradition vis-à-vis Protestant perceptions of the economy (Agadjanian and Rousselet 2005: 35ff.).

The section of the 'Bases of the Social Concepts' dedicated to the economic sphere deals especially with the topics of work and property. Under the heading 'Work and its Fruits' (*trud i ego plody*), the document addresses the topics of work, its rhythm and limits, and the meanings of work, payment, profit, and justice. With reference to the Bible, the relation of man to work is depicted as an ambiguous one. On the one hand, work is described as an organic element of life (*Osnovy* VI.1.), but, on the other hand, there is a difference between work before and after man's fall from grace – between creative occupation and the tiresome necessity to earn one's living. Although the fall changed the character of work, it is still perceived as an important element of life. Following the fourth commandment from the Bible a particular rhythm of work is demanded where Sunday is dedicated to religious service (*Osnovy* VI.2.).[57]

The 'Bases of the Social Concepts' stipulates that work should be limited in its intensity and duration, and that man should strive to undertake only work that is 'blessed'. The document argues that the modern division of labour and the reduction of physically difficult forms of work have improved man's material condition, but that his spiritual condition is in danger because it has not improved in the same way (*Osnovy* VI.3.). Moreover, the civilising process further endangers man's spiritual condition because it estranges him from God, and encourages man to want to live without God. The document introduces the construction of the Tower of Babel as an example of work

[57] This work rhythm is rarely kept by the owners of shops and other small business owners because most markets and shopping malls are open on weekends, seven days a week, or even 24 hours.

which man undertakes as a challenge to God; such work is not blessed (*Osnovy* VI.4.). Work is only blessed when it follows God's commandments and is not directed towards egoistic goals. Two motivations for work are considered to be moral: first, to feed oneself, and second, to share with people in need. If this is taken into account, work can become a 'school of social justice', as formulated by Clement of Alexandria, one of the early Church Fathers. Moreover, unselfishness in work is highlighted and the importance of charity is stressed.

According to the Church's view, every profession that follows Christian moral norms is equally blessed (*Osnovy* VI.5.). Drawing on the Gospel of Matthew (13, 45–46), which makes an analogy between the kingdom of heaven and a merchant's valuation of a precious pearl, the Russian Orthodox Church includes engagement in business as an adequate profession which suits Christian norms. Only professions promoting and supporting alcoholism, the use of narcotics, prostitution, and adultery are considered inherently sinful. The Church also judges that is not sinful to work for others, nor to employ others, but honest work should be fairly paid, and the 'fruits' of work should be shared with the needy.

The following chapter in the 'Bases of the Social Concepts' deals with questions pertaining to property (*sobstvennost'*), and its forms and meanings. Although the Church is not in a position to define people's right to property in legal terms, it reminds people that the possession of property during their lifetime is less important than preparing for God's Kingdom after death (*Osnovy* VII.1.). One has to secure one's own salvation primarily through sharing, as often invoked through a citation from the Book of Matthew: 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God' (Mt 19, 24). Or, as expressed by John Chrysostom, 'Not to share one's property is theft as well'.[58] Both the 'Bases of the Social Concepts' and many priests stress the difference between their perceptions of Protestant teachings on property and the Orthodox understanding. Drawing on a simplistic reading of Weber, they describe the pursuit and acquisition of property and wealth as goals which Protestants consider to be blessed by God, and then explain that wealth is not necessarily a blessing among the Orthodox. Property is an important aspect of relations among men, as it is acknowledged in two commandments, but the Russian Orthodox Church stresses that property is not valued in itself, and that its possession does not necessarily lead to happiness (*Osnovy* VII.2.). In this respect, the 'Bases of the Social Concepts' does not provide a new interpre-

[58] John Chrysostom (*Ioann Zlatoust*) lived in the fourth and fifth centuries, was Archbishop of Constantinople and is considered to be one of the early Church Fathers. He is held in high esteem in Russian Orthodoxy and outside it.

tation of property for the general public, but compiles previously published interpretations from booklets and articles in popular religious journals.

The 'Bases of the Social Concepts' also outlines different forms of property: state, societal, cooperative, private, and mixed forms of property (*Osnovy* VII.3.). None of these forms is considered to be superior to the others. But a special role is attached to the property of religious organisations that, according to the Church's demands, should be exempt from taxation (*Osnovy* VII.4.). For the Russian Orthodox Church, this demand has already been implemented to a large degree, as no tax has to be paid for income generated through property, the sale of religious paraphernalia, or donations made to the Church.

Beyond these summary discussions of the appropriate values and limits which should be placed on work and property, the 'Bases of the Social Concepts' invokes examples given in the Bible or by the early Church Fathers to assist readers in the practical application of these principles. Yet these examples often appear to contradict each other and are still phrased too abstractly to be easily translated into practical guidance for everyday living.

In contrast, the World Russian People's Council (*Vsemirnyi Russkii Narodnyi Sobor*) has attempted to generate a more practical discourse on the ideal model of economic activities. The Council consists of deputies from the government, political parties, churches, trade unions, and entrepreneurial and art organisations. The assembly of 2002, held at the seat of the patriarch in Moscow from 16–17 December, met under the heading 'Faith and Work: Spiritual-Cultural Traditions and the Economic Future of Russia'. As a result a Decalogue was published called the 'Ten Commandments of Business':[59]

1. Do not forget to earn the daily bread (*nasushchnyi khleb*), but remember the spiritual meaning of life as well. Do not forget your personal grace that requires caring for your neighbour, for society, and for the motherland.
2. Wealth is not an end in itself (*samotsel'*). It should serve to build a dignified life for everyone and for the people (*narod*).
3. The culture of business relations and the loyalty (*vernost'*) in a given word help to improve people and the economy.
4. Man is no 'continuously working mechanism'. He needs time for relaxation (*otdykh*), spiritual life (*dukhovnaia zhizn'*), and creative development (*tvorcheskoe razvitie*).
5. State, society, and business should work together to assure a dignified life for workers. In particular, they have to work together to care for those who are not able to earn their living.

[59] See http://www.mospat.ru/archive/nr212173.htm, accessed on 25 February 2009.

6. Work should not kill (*ubivat'*) or cripple (*kalechit'*) people.
7. Political and economic power should be separated. Participation of businessmen in politics and their influence on public opinion have to be obvious and open.
8. Disrespect of others' property, misuse of common property, failure to pay one's employees for work, or the cheating of one's partner, violates the moral law (*nravstvennyi zakon*) and harms society and oneself.
9. In competition, one must not make use of lies (*lozh'*) and insults (*oskorblenie*), or exploit vice (*porok*) and instincts (*instinkty*).
10. One should respect (*uvazhat'*) ownership (*sobstvennost'*) as the right to possess and dispose of property. It is immoral to envy (*zavidovat'*) the prosperity of your neighbour or to claim his property.

In contrast to the 'Bases of the Social Concepts', the 'Ten Commandments of Business' give more practical advice for economic activity. Nevertheless, the problem of applying these teachings in everyday life still remains because the languages of religion and business are deeply separated.

At a meeting of a business association, for example, I asked one businessman about the relevance of religious teachings in his everyday activities. As did many others, he denied that he was overtly influenced by religion, and explained why. 'Of course the Church holds modesty to be an important quality for men. But if I tell my employees, "You are so nice because you are such modest guys (*besserebrianniki*)", they will be offended'. The businessman's point is clear: the term the Church most often uses to refer to modest people also has the literal meaning of 'those without silver (*serebro*)' – hardly a desirable description for any worker or businessman. As this example shows, it is often impossible to phrase things in religious language in everyday situations. Nevertheless, axiological teachings remain important at a more abstract level, as in discourses or as ideal models. More important for everyday life and actual practices have been the local interpretations and local discourses that will be examined below.

God or Greed? Entrepreneurs' Reflections on Business Practices

The prevailing image of entrepreneurs is marked by what many recall as the 'horrible 1990s' (*strashnye 1990 gody*). In the first decade of postsocialism, rackets, murder, and swindle were part of the everyday experience of many Russians.[60] As a result of increased racketeering, public shootings (*razborki*), and organised crime, business was perceived as the most criminal sphere of

[60] Many people, for example, were directly affected by pyramid schemes like MMM which involved several million people before it collapsed in 1994.

life, as a source of criminalisation, and as a danger for the entire society (see Silverman and Yanowitch 2000; Ries 2002). During my fieldwork in 2006–2007, I never heard about public shootings among rivalling gangs in Vladimir. Nevertheless, the image of the 1990s remained and was shared by my colleagues in the newspaper company, friends and acquaintances, and other businessmen. My colleagues, for example, continued to express surprise when former colleagues or acquaintances became rich virtually overnight. People they had considered 'honest' and like themselves were suddenly revealed to have been 'criminals'. The pervasive association of business with criminality rests on personal experience and actual knowledge of what happened during perestroika, but, in addition, is shot through with gossip, rumours, and mere guesswork about individual cases. Before giving the individual accounts let me turn to a brief historical description of the perestroika period in Russia.[61]

The privatisation of former state conglomerates started in 1991 when President Boris Yeltsin appointed Yegor Gaidar to lead his first cabinet. In turn, Gaidar appointed his friend Anatoly Chubais to run the State Committee on the Management of State Property (*Gosudarstvennyi komitet Rossiiskoi Federacii po upravleniiu gosudarstvennym imushchestvom*). In summer 1992, a presidential decree created the legal basis for privatisation. It was a crucial event for the introduction of capitalism in Russia. As part of the privatisation process, employees in most state enterprises received vouchers (*vauchery*) that made them eligible to participate in decision making and to share in the enterprise's profits. In reality, employees benefitted very little, and most of my informants, like Western analysts, consider privatisation to have been a failure. Most of the vouchers were sold at a low price or lost their value because companies declared themselves bankrupt; at the same time, a few individuals managed to acquire incredible wealth in the exchange and sale of shares. The latter soon came to be described as oligarchs. In addition, prices were liberalised, followed by inflation, with prices rising and savings from socialist times being devalued. It was only at the end of the 1990s (after the rouble crisis in 1998) that the situation became more stable. The near and actual illegality of many of the transactions involved in privatisation, coupled with economic instability for many and extreme wealth for a few, has engendered social disapproval of the whole process, and is now reflected in a common play of words between privatisation (*privatizatsiia*) and seizure (*prikhvatizatsiia*).[62]

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[61] For more detailed accounts see Boycko, Shleifer, and Vishny 1995; Hedlund 1999; Åslund 2002.

[62] *Prikhvatizatsiia* is an artificial construction that derives from the verb *prikhvatit'*/*prikhvatyvat'*, to grab or to seize.

Boris, the head of the newspaper company where I did my internship, explained how privatisation was introduced to Vladimir Region. He was one of the first to open an independent business in 1991, but he had held a leading position in the Komsomol youth organisation when the first business activities were initiated (see also Yurchak 2002). According to Boris, in Vladimir, widespread cheating connected to privatisation was mainly carried out by the managers or former directors of the corporations. He differentiated between two forms of cheating. In the first instance, no salary was paid to workers and employees for a while – sometimes intentionally and sometimes due to economic difficulties. After some time, because they had not received salaries, employees had the impression that their company would soon have to declare bankruptcy. Employees were thus willing to sell their vouchers to managers for less than their nominal value, and accepted particularly low rates when they were offered foreign currency such as US dollars. In this way, a few individuals amassed the majority of shares, employees lost their voting rights, and the company's ownership was legally transferred.

The second form of cheating was called 'mirror' (*zerkalo*) cheating, and was also carried out by the leadership of the former state enterprises. In this process, managers founded a second enterprise that was independent from the existing one, but worked in the same economic sphere. Orders to the state enterprise were handed over to the new enterprise in secret. Due to the evident drop in demand at the state enterprise, most of the equipment was no longer necessary and was sold at a low price, often to the newly founded company. After some time, the former state enterprise declared bankruptcy and dismissed all the employees, who were then offered new jobs in the private company. Similar to the first example given, managers (pejoratively called 'takeover agents' *perekupshchiki*) applied a 'push-out strategy' and employees lost their ownership rights, with little or no compensation.

In addition to the privatisation of former state enterprises, many new private companies emerged in the 1990s. Accounts of the establishment of these new companies are also accompanied by widespread accusations of fraud and deceit. The accumulation of starting capital is particularly seen as suspicious. Examples from my informants mainly show the importance of connections with people in power or in strategic positions. Those who gained great wealth are also thought to have profited by conducting transactions in foreign currency that could be further exchanged for roubles at a profitable rate because officially possessing foreign currency was not allowed at that time. One former colleague from the newspaper company, for example, is reputed to have become wealthy by using connections to acquire

weapons and then sell them in Moldova where his relatives lived.[63] Now he is a respected entrepreneur, a member of the local parliament, and the owner of several companies. Although it is difficult to judge to what extent such rumours are true, I tend to accept the given explanations because of my informants' detailed knowledge of the methods and the circumstances.

Amidst these widely shared and verified accounts of deception, cheating, and questionable morality in the formation of new and privatised businesses, businessmen provide more complex accounts of their own initial dealings. In these accounts, belief in God and a desire to behave in accord with church teachings is entwined with descriptions of a generalised immorality in Russian business practices. As examples in this chapter and others will show, priests often encourage businessmen to engage in such highly nuanced discussions and practices, in which many of the businessman's own activities (and certainly those of others) remain sinful, even as he engages in some forms of penance and spiritual development. Additionally, neither businessmen nor priests rely exclusively on official church teachings for moral guidance, but also incorporate examples from well-known Soviet-era literature and films.

For example, Father Vladimir provided a rich account of his own development as a businessman before he turned to the priesthood and became the director of the Orthodox school in Vladimir.[64] Father Vladimir's business sold icons and other religious paraphernalia, and although it was independent from the Church, the business brought him into good relations with the Church. In this interview, he also explained his understanding of business and what he perceives to be the general attitude towards wealth in Russia.

> Father Vladimir: I did not want to engage in business because it means deceitfulness (*lukavstvo*) and fraud (*lozh'*).
>
> Tobias Köllner: Really?
>
> Father Vladimir: Virtually always (*prakticheski vsegda*). If you want to make a profit, virtually always. And if you want to make a big profit – 100 per cent, always. I made big profits, in comparison at least. About 200 or 300 per cent. Very much. ... And well, I used

[63] From 1990 until 1992, there were armed conflicts between Moldova's national forces and separatist forces in Transnistria.

[64] In 2006, Father Vladimir worked in an Orthodox school and served in one of the biggest churches in Vladimir. He is also the person in the diocese who is responsible for donations made to the Russian Orthodox Church. The Orthodox school was situated next to my son's kindergarten, which gave me the opportunity to meet Father Vladimir regularly. After some time, he invited me to the school as well as to the church. His reasons for engaging with me were twofold. On the one hand, he was interested in talking about religion in general and about religion in Germany in particular. On the other hand, he hoped to convert me to Orthodoxy.

some counterfeits (*podlogi*). I tell you this openly because now I understand what I did. And when this happened [Father Vladimir had a serious accident on one of the holy days dedicated to Mary and had to pay for the damages on the borrowed car], I understood that Our Lady pulled me away [from business] because it happened on her day.[65] My strength was not sufficient to stop [engaging in business] on my own. Why? First, because of the money, of course, and second, because of the obligations towards suppliers, towards ... Many people were connected with it and it was not easy to say: 'That's it. I won't do this anymore!' I am very happy that this came to an end, very happy. I became another person. [...]

Imagine so much money! I could afford a lot for myself. But I felt ashamed (*mne bylo stydno*). I tell you the truth, I felt ashamed. Because I had money, I could afford to go to a restaurant; I could fly to the south to the best sanatoria. But all the other people could not afford it. It was so shameful to me because I had enough money. At the train station I told someone: 'What do you want? Well, I will buy it for you. Let's go, I will buy the ticket for you'. I realised that something was in his eyes ... Do you know, there is an author, no two authors, Il'f and Petrov, who wrote *Twelve Chairs* and *The Golden Calf*?[66] There is one story about a man who wanted to become rich, which has been important for the Russian intelligentsia until today. In the second book, he finally became rich because he pinched the money from another bandit [laughs]. Very surprising, of course. He went to Moscow by train and met some students who sang songs and played guitar. A very funny company. [...]

But then there was this moment when he wanted to boast about his money and opened his suitcase and showed them his million. And suddenly something in the mood broke and the students left. He asked why the students were leaving and told them he would pay them for their company. But the money changed the whole situation. The money disturbed and changed this man. [...]

In Orthodoxy, wealth as such is not perceived as something positive. Even today, wealth is shameful for a man. This has nothing to do with envy (*zavist'*), but with shame (*styd*). Unfortunately, many

[65] For more details on the understanding of accidents as divine interventions, see chapter 4.

[66] Il'ia Il'f and Evgenii Petrov are the authors of both novels that quickly became cult classics. They describe Soviet life in the 1920s and 1930s at the times of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in a satirical way. Both stories involve the pursuit of wealth through various means, including a suitcase full of money and chairs stuffed with diamonds. *Twelve Chairs* was published in 1928 and *The Golden Calf* in 1931.

> people do not understand this and drive around in expensive jeeps. This is not right. One can use one's wealth for one's flat because this is something intimate and private – for one's friends and kin.
> Tobias Köllner: Why do you think wealth should be shameful to them?
> Father Vladimir: Look at these young billionaires, these young lads (*mal'chishki*). Abramovich ... Who is he?[67] How old is he? 41! A young guy. Where is this money from, where did he take it from? Maybe his father was Rockefeller and he inherited everything? No. This guy went to a secondary school (*srednia shkola*) and somehow managed to do the right steps in time, and to attract money. Where did he take it from? No one knows. This means something was not honest (*nechestnyi*). This means somewhere (*gde-to*), something (*chto-to*) happened. And if you search for it, you definitely will find it – he cheated (*obmanul*) and seized (*perekupil*). In general, these people did not earn their starting capital in an honest way (*nechestnym sposobom*). Business in Russia has always been wild and rough (*dikii*), and will always stay like this. This is also true for the merchants and donors in the nineteenth century, or why do you think they donated so much money to the Church? They did not earn their money in an honest way and recognised their sins (*grekhi*). The nicer the church to which they donated, the bigger the sins. But they wanted their children to be different. In the West, it was the same when one looks at, for example, the Rothschild family. To earn a lot of money is only possible if one makes a moral compromise.[68]

As Father Vladimir recounted his experience of being a businessman, making money, and ultimately leaving business, a number of themes emerged that reflect common Russian attitudes towards wealth and business, as well as popular interpretations of what Orthodoxy considers to be appropriate behaviours. Envy and greed, shame, the desire for material comfort, moral weakness, and age are the most important. Interestingly, Father Vladimir does not use biblical passages to reflect on his reasons for leaving business, but rather refers to two books (later made into popular films) that originated

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[67] Roman Arkad'evich Abramovich was born in 1966 in Saratov and studied engineering at the Gubkin Russian State University of Oil and Gas in Moscow. Through his engagement in oil and other businesses including *Rusal*, *Runicom*, *Sibneft'*, and *Aeroflot*, he became rich. By 2006, he had become one of Russia's most well-known oligarchs. From 2000 to 2008, he was the governor of Chukotka Region, and in 2003 he became known worldwide as the owner of the British football club FC Chelsea.

[68] Unfortunately, Father Vladimir answers the question why he associates the possession of money with shame only partially by pointing to the honest gain of wealth. However, this seems to be only one aspect of why he associates wealth with shame.

in the socialist period, and were not initially intended to convey religious messages. Rather, these tales reflected socialist moral teachings like 'You do not need to have a million to be content', or 'It's the small things that make you happy'. In earlier parts of our conversation, Father Vladimir had cited biblical passages, but this reference makes clear that socialist and Orthodox moral teachings intermingle and constitute a wide-ranging nexus of interpretations and notions, not only among ordinary Russians but also among clergy members.

As the interview shows, wealth per se is neither negative nor positive in Father Vladimir's view because he differentiates between its use and its origins. For example, he is critical of Russians who like to show their wealth with expensive cars, furs, or jewellery, but thinks that it is appropriate to spend money in the private sphere for friends and relatives, and to invest in making one's home a comfortable place. Furthermore, he, like most Russians, is sceptical about the origins of wealth, and is convinced that it is not possible to earn a lot of money by honest means in such a short time. He especially thinks that it is unlikely that young businessmen with low levels of education earned their money in honest ways.[69]

While shame and modesty are themes that appear in Orthodox teachings about wealth, Father Vladimir's disapproval of relatively young and uneducated men becoming rich seems more closely related to socialist teachings which stressed the importance of education, and attached substantial moral authority to those who had obtained post-secondary degrees. All of these qualifications, however, indicate that wealth per se is not a moral or social problem, as long as one has attained it honestly and uses it appropriately.

To some degree, the mixture of Orthodox and socialist teachings with common Russian opinions can be understood as a stylistic strategy by Father Vladimir. In several of our meetings, he mentioned that he should make an effort to convert me to Orthodoxy, and I suspect that he used similar rhetorical strategies with the businessmen and others who come to him for confession. Often the priest in this confessional relation is called a spiritual teacher (*dukhovnyi nastavnik*).[70] By talking about his personal experiences and struggles, Father Vladimir effectively describes his attitude and influences behaviour by giving advice and making suggestions about concrete situations of everyday life. In this way, he adapts the quite open axiological teachings to individual needs and intellect. Father Vladimir's approach

[69] The two facts do not coincide with the businessmen in my sample who are mainly middle-aged and of whom more than 70 per cent hold university degrees (see chapter 2).

[70] See also chapters 4 and 5 for more ethnographic details on the relationship between businessmen and their spiritual mentors.

conforms to the findings of Chris Chulos (2006: 354) who noted that in Orthodoxy 'religious belief and practice took on a highly personal and local meaning'. This fact is important to keep in mind because this allows for the direct approach to groups with highly individual forms of religiosity.

Assertions that business is inherently dishonest and sinful are equally widespread among priests and ordinary Russians who only tangentially participate in church activities. For example, a young priest at the Archangel Michael Cathedral was even more categorical in his insistence about the dishonesty of business than was Father Vladimir. The Archangel Michael Cathedral is located near the city centre and was used as a museum during the Soviet period. At the time of my fieldwork, it was mainly frequented by young and middle-aged people who entered for brief periods to light candles in front of an icon, to read a prayer, or to remain silent for a few minutes before leaving again. The church was near a bus station and had a parking lot, so many individuals came in the morning or late afternoon, taking a short rest on their way to or from work. Many of the female visitors did not observe the Church's dress code, and entered the church in short skirts, high heels, and without headscarves.[71] For all these reasons, the Archangel Michael Cathedral was very different from most other churches which had close-knit parish communities from the neighbouring areas, everyone was well-known to each other, and dress and behavioural codes were strongly enforced. One might have expected to find more relaxed attitudes towards wealth and business in a priest who ministered in such a setting, but this was not the case.

Father Kliment, a young man in his early thirties, was convinced that business could not be carried out honestly. When I asked him why, he answered: 'To buy goods for five roubles and to sell them for ten. What do you think this is? It's a sin (*grekh*). Of course, it is sin'. I tried to argue, saying 'But probably he will not earn five roubles profit because he has to pay the rent, the equipment and so on'. But Father Kliment still disagreed: 'Nevertheless, it is a sin. This is mere speculation (*spekulatsiia*). It would be something different if someone is producing something on its own and sells it for its real cost (*real'nye raskhody*)'.

As in the interview with Father Vladimir, this discussion reveals the ongoing influence of socialist teachings on contemporary religious discourse. As illustrated above, the official position of the Russian Orthodox Church stipulates that trade, if carried out without deceit, is considered to be

[71] Most priests require skirts at least to cover the knees and condemn the popular high heels. For women it is obligatory to cover their heads with headscarves and elderly women who clean the churches or sell religious items in the church shop watch for compliance to the last detail by handing out headscarves to women who enter without any.

a regular and moral occupation. Yet, it is clear that Father Kliment considers every sale that is not made directly by the producer to the consumer to be a form of speculation, and thus sinful. According to his understanding, goods should be sold for their real cost and not for a price formed by the supply and demand of the market. The problem is not a doubling of price by many contemporary businessmen, but that they add any costs at all to account for the value of their own labour and overhead. Father Kliment's position, like that of many Russians (as Caroline Humphrey has already noted [2002: 59]), reflects a Marxist interpretation of the labour theory of value where true value is created by labour.[72] This influence is even more clearly betrayed by Father Kliment's use of the term 'speculation' to characterise trade. This term was often used in socialist times specifically to discredit trade. However, as Father Kliment equates speculation with sin, he reconfigures socialist teachings as religious ones. While the interpolation of socialist values into postsocialist Orthodoxy can sometimes be explained as a matter of individual biography and experience – as in the case with older priests like Father Vladimir who were educated during socialism and had other occupations before entering the priesthood – this is not always so. In Russia more generally, it could be argued that religious and secular notions intermingle and constitute a nexus, but not clear-cut opposition or contradiction.

Negative evaluations about success in business are not limited to priests, but are shared by other people as well. Natasha, a woman in her mid-forties, provides a good example. Natasha considers herself Orthodox, observes fasting, and visits different churches from time to time, but she does not belong to or regularly attend a particular parish. Thus she is somewhere in the middle of the range between 'belonging without believing' and being identified by the Church as an inchurched believer. Natasha is also a businesswoman; she runs a job agency in the centre of Vladimir located near the newspaper company, and I often met with her to discuss various topics over a cup of tea. Because there are many job agencies in Vladimir, she faced serious problems in trying to stay in business. But she tried to find her niche by training as an auditor, and now she is able to evaluate enterprises for company sales. Despite the fact that she is running a business on her own, she is critical about other people's businesses, as the following interview extract indicates.

[72] According to Marx (1986: 46), 'A use-value, or useful article, therefore, has value only because human labour in the abstract has been embodied or materialised in it. How, then, is the magnitude of value to be measured? Plainly, by the quantity of the value-creating substance, the labour, contained in the article'. See also Adam Smith (2005 [1776]) and David Ricardo (2006 [1817]) who have elaborated on the labour theory of value.

> Decency and honesty in business do not go together. This is impossible (*ne vozmozhno*) because there is no sincerity (*iskrennost'*) in business, and there can be no sincerity. If you tell your business partner everything, you lose your own advantage and cannot stay in business. Business is based on your advantage in having knowledge, and you have to keep this secret. Of course, there are limits and most entrepreneurs try to keep their word and the contracts. [...]
>
> Nevertheless, business is always connected to cunning (*khitrost'*) and no one will tell you the whole truth. Business is like a game and businessmen are like gamblers (*igroki*) – you can lose or win everything. Cunning is always part of the game – on a small scale (*melkie khitrosti*), but these are still sins (*a tem ne menee eto grekhi*). It is especially problematic to get the necessary starting capital. In the 1990s this was seldom achieved in an honest way (*redko chestnym putem*).

Natasha shares the priests' negative views on success in business, but provides a slightly different explanation of why business is sinful. In her account, business is always connected to sinful behaviour because it cannot be completely honest and sincere. Although she knows many entrepreneurs who try to keep their word and contracts, they still keep secrets to maintain an advantage over others. In her view, the lack of sincerity is already a sin. She accuses especially the first generation of entrepreneurs of having earned their starting capital in illegal ways. But many of the points she made are also true for her own business. Although she is talking about a general other and not about herself, she refers at least in some parts to her own situation.

Natasha's view is rather unusual because most businessmen do not consider the lack of openness and sincerity a sin. On the contrary, tax evasion, making use of personal connections with people in power, or bribery are described as trifling elements of common practice that cause little or no harm to others. In this view, most aspects of business can be considered generally decent, with only a few exceptions. This view was exemplified in an interview I held with Artem, a man of about sixty years, and the owner of a medium-size company situated some 90 kilometres away from Vladimir in several small settlements. Artem's company comprises numerous hotels, restaurants, food shops, garages for car repairs, and shops for construction materials. In total, more than 600 people work for the company in different locations. In socialist times, Artem was the head of department in one of the big state corporations that was located in Moscow but had its dacha settlement in the village where the headquarters of his firm are situated today. He opened his first private business in early 1991, selling groceries from a cabin with two companions who left the company later. Artem still lives in Mos-

cow, but comes to the company nearly every day. Like Natasha, he is actively engaged with religion. Although he was baptised in infancy, he only started to engage with Orthodoxy from early 2000 onwards. He visits the church regularly, although not every week, observes fasts, and goes to confession. In the following interview segment, he describes a priest's response to his confession of dishonesty in his business dealings:

> Sometimes there is temptation (*iskushenie*) because I am a director, and whether I want to or not, I commit sins anyway. For example, I violate a law or do not pay some taxes. But do you understand how it is here [in Russia]? The laws are so stupid (*Zakony takie duratskie*). I went to the priest in order to confess and told him: 'Father, I have not paid my taxes properly'. And he said: 'You cannot live if you do not sin, and you cannot repent if you do not sin' (*Ne prozhivesh' – ne sogreshish', a ne sogreshish' – ne pokaesh'sia*). Priests themselves understand because they are decent people (*adekvatnye liudi*).

Artem's confession to evading taxes and the blame he places on inadequate laws to explain his evasion of them, are quite common among businessmen. What is more interesting in this anecdote is that the priest supports Artem's explanation; he even encourages Artem to continue evading taxes by referring to two popular Russian proverbs: 'You cannot live honestly in this world' (*Chestnym v mire ne prozhivesh'*) and 'If you do not commit sins, you cannot repent' (*Ne sogreshish' – ne pokaesh'sia*). According to the priest's logic, sinful behaviour is a necessary precondition for repentance. Artem appreciates the priest's lack of criticism as an 'adequate' (*adekvatnyi*) and understanding response; both priest and businessman criticise the state and its laws as creating difficult and unstable circumstances, in which man cannot live honestly. Under the circumstances, confession and repentance constitute a moral response to an immoral world. Such a position, however, is also in clear contradiction to the Russian Orthodox Church's official teachings that one should live according to the state's laws, and in which tax evasion is described as equivalent to 'theft from orphans, the elderly and the handicapped' (cited in Simons 2005: 19).

This example clearly shows the difference between official teachings and everyday interpretation and practice. Showing respect, and even sympathy, for the problems of businessmen enables priests to play an ambiguous role as friend and spiritual teacher. The compassion by Artem's priest shows that he understands the dilemma that Artem faces. Such expressions of compassion from priests, especially when accompanied by practical solutions – such as confession – allow priests and businessmen to initiate long-term relations. Over time, these relations allow for the mutual exchange of support and favours; businessmen receive blessings and prayers, but they

also give donations. Relations between priests and businessmen have both spiritual and material dimensions to them. In this relation, priests emphasise the axiological teachings, being important as an ideal, but actually reshape their practical advice, in order to meet the spiritual needs of businessmen.

In some cases, priests also use their privileged knowledge to help businessmen advance their practical ventures as well. Cases such as the one described below were quite rare in my data, but their existence indicates the degree to which the priest's roles as friend and spiritual teacher can come into conflict, and the extreme changes that priests can make when interpreting official teachings to befriend businessmen.

One night, Father Dimitrii, a priest in his mid-thirties who was responsible for a small chapel outside Vladimir, invited me to dinner with two of his friends. We had met several times in his chapel and in Vladimir because I was interested in the reconstruction work at his church, and especially its newly constructed bell tower. The restaurant was the most expensive one in the city, and a dinner could cost more than 1,000 roubles (30 euros). As it turned out, Father Dimitrii's two friends owned the restaurant and several other catering facilities. As dinner began, the two businessmen asked the priest what they could order, as it was the Lent of Peter (*Petrovskii post*). The priest talked to the waitress and ordered fish for all of us because meat and all animal products except fish were prohibited. When we received our dinner, the two businessmen asked the priest to say a prayer and to bless the food because, as they explained, 'this is his task'. This reflects a widespread attitude among businessmen, as religion is considered to be a task for experts and in this way becomes more efficacious. A similar attitude prevails in respect to prayers and blessings, as I will show in chapter 4.

During dinner, one of the businessmen talked to me, while the other businessman talked to the priest. The businessman I was speaking with told me about the profitability of their business, sprinkling his account with biblical citations, and attributing the successful opening of five new restaurants in the previous year as a sign that they had been blessed with God's grace. I pretended to follow his account, but in fact, I listened more intently to his partner and the priest, who were talking in soft voices. I saw the priest handing over a leaflet that was offering a real estate investment in a dacha settlement near the city – an investment the priest considered to be profitable. In addition, I heard the priest tell the second businessman that a building which had the best location for a restaurant belonged to an old woman who 'could certainly be convinced to sell it'.

In this example, the priest's 'friendship' with businessmen seems to far exceed the compassion necessary for active ministry, or even to meet the practical needs of securing adequate donations for church functioning. While

I subsequently mentioned this incident to other priests in an effort to better understand what they perceived as the limits on priestly compassion, I found that they were reluctant to comment. In any case, however rare this incident may have been, it illustrates the ambivalence in the relation between priests and businessmen, and the extent to which priests and businessmen may cooperate, despite widespread pronouncements that business and religion are irreconcilable.

How the Church Makes Money

At the end of the Soviet period, many former church buildings were returned to the Russian Orthodox Church in a dilapidated state. Before they could again be used as churches, the buildings needed renovation as well as new personnel. The costs to the Russian Orthodox Church have thus been particularly high, as it has attempted to renovate and reopen, as well as maintain and operate, its churches. The Church receives some money from the state, but it is severely limited due to the separation of state and Church in the Constitution. Some state money is allocated to the Church for the support of cultural heritage, but unlike Sweden, Finland, or Germany, there is no church tax in Russia.[73] Therefore most of the operational costs for local parishes are covered by the collection of money for religious services, to sell religious paraphernalia and to attract donations from believers. Donations, as I will show in chapter 5, are of utmost importance for the construction of existing churches and the erection of new ones.

The Russian Orthodox Church tries to reduce its dependency on donations and to generate more stable sources of income. Therefore, the Church has become increasingly active in the economic sphere. Nearly all the churches have small church shops (*tserkovnye lavki*) selling religious paraphernalia, books, and candles to believers. Bringing one's own candles to the church for prayers and the veneration of icons is explicitly discouraged by signs that insist that only candles purchased at the store are 'blessed'.[74] Moreover, many churches post lists which state the prices of all the religious items and services – a baptism costs about 200 roubles (6 euros) and a wedding 1,000 roubles (30 euros). Despite the fixed prices, the idea of a voluntary donation prevails (Tocheva 2011). In addition to the sale of religious items and charges for rituals, the Church generates income through tourism.

[73] In 2009, the Russian state dedicated 2 billion, 235 million roubles (about 50 million euros) for 'objects of cultural heritage', many of which are churches and monasteries (see http://www.izvestia.ru/obshestvo/article3126505/, accessed on 20 March 2009).

[74] In front of every icon is a candleholder; the flame and smoke of lit candles are said to carry prayers to the venerated saint.

In many cases, monasteries now market themselves as destinations for organised pilgrimage tours and as historic heritage sites.

In Vladimir Region, monasteries historically played an important role in the economic activity of the Church, and they have resumed this role in the post-Soviet period. Until the 1917 Revolution, monasteries owned huge land estates that could be rented to farmers. This generated the income necessary for charitable and other non-profit activities. In addition, monasteries were engaged in craftsmanship where monks, nuns, and believers produced goods for use or sale. Since the end of socialism, the monasteries have also been in a period of transition. Vladimir's main monastery, for example, was used by the KGB during the Soviet period. It now has resumed its monastic functions, but also hosts the diocese of the Vladimir eparchy, a seminary for priests, the library of the eparchy, and the municipal land authority. The head of the monastery is Abbot Giorgii who is also the secretary of the archbishop. In this position, he deals with the economic activities of the diocese. In one of our interviews, he complained about the current situation of the monasteries and their economic weakness, and then outlined his own visions for future developments.

> When we look at a monastery in Italy, for example, one part of it is dedicated to pilgrimage. And some sort of an accommodation business is there, right? Here [in his monastery] such things do not exist. [...] According to my view, the Church should have its own economy. But we do not have it! There is no independent [church] economy. We only wait with open hands until someone gives us money. We are not able to earn this money on our own. And the state does not give us money as in Germany. It [the state] does not collect taxes for us; the Church is separated from the state. We only receive money from rich people. [...]
>
> Rather, we should build a small factory or enterprise for the production of furniture, for example. Produce – sell. As I saw it in Italy or France. Another possibility is a brick factory where church people work. They produce all the construction material necessary for the construction of a church. What is not needed for the church could be sold, and the profit could be used for the needs of the Church.

To my surprise, Abbot Giorgii's idea that the monastery could engage in the production and sale of construction materials caused little concern for the believers with whom I spoke. Indeed, most of them refrained from open criticism, and showed at least some sympathy for the introduction of other forms of rational economic activity inside the parishes of Vladimir. As they said, 'The Church has to earn its money as well'. As to the current situation, the state was blamed for not giving the necessary funds to keep the Church

running. Even those who disagreed remained silent and claimed, 'It is not our task to judge this! (*Ne nam eto sudit'*)'. Even when people did disapprove, the Church's teachings on authority tend to mute open criticism. Priests frequently underline the importance of refraining from open criticism of higher-ranking people: a woman should not criticise her husband or other men, an employee should not criticise his or her employer, and a believer should not criticise the priest. The only two possibilities, then, when one disagrees with a priest are to endure the situation, or to pray to God for change. Especially inchurched believers and converts were eager to follow priests' advice and, therefore, felt obliged to abstain from critical remarks.

The introduction of price lists did not cause any anxieties either. On the contrary, most believers appreciated the introduction of fixed prices in churches because it was otherwise difficult to guess the right price. With a fixed price, all churchgoers knew how much they were expected to pay for services and goods. Especially for people who were not visiting the church regularly, this greatly simplified the handling of services.

In contrast to many churchgoers and ordinary believers, I noticed far more criticism of the Russian Orthodox Church among entrepreneurs. Tatiana, an entrepreneur in her mid-fifties, is one of those who oppose the increasing economic engagement of the Church. She is a professor of economics and the director of a private business school. During socialism, the school was part of the Marxist-Leninist Scientific Institute of the biggest enterprise in Vladimir. Tatiana had worked in the institute, and in 1997, she took over the building and started a private business institute.

> Today, the Church also tries to earn (*zarabatyvat'*) money under market conditions, and starts to take part in all big events, even in political ones. The market relations touch the Church as well (*rynochnye otnosheniia kosnulis' i tserkvi*). Today, the Church already divorces (*razvenchivat'*). I do not understand this. A wedding is a unique event, right? If divorce ceremonies are then done for money, it already smells bad (*pakhnet*). Probably, there is the danger of a commercialisation of the Church. ... This is my personal opinion.

Tatiana points to two examples of commercialised behaviours by the Church – participation in political events and divorce ceremonies. She finds divorce ceremonies particularly problematic. As she notes, a wedding is a unique event, and the bonds of marriage should not be dissolved, 'until death separates you'. Whereas marriage is considered to be one of the sacraments, divorce is not, and is not even mentioned in the Bible. For Tatiana, priests should not conduct divorce ceremonies at all, and the fact that they now collect for the ceremonies, 'smells'. Later in the conversation, Tatiana also

mentioned the blessings of offices that have become fashionable in contemporary Russia as an example of the dangerous commercialisation of the Church.

Another entrepreneur, Pavel, agrees with Tatiana's criticism of the Church. He is in his early forties and was still studying to become a construction engineer when he first thought about opening his own business. In order to obtain the necessary starting capital (*pervichnyi kapital*), he started to engage in business activities. His first official business selling groceries opened in 1992. Today he runs a construction company with more than 50 employees. In one of the interviews, he complained about the changes in the Church since socialist times. Pavel himself was baptised as an adult in late socialist times, and compares this to the recent baptism of his youngest child.

> I was baptised when I returned from the army. I was 20 years old and it was still under Soviet rule when everyone was afraid to visit the churches. So I went alone. I remember how the priests were in those days. It was a church in a stable with sincere believers (*iskrennye veruiushchie*). The priest talked to me for a long time, talked about spiritual values, about Orthodoxy, and many other things. But today ... In those days, we were two or three people who were baptised, and the priest had a lot of time to talk to each of us individually. Today, it is a commercial flow (*kommercheskii potok*), like an assembly line. When I baptised my last child, there was a crowd of people. It was a pure formality (*chistaia formal'nost'*). Read, dunk, dismiss (*Otchital, maknul, raspustil*). [...]
>
> In those days, there were only a few parishioners and the priests lived in poverty. And the churches were poor. And there were people who were devout believers and willing to help others. But today it is a very good salary [the priest's] and there are people [priests], who go there [do these jobs] and do not believe in God, or maybe they believe in God, but at the same time they have their selfish (*korystnyi*) motivations. In my view, this is not acceptable (*ne priemlemo*) for a priest.

Like Tatiana, Pavel perceives a moral decline among priests that he links to the improving material prosperity of the Church in the postsocialist period. The priesthood has become like any other occupation, primarily an opportunity to make a living, and it is no longer even necessary for a priest to have a deep belief in God to perform his work.

Entrepreneurs, however, are not universally critical of the Church. Like other believers, they accept the Church's need to support itself through some financial dealings. One entrepreneur, Gennadii, provided a more elaborate explanation of the Church's economic status which emphasised its

need for society's active support, not only a non-questioning attitude towards its activities. Gennadii is in his mid-forties, a member of the local parliament, and runs one of the biggest construction companies in the region. He is a well-known donor who financed the erection of two new churches and several monuments in Vladimir (see chapters 5 and 7). I met him more than once, and when I knew him better, I asked him more sensitive questions as well.

> Tobias Köllner: Do you see any threat that the Russian Orthodox Church could be perceived as too commercialised, as providing religious services (*dukhovnye uslugi*)?
>
> Gennadii: No, I do not see any threat. [...] The priest's income stems from his parish. It is these people, the parishioners, who should support him. There is probably some sense behind it. It has been like this for centuries. Since ancient times, a tribe supported its shaman. These people of spirituality (*dukhovnost'*) care about our spiritual world. Correspondingly, I think, we should support them. Any service (*usluga*) obliges us to pay for it.

By asking Gennadii if the current situation could be understood like a provision of 'religious service', I drew on an expression that I had heard Father Vladimir use when he complained about how entrepreneurs perceive the Church (to be discussed in chapter 4). Gennadii, however, disagreed. He did not see the relationship between priest and parishioners as one of sellers and buyers, but argued that it was an ancient relationship of patronage: spiritual people have always been supported by laypeople, so that they could undertake specialised work that would, in turn, support the laypeople. Yet even though Gennadii denied any danger that the Russian Orthodox Church might be perceived as a provider of religious services, he still concluded, 'any service obliges us to pay for it'. Gennadii's explanation turns on the idea that spiritual services have a material or monetary equivalence. Many people, including Father Vladimir, reject this idea because they understand it as reflecting the commercialisation of priests' work, but Gennadii differentiates between the neutral connotations of service provision, and the negative connotations of commercialisation.

Conclusion

Despite their differences, Gennadii, Tatiana, and Pavel share what I found to be a dominant association of priests with the monastic ideals of asceticism, renouncement, and sharing, as represented in the notion of a *vita contemplativa*. In contrast, entrepreneurs and the world of business are mainly associated with activity, rationality, and practice, as pronounced in the model of the *vita activa*. Priests and businessmen share these mutual perceptions of

each other, and the perceptions often influence their practical dealings and assessment of each other's honesty and morality.

Businessmen are usually perceived as the less moral characters, especially because their activities are considered secretive, opaque, and unclear. Businessmen are described as earning or losing their fortunes because, 'at some time, somewhere, something happened' (*kogda-to, gde-to, chto-to bylo*). What actually happened is considered too difficult to know with certainty, and most people assume it involved questionable or dishonest behaviours. Yet it would be misleading to assume that entrepreneurs do not care about contemplation or salvation. On the contrary, they share many of the ideals and moral premises of society, as becomes visible in their donations, penitential efforts, and religious beliefs and practices (see chapters 4 and 5). Moreover, the interviews with Tatiana and Pavel show that similar accusations of corrupt behaviour, insincerity, and selfishness may be levelled at priests. And Artem's recounting of his attempt at confession demonstrates that such ambivalence is indeed inherent in priests' behaviour, especially when they interact with businessmen.

In practice, the boundaries between 'contemplative' and 'active' life become blurred, and both groups diverge from their respective ideal model. Priests sometimes engage in rational activity and businessmen have spiritual requirements. It is therefore necessary to differentiate between a 'representational' and an 'operational' model of how priests and businessmen behave. But, priests and businessmen are also keen to jump between models, depending on the context. Sometimes they work together, ignoring the models altogether; at other times, they each criticise the other for not being adequately contemplative.

The next chapter examines how businessmen do live, partially and to various degrees, a contemplative life. As I will show, the religious beliefs and practices of businessmen are highly personalised and depend on personal relations and the interpretations given by priests. Priestly advice ('Russians always have been the builders of churches') and practical recommendations ('Pray to this or that icon') are far more important than abstract theological teachings as expressed in the 'Bases of the Social Concepts of the Russian Orthodox Church'. The religious practices and beliefs of businessmen, however, remain ambivalent because it is intimately linked to notions of protection, and is sometimes used to gain higher profits.

Chapter 4
‘Just in Case – It Won’t Become Worse’? Religious Beliefs and Practices among Businessmen

> ‘In the eyes of many peasants the rites of the church were nothing more, but also nothing less, than particularly effective magical performances; without knowledge of the Bible, any dogmas, or even the Lord’s Prayer, they were accustomed to the rites and saw the essence of Christianity in them’.
>
> - Andreas Buss, *The Russian Orthodox Tradition and Modernity*

The citation above refers to the religiosity of Russian peasants and their relation to the Orthodox Church in previous centuries. The picture described by Andreas Buss is still very familiar, and religion in contemporary Russia is often described as being characterised by a kind of double belief (*dvoeverie*) in which pagan beliefs and practices are preserved alongside Christian teachings (e.g. Rock 2006, 2007). Such accounts of belief, however, have tended to focus on the expression of religion in rural regions, and have given little attention to the problems of social differentiation, or to the complex ways in which religious belief might be experienced and expressed in urban areas.

The analytical stress on the problem of double belief in Russian Orthodoxy also duplicates a common tendency in the study of Eastern Christianities, which is to foreground the dichotomies formulated by the Church of orthodox/heterodox, scriptural/popular and belief/practice. From an anthropological perspective, Chris Hann and Hermann Goltz have argued that it is necessary to draw attention to the ‘solid theological backing for attaching prime importance to *practice*’ (2010: 15) and – at the same time – to avoid structuring belief and practice as diametrically opposed. Instead, they contended that greater insight into Eastern religiosity depends on ‘recognis(ing) more complex combinations of beliefs and practices, varying between different social groups, but also between individuals, and contextually variable even for the individual’ (Hann and Goltz 2010: 16). This chapter follows the

lead suggested by Hann and Goltz through a close examination of the religious beliefs and practices that are important for businessmen – a social and economic group that has only emerged during the recent postsocialist period. What relation do the believers among this group have with the Russian Orthodox Church?

The years of perestroika and the time following the demise of socialism bear witness to major changes in the religious sphere in Russia. A country that was officially atheist has very quickly transformed into one where up to 82 per cent of ethnic Russians claim identification with Orthodoxy (Kääriäinen and Furman 2000; Filatov and Lunkin 2006: 35). These 75 to 85 million Russians do not necessarily attend church services regularly or have a deep knowledge of church dogmas or religious rituals. Despite the high level of identification with Orthodoxy, the level of religious practice (whether measured through church attendance, prayer, or observation of fasts), and knowledge of Orthodox axiological teachings remain low (Kääriäinen and Furman 2000; Borowik 2002; Sokolova 2005; Filatov and Lunkin 2006). Research conducted specifically in Vladimir has used church attendance as the main indicator of religious practice because prayers and fasting have been considered too difficult to observe. A survey organised by the Vladimir eparchy, for example, reports that church attendance in Vladimir is less than 0.5 per cent of the city's inhabitants on a normal Sunday (personal communication from Father Aleksii Golovchenko). Taking into account the daily services that take place every morning and evening, sociological surveys still calculate that only 7 per cent of the population visits church at least once a month (Kääriäinen and Furman 2000: 21).

From the Church's perspective, the mismatch between religious identification and church attendance is problematic. The Church perceives itself as the living body of Christ (*telo Khrista*) and considers that every believer is an active part of this body.[75] Accordingly, salvation outside the Church is considered to be impossible, and active engagement with the Church is demanded of believers. The process of 'inchurchment' (*votserkovlenie*) is considered to play an especially important role because through regular church attendance, believers are expected to address the question of how one should work on oneself in order to come closer to the Church and to achieve one's own salvation. As priests explain it, through inchurchment a 'real' Christian is made out of a 'nominal' one.[76] Through the distribution of

[75] The concept derives from St Paul (1 Cor 12: 13). It stresses the unity of the Church through an analogy with the human body, and expresses the need for cooperation between the individual parts.

[76] In a narrower sense, *votserkovlenie* is part of the baptism ritual and refers to the admission into the religious community. But today it is mostly understood in a broader sense, as a

booklets and journals, the Russian Orthodox Church also teaches the crucial importance of daily prayers, priestly benediction (*blagoslovenie*), and the blessing (*osviashchenie*) of any activity (cf. Sinichkin 2006: 1).

In contrast to the Church's demands, my own observations reveal that there is a high level of embarrassment among businessmen to show their religiosity, and that they tend to have only loose membership ties with the parish community. Thus, inchurchment among businessmen is even more rare than it is among other groups. For most of my informants, the open display of religious feelings was considered shameful. When attachment to Orthodoxy was mentioned, often a restriction followed: 'Of course, we do not pray to such an extent that the head breaks (*golovu razbit'*)'. The embarrassment and shame associated with public expressions of religious belief had also been noticed by priests, who thought it was important to perform religious rituals and processions in public, as a way of lowering people's inhibitions to inchurchment.

Despite high levels of shame and embarrassment, my observations show a demand for religious interpretations and the use of particular religious practices by businessmen. However, the practices demanded are mainly not connected to the parish community, do not have to be exercised in public, and largely rely on priests as intermediaries. Often priests are invited to the office, or they are asked if the ceremony could be carried out in a closed church or at the priest's home. The religious practices demanded are diverse and range from life-cycle rituals to benedictions, blessings, or prayers (*molitvy*). According to a widespread attitude among businessmen, it is the expert's task to communicate with God, and he is considered to be much more successful in obtaining results (see also chapter 3, p. 80). These findings indicate highly individualised and privatised forms of religiosity that largely depend on personal acquaintance with priests, and which can produce highly personalised meanings that fall outside of the Church's official teachings and interpretations. In other contexts, such phenomena have been understood through concepts like individualisation (Luckmann 2000) or 'believing without belonging' (Davie 2003).

In western Europe, the individualisation of religion is often described in economic metaphors, as reflecting 'choice' in a religious 'market'. In Russia, the market metaphor is only apt to the degree that businessmen often consider the Church a provider of services similar to the other suppliers with whom they contract business deals. Accordingly, they imagine that the Church's services vary in quality, and that higher quality services can be obtained for higher prices. For businessmen especially, contributions to the

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lifelong process of engagement with the Church and a strict observance of clergymen's prescriptions.

Church may be called donations, but are often understood to be payment (see also Tocheva 2011). Therefore, businessmen sometimes 'donate' enormous sums in order to receive the best possible religious services. For example, I was told a story about a businessman who paid ten times more than the priest asked for baptismal services for the man's child, in the hopes that the baptism would be closed to the public and done in the best possible manner.

In the case of Russian businessmen, however, personalised religious practice can only loosely be associated with 'freedom of choice' in a religious market. At one level, a general commitment to an abstract notion of Orthodoxy is highly appreciated across social sectors, and has even become a kind of a 'fashion' (*moda*): offices have to be blessed by a priest, an icon hung in the corner, and children baptised. Businessmen also face real social pressure to affiliate with the Church. In Russia, elite economic and political groups face especially strong limits of religious choice because 'it is still impossible to disentangle the "economic" from the "political"' (Humphrey 2002: xxii). For this reason, businessmen from bigger enterprises must follow in the friendly course which the state and president have taken towards the Russian Orthodox Church. The degree of this social pressure and interlocking of Church, politics, and economy, is even reflected in a businessman's choice of spiritual teacher: the higher the position of the businessman in society, the higher the position of his spiritual teacher and other acquaintances in the church hierarchy.

The most widespread religious practices among businessmen are similar to those observed by other Russians. Businessmen request blessings with holy water (*osviashchenie*) for offices, office equipment and machinery, homes, cars, and other items; they hang icons on their home and office walls[77]; and they periodically light candles in church. In addition, many businessmen establish a long-term relationship with a particular priest as a spiritual teacher or father (*dukhovnyi nastavnik*). Through this relationship, businessmen also participate in parish life, although they rarely attend church services. Their financial support funds reconstruction, renovation, and other important church projects, and they may also shape the character of a priest's teachings more generally, as few businessmen willing accept a spiritual teacher who overly criticises entrepreneurial activity. Priests who are spiritual teachers to businessmen also give religious interpretations of various events and deliver religious services like prayers (*molitvy*), blessings

[77] In Russia two forms of blessings are known. The first one is called *blagoslovenie* and can be carried out by priests and ordinary believers. Holy water is not necessary for this form of blessing. It is used, for example, by parents who bless the marriage of their child, or by believers who bless the journey of an anthropologist driving back to Germany. The second form, *osviashchenie*, requires holy water, and can only be performed by priests.

(*osviashcheniia*), and baptisms (*kreshcheniia*) in the enterprise, at home, or in church.

Taken together, these practices reflect an underlying set of beliefs, religious interpretations, and preoccupations that focus on aspects of evil (*zlo*) which are troubling (*bespokoit'*) people, and on the notion of punishment (*nakazanie*). In the remainder of the chapter, I describe how these beliefs are expressed in practice, and provide more ethnographic examples of how entrepreneurs make use of blessings by having a wide range of objects including cars, honey, and even *pel'meni* (Russian dumplings) blessed.

What do Russians Believe?

In recent years, the topic of religious belief has been contested by many writers on the grounds that it is difficult to measure, and irrelevant for understanding religions other than Christianity and other Semitic traditions (e.g. Watson 1988; Asad 1997; Lopez 2000; Bloch 2002). From this perspective, 'practice' is a more useful tool for understanding religion. There are difficulties, however, in simply transferring this perspective to the study of Russian Orthodoxy. On the one hand, Eastern Orthodoxy is often distinguished from Catholicism and Protestantism with a reference to the emphasis which Orthodoxy places on 'right practice'. Yet on the other hand, the contrast between practice and belief within Orthodoxy is drawn less strongly by Russian Orthodox believers when they describe their personal relationship to religion. Many people, for example, described the beginning of their engagement with religion as originating in belief. Often they came to 'believe' in church teachings after they heard a priest or leading parishioner interpret an event or circumstance in a new way that caused them to re-evaluate their previous assumptions or perspective. Thus, it is not possible to dispense with the concept of 'belief' in favour of 'practice' when analysing the relationship of businessmen with Russian Orthodoxy. Instead, it remains important to investigate how belief and practice are mutually constituted (Durkheim 1957: 101), and how belief influences certain courses of action beyond prescribed religious practices (Godlove 2002).

Several sociological surveys have already been conducted in Russia to outline the profile and patterns of 'belief'. These have shown that atheism is generally decreasing, and that most Russians believe in the existence of God. Across Russia, the population of such believers averages 61 per cent (Kääriäinen and Furman 2000: 17); in Vladimir Region, the figure is a slightly higher 65 per cent (Zharkov 2005: 239). Yet the surveys have also revealed that beliefs in astrology, magic, and witchcraft are widespread, with more than 40 per cent of the population holding such beliefs (Kääriäinen and Furman 2000: 17). Indeed, the Chinese luck charms, evil eyes, and other

talismans that decorate many offices and market stalls bear witness to religious and magical beliefs that are not sanctioned by the Church. Although I did not conduct sustained research on these charms and talismans, their use and display would seem consistent with what I found to be the most important aspects of belief and practice within official Orthodoxy.

Namely, the most important religious beliefs for Russian businessmen are those connected to suffering and notions of evil. One important belief in Russian Orthodoxy is related to the understanding of punishment on earth (*nakazanie*). Unlike in Protestant belief, Orthodox theology has developed the dialectic between bodily suffering and bodily restoration, as exemplified in Christ's resurrection, in ways that blur the distinction between the spiritual and the material (Eade and Sallnow 2000: 22). Thus across Orthodox communities, bodily imperfections and illnesses are often interpreted as outward signs of God's punishment for one's own sins (cf. Danforth 1982). Accordingly, accidents (*neschastnye proisshestviia*), illness (*bolezn'*), or bad luck (*neschast'e*) are often connected to one's own misdeeds and result in processes of self-reflection that could lead to conversion or more serious engagement with religion (cf. Pelkmans 2009). Certainly, these events provide an impulse for becoming religious in any society, but in Orthodoxy the clear-cut reasoning in church discourse is striking, and puts considerable pressure on individuals to atone for their sins, even – and perhaps especially – if they are not active churchgoers. In this way, I argue, beliefs resulting from given religious interpretations have to be seen as important factors which have to be taken into account for the analysis of religious practices.

In addition to the notion of punishment on earth, notions of evil (*zlo*) and anxiety (*bespokoistvo*) are important and widespread. Many businessmen hold beliefs in evil forces which could disturb them at home or at work, and they undertake a variety of practices to protect their businesses, families, and souls. Among inchurched individuals, the interpretation of priests and ongoing discourse in the parish community create and strengthen fear of evil forces and anxiety: Is it acceptable to purchase a certain item? Or, might it be related to a crime, death, or accident? Is this the reason why it is sold at such a low price? Fears are further reinforced by discourses in the media, in books, journals, and internet forums that identify evil forces, spiritual pollution, and Masonic conspiracies in everyday life, objects, and events. Alongside older notions about possession by demons, evil spirits, and the Devil[78], new anxieties about life in modernity have developed.

[78] Exorcism was quite popular in Vladimir in the 1990s, but ceased after the death of the priest who conducted the rituals. Exorcisms at the St Sergius Trinity monastery in Sergiev Posad (about 150 kilometres away) were also popular and attended by people from Vladimir.

In addition, traditionalist circles of very committed believers or priests consider the fear of God (*strakh pered Bogom*) as a necessity for deep belief. These circles are not limited to remote rural settings, but occur also in urban areas like Vladimir. In this view, it is only through fear that one can withstand temptations (*soblazny*) and live a real Christian life. Accordingly, some priests stress the importance of fear in preaching and in everyday communications with believers, and rouse anxiety by giving corresponding interpretations. In this way, many Russians perceive their environment to be full of invisible and inexplicable creatures or dangers.

One such example of priests encouraging fear appears in the ongoing dispute about Individual Tax Numbers and other digital numbers or bar codes imprinted on passports, identification cards, insurance cards, and work permits (see also Agadjanian and Rousselet 2005: 33ff.). Some priests argue that no one knows what numbers are printed on these documents, and in the worst case one could be carrying a document with the number '666', the sign of the Devil. Following their argumentation, one aligns with the Devil by carrying his sign and forfeits the possibility of being a good Christian. Such fear has been so strong that, in 2006, believers in the neighbouring city of Suzdal' publicly burned their passports. The Russian Orthodox Church officially distanced itself from the debate about the numbering on state-issued documents, but many priests are still concerned about the possibility that these documents could bring spiritual harm to their bearers.

The boundary between axiological Orthodox teachings and superstition (*sueverie*) is unclear and fluid. Although the eparchy tries to standardise beliefs, the variations between parishes are remarkable, and much depends on the parish priest. Witchcraft (*koldovstvo*), evil spirits, dark energies, fallen angels, and possession by demons are among the notions of evil that are widespread. Beliefs in creatures and forces that inflict harm on people are usually paired with belief in protective forces, such as guardian angels. Guardian angels (*angely-khraniteli*) are considered to protect believers in many situations by fighting demons and helping their wards to withstand temptations. A belief in miracles (*chudesa*) is also widespread (see e.g. Worobec 2007 on miraculous healing), but most priests consider that experiences of miracles should not be openly shared with others because they are a direct and personal experience of divinity. Nevertheless, rumours about miracles are present in almost any church in Russia and are also put forward by some priests as evidence for the superiority of Orthodoxy over other religions.

Entrepreneurs' Beliefs in Evil and Punishment

Often clergymen and ordinary believers consider businessmen to be the winners of the postsocialist transition process, and describe them as casual believers. Accordingly, examples of businessmen who – despite their previous success – have experienced illnesses, accidents, and other failures before converting or becoming inchurched are very prominent in parish discourse. Many entrepreneurs also describe transformations in their own activities as responses to evil and punishment, or as responses to social pressure from others who believe in evil and punishment.

Ivan

Ivan is in his mid-fifties, wears a beard, and in contrast to most other businessmen, dresses in casual wear. In socialist times, Ivan was an engineer and worked as the head of a technical department. He left that job in 1990 to work for an American company that was building a sanatorium outside Vladimir. There, he had a leading position and became acquainted with the non-state sector and Western modes of business. In 1991, he was one of the first people to enter the market in private real estate, working as a manager in a new real-estate firm. At that time, competition was not as strong as it is today, and the firm gained high profits. In 1995, Ivan left the firm and started his own business, but was still dependent on money from other businessmen. In 1998, he and his wife (who works as his accountant) succeeded in opening their current real estate company without help or money from other people.

When we talked about the establishment of his company, Ivan mentioned that he had held a blessing ceremony for his new office. What, I asked, had been his underlying motivation for such a ceremony? He answered:

> There is this delusion and illusion, which people had. It has been said, that there are ... many people saw it. That there are poltergeists. That there is something, well, that there are wandering souls (*neupokoennye dushi*) after a violent death (*nasil'stvennaia smert'*), and so on. […] I do not want this to happen in my office.

Although Ivan displaced the question of whether or not he believed in poltergeists or wandering souls, it is clear that he considered a priest's blessing to be the most effective way to ensure that his office and person would be undisturbed by malevolent forces.

Nina

In Catholicism and Protestantism, one only has to take responsibility for one's sins on the Day of Last Judgement, but not during one's life on earth. In contrast, punishment in Orthodoxy is extended to this world, and illnesses or tragedies show one's misdeeds and are explained in such terms by priests and other believers. As becomes clear in Nina's account below, individuals may not believe that they caused their own suffering, but they must respond to widespread social opinion that their suffering is likely to have been brought about by sinful behaviour.

> See, I remained alone; I still have a mother, true, thank God for it. ... Why did God punish me (*Za chto menia Bog nakazal*)? Why did my husband die? Why have I lost everything there in Tajikistan? Personally I am not responsible for it, right? But everything was taken from me. [...]
>
> But people began to say: for whose sins [has this happened]? Why? Why all this? ... But I cannot understand this. I simply cannot.

Nina is about 50 years old and taught psychology during socialist times. According to her own descriptions, her life was good and pleasurable because her mother worked in a leading position in the Ministry for Education in Tajikistan. In the early 1990s, Tajikistan was shaken by a civil war between the various ethnic groups. Nina lost her house and possessions, and her husband, who was a Tajik soldier, died in the war. After the war, she (like most ethnic Russians) was forced to leave the country, along with her mother and her two children. She migrated to Vladimir, and had to build up a new life. During my research, she and a business partner were running a newly founded real estate office.

In the quotation given above she reflects on the concept of *nakazanie*, linking it to the losses she suffered after the end of socialism. Others use *nakazanie* to make sense of unexpected disasters, such as the death of a husband, but Nina sees no reason why she would have been punished in such a way. After moving to Vladimir, she attended church, but when people began to speculate about her former life, suggesting that she had been rightfully punished for her sins, she distanced herself from the parish community. Yet Nina continues to go to church at least twice a month, and she extends religious practice to her office. She has hung icons in her office, and has asked a priest to bless her office for protection. Although she refuses to consider her husband's death as a personal punishment, she nevertheless seeks protection from evil.

Pavel

> And there was this moment, when, how can I explain it to you? It is said, that one sells one's motherland (*prodavat' rodinu*), but in fact it was the process of accumulating starting capital (*nakoplenie pervichnogo kapitala*), and ... there was a big demand for icons and they became expensive. So we made our starting capital by dealing a little bit with icons on the market which we sold to collectors. Although it is, of course, a big sin (*bol'shoi grekh*).
>
> And we came back – having been very successful – came back very happy, and in the back [of the car] lay many, many icons which we had bought very cheap. And on the way back, we had an accident, a serious accident, where the car crashed completely ... and I broke my spine. That's all. For me it was a sign that what I did was not right. I immediately gave up (*Ia srazu brosil*). This means, I never dealt with icons again. We experienced all that is written in textbooks (*napisano v uchebnikakh*). We experienced it in practice (*my eto vse proshli na praktike*).

Pavel is now in his early forties, but was still studying at the university to be a construction engineer when he thought about opening his own business. In order to obtain the necessary starting capital, he started to engage in business activities with a friend who was studying at the same university. Pavel and his friend profited through the sale of icons, but – as he now recounts – he stopped selling icons following a critical accident. Like Father Vladimir (see chapter 3), Pavel interpreted his accident as divine punishment for sinful behaviour. Although he stopped selling icons, Pavel continued to develop his skills as a businessman, and opened one of the first shops in Vladimir, and a construction business which he still runs. Interestingly, Pavel's accident also enhanced his belief in the power of icons to a level that he describes as 'somewhat mystic' (*nemnozhko misticheskii*), and he hangs them in his home, office, and car as means of protection against evil forces or accidents.

The Religious Practices of Entrepreneurs: Icons, Blessings, and Candles

As previously mentioned, the religious practices of businessmen are rarely connected to parish activities or to religious communities, but take place on an individual level. Inchurchment (*votserkovlenie*), the process of active engagement with the Orthodox Church, rarely applies to businessmen. They visit churches only on special occasions like festive days (*prazdniki*), or if

they have personal problems like health issues, bereavement, or a money shortage. But why is this so?

There are several reasons that businessmen are reluctant to openly participate in church activities. First, their lack of participation is not particularly unusual, as most Russians still do not show their religious feelings openly in public. Explanations I received for this reticence tended to stress notions of shame (*styd*) or embarrassment (to be embarrassed – *stesniat'sia*). Second, business is predominantly a male domain, and men generally seem to find it harder than do women, to show openly their deep religious emotions. Third, businessmen who had leading positions in socialist times, particularly those who were well-known members of the Communist Party, also considered it shameful to show openly their religious conversion. Fourth, many businessmen were originally trained as engineers during socialism, and held a professional identity that emphasised rationality and calculability, as the opposite of religion. For these businessmen who were trained to consider every religion a form of superstition, it is especially difficult to form a close affiliation with the Church.



Plate 1. After a joint prayer, the priest blesses an entrepreneur's car with holy water. All the doors of the car are opened and the water is sprinkled inside and over the car. This religious practice is carried out to protect the driver from accidents (Vladimir 2007).

But as I tried to show in the first part of my chapter, many businessmen, nevertheless, know the basic concepts and axiological teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church. Because of their individual approach to religion they make use of services offered by the Church on a private and personal level. Examples for the private use of religion are the use of icons, requests for prayers or blessings with holy water in the enterprise or the lighting of candles.

Use of Icons

One popular religious practice is the veneration of icons in churches, at home, or in offices. Businessmen are no exception from the rule, and in most offices or factories one can find one or several icons. In Orthodoxy, there are many icons and people attach particular meanings to them. One icon is said to protect the family, another to help while travelling, and so on. Therefore, I often asked whether there was an icon that might or should have special meaning for businessmen. One priest mentioned an icon called 'Our Lady the Never-Ending Chalice' (*neupivaemaia chasha*), but I realised later this was a coarse joke, in which the priest was equating business with alcoholism. Ordinarily, the icon is believed to help alcoholics quell their thirst, but in his joke, the priest suggested businessmen had too great a thirst for profit. The booklets circulated in church shops, however, mention several icons that are considered to be especially helpful for people employed with trade or business. For example, one booklet (Sinichkin 2006: 7) lists five categories of icons.

1. St John (*Ioann Sochavskii*), St John (*Ioann Ianinskii*), and St Nicholas (*Nikolai Ugodnik*) are sought as patrons of trade and business.
2. St John the Warrior is considered to prevent theft.
3. The icon Non-flammable (*Neopalimaia Kupina*) prevents fire.
4. St Nicholas (*Nikolai Ugodnik*) as the patron of all travellers (including traders).
5. The icon of Kiprian and Iustinian protects against witchcraft and envy.

With the exception of St Nicholas, however, few of these icons were used by businessmen. Like other Russians, most choose to venerate the icon of the saint whose name they bear. Sometimes, they choose personal saints on whose day memorable events or experiences occurred.

Office Blessings

Blessings of many items of everyday use have become very popular in recent years among all groups of Russian society. Among businessmen, the

blessings of offices, equipment, and machinery are especially important.[79] Normally, a priest is invited once a year, shortly before Easter (the main festive day in Orthodoxy), to carry out the blessing. The ceremony is relatively simple: while the owner and employees hold candles, the priest prays and splashes holy water in all four directions. This is repeated several times, and at various points, the priest asks the others to pray with him. When the prayers are completed, the priest places a cross-shaped sticker on each of the four walls.

Most businessmen and employees in my study were not eager to attend the blessing themselves, but perceive it as a ceremony that should be conducted entirely by the priest. In contrast, most priests underline the importance of the participation and presence of businessmen and their employees for the success of the blessing. In addition to the importance of the joint praying, priests consider that blessings may help improve cooperation among employees, but only if they participate in the service. Especially in bigger enterprises, I noticed that employees might giggle and whisper during the blessing ceremony. Priests, like Father Vladimir (below), complain about this kind of behaviour and the lack of respect it demonstrates. But before I turn to the priests' complaints, I shall describe the interpretations given by some entrepreneurs.

Viktor

> Tobias Köllner: Why did you decide to have your office blessed?
> Viktor: Even I do not know. Just in case – it won't become worse! (*Ia dazhe ne znaiu. Na vsiakii sluchai – khuzhe ne budet!*)

Viktor seldom attends church, going mostly on major holidays like Whitsunday (*Troitsa*). He is an engineer and studied in one of the best institutes of the former Soviet Union in Leningrad. Afterwards, he found work in an armament factory in a closed city near Vladimir. Like many others, he lost his job in the economic crises that followed the demise of the Soviet Union. Out of necessity, he started a one-man-business as a wholesaler of small electrical devices which he sells to smaller shops in the city's markets.

Viktor's explanation of why he had his office blessed reflects a widespread attitude among many businessmen, and particularly among those who are active in small shops in the marketplace. Viktor described himself as a logical person (*logicheskii chelovek*) who was raised in a secular setting,

[79] There are limits to what can be blessed. Most priests refuse to bless casinos or restaurants because these establishments deal in gambling, smoking, and alcohol, which are all considered sins (*grekhi*).

both in his family and at work. In his view, in engineering everything is rational and can be calculated, which, according to him, contradicts the very idea of religion. But in today's business, he claims, it is completely different. Outcomes are very uncertain, and he was never sure whether something would work. Therefore, he tentatively started to engage with religion. He shares the uneasy feelings and anxieties of many, and in order to prevent (further) harm and raise profits, he requested a priest to bless his office. The phrase that he uses to explain his request also expresses an ambiguous relationship to religious practices that incorporates both doubt and belief in the supernatural. In other contexts '*khuzhe ne budet*' usually means 'it can't hurt', but when applied to religious questions, I found that my informants used the phrase more literally to mean not only that a particular practice was harmless, but that it also had the possibility to forestall something bad, or worse, from happening.

In many ways, Viktor's attitude towards blessing rituals and religion resembles Galina Lindquist's (2006) account about magic in contemporary Russia. According to Lindquist, the use of magic is deeply connected to hope, 'the existential and affective counterpart of agency that replaces it where channels for agency are blocked' (Lindquist 2006: 4). People use magic when they do not have other ways to express agency because magic offers 'the lost sense of tomorrow, a tool for fostering hope' (Lindquist 2006: 199). As Lindquist showed, businessmen who face economic difficulties are particularly likely to engage in magical practices. In Viktor's case, Orthodox rituals are only one of the many ways in which he deals with his business anxieties (*bespokoistvo*). For example, he also reads books about becoming rich and securing luck; these include American bestsellers, as well as popularised accounts of Confucian and other Asian concepts of how to attract success in business. It is clear from his variegated approach that he is willing to accept talismans and charms from any tradition, so long as they effectively ward off evil and improve his luck.

Ivan

I already depicted some of Ivan's beliefs in the first part of this chapter, where he mentioned wandering souls and poltergeists that might disturb him at work. He does not want similar events to happen in his office and therefore requests that it be blessed. In contrast to Viktor who has little knowledge about religion, attaches no special meaning to blessings, and had little interest in discussing why such rituals are being so widely practised, Ivan is more self-reflective on his own and others' practices. In another conversa-

tion, Ivan expanded on the idea of social pressure as a motivating force for businessmen to partake in office blessings.

> Today there is probably no Russian businessman who professes to Orthodoxy who has not blessed his business, his home, his factory, his ship, his flat. They all invite priests to carry out the rite of blessing with water. Well, on the one hand this is a good thing, and people think that because of the blessing a world of tranquillity (*spokoistvie*) will come to them. That is to say – a pleasant job, efficient work in the factory; cars can also be blessed, so that they do not fall apart. For us [Russians], this is also a kind of fashion (*moda*), so to say.
>
> The president goes there [to the church], and as a governor, I also have to visit the church. [...] If the president is doing so, if the government is doing so, that means the governor should also do it. If the governor is doing so, this means that the mayor also has to do it, and so on. But I think that here [in Russia], only some [of the people] really have a sincere and normal relation to the Church (*iskrennoe, normal'noe otnoshenie k tserkvi*).

Ivan is critical of the social pressure from above that leads to engagement with religion because it contradicts what he depicts as a 'sincere and normal relation' with the Church. Kimmo Kääriäinen and Dmitrii Furman (2000: 16) pointed in the same direction by creating the category of 'ideological' Orthodoxy (*ideologicheskoe pravoslavie*), in which religiosity is characterised by an indirect relation to belief. In Ivan's account, 'ideological' Orthodoxy occurs because of social pressure along the chain of political hierarchy. His more subtle references to 'us Russians', however, also capture the way in which 'ideological Orthodoxy' functions as an ethnic marker, and the increasing importance of 'Russianness' as a source of collective identity after the disappearance of a unifying Communist ideology (see also Anderson 1994: 90; Chulos 2006: 363).[80]

As Ivan observes, displays of religiosity can function as a kind of political symbol. Such displays are important for showing one's political loyalties, and the professed religiosity of politicians might change when the president changes. Indeed, the 'fashion' of professing Orthodoxy began during Boris Yeltsin's presidency, and seems to have climaxed under

[80] The importance of the ethnic component became clear to me when the local Catholic priest complained about other priests who could not understand why he as a Russian became a Catholic. So he stressed several times that although he is a 'pure' (*chistyi*) Russian with 100 per cent Russian blood, he is a Catholic and that he is not from one of the predominantly Catholic ethnicities like the Poles or Byelorussians.

Vladimir Putin's second presidency from 2004 to 2008.[81] President Putin not only used every possibility to show himself as a devout believer, but also managed to give substantial financial support to the Russian Orthodox Church, despite the constitutional separation of state and Church. In Vladimir Region, the governor and the mayor also take part in many religious events, but the governor's participation has long been a source of amusement and social critique because he was, until 2008, a member of the Communist Party. Ivan continued to explain how social pressure within the political hierarchy produces formal or outer displays of religiosity that lack personal commitment. In everyday speech, Russians refer to a person who adapts such an attitude as a *pokazukha*.[82]

> Ivan: ... What is it, religion? He never read the Bible. But he knows that he has to go to church.
>
> Tobias Köllner: And he has to light candles and cross himself.
>
> Ivan: Yes. And he lights a candle. He drives by car, in his Mercedes, which is so luxurious (*shikarnyi*), and sees a church. There it is [making a gesture as if he sees a church]. So he crosses himself [shows how he drives and crosses himself]. This means, well, it is no witchcraft (*koldovstvo*), but only the outer side of religion (*vneshnia storona religii*). These people often apprehend only the outer side of religion, but not the inner side (*vnutrennia storona*). They do not understand it completely (*do kontsa*). They know that there is Christmas, and know that Christmas is on this day, and on that day is Easter. And on other days there is fasting. Many people have started to observe fasts and do not eat meat now. But this stands only on formal grounds because these are the rules. But why? ... The understanding of the essence of Christianity or the Orthodox canon is only an outer one.

Ivan's distinction between an outer and an inner side of religion is remarkably similar to that made by priests. Indeed, Ivan probably formed his view when he sang in the church choir for a few years and became closely acquainted with some priests. Most of the priests whom I interviewed stressed the complementarity of the outer and inner sides of religion; according to them, both adherence to rules and personal dedication is necessary. In contrast, Ivan considers the outer rules to rank lower than the moral teachings of the New Testament. For him, it is more important to change one's life in

---

[81] See, for example, the law 'On freedom of conscience and on religious associations' (*O svobode sovesti i o religioznykh ob''edineniiakh*) of 1997, which favours Russia's 'traditional religions'.

[82] The noun *pokazukha* is a colloquial term and originates from the verb *pokazyvat'*/*pokazat'*, which means 'to show' or 'to pretend'.

order to show that one wants to live with God, than to follow rules like lighting candles only with the right hand or avoiding washing before festive days.

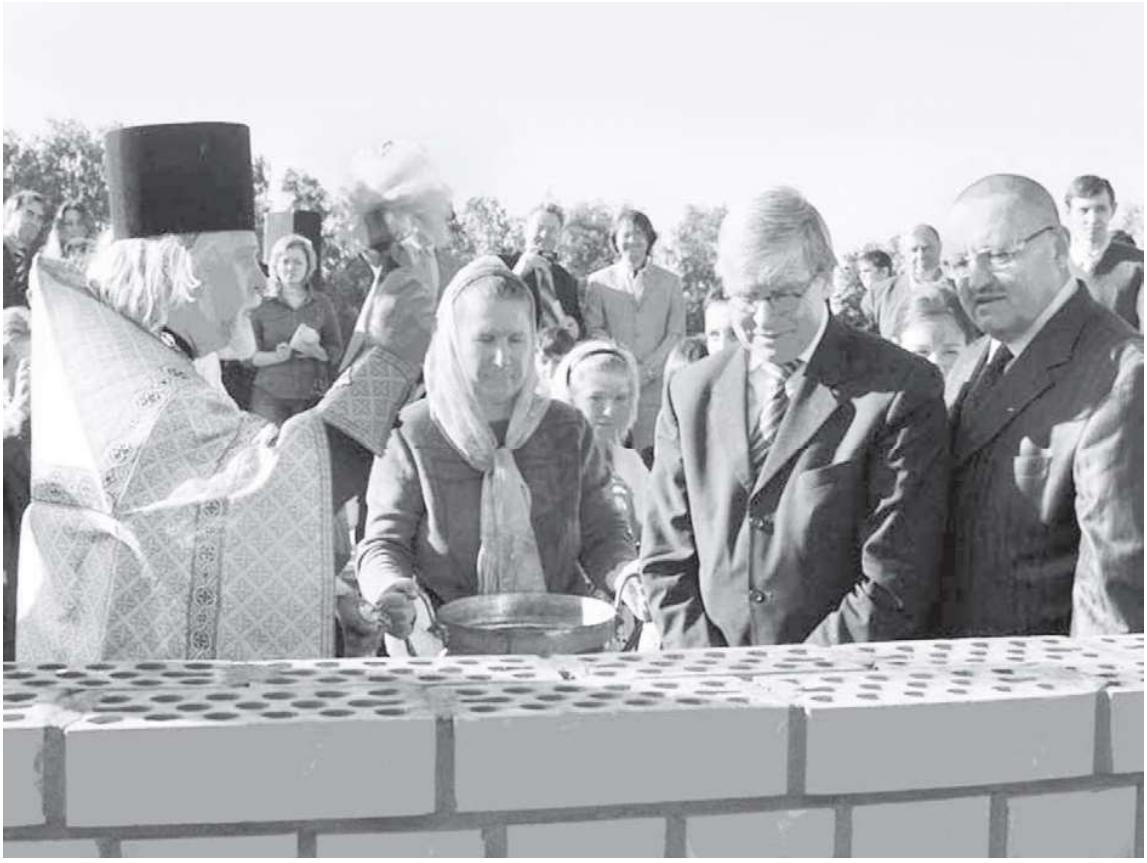


Plate 2. Two entrepreneurs (on the right) requested a priest (left) to bless the first stone of their new enterprise. Blessings with water (*osviashcheniia*) are considered to protect the enterprise against all evils and to advance efficiency and profitability. Sometimes holy relics (*sviatye moshchi*) are inserted in the first wall in order to protect the enterprise against evil (Vorsha 2007) (Photo: Sergei Baranov).

Priests

Like businessmen themselves, priests highlight and criticise the variety of non-religious motivations that businessmen have for participating in blessings and other rituals. The following excerpt comes from a conversation with Father Vladimir who, as mentioned in chapter 3, is responsible for the collection of donations from businessmen and others for the Vladimir eparchy. Father Vladimir has extensive contact with businessmen through this position, and in his second role as head of Vladimir's Orthodox school, where the children of many businessmen are enrolled. At the time of my fieldwork, Father Vladimir's relations with businessmen were especially extensive because he was also leading a donation campaign for the school's recon-

struction to make it the biggest and most modern school in the city. Father Vladimir's description of businessmen is thus enriched by more extensive engagement with businessmen than many other priests have experienced.

> Tobias Köllner: I heard about the rite to bless offices with water. To what extent is this important in contemporary Russia?
> Father Vladimir: I think this should be important for everyone. It is not important in the sense that the priest blesses the office and afterwards the kopecks, tchik-tchik-tchik-tchik (sound of coins clinking), are earned more easily. Maybe entrepreneurs understand it just like this. This cannot be excluded. Probably it is like this. He does it so that it becomes better, that his business goes better, that the relation among employees becomes ... He expects from the blessing some magical solution (*volshebnoe reshenie*) for his problems.[83] As if the priests has a magic wand (*volshebnaia palochka*). He waves it: tchik! And that's all. Oh! [imitating astonishment] – and everything is good.
> Tobias Köllner: And everything becomes better.
> Father Vladimir: He takes the magical water (*volshebnaia vodichka*)[84] – tchik, tchik, tchik, tchik[85] – and that's all: everyone stops scolding ... everyone becomes nice. Sprinkle water on the safe once – and it is full of money! Oh! ... No. Of course not!
> Tobias Köllner: No.
> Father Vladimir: Of course not! Because any holy action (*sviashchennodeistvie*), any ritual (*ritual*), rite (*obriad*) or prayer (*molitva*) – for everything your heart is necessary, the action needs your prayer.[86] ... And do you know what is said? 'Let us meet on Sunday, in the office, when it is closed and nobody is there; we carry out the blessing in secret'.

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[83] In Russian one can distinguish between magic as a vehicle to achieve one's will (*magiia*) and sorcery (*volshebstvo*). While *magiia* can have a negative connotation (black magic) as well as a positive connotation (white magic), *volshebstvo* is often seen as positive. In contrast, the word *koldovstvo* is always seen as negative, and can be translated as 'witchcraft'. Father Vladimir always uses the adjectival form of *volshebstvo* in this passage.

[84] Here and in many of the following passages he uses the diminutive form that makes the interview sarcastic.

[85] He uses the same sound as before and gestures as if he is blessing the four walls of the office and spreading water.

[86] Prayers are not only advised for holy actions, rituals or rites, but also for many everyday situations. After the church service many people turn to priests to receive advice on how to deal with problems like mobbing at work, or the choice of a marriage partner. The most common answer is to pray to a particular saint for help, and the priest will later help to interpret the saint's response.

> I say, 'Excuse me, but what are we going to do? Am I going to steal something with you? On the contrary, it is important that all your employees come. I will give them a candle. We will stand, and I will talk to them, and we will stand and pray'. Only then it makes sense. But if we enter through a tiny window, in order not to switch on the light, in order not to be seen, to carry it out quickly – okh [imitating relief], 'I blessed my office' – then for whom is your blessing necessary? If no one knows about it?
>
> But he is embarrassed. He wants it, first and foremost, because, well, it will not become worse (*khuzhe ne budet*), he thinks, it will become better (*budet luchshe*). Just in case (*Na vsiakii sluchai*). To show that he is a believer makes him feel embarrassed. ... I come to the office in order to bless it, and everybody, the owner and the employees, goes to have a cigarette. I say: 'Where are you going?' – 'We will only have a cigarette. You will do it'.
>
> 'Interesting', I say, 'but did I come to repair your car?' What do I say then? Do I tell them: 'Please go and I will fix the screws; you will come afterwards and check if I managed it?' No! It is their prayers that are necessary, not mine. I tell the owner: 'Stop doing this and everybody should come here. I will do nothing without you'. And they will come. For them it is unusual. To hold a candle is strange to them. To cross himself he cannot. He does not know how to cross himself. He is embarrassed.
>
> Everything is connected – if there is belief (*vera*) then there will be a result of this belief. If there is no belief, unfortunately, then the blessing of offices, the blessing of cars, and everything else becomes some rite (*kakoi-to obriad*). Some rites are used by a person because he has superstitions (*sueverie*) or because he perceives the rites as a provision of a spiritual service (*dukhovnaia usluga*). A spiritual service.

In his answer to my question about whether blessing ceremonies are important, Father Vladimir describes how most businessmen perceive and undertake the ritual. He allows for the possibility that a business owner may believe, but is embarrassed and ashamed to openly show his religious feelings, ('Let us meet on Sunday').[87] A businessman may also be ashamed to show his lack of religious knowledge ('to cross himself he cannot'). Never-

[87] Tatiana is a good example of an entrepreneur who is ashamed to show her religious feelings. While I was conducting an interview with her, her daughter (who works as her assistant) joined us for two minutes. Tatiana immediately switched to another topic which was not related to religion. When we talked about her religious beliefs and practices, she also spoke in a whisper.

theless, Father Vladimir concludes that most businessmen act out of superstition (*sueverie*), and use rituals as if they were magical practices, rites to be conducted by a sorcerer, who is then paid for his services (*dukhovnaia usluga*). Father Vladimir criticises the interconnected perceptions that the priest does magic or sorcery (*volshebstvo*), and that everything becomes better within a moment. He draws on an analogy with repairing a car: he will fix everything and the businessman and his employees will then check his work. In contrast, Father Vladimir stresses the importance of prayer in the blessing ceremony and all rituals. In later conversations, Father Vladimir explained that blessings may not bring financial success, but if they are undertaken 'correctly' – i.e. with sincere prayer and belief – then they contribute to one's own penance and salvation.

Lighting Candles

It is common practice for Orthodox believers to light candles in front of icons while they pray. The lit candle is said to help carry the believer's prayer to the venerated saint in heaven. Like blessings, the Church considers that the lighting of candles is intimately linked to prayer. But, as revealed by the following passage from a conversation with Viktor one Sunday as he was leaving church, those who light candles do not always follow the Church's prescriptions.

> Tobias Köllner: Do you attend church regularly?
> Viktor: No, not every Sunday, but sometimes I go in order to light some candles.
> Tobias Köllner: Do you also pray when you light candles?
> Viktor: No. I do not know any prayers (*Molitv ne znaiu*.) [I] Simply [do it] so that my business develops and improves (*Prosto tak, chtoby biznes razvivatsia*).

As in our conversation about blessing ceremonies cited previously, Viktor indicates that he has clear expectations about what his participation in religious rituals should yield, and that he is reluctant to engage with religion on the Church's terms. Sometimes he lights candles, but does not pray as prescribed in Orthodox teachings. Contrary to the Church's prescriptions, he uses candles for the formulation of his requests, and not for the veneration of a certain saint.

In this context, it is useful to look at the priests' understanding. How is this behaviour perceived by priests and other church officials? Father Vladimir explains the official perspective, as well as his own opinion.

> Father Vladimir: The Church says, 'Well, thank God, he came and lit a candle. Maybe next time he will remain longer. And maybe in five years he will think about his soul and come to confession (*is-*

> *poved'*)'. The Church says, 'Thank God'. But when we talk, to say it directly (*po gamburgskomu schetu*)[88], this is a sign of this man's superstition (*sueverie*).
> Tobias Köllner: Of his superstition?
> Father Vladimir: This man perceives God like some, eh, like some gods, which can give or take according to the will of this man. [...] He thinks like this: I give you a bigger candle and You ... You give me more. Like tit for tat (*dash' na dash'*), like in a food store. I go into a shop and say, 'I am ready to buy. I have money, and I want the very best. See, here is the money for you. Give me the very best'. Here they think that God is so stupid (*Zdes' zhe oni dumaiut, chto Bog takoi glupyi*). He thinks that if he buys this candle for 1,000 roubles that God will give him a million dollars in return. But this is all stupid!

Father Vladimir expressed his agreement with the Church's official perspective that it is better for people to engage superficially with religion than to avoid it altogether. From this perspective, an individual's relationship with the Church, God, and Orthodox teachings will develop over time with increased exposure and participation in ritual life. The hope and expectation is that, over time, people will stay longer at church services, pray and go to confession, and become inchurched. There is even a widespread idea that this turn towards the inner side of religion will take at least one generation to occur. But in this conversation, Father Vladimir criticised behaviours that are based on a tit-for-tat strategy (*dash' na dash'*) in the pursuit of personal gains. These behaviours, he says, reflect superstition rather than belief.

Profiting from Blessed Goods

Although the Church officially fights against superstition (*sueverie*), many local clergymen hold more relaxed or ambiguous positions on the increasing popularity of blessing ceremonies and other ritual practices. As I have shown through the example of office blessings, it is difficult to distinguish belief from practice. Businessmen and priests alike, like many other Russians, are engaged in an ongoing effort to distinguish magic from religion, and superstition from true belief. In part, this process is so pronounced because the Church itself asserts that 'false' beliefs may be corrected through 'right' practice, and is thus lenient with a variety of practices that might otherwise be considered 'deviant'. Blessed objects fall into this category. While church teachings about blessings are complex and subtle, most believers – espe-

[88] This is an expression for talking openly that goes back at least to the nineteenth century. Why it refers to the city of Hamburg is not clear.

cially those who are in the earliest stages of their relationship to the Church – appreciate blessed objects for their almost magical qualities (see also Lindquist 2006). Most priests do little to correct this attitude, and may even encourage believers to ascribe magical qualities to blessed objects.

In this context, it is little wonder that in the postsocialist period some businessmen noticed the growing demand for religious goods and built business around it. Some businessmen, for example, have used their connections with clergymen to have their goods blessed by the Church. This enables them to acquire new customers and sell their products for a higher price than unblessed equivalents. The market for blessed goods, however, also reveals variations in the value that customers assign to blessings. At one level, the increased value of the product correlates with the prestige of the blessing institution – the higher the institution, the higher price that can be asked for the blessed goods. At another level, the value of the blessing changes according to the product itself.

Examples of blessed goods are manifold and span all categories and levels of consumption. Blessed honey, jewellery, and cars are among the most interesting for discussing how value is added to an object by blessing it. Blessed honey, for example, is particularly valued because it is believed that its healing qualities are strengthened through blessing. With cars and jewellery, however, blessings are thought to remove any traces of bad luck that might have adhered to the object. In postsocialist Russia, most people cannot afford new cars or fine jewellery, and purchase these items second-hand. Purchasing used items, however, especially at bargain prices, arouses suspicion about why the goods are being sold, and fear that they will curse their new owners. I frequently heard rumours that cursed rings had led to gossip, marital conflict, and divorce, while used cars are suspected of conveying supernatural punishment to new owners if the cars had been used for criminal purposes or involved in an accident. Businessmen who seek blessings for their products thus need to be attentive to the meanings that buyers associate with the type of product they are selling, and how the blessing will be interpreted. Sometimes, as in the case of *pel'meni* described below, buyers will reject marketing strategies that use religious symbols, associations, and blessings.



Plate 3. A man sells honey and honey products in the vicinity of a large monastery. The Orthodox monk’s habit and the proximity of the monastery are likely to persuade buyers (Diveevo 2007).

A unique example of the blessing of a particular item was a campaign which advertised blessed *pel’meni* (Russian dumplings). In Vladimir, there is a large factory for the production of *pel’meni* which are sold everywhere in European Russia. The factory is owned by three brothers, and by the time of research they had expanded their business operations to include a department store, one of the city’s markets, a radio station, and a television channel. Altogether, they employed more than 4,000 people. The head of the company is Iurii, a businessman in his late forties, who is also the local representative in the Duma (national parliament) for the United Russia Party. One of Iurii’s brothers engages in politics, and is a member of the regional parliament. Due to their high-ranking positions, I did not manage to interview any of the three owners, but did succeed in talking with two former managers who had been involved in the *pel’meni* campaign. The advertising campaign drew heavily on Orthodox symbols and organised the blessing of the

pel'meni by a well-known monastery in Sergiev Posad. One of my informants, Oleg, was brand manager who was responsible for all the marketing decisions related to the *pel'meni* and other blessed foods produced by the company. My other informant, Victoria, worked as one of the editors, and created all the texts for the advertising campaign.

Oleg did not initiate the idea of blessing the *pel'meni.* His immediate predecessor formulated the idea to target religiously motivated consumers by blessing the *pel'meni* and advertising them with explicit religious symbolism. She left soon after initiating the campaign, but Oleg continued her ideas. He explained to me the twofold rationale behind the campaign. On the one hand, the Church's support would strengthen the overall positioning of the brand in the market. On the other, the campaign was meant to increase sales of *vareniki*, a differently shaped type of dumpling from *pel'meni* that are also usually vegetarian. Many people dislike the taste of *vareniki*, so stimulating increased consumption is particularly challenging. As Victoria told me, 'only nuns could eat this – really awful!' *Vareniki*, however, can be eaten during church prescribed fasts, so Lent was an important component in the advertising campaign.

During the campaign, all of the equipment in the factory was blessed with water, in a ritual similar to that described above for office blessings. In addition, the local eparchy was asked to give its blessing for all the company's products. Of course, it was not possible to receive a water blessing (*osviashchenie*) for all the *pel'meni* produced in the factory, so the company asked for a general blessing of their products (*blagoslovlenie*). According to Oleg, it proved to be more difficult than expected to gain this blessing. The local eparchy was initially reluctant to give its blessing and referred the request to higher levels of church authority in Sergiev Posad and Moscow. When I asked Oleg why the local eparchy turned down the request, he replied:

> The Russian Orthodox Church has a very strict hierarchical structure (*zhestkaia ierarkhicheskaia struktura*). Apparently, they feared to decide [on their own]. They understood that this decision is oriented towards business, and not the spiritual realm (*Ponimaem, chto takoe reshenie napravleno na biznes, no eto ne dukhovno*.).

Following the advice from the eparchy, Oleg turned to higher authorities within the Church. He was finally successful when he approached bishops. In Sergiev Posad, he found an abbot (*igumen*) who was open to the request. The abbot, 'a very well-known face in the Orthodox world', as Victoria said, was responsible for supplying food to the monastery and seminary in Sergiev Posad. In 2003, the company's owner and the abbot reached an agreement. Iurii's company delivered food for free to the monastery for all the monks,

students of the seminary, and pilgrims, and in return received the blessing of the St Trinity monastery.

Before this agreement could be reached, the factory's owner, Iurii, needed to gain the approval of the local representative of the patriarch (*namestnik*). Iurii approached the representative, but he was not received and his request for approval was refused. After repeated tries, Iurii eventually obtained an appointment with the *namestnik*, during which he requested membership on the monastery's welfare board (*popechitel'skii sovet*). The board is not an official body, but an informal group of people who support the monastery. Among the donors are many well-known entrepreneurs, like Vladimir Yakunin, the president of the Russian railway company. Victoria and Oleg did not know exactly how much money Iurii donated to the monastery, but they knew that the entrance fee for becoming a member of the board would have been considerable, and that ongoing donations would have been necessary to remain on the board.

After the agreement had been reached, a powerful advertising campaign began. Packaging was designed which received the approval of the monastery. The packaging made heavy use of religious symbols, gave a list of Orthodox festive days and their meaning, and provided an Orthodox calendar which announced the dates for Lent. Moreover, text on the packaging asserted that the recipe for the *pel'meni* was very old and that it had been taken from a monastery following an old technique. But the most precious item on the packaging was the stamp of the monastery which declared: 'With the blessing of the St Trinity monastery'. In addition, advertisements on television channels, radio stations, and posters marketed the new brand and its blessing with images and references to the monastery itself. In order to open up new groups of customers among believers, leaflets announcing the new brand were distributed by women who were hired to stand at the entrances of churches and monasteries during Lent and religious holidays. The women who took part in the campaign had to be a bit older, wear skirts, and appear to be serious believers.

When I asked Victoria why the campaign was directed so much at believers, she told me:

> Of course, the goal [of the campaign] was to sell the product. Therefore, the brand was created. [...] Everything was done to sell (*Eto vse bylo dlia prodazhi*) to those people who were believers or to those who had a positive attitude towards [Orthodoxy]. And in Russia, this means nearly everybody (*I v Rossii eto pochti vse*). Offer someone the choice to buy normal bread or blessed bread from a monastery. Even if the bread from a monastery is a bit more expensive, the overwhelming majority selects the [bread] from the monastery.

Victoria and Oleg both depicted Iurii, the company's owner, as a religious person, though not one who regularly attended church. Nevertheless, both perceived the sale of the product to be the main motivation for the campaign. As Victoria's explanation indicates, targeting products to a religious market is especially successful because 'nearly everybody' in Russia is willing to pay higher prices for blessed goods.

The advertising campaign, however, also had a surprising side effect on the employees. Oleg told me that although he was brought up in a family of believers and knew a lot about religion before joining company, many of his colleagues had their first introduction to Russian Orthodoxy through the advertising campaign. As he told me:

> It was very uncharacteristic for our very secular business sphere. People working in this brand [laughs] became completely absorbed in religiosity (*ochen' proniklis' vse religioznost'iu*). They learned about Orthodox holidays and feasts. They asked believers how one addresses people on a certain holiday. And they learned how to address, for example, an archbishop: *Vladyka*, or Our Reverend (*Preosviashchenstvo*!) [laughs again]. For our girls this was really difficult.

In 2006, however, the company changed the image of the brand to emphasise a patriotic image that stresses Russian traditions and the idea of 'being ours' (*nash*, *rodnoi*). In the change, most of the religious symbolism in the packaging and promotion of the company's products was discarded. By 2006, Oleg and Victoria no longer worked for the company, and could not definitively explain why the campaign had changed, but they noted that the campaign had always been problematic because customers had an ambiguous attitude towards the marketing. On the one hand, most customers liked the religious symbols, but on the other, very committed believers found it unacceptable to discard the used packaging because it was covered with religious symbols like crosses, cupolas, and calendars with religious holidays. These customers considered it sinful to throw away such religious images, and sales declined as the general market became convinced that only people who did not know (or care) about possible repercussions were able to buy the products. Potential customers also cast doubt on the company's claim to be using an authentic monastic recipe, and word spread that the company did not actually produce the *pel'meni* as they were produced in earlier times, by hand with special ingredients (e.g. originally ice was used during the production process). Victoria defended the company's modifications on technical grounds, 'It is not possible because we are living in a contemporary world', but customers seized on the issue of these modifica-

tions in production as proof that the company misrepresented or falsified the spiritual qualities of its products.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the close interrelation of religious belief and practice. I draw special attention to widespread beliefs in the presence of evil and in the earthly punishment of sins, which have a substantial impact on people's religious practice. Evil is often conceptualised as possession by demons; the presence and interference of dark forces including fallen angels and bad energy; or as a global battle between good and evil, or God and the Devil. The omnipresence of evil in everyday life poses serious challenges for believers, and one has to find strong assistance to resist or overcome these negative forces. The veneration of icons, blessings with water, and lighting of candles are common ways in which many Russians, including entrepreneurs, seek protection for themselves and their affairs, in the ongoing struggle between good and evil. When misfortune does occur, however, individuals vary in their interpretation and response to the event. In Pavel's case, for example, he interpreted the severe injuries that he sustained in a car accident as evidence that he was engaged in sinful behaviour by selling icons. He stopped selling icons, engaged more deeply with Orthodox teachings, and became more involved in regular church activities. In contrast, Nina refused the interpretation made by other parishioners that she had lost her husband and house during Tajikistan's civil war because of sins she had individually committed. Though Nina continued many religious practices, she retreated from regular church attendance and participation in the parish community.

Although evil and sin are central themes across Christian denominations, and have a particular history within Russian Orthodoxy, at least some of the intensity surrounding these themes in postsocialist Russia is likely to be connected to the country's drastic social and economic changes. Much has been written about the boom of notions of evil elsewhere during periods of social and economic change (Geschiere 1997; Mitchell 2001; Thoden van Velzen and van Wetering 2001). Especially the fear of excess in situations of social and economic change is seen as an important reason for moralising (Mitchell 2001). In contemporary Russia, in accordance with Jon Mitchell's argument, moralising against people in the political administration (*chinovniki*) and people with money (*oligarkhi* or *biznesmeny*) is widespread, as was shown by Nancy Ries (2002). And indeed, many Russians characterise the

current situation as one without limits, as *bespredel*.[89] Especially people with political power and leading businessmen are said to make use of their privileged positions to enrich themselves at the people's (*narod*) expense. These people are perceived as having transgressed common norms and rules at the expense of others and are blamed accordingly. These patterns of discourse complicate the relation of businessmen to the Church and religious belief and practice, because they know the criticisms levelled against them, participate in criticising others on similar grounds, and yet also seek protection from known and unknown forces of evil. In addition, businessmen approach religion and the Church with material concerns, interests, and behaviours that the Church assumes, anticipates, criticises and – yet – also finds useful.

The engagement of businessmen with religion is often dismissed or criticised as magic, superstition, or an attempt to purchase spiritual 'services'. In fact, the practices that businessmen engage in are widely shared across Russian social strata, and thus require a more sustained discussion of the relationship between magic and belief. Although Durkheim's (1957: 42ff.) differentiation between religion and magic is well-established, it is difficult to apply to contemporary practices in Russian Orthodoxy. Although Orthodoxy opposes magic and superstition, many ritual practices have strong traits of magical behaviour, and both priests and practitioners constantly negotiate the boundary between magic and belief. Many practices, like blessings and lighting candles, are bound up with the idea of influencing or bargaining with the divine (e.g. forcing bad spirits out or attracting luck in business). Therefore, I have tried to show that lighting candles as well as the blessings of offices, cars, and flats are used in order to establish a feeling of self-assuredness and control in situations that are highly precarious. Similar to Galina Lindquist (2006), I argue that in a setting lacking institutions that can build trust and a stable framework, such as postsocialist Russia, religious practices, in analogy to magic, 'can be used as a psychological mechanism comparable to the strategies of trust formation, but giving something different – faith rather than trust' (Lindquist 2006: 199). In this way, religious practices render hope in insecure situations, and provide a sense of agency in a context where economic success is unpredictable and highly dependent on personal connections and fluid social relations.

In this chapter, I have also drawn special attention to the ambivalences in the relationships between businessmen and priests. The establishment of a personal relationship with one or several priests is an important characteristic of the religiosity of businessmen. Businessmen rarely attend church

[89] The word *bespredel* with the present overtone came only into use after the demise of socialism and characterises a limitless situation or a situation without boundaries. It has a strong negative connotation which can also be translated with 'immoderation' or 'excess'.

regularly and are invisible members in parish communities, if they associate with a particular parish at all. Nevertheless, most businessmen are not opposed to the Church's official strictures and practices. They often have long-term relationships with individual priests, to whom they turn for various blessings, life-cycle rituals, and forms of spiritual advice, including the interpretation of dreams and other events, and confession and penance. The interpretations given by priests differ considerably, but priests generally emphasise religious action and right ritual performance, and do not scrutinise the correctness of the beliefs or meanings that a person attaches to the actions that he performs. In this way, Russian Orthodoxy is more flexible than even its practitioners and priests like to acknowledge. Orthodoxy adapts to individual needs without changing its axiological teachings. Therefore the religiosity practised by businessmen is not contradicting Orthodox doctrines, but allows for their incorporation into the Orthodox community. Yet, the ways in which businessmen are incorporated into the religious community sustain, and even encourage, popular discourse about the incompatibilities of business with religion, and of self-interested profit with spiritual growth. Businessmen experience, and are described as experiencing, fear, shame, and misunderstanding when confronted with rituals that require right performance to demonstrate belief.

After investigating the importance of religious belief for practice in this chapter, I continue to analyse the priest-entrepreneur relationship in the next chapter by addressing the donations that businessmen make to the Church. I take into consideration entrepreneurs' own motivations for donating and the discourses that circulate among others about 'churches built with gold'.

Chapter 5
Built with Gold or Tears? Moral Discourses on the Construction of Churches*

During the socialist period, many of Vladimir's churches were destroyed, fell into decline, or were used for other purposes, such as radio stations or museums. From the perestroika period onwards the Russian Orthodox Church gained public recognition again, and today it is the most trusted institution in Russian society (Dubin 2006: 84). The religious revival was accompanied by a general tendency to restore former church buildings, and to erect new ones in places where churches had been before the 1917 Revolution. Although most people are in favour of returning the former church buildings to the Church, some voice reservations about the return, saying that good museums will vanish, and that the newly established churches will be used by only a few parishioners.

The most serious problem the Church faces in the context of its reconstruction is the financing of building activities. No state money can be directed to the Russian Orthodox Church because the Russian Constitution stipulates the separation of Church and state. But since the second presidency of Vladimir Putin (2004–2008), the official separation has become blurred and the Russian Orthodox Church is supported by the state in many ways. One way of supporting the Church is to declare its church buildings to be architectural heritage, which enables the Church to receive state funding for their reconstruction. Nevertheless, the Church is still highly dependent on donations from private entrepreneurs. In particular, the erection of new church buildings requires substantial donations. Parishioners have only managed to carry out the restoration of a church building on their own, without help from the diocese or from rich businessmen, in a few instances. In such cases, contributions are made in the form of labour rather than money. The parishioners form a close group of people and many of them spend every free minute on the construction site helping to restore the church.

*This chapter is a revised version of a previously published article (Köllner 2011).

Charitable giving, labour contributions, and donations to the Russian Orthodox Church are often morally charged (Kleineberg 2000; Caldwell 2008). For this reason, I connect donations by businessmen with the sphere of morality. Morality, as Jarrett Zigon (2011) argued, can be separated into three different but interrelated aspects: the institutional; public discourse; and embodied dispositions. In this chapter, I am mainly concerned with the second aspect of morality – public discourses. During my research, I noted that there were conflicting public discourses pertaining to both types of church-building activities: 'churches built with gold' (*postroena na zolote*) and 'churches built with tears' (*postroena na slezakh*). To build 'churches with gold', charitable contributions (*blagotvoritel'nost'*) and donations (*pozhertvovanie*, *darenie*) are collected from the rich, most of whom are businessmen. But this is controversial, and some people question the underlying motivations of donors, and contrast them with their own penitential labour contributions.[90] By shifting the emphasis away from the beauty or number of the erected churches to the arduousness of the labour contributed to build them, those who build churches with their effort and 'tears' are able to claim moral superiority. Consequently, these labourers derogatively depict donations as a way to do penance that is much too easy.

Although both public discourses on church construction are of equal importance in post-Soviet Russia, I put more emphasis on entrepreneurial donations because entrepreneurs have been the focus of my research. I will show that a combination of religious, moral, and self-interested motivations characterise donations by entrepreneurs, a mixture which already has been mentioned in the previous chapter. Thus donations can be understood as attempts to compensate for one's sins and as a way to make the possession of wealth more legitimate.

Church Donations before 1917

Donations to churches and charity have a long history in Russia. In Vladimir itself, charitable food donations for people in need were mentioned among the deeds of Prince Vladimir who founded the city in 995 (Patriarch Aleksii II 2002: 331). In his edict of 996, Prince Vladimir ordered the Church to do charitable work (at that time called 'societal care' [*obshchestvennoe prizrenie*], see also Guliaeva 2003: 126), and in return introduced the church tithe to ensure that the Church received income from the faithful (Patriarch

[90] According to Orthodox teachings, the acknowledgement of one's sins in confession (*ispoved'*) calls for compensation through penance (*pokaianie*). Therefore, penitential efforts are understood as an ongoing process and not as a single event. Often penance, like the religious beliefs described before, is guided by priestly advice.

Aleksii II 2002: 331). Charity remained a prerogative of the Church until the seventeenth century when the state began to take over the responsibility for caring for the poor and needy (Patriarch Aleksii II 2002: 331). In 1781, a law was enacted which made private donations to various charitable institutions possible (Patriarch Aleksii II 2002: 333). As a result of the state reforms of 1864 and 1870, the responsibility for charity devolved from national to local authorities (city or rural administrations), and charity became more dependent on private contributions. At first, donations to the Church were given mainly by aristocrats, but the rise of trade and industry in the nineteenth century enabled private merchants and entrepreneurs to participate in charitable contributions. By the end of the nineteenth century, 75 per cent of all donations to the Church were given by non-aristocrats (Patriarch Aleksii II 2002: 333).

As Adele Lindenmeyr (1990, 1996) has shown, charitable giving flourished in imperial Russia. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the attention in Russia focused on rising social problems and 'fostered an ethos of service to society' (Lindenmeyr 1990: 679). As in other Christian doctrines, Orthodoxy perceived charity as a Christian duty towards people in need. The Russian Orthodox Church itself, however, sponsored relatively few charitable institutions of its own, and stressed the 'individual, moral nature of giving' (Lindenmeyr 1990: 680). My archival research bears out the same trend in Vladimir's parishes: nineteenth century financial accounts reveal that most parishes spent money mainly on construction activities, and – in some cases – on proselytising in the Caucasus and in Siberia, an important mission at that time. From the Church's perspective, charity was a personal duty that was considered essential for salvation (Lindenmeyr 1990: 680). Thus although church-led charitable activities remained relatively low until the 1917 Revolution, wealthier individuals increasingly gave donations and organised charitable organisations, at least in part, as an outward expression of their religious beliefs and sentiments. In Vladimir Region, 21 charitable societies (*blagotvoritel'nye obshchestva*) and 79 institutions offering charity existed by 1896 (Guliaeva 2003: 126–127).

Donations to the Russian Orthodox Church itself were also widespread in pre-revolutionary Russia. In the seventeenth century, for example, older wooden churches in Vladimir were replaced by churches built with stone. Even then, some of these churches were financed with donations made by local people. Like the charitable organisations mentioned above, donations to the Church were mainly supported by rich merchants (*kuptsy*) and entrepreneurs (*predprinimateli*) who owned the newly established industrial factories which produced glass, steel, and other manufactured goods. Especially famous for their substantial donations were Old-Believer merchants,

who formed a substantial section of the merchants' guilds until the 1917 Revolution.[91]

Local Interpretations of Donations by Clergymen

In contrast to the West, where help for people in need is often linked to religious organisations, the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church has tried to avoid taking up the role as a provider of social support. Only in big cities such as Moscow or St Petersburg is the Church forced to take a different stance by the threat of competition, mainly from Protestants. In these places, the Russian Orthodox Church also engages in charitable work by running soup kitchens, and providing health care and housing for homeless people (Caldwell 2004). Charitable Orthodox organisations are also visible in large cities like Moscow, where the buses of '*Miloserdie*' (mercy) and other initiatives, are literally 'on the street'. In smaller cities, however, Orthodox charity may be present but invisible. In Vladimir, for example, food collections were seldom organised by the diocese, but parishioners did sometimes organise food collection and distribution through their networks.

As in pre-revolutionary Russia, donations are generally perceived as an opportunity for believers to secure their own salvation. Father Vladimir, cited in the previous chapters, was also willing to discuss the specificities of Orthodox charity.

> As far as I know, charitable programmes [*blagotvoritel'nye programmy*] are very popular in the West. Many publicly known people like artists or politicians perceive it to be an honour to take part in such programmes. They give considerable amounts. They fight against AIDS, fight against hunger in Africa and in Asia; in their own countries, they fight against poverty or unemployment.
>
> In Orthodoxy, however, the way charity is organised is somewhat different. The Orthodox Church believes that the first and most important aid is to put people on the right path. [The Church] says: the most important help for people is to help them to begin to believe in Christ. The most important help for someone is a prayer for him.
>
> God says: 'Strive for spiritual gifts' [1 Cor 14, 1] first and foremost, because only this will save you. We will never overcome misery [*nishcheta*] and poverty [*bednost'*]. This is clear. But I do not know if this is clear in the West. In Russia this has already been clear for a long time. In Russia, they tried to build a heavenly King-

[91] After liturgical reforms, introduced by Patriarch Nikon of Moscow in 1666–67, a group of believers separated from the Russian Orthodox Church, and kept the old liturgy. They were called Old Believers.

> dom for a long time, for 70 years, they tried to build heaven on earth, to feed everyone. Communism – this was to give everyone sweets, a piece of bread, and so on. But this is, of course, fraud and deceit [*lozh' i obman*]. And even Christ Himself says: 'Poor people will always exist, but the human Son will not be with you forever' [see Jn 12, 8 and Mk 14, 7], He said this before His death, He told His disciples.
>
> Our Orthodox Church in contemporary secular society, in Russian society, has argued very seriously against an understanding of the Church as some sort of a social institution [*nekotoryi sotsial'nyi institut*]. Let us say the Church – this is a charitable institution – the Church is established for people who go to the Church and share their material wealth, and they can be sure the wealth is spread correctly. This view of charity is wrong. And our Orthodox Church says: Orthodoxy is not like this. The church of Christ is first and foremost the mystic body of Christ, first and foremost the illustration [*aktualizatsiia*] of the heavenly kingdom on earth.

Father Vladimir's explanation of how the Russian Orthodox Church approaches charity distinguishes it from three other approaches to charity: a popular Western approach, the approach of Western churches, and the socialist approach. In all three cases, charity is oriented towards overcoming social problems such as misery, poverty, and illness. Referring to the Bible, he argues that misery and poverty will always exist and there is no way to prevent them. The socialist attempt to care for everyone, he says, was simply 'fraud and deceit' because there can be no heavenly kingdom on earth. In contrast, the Orthodox perspective considers that donations are a way of securing one's own salvation. Since there can be no heaven on earth, the Church emphasises the importance of bringing people to the next world. For this, it is necessary to lead people to the Church and to show them the 'right path'. Individual salvation requires belief in God, and only the accumulation of spiritual wealth through one's own prayers and deeds, and the prayers that one receives from others, is of use for reaching the next world. For Father Vladimir, this perspective explains and justifies why the Russian Orthodox Church does not engage in much charity work, and tries to avoid the image of being a social institution which can do something about the rising inequality and poverty in Russian society.

Later in this same interview, Father Vladimir explained why the Russian Orthodox Church spends the majority of money it has on the erection of new churches and the adornment (*ukrashenie*) or reconstruction of existing ones. Whereas the churches of Protestant congregations in Russia, as well as elsewhere, are rather plain, Orthodox churches are decorated extensively

because they are considered to be images of heaven on earth. They thus herald the good times to come, and are thought to attract believers because of their beauty and mystique. In addition to the Church's function of representing heaven, Father Vladimir stresses an understanding of the Church as the mystical body of Christ.

Most priests replicate an explanation of the Church's perspective on charity that is quite similar to the one that Father Vladimir provided. The reasons for prioritising church construction and adornment, however, are less consistently articulated, and priests provide varying explanations drawn from their own experience. According to another priest, for example, it is easy to see the results of money used for the decoration of a church, while no one can control where the money goes if it is used for charitable purposes. Thus he used donations to his parish mainly for the reconstruction or adornment of church buildings in order to avoid accusations of corruption or misuse of the donated money.

In yet another interview, Father Vladimir expressed less concern about donations given as charity, and more concern with donations given by rich businessmen to build churches.

> Father Vladimir: Today's businessmen absolutely do not think about inchurchment [*votserkovlenie*]. They say: 'See, you pray better [than I do], and so pray'. [He continues imitating a businessman] 'See, you need money, so I will give it to you, so that a bell can be bought [*chtoby kolokol kupit'*]'. 'And, you will pray for me, and everything will be fine with me [*A ty za menia pomolis', pust' u menia budet vse khorosho*]'. This is like a bribe for God [*vziatka Bogu*]. But this is stupid, of course, because God does not take bribes. God, He does not need a bell tower. God needs your soul, your heart.
>
> Tobias Köllner: And not the money.
>
> Father Vladimir: Of course! I will take the money, thank him, and will build the bell tower. And I will pray for this man. But if he himself does not turn to God, hardly anything good will happen. God does not take bribes [*Bog vziatok ne prinimaet*].

In this discussion, like in those of the previous chapters, Father Vladimir criticises businessmen for their misguided approaches towards God and the Church. Few businessmen, he says, even consider becoming inchurched. In the previous chapter, I described inchurchment (*votserkovlenie*) as involving regular church attendance, but Father Vladimir understands it as an indicator that an individual is deeply engaged with the Church, thinks about his soul (*razmyshliat' o svoei dushe*), connects his life to God (*sviazyvat' zhizn' svoiu s Bogom*), and follows clergymen's prescriptions exactly. Instead of engaging in this process, he says, most businessmen try to bribe God by making

donations; and he imitates a common explanation that an entrepreneur might give to a priest when donating money for a bell tower. The entrepreneur knows that he needs prayers, but he is misguided on two fronts. First, he does not know that the prayers need to be for his soul; he wants only luck, success, and protection (see chapter 4). Second, he tries to 'buy' (*kupit'*) the prayers through a succession of material favours and gifts to the priest, who prays 'better' than he does, and can thus reach God more quickly or effectively than the entrepreneur could through his own prayers. This, Father Vladimir describes as an attempt to give a bribe (*vziatka*) to God.

It is interesting that Father Vladimir does not lay fault with the priest for accepting the money for the bell tower. Rather, he suggests that the donation may be turned to the entrepreneur's benefit in time, if the entrepreneur himself undergoes a real change in behaviour. Although Father Vladimir does not talk about penance explicitly, his understanding of a change in behaviour is based on the concept of penance. Only if the entrepreneur offers the donation as a form of penance, and changes his future behaviour in accord with a deeper focus on God, can the donation bring about salvation. When I questioned the role of the priest later in our discussion, Father Vladimir explained that the priest will pray for the donor to turn towards the Church, but not for the removal of his sins.

Following Michel Foucault's (1993: 222) distinction between two techniques of self-knowledge in Christianity, auricular confession (*exaugoresis*), and public penance (*exomologesis*), Oleg Kharkhordin (1999: 61ff.) claimed a predominance of the latter in Orthodoxy. This view is supported by Father Vladimir's account of the necessity of a visible change in behaviour – a revelation by deeds. In addition, Father Vladimir links penance to the process of inchurchment that always demands new penitential efforts. As I will show in the following sections, the emphasis on public action is inherent in both forms of penance in church construction: 'churches built with gold' and 'churches built with tears'.

Churches Built with Gold (*na zolote*): Motivations for Giving Donations

In August 2007, the first stone was laid for a new church near Vladimir's city centre. The new church replaced a church that had been destroyed in 1970, but could not be built in exactly the same location. When the original church was destroyed, an eternal flame, commemorating the victims of the Second World War, was installed in its place. Thus the new church is situated in the grounds of the former church's cemetery. Only a very few believers were critical that the reconstructed church would be 'built on bones' (*na*

kostiakh). The church was dedicated to Our Lady of Kazan – one of the most important icons in Russia.[92] The church was 'built with gold', as local people told me, because two businessmen, among others, donated money for the construction work. Each of them had donated ten million roubles (about 300,000 euros). Total construction costs were estimated at 25 to 28 million roubles (700,000 to 800,000 euros), and the remaining 100–200,000 euros not covered by the two businessmen were provided by about 200 other individuals.



Plate 4. The site for the construction of the new church has been marked. In the background is the first stone of the church that contains a small relic which is considered to give protection during and after the construction of the new church (Vladimir 2007).

[92] Our Lady of Kazan, an icon representing the Virgin Mary, is said to have been found in the city of Kazan by a young girl. The icon is considered to give protection to Russia against foreign powers, which, it is believed, occurred during the Polish invasion in 1612, during the Swedish invasion in 1709 and during Napoleon's invasion in 1812. The 21 July and 4 November are dedicated to the icon which was stolen in 1904 and never recovered.



Plate 5. Many Orthodox believers attended the blessing ceremony, prayed, and thanked God for the construction. The two women in the foreground follow the Church's prescribed dress code: they have covered their hair with head scarves and wear long skirts (Vladimir 2007).

When I attended the official blessing and dedication of the church on a return trip in November 2008, the construction of the building was completed, but the inside of the church was still empty – iconostases, paintings, and icons were all missing. Still, the dedication was held on 4 November, the day of the Icon of Our Lady of Kazan, at the archbishop's insistence. Many people attended the ceremony, and most of them arrived at least one hour before the appointed time. Most of the attendees were elderly women from the surrounding area who, until recently, had attended other churches. They looked forward to attending a church closer to home, and approved of the church's construction.

The archbishop, the mayor, the head of the local section of the United Russia Party, and Gennadii, one of the two major donors, led the official opening ceremony with speeches. The archbishop spoke first. He thanked Gennadii and all the other donors for their help, and praised the new church. The mayor then spoke, repeating the archbishop's thanks and praise, and then asked Gennadii to step forward, so that he could introduce him to the crowd. Gennadii complied, and then spoke briefly about the work of build-

ing the church and the problems they faced. He seemed relieved to step back into the line of honoured guests when he had finished speaking. After Gennadii had spoken, the archbishop said a prayer, carried out the blessing of the church with holy water, and led a procession around the church. Towards the end of the official ceremony, the archbishop again expressed his gratitude to Gennadii and gave him a reproduction of the icon of Our Lady of Kazan as a gift. Gennadii thanked him and stressed the importance of the church for the people in this district of the city. Although Gennadii appeared to dislike the publicity, he willingly gave interviews to the television, radio, and newspaper reporters at the event.



Plate 6. The newly erected church one day before the official opening ceremony (Vladimir 2008).

Gennadii's inclusion in the dedication ceremony as an honoured guest is so 'normal', that it almost escapes notice. But the archbishop made a point of drawing attention to Gennadii's presence and his donation three separate times – at the beginning, middle, and end – of the dedication ceremony. How

does the structure of this ceremony help to elucidate the relations established between churches and those who donate to them? Are donations gifts? And, what do donors receive in exchange?

Businessmen in Russia donate to churches out of at least three principle motivations that have been widely noted throughout the anthropological study of gift-giving. That is, businessmen's donations can be described as reflecting a combination of religious and political motivations, as well as the motivation that Annette Weiner (1992) has described as 'keeping-while-giving'. The religious dimension hinges on an understanding of the donation as being part of a reciprocal gift-giving relationship with the divine. Marcel Mauss (1990) considered the notion of reciprocity to underlie all gifts, including those made to gods: 'because those gods who give and return gifts are there to give a considerable thing in the place of a small one' (1990: 17). Following this interpretation of the reciprocity of giving, religious motivations for donations are guided by expectations of a return in the next world. Many Russians have a similar understanding and stress the potentially reciprocal nature of donations to the Church, which allow for the salvation of the soul.

For the second aspect of church donations, the political motivation, I underline the increase in influence and power that donations to the Church can bring. Following Bourdieu's (2001) argument, donations to the Church can be interpreted as a way of converting economic to social capital that elevates one's social status and prestige in the secular sphere. Increased social status and prestige, then, are transformed into political power when a donor advances in his political career. This perception is shared by many Russians, as I will try to show.

Drawing on Annette Weiner's (1992) account on *kula* exchange, I use her term 'keeping-while-giving' for the third motivation for donations. Like Jonathan Parry (1986), she criticised the assumption of reciprocity in gift-giving because 'during the rise of capitalism, the give and take of reciprocity took on an almost magical, sacred power among Western economists' (Weiner 1992: 2). In her view, the emphasis on reciprocity in exchanges also gained influence in anthropology and concealed the nature of inalienable possessions. But for her, at issue was 'not how one gift elicits a return, but rather which possessions the members of a group are able to keep' (Weiner 1992: 26). She claimed that exchange is not motivated by 'the hoary idea of a return gift … but the radiating power of keeping inalienable possessions out of exchange' (Weiner 1992: 150).[93] Although businessmen do not expressly make donations to the Church in order to avoid giving other things,

[93] Inalienable possessions are those 'imbued with the intrinsic and ineffable identities of their owners', like the copper plates held by native American peoples in the northwest (1992: 6).

they do sometimes use their gifts to the Church as a way to avoid – discursively and legally – taking responsibility for other financial burdens from the state.

Religious Motivation

The religious aspect of businessmen's donations dominates academic and church literature, as well as everyday conversations. First and foremost, donations are perceived and described as a form of penance (*pokaianie*) for one's sins. Only through penance does salvation become possible. The connection between donations and penance is a long-standing one in Russia. As the Russian historian Oleg Platonov (1995: 25) argued, 'in the consciousness of Russians the idea of penance or atonement for wealth exists because wealth is always connected to sins'. Platonov built his argument around the numerous Russian proverbs that convey popular ideas about wealth: 'Don't accumulate a belly [wealth], and you won't poison your soul [*Zhivota* (*bogatstva*) *ne kopi, a dushu ne mori*]' or 'Let your soul go to hell – and you will become rich [*Pusti dushu v ad – budesh' bogat*]' (1995: 25–26). Negative perceptions of wealth are also mentioned in the *I'zmaragd'*, a religious anthology from the fourteenth century. In one chapter, for example, readers are advised that, 'for personal salvation it is better to get rid of wealth, as a wanderer prefers to give robbers his money and save his life; or as sailors, during the storm, throw their freight overboard' (*I'zmaragd'* II, ch. 157; cited in Fedotov 1966: 67). By extension, gifts and donations made to the Church helped to remove one's own sins or those of the individuals in whose name a gift was made. Such appears to be the case, for example, with a bell that was donated by merchants to Vladimir's Dormition Cathedral in the seventeenth century. The bell's inscription reads, 'for our souls and for those of our parents in eternal peace [*Po svoikh dushakh i po svoikh roditeliakh v vechnyi pokoi*]' (Guliaeva 2003: 61).

In contemporary Russia, old proverbs and allegories only convey a partial depiction of how most people understand wealth. While negative associations still prevail, wealth is also valued because many social services, such as health care, education, and housing, are privatised and therefore very expensive. Nevertheless, many people still stress the sinfulness of those who have become rich. As discussed previously, the wealth of contemporary businessmen is often perceived to have been obtained by questionable or illegal means. As Pavel's account in the previous chapter demonstrates, negative perceptions of wealth draw on both religious and socialist morality. Yet, people themselves most frequently stress the religious motivations to reprobate wealth, and many of my interlocutors specifically linked charity

and the donation of money to the Church with penance and the quest for the peace of one's own soul or of the souls of one's relatives.

Businessmen themselves often make the same linkages. For example, Ivan, a former engineer in his mid-fifties who now runs a real estate business and has been introduced in more detail before, provided the following explanation of donations:

> Some people really have an interest in religion. They take to books, read; and some go to monasteries; some search for a spiritual teacher (*dukhovnyi nastavnik*) who tells them who Jesus Christ was, why he was crucified, who the Virgin Mary was and ... what Easter is, and so on.
>
> Then they, so to say, start to study and comprehend, and someone helps them, and they understand, understand enough. And these people, who have a lot of success in business, at some time they were criminals (*kogda-to oni zanimalis' kriminalom*). But those who found a spiritual teacher, they really help the Church, help to build churches. They help to build, so to say, holy institutions. They occupy themselves with charitable activities (*blagotvoritel'nost'*).
>
> They understood that this is necessary, that the soul can rise (*vrode by i polet dushy byl*), right? They understand: 'Apparently I did something wrong in life' (*Znachit, chto ia chto-to delal v zhizni ne tak*).

Ivan's description of how some successful businessmen turn away from criminal activities through religious study, donations, and charitable work complements the perspectives of priests, detailed in chapter 4, about 'right practice'. Importantly, Ivan describes wealth in negative terms, and expresses suspicion that highly successful businesses are normally built through criminal methods and sinful behaviour. Like the priests quoted earlier, however, Ivan stresses that an individual can be redeemed through contemplation, penance, and changed behaviours. And, like the priests' accounts previously cited, he suggests that future success in business cannot be easily correlated with one's level of belief. A businessman's initial gain in wealth is always morally suspect, but a businessman may continue to be wealthy and successful, even as he recognises that 'I did something wrong in life', and begins to help build churches so that 'the soul can rise'.

In the interview, Ivan mainly talks about others, but the account also reflects much of his own personal experience. For example, he stresses the important role of spiritual teachers in helping businessmen to begin their religious study and spiritual development. Ivan himself has a long-standing relationship with his own spiritual teacher – a monk from a nearby monastery who is also a friend of Ivan's parents. Although Ivan could not be

described as rich, his business is profitable, and he is faced with expectations to donate from many sides. However, he is reluctant to give money to unfamiliar people or religious institutions. He has a preference to give to Orthodox orphanages and schools, but makes most of his donations through his personal networks or according to the advice of his spiritual teacher.

My second example is Gennadii, whom I mentioned in my description of the church opening ceremony. He is in his mid-forties and runs one of the biggest construction companies in the region. The church whose blessing I attended was the second church construction to which Gennadii had donated. The first church was built on the site of the city's cemetery, and had been completed before my arrival, but rumours about the construction still circulated during my research. Many people suspect that Gennadii and the other businessmen who made major donations to the project had been motivated by political interest. The construction of the first church was undertaken and completed rapidly in 2004–2005. Shortly afterwards, elections for the regional (*oblast'*) parliament were held, and four of the businessmen who had contributed to the construction, including Gennadii, were elected.

When I interviewed him, Gennadii denied any connection between his contribution to the church and the elections. Instead, he explained his decision to contribute as motivated by a dream.

> I saw myself standing on a hill in white clothes. Other people stood with me in white capes, and next to me was a white church. An endless chain of people passed by and bowed to us showing signs of respect. A mysterious apparition.
>
> Later it so happened, completely accidentally, that they proposed to me to build [this church in the cemetery]. And why not? There used to be a church there, and we decided to rebuild it. Before we got involved, they had already tried to build it, about ten years earlier, but they had not succeeded. They collected some money, laid the first stone, but it led nowhere. There was nothing, nothing worked. So, for this reason, when the foundation of the church was laid, a box with holy relics [*sviatye moshchi*] was included.
>
> Later there was a meal, it was such a celebration, and the archbishop said, 'Gennadii, you cannot imagine how those people who are buried here in this cemetery will thank you! They will pray for you [*za tebia molit'sia*]'. And I remembered this dream, the endless chain of people. And here in the cemetery, 100,000 people are buried.
>
> This is what is important to me. I am not interested in public recognition [*priznanie obshchestvennoe*]. I did this for myself [*dlia me-*

nia samogo], and it is a possibility to share this with other people [*podelit'sia, kak by, s liud'mi*].

Gennadii initially describes his decision to participate in the church construction as 'accidental' – 'why not?' It appears that he only connected the dream to the construction project after the archbishop told him that the people buried in the cemetery would pray for him. Only then, it seems, did Gennadii realise that he had donated for 'his soul' and 'for others'.

Gennadii's description of a premonitory dream before making his donation is not unusual. Rather, dreams play an important role in Orthodoxy and are generally thought to be supernatural signs, possibly from God. Many other instances can be found where the construction of a church was motivated by a dream. In Vladimir Region, for example, the Church of the Intercession on the River Nerl' (*Pokrov na Nerli*) is also said to have been built as the result of a dream. In 1155, Prince Andrei Bogoliubskii was on his way from Kiev to Rostov Velikii when his horses stopped suddenly. He had to take a rest, and during the night, the Mother of God appeared to him in a dream, and advised him to build a church in the spot where he was resting. In the case of the new cemetery church, another businessman who had donated to the project also claimed to have had a dream in which his grandmother appeared and asked him to build a church in the cemetery where she was buried. Although it is impossible to know whether Gennadii and his colleague were really motivated by dreams, it is noteworthy that both men talk about their dreams as a way of demonstrating the religious motivations behind their donations. At the very least, the men demonstrate their familiarity with, and internalisation of, traditional modes of explaining the motivation to build churches as divinely inspired.

Other details suggest that Gennadii really does believe that his donations were religiously motivated. For example, it is clear that Gennadii considers the archbishop to be a spiritual teacher (*dukhovnyi nastavnik*). In the account, the intimate personal relation between the two is only hinted at, when Gennadii describes how the archbishop addressed him personally and called him by his first name. But prior to the construction project, Gennadii had met with the archbishop several times; they had attended public events together and had travelled to Italy on a trip that was organised jointly by the diocese, the city administration, and several entrepreneurs, to venerate the relics of St Nicholas. It seems clear, then, that when the archbishop approached Gennadii about participating in the church construction, both men enacted the scenario described in Ivan's account. A spiritual teacher proposed a particular kind of donation to a businessman, who, in accepting began the path of spiritual growth.

Political Motivation

In addition to religious motivations, Ivan also mentioned political motivations for giving donations. Like others, Ivan sees a connection between entrepreneurial donations and the goal of becoming a member of the regional parliament. Here is how he explained it:

> Many of these people who are in business do not understand the core of religion, and they felt the need to engage in politics [*u nikh poiavilas' neobkhodimost' delat' politiku*]. They followed the general political trend [*na volne politicheskikh deistvii*]: I will build a church and I will write in the newspaper for everyone to see: I built a church! ... Yes. And then people will support me in the elections because, you see, I built [a church]. Everyone will know, especially the pensioners, that is to say the older voters, and they are the main part of the electorate. The youth does not come out to vote. They [young people] do not go to vote, they just do not. Yes. But those who vote will vote for me.

Although Ivan had earlier described many businessmen's donations to the Church as religiously motivated, in this interview segment, he provided a more cynical – though equally complex – account of donations. Ivan notes that many businessmen feel the need to involve themselves in politics; these businessmen therefore capitalise on the increasing religiosity of voters, especially the influential older generations. They build churches to appear religious, and thus to gain voters' trust and support. While Ivan is certainly critical of this pattern, his description is also vague about businessmen's exact intentions. They 'follow a trend' and 'do not understand the core of religion'. Thus, as in so many other accounts that I have already cited, Ivan leaves open the possibility that businessmen who donate to churches as part of their political careers may not be wholly cynical and manipulative.

Ivan is right to note that businessmen are rarely involved in politics for religious reasons. In many cases, political engagement confers direct advantages in business activities. For example, a regional law currently exists in Vladimir which prescribes monthly health checks for visitors if they want to visit a public bath house. As a result, existing public bath houses are in a poor condition because entry fees are low and visitors are rare. One businessman, Gennadii's partner in the second church reconstruction, now wants to open an 'aqua park'. He dreams of having several different pools and some slides, as he saw in western Europe. But his plans will only have a chance of being profitable, if he is able to change or abolish the law prescribing health checks. This change is precisely his goal at the moment, and he hopes to be elected in the coming elections. Similar conditions exist in many economic spheres, and building regulations are some of the most complex.

Businessmen thus often seek to become parliament members so that they can directly influence the regulations that affect their businesses. Moreover, businessmen find it particularly useful to have the political immunity of parliamentarians because they cannot be easily charged for legal infractions in their personal or business affairs.[94]

At the same time, many businessmen appear to engage with politics as an extension of their vision of themselves as entrepreneurs. For example, in his account on entrepreneurial governmentality in Russia, Alexei Yurchak noted that 'entrepreneurial agency ... is directed not so much at personal enrichment at any cost as at building a meaningful personal reality' (2002: 310–311). Entrepreneurial engagement in politics in this respect can be understood as a way of building something new, of taking part in shaping a new Russia. The 'trend' of donating to the Russian Orthodox Church, from this perspective, may well be experienced by the donors as constituting a patriotic act.

Keeping-While-Giving

In her re-examination of the *kula* trade, Annette Weiner provided yet another reason for gift-giving. She argued that 'at issue is not how one gift elicits a return, but rather which possessions the members of a group are able to keep' (1992: 26). Her focus was on things one can keep, rather than on gifts that are given away. Following her interpretation, gift-giving is carried out in order to hold back inalienable possessions. Similarly, I perceive donations to the Church as a precautionary practice, and as a way of protecting one's possessions in a difficult political context. Russian businesses face increasingly complex layers of bureaucracy and legal requirements as they grow in size and productivity. As long as one's company is small it is generally ignored, but as a company grows it faces more and more expectations from the state. Many of these expectations, however, are also difficult to track and trace because they are leveraged through personal networks, and – especially – through the client-patron relations that develop between business owners and state representatives who are members of a common political party.

In order to illustrate how client-patron relations develop between business owners and state representatives, I want to provide an example. One day in August 2007, I was walking along the main street of Vladimir. I stopped in front of one of the big companies from socialist times that is now

[94] The outcomes of judicial cases are never certain and can always have a political dimension. This is true even at the international level. For example, in 2006 Royal Dutch Shell and other partners were forced to sell their majority share in the gas field of Sakhalin-2 to Gazprom at a price which was far below the market value because they were accused of violating environmental regulations.

privately owned, and took a photo of the building from the street. Security men came outside and arrested me. They called the police who took me to the police station. Although I was not accused of espionage, I had raised suspicions because I was a foreigner, and was interviewed by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Special Purpose Police Squad (OMON). At the beginning, they were quite unfriendly, but became more relaxed when they saw the photo I had taken. It only showed the building with some symbols from socialist times that every passerby could see from the main road. After two hours of interviews and the writing-up of a report I was released. So, what was at stake?

When I told the story at work in the newspaper company the next day, everyone smiled and asked me if I did not know that nearly all the big firms in the area had continued or resumed the production of military goods. The company whose offices I had photographed advertises its production of gas and water meters, but it also produces fuses for bombs and missiles. Another company offers chemicals for civil as well as military use, and yet another firm officially produces oil drilling equipment, but also supplies military contracts.

These overlapping areas of production reveal much about the close relationship between business and the state. All the businessmen from bigger companies are members of the same political party, United Russia, and support the party's main figure, Vladimir Putin. Businessmen also feel that they must take some responsibility for the state's projects (by favouring the Church, renovating schools, and other activities) in order to stay in business, and to return at least some of the profits made through state orders. When businesses do not help the state, health inspections or checks for compliance with fire or tax regulations are carried out. These checks, while legal and officially correct, can also be conducted in ways that are designed to punish businessmen by interfering in their normal operations. For example, a businessman who owned an insurance company underwent a tax inspection during which all his computers were confiscated. The inspection was performed very slowly, however, and the company's work was forced to a halt until the computers were returned several months later.

Churches Built with Tears (*na slezakh*): Notions of Asceticism

After the detailed account I have provided about entrepreneurial church donations, let me now turn to the second, conflicting moral discourse about such donations. Although donations to the Russian Orthodox Church by entrepreneurs are widely appreciated by believers as well as by others, they do not go without criticism. As I have tried to show, giving donations is often understood in relation to earlier sinful behaviour and perceived as a

potentially easy way of getting rid of one's sins. Thus some believers make a distinction between donations as a form of compensation (*iskuplenie*, *kompensatsiia*) for one's sins, and what they consider to be real penance (*pokaianie*). For them, real penance is connected to loss, work, and hardship, and reflects ascetic ideals as they are practised in monastic life, such as fasting, poverty, and manual labour.

Not all parishes receive money from rich businessmen and the parishioners sometimes start reconstruction work on their own. In one of the small settlements near my main field site, a church was restored in this way. Over the course of several months, a group of about 30 parishioners spent very little money, but exerted a lot of effort in order to carry out the work. The group, two-thirds of whom were women and one-third men, met on weekends and sometimes more frequently, to work, hold services, and share meals (*trapeza*) together. Those with whom I talked stressed the close community feeling which arose during those collective activities. This community feeling also provided a reason for people who did not live in the settlement to contribute to the work. After the reconstruction was completed, minor and occasional repairs were mainly done by a few men and not by the whole group. The period of intense cooperation and sharing during the church's reconstruction, however, solidified a strong sense of group identity among those who had worked together. Individuals from the group continue to meet frequently with many others, but the group now only gathers in its entirety during church services. The members are so glad to see each other, that the priest sometimes complains that they are too loud: 'The church is not for conversations, but for prayers!'

Within the group of labourers, I had the closest contact with Igor, who is about 40 years old. I got to know him through Sonia, an acquaintance of mine who worked as a teacher in one of Vladimir's religious schools, but lived outside the city in the same village as Igor. Igor had studied theology at St Tikhon academy in Moscow for three years, but did not complete his studies because he needed to support his wife and their four children. He currently works as a driver, but still wants to finish his studies. Igor underlined the importance that working for the Church has for him. He perceives this work as the fulfilment (*ispolnenie*) of the Ten Commandments and stresses the penitential aspect of manual labour for the Church. Working for the Church, according to Igor, brings special grace (*blagopoluchnie*) to one's afterlife. For him, hard work is part of an ascetic lifestyle, like fasting, which he also observes.

One day, Igor and I were standing near the church, and he gestured towards it saying, 'See, this is our church – not the most beautiful, but built with tears'. The positive value that Igor places on the church that he helped

to build has two aspects. First, his statement reflects the pride of ownership that parishioners can have because they managed to reconstruct the church without any external help: this is 'our church' (*nasha tserkov'*). On another level, Igor values the church precisely because it was built 'with tears'; at this level, he values the hardship that he and other workers experienced as they undertook the reconstruction. In other discussions, he reminded me that businessmen who only donate money do not share in the rewards brought by 'tears'. In fact, if they publicised their donations, businessmen failed to gain any spiritual or heavenly rewards at all because they 'already received their "grapes"'.[95]

When Igor described the village church as 'built with tears', he drew on a hierarchy of values about church construction, wealth, and work, outlined in the Nestor chronicle (Trautmann 1948).[96] The chronicle describes how Antonii, the abbot of the Kievan Cave Monastery, succeeded in building churches.[97] 'Many monasteries were built by the emperor, by aristocrats, or by wealthy people. But it is different if they are built with tears, fasting, prayers, and vigils. Antonii has no gold, no silver and so he collected tears and fasting' (Shakhmatov 1969: 202). Like Igor, the author of the chronicle draws a contrast between churches that are constructed with gold or silver, and those that are built with tears, fasting, prayers, and prayer vigils (*bdenie*).[98] The contrast implies that the churches 'built with tears' possess special qualities; they are more rare than the 'many' churches and monasteries built by the Emperor and the aristocracy.

From my intermittent observation of the reconstruction of this village church, however, it is difficult to conclude that there is any empirical evidence that churches 'built with tears' reflect or engender higher personal values among those who engage in the work. What I mean is that the recon-

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[95] A similar phrase can also be found in the Bible (Mt 6, 16) where Jesus talks about affectation and fast.

[96] I am very grateful to Hermann Goltz who advised me to check the Nestor chronicle for similar phrases. The Nestor chronicle describes the early years of the Kievan Rus' (from about 850 to 1110) and is written in Old Church Slavonic. Its use as a historical source for any purposes, however, is complicated by uncertainty over its original authorship. Furthermore, the original has disappeared and some parts are suspected of having been added or rewritten in later periods. Igor may have been familiar with the Nestor chronicle from his studies, but he never mentioned it as a source for his own appreciation of the church he had helped to build.

[97] According to the chronicle, Abbot Antonii moved from a Greek monastic community on Mt Athos to Kiev in 1051 and settled in one of the caves. Others monks joined him and he is considered to be the founder of monasticism in the Kievan Rus'. He was later canonised at an unknown date.

[98] *Bdenie* is a religious exercise, mostly practised in monasteries, where one keeps watch, prays, and concentrates one's thinking and practice on God.

struction of the village church was riven with conflict that revolved around Igor's and Sonia's desires to each be recognised as a leader within the parish community. Although many parishioners agree with Igor's criticism of the entrepreneur donors, the portrayal of his own hardships during participation in the reconstruction work is contested. One of those who downplayed Igor's hardships during the work on the church was Sonia. Although they are sometimes allies, each claims a leading position within the parish, and often opposes the other. Igor's claim rests on his theological studies in Moscow, and Sonia's claims on her religious education and work as a teacher in a religious school. In addition, Sonia leads the Sunday school for children. Both sustain their claim to a leading role within the parish with the fact that they share their religious knowledge with others, on the amount of work each contributed to the reconstruction project, and the hardships they faced during construction.

The dispute between Sonia and Igor elucidates the differences and similarities between the contribution of gold or tears as a form of penance, and allows for an interpretation that bridges the gap between them. One obvious contrast between entrepreneurial donations and labour contributions is the level of sociality involved. Entrepreneurs mainly carry out their projects on an individual level, as the case of Gennadii shows. Although it is the case that about 200 people donated money for the erection of the church, most of the other donors were unknown to him. In contrast to the individual nature of entrepreneurial donations, the construction of a church through labour contributions, such as the project Igor and Sonia participated in, can create a community through the sociality of the building process. This community building effect of joint labour was appreciated, and is certainly one of the reasons why participants consider their work to be superior to the donations given individually by businessmen. Nevertheless, the dispute between Sonia and Igor threatens the community and means that it could split into factions if parishioners join one side or the other. Furthermore, their dispute resembles the desire of entrepreneurs for acknowledgement, as described in the section on the political motivations for giving donations. Therefore, I argue that both moral discourses are important as ideals, but their actual implementation in practice is far more complex and ambiguous.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have distinguished between two forms of church reconstruction which draw on both local understandings and historic distinctions: one relies on monetary donations from entrepreneurs, the other on labour contributions from parishioners. In reality, most people who contribute to church reconstruction donate some combination of both labour and money.

Nevertheless, the conceptual distinction is important because it reflects powerful local discourses on morality. Both methods of construction are interpreted as forms of penance, although many believers see a substantial difference between them. The judgment of parishioners mainly rests on their respect for ascetic ideals like hard manual labour and an adherence to proper fasting. In some respects, monetary donations are perceived as a form of penance that is too easy and therefore of a different quality compared to their penitential efforts through labour, prayers, fasting, and self-restraint. Therefore, donations are often described in slightly disparaging terms, such as compensation (*kompensatsiia*) or atonement (*iskuplenie*). The latter is the Russian translation of the Greek word for ransom (Alfeev 2004: 68–71) and has the word 'to buy' (*kupit'*/*pokupat'*) at its root, stressing the perception of economic calculation on the part of those making this type of donation.

Monetary donations, however, are often described as 'pure gifts' (Parry 1986; see also Malinowski 1984: 177f.). Both donors and priests stress that monetary donations should be given without any expectation of return. Priests particularly insist that donations do not engender 'this-worldly' returns, and work to counter common perceptions that spiritual favours can be sold or purchased. And, businessmen who make donations (like Ivan and Gennadii) stress the benefits that giving has made to their own soul. The most they hope for, as expressed most clearly by Gennadii, is that others will pray for them.

Yet anthropological analysis demands some further explanation of the quandaries posed by monetary donations to church reconstruction. If monetary donations are really less valuable as a form of penance than manual labour, why do businessmen make them at all? The answer, I suggest, has to do with the desire that many businessmen have to gain moral approval. In the context of Russian society, both in the recent postsocialist transitions and longer historical contexts, wealth is considered morally suspect. Those who are wealthy, but also want to be viewed as morally decent, must therefore find ways to convert economic capital into social and moral capital. Monetary donations offer one possibility for making this conversion, although it is always incomplete.

Although donors do receive a variety of return 'gifts', an interpretation of donations and reciprocal gifts from the church as a commodity exchange is misleading. Drawing on Gregory's (1982) distinction between gifts and commodities, I interpret donations to the church as gifts rather than commodities because the 'commodity exchange establishes a relationship between the objects exchanged, whereas gift-exchange establishes a relationship between the subjects' (1982: 19). And indeed, Gennadii's relationship with the archbishop clearly indicates the latter. The most common way to

show gratitude is to hand out certificates to donors. These certificates are often exhibited in a public part of offices, and as described for Boris's newspaper company in chapter 2, contribute to a donor's social reputation. Sometimes reciprocal gifts, like precious icons, are made, or blessings and prayers take place. Prayers for donors, which are announced publicly during the ceremonies, are requested in well-known monasteries for a certain period of time (forty days, half a year, or a whole year). In addition, donors often get a burial plot in a privileged place right next to the church. As seen in the case of medieval France, the social prestige that accrues to church donors may extend across several generations (White 1988). Therefore, I argue that entrepreneurial donations to the church include an element of personal interest in the exchanges of favours as well as disinterested gifts. Both aspects are inseparable and constitute two sides of one and the same activity.

Another way to explain the ongoing nature of returns might better focus on another aspect of the relationship that is established between a donor and recipient through giving. Raymond Firth, for example, noted that 'giving is an extension of the self, and hence the obligation is bound up with the notion of the self, its social bonds and social roles' (1975: 10f.). In other words, as individuals make a donation, they are also likely to assume the social identity of 'donor', and will attempt to fulfil the social roles and obligations attached to that role. From this perspective, the 'return' gifts from the church to the donor reinforce the donor's social identity and his obligations and responsibilities to the church. My ethnographic material supports such an interpretation because the relation between the donor and the outcome of his donation continues to be highlighted in many church activities. For example, donors participate in events like anniversaries or the celebration of the days of saints. During these events, they take privileged positions next to representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and of the city or regional administration. The donation establishes a relationship between donor and recipient which is renewed at each meeting, and as Marcel Mauss wrote, 'the alliance contracted is not temporary, and the contracting parties are bound in perpetual interdependence' (1990: 62). In the ethnographic material presented, Gennadii and the archbishop not only stayed in contact over several years, but also renewed their relationship with another donation which led to the construction of a second church. Therefore, I understand donations as complex social transactions that cannot be described as isolated acts, but as an ongoing process of social interaction and exchange.

In addition to the 'unseen fruits' and ecclesiastical favours, a gain in prestige and social status in the secular context can be observed. The postsocialist transition led to changes and inconsistencies in people's status, and

the nouveaux riches faced a dilemma because there was a 'displacement between economic resources and social status' (Sampson 1996: 93). In order to acquire elite status, entrepreneurs try 'to solve the incongruity between newly acquired material resources and lack of cultural hegemony' (Sampson 1996: 94). Donations to the Church and other respected institutions bridge the gap and enable participation in public events that can lead to an increase in prestige and moral approval. A parallel interpretation has been drawn for France in the Middle Ages: 'secular princes ... used the foundation of an abbey ... as a means of enhancing their own prestige in the secular world and as a way of establishing, consolidating, and extending their own political power' (White 1988: 30). Therefore, an understanding of donations to the Russian Orthodox Church as capital transformation (Bourdieu 2001) is reasonable. Economic capital is transformed through donations into social capital in the form of higher prestige.

However, many of the efforts made by businessmen are not accompanied by an actual increase in prestige, and often entrepreneurs remain morally questionable in the eyes of the public. In contemporary Russia as in medieval France, businessmen do not only transform economic capital into social capital, but also transform social capital (back) into economic capital. This is seen in the 'trend' whereby church donations have become a standard element in the campaigns of businessmen who seek entry into the regional and national parliaments. Once in parliament, businessmen stand to increase their economic standing even further. Thus even as businessmen, priests, and believers seek to apprehend monetary donations to the Church as proof of the donor's faith and desire for penance, they are met with conflicting discourses about churches built with tears, socialist notions about trade as speculation, and the immorality of the excessive use of wealth.

But more importantly, the donations established long-lasting social relations between priests and businessmen, which are in accordance with moral ideals and brought benefits for both sides. Thus again a complex interrelation between self-interested motivations and socially shared and accepted ideals become obvious, and are reflected in discourses. This characteristic mixture recurs in the next chapter that addresses pilgrimage and excursions of the working collective.

Chapter 6
Pilgrimage or Excursion? Collective Outings to Sacred Places

> It is important to understand that pilgrimage and tourism have different meanings, are different manifestations of life. Pilgrimage (*palomnichestvo*) – [is] a manifestation of religious life; excursion (*ekskursiia*) – [is] a manifestation of cultural life.
>
> **-** Bishop Egor'evskii Mark, *Orthodox Pilgrimage*

In addition to the religious practices discussed in chapter 4 and the donations analysed in chapter 5, pilgrimages have become increasingly popular for Russian Orthodox believers in the postsocialist period. For this reason, I participated in several pilgrimage tours to well-known sites like Sergiev Posad and Diveevo, as well as to other places of minor importance. During one of the first pilgrimage trips, however, I noticed a peculiar fact: some businessmen did not go on pilgrimages on their own, but together with their employees – making the trip a pilgrimage for the whole company.[99] As I learned later, this is a common practice, especially for the larger enterprises. Thus this chapter examines the interrelation between business and pilgrimage (*palomnichestvo*).

In this chapter, I argue that there is an inherent tension in the pilgrimage practices of businessmen which arouse criticism from church representatives and believers, but still remain popular. Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church argue that tourism and pilgrimage belong to two different realms, but have become blurred in contemporary pilgrimage practices (Mark 2004: 12).[100] Church representatives are especially critical of the entrepreneurial attempts of travel agencies to market 'pilgrimage tours' and

[99] A similar practice has been mentioned by Kormina (2010: 274 n. 10), but in her case the pilgrimage was organised by the trade union and not by the entrepreneur.

[100] In 1999, Bishop Egor'evskii Mark was appointed Deputy of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate and since 2009 he has been Secretary for International Relations to Patriarch Kirill.

'excursions to monasteries' as touristic activities (Mark 2004: 12). Here, I only consider the excursions organised by businessmen for their employees.

Businessmen are motivated to organise and even pay the costs of collective pilgrimage trips for at least three reasons: personal religious motives; a desire to strengthen the community spirit in the collective; and moral educational motives. This combination once again reflects the peculiar mixture of motivations which has characterised businessmen's activities, as described in previous chapters. Although the religious motivation should not be neglected, pilgrimages organised by businessmen tend to emphasise community building and educational motives. Community building and educational motivations can be best understood, I argue, through the concept of 'entrepreneurial governmentality' (Yurchak 2002, 2006). In his attempt to explain why Komsomol activists so quickly succeeded in business ventures at the end of the socialist period, Alexei Yurchak drew on Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality that aims 'to shape or affect people's conduct' (Foucault 1991: 3). Yurchak argued that Komsomol activities had prepared its young leaders for the same aspects of entrepreneurship that 'involve organizing and governing people, institutions, relations, objects and ideas' (Yurchak 2002: 278; 2006: 296). Yurchak's concept allows me to conceive of pilgrimage trips as part of an overall business strategy in which entrepreneurs take a paternalistic approach to their employees which orders working relations at the enterprise; and, that these trips represent the attempts made by entrepreneurs to create a meaningful reality for themselves.

The pilgrimage trips organised by businessmen also bear striking similarities to the socialist practice in which work brigades periodically organised trips to museums and other interesting places for the whole work collective (*kollektiv*). According to Anna Pietsch (1986), in the 1970s, the Soviet Union was characterised by labour shortage and a change in workers' attitudes towards a more instrumental perception of their work, which led to declining work participation rates and stagnation in labour productivity.[101] Although a rise in labour productivity is imperative in most economic systems, from the 1970s onwards, Soviet leaders put special emphasis on raising workers' motivation through various means. Extended decision making in the work collective, financial incentives, and moral education were given prominence, as the newly adopted Article 8 of the 1977 Constitution of the Soviet Union suggests:

> Work collectives take part in discussing and deciding state and public affairs; in planning production and social development; in train-

[101] The Brezhnev era (1964–1982) is often remembered as a 'time of stagnation' (*vremia zastoia*), but, as Alexei Yurchak has shown, this description was attached to it in retrospect (2006: 7).

> ing and placing personnel; and in discussing and deciding matters pertaining to the management of enterprises and institutions, the improvement of living and working conditions, and *the use of funds* allocated both for developing production and *for social and cultural purposes* and financial incentives.
>
> *Work collectives* promote socialist competition, the spread of progressive methods of work, and the strengthening of production discipline; *educate their members in the spirit of Communist morality; and strive to enhance their political consciousness and raise their cultural level, skills, and qualifications* (emphasis added).

This trend was further elaborated in the Central Committee's Resolution, 'On improving the economic mechanism' of 1979. Prominence was given to the reorganisation of industrial labour through the promotion of the brigade system that reached its climax under Yuri Andropov in the early 1980s (Slider 1987: 388f., 394f.). The brigade system rewarded workers financially when their collective fulfilled its plan, and documented efforts at moral education and attitude change among workers.[102] Whereas the effect of financial stimuli tended to be limited, the emphasis put on moral education through the collective had potential advantages (Slider 1987: 389ff.).[103] Accordingly, the brigade was understood as the lowest-level collective of Soviet society that had a 'unique position to influence the beliefs and values of its members through peer pressure and other forms of group influence' (Slider 1987: 390).

Under socialism, economic life in the enterprise was shaped by directives of the plan and did not follow the logic of the market. According to Richard Rottenburg, the directives of the plan were subordinated to societal and moral requirements (1991: 306). Brigades and other socialist collectives had to incorporate the individual by teaching classifications, norms, values, and roles (Rottenburg 1992: 243; Müller 2002: 73). In fact, Rottenburg concluded that morality was so important that the Soviet economy could be described as an example of E. P. Thompson's 'moral economy' (Rottenburg 1991: 306). Work in socialist times followed a holistic understanding and was not confined to work practices, but had a particular moral impetus and aimed at the development of the new 'socialist man' (Rottenburg 1991: 306). The construction of a new symbolic reality was attempted through various

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[102] In 1983, bonuses amounted to an average of 16 per cent of a worker's pay (Slider 1987: 388).

[103] Peter Rutland (1986: 195f.) mentioned the management's reservations about implementation, a continuing scarcity of consumer goods, and the confusing and complex nature of the bonus systems. Similarly, Darrell Slider noted increased conflicts and ill-will among the members of the brigade in the distribution of collective bonuses (1987: 398ff.).

educational means, with collective trips to places of importance being one of them.

The participation in brigade life, socialist competition at the workplace, and education allowed for two conflicting interpretations: identification with the state's goals or instrumental use for personal benefits (Rottenburg 1992: 244). But, as Rottenburg was able to show, in the long run the boundary between identification and instrumental use became blurred and hard to sustain. People in leading positions were especially affected and experienced emotional and cognitive dissonance (Rottenburg 1992: 244). Although the outcomes of socialist education are difficult to evaluate, neither pure identification nor pure instrumentalisation among socialist workers seems likely.

Some of today's businessmen have evidently transformed the skills, experiences, and habits that they gained as managers in socialist enterprises, and the organisation of collective trips for the whole enterprise is just one example of this process. In part, the transferral of educational trips to the postsocialist context can be seen as an example of what Sonja Luehrmann (2005) referred to as 'recycling'. As in the socialist period, businessmen try to make work more efficient and impart moral values to their employees. As in the previous chapter, I argue that the state's agenda continues to play an important, if often hidden, role in businessmen's activities. Regardless of their own religious and self-interested motivations for undertaking pilgrimage, businessmen frequently emphasise that these pilgrimages provide the opportunity for their employees to gain a deeper knowledge of important historic and religious places in Russia. In turn, businessmen expect that this deeper knowledge will foster respect and pride for national history, and create a new form of patriotism (*patriotizm*).

The Effects of Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage and related rituals at sacred sites have long been at the centre of research in the social sciences. Early works in the anthropology of pilgrimage drew heavily on Emile Durkheim's assertion that rituals replicate the social and political order. 'By the mere fact that their apparent function is to strengthen the bonds attaching the believer to his god, [rituals] at the same time really strengthen the bonds attaching the individual to the society of which he is a member, since the god is only a figurative expression of the society' (Durkheim 1957: 226). Consequently, many anthropologists have tended to ascribe a community building function to religious rituals, festivals, and pilgrimage (e.g. Wolf 1958; cf. Eliade 1991, 1996). Similarly, other activities at sacred sites have been predominantly seen as contributing to the social unification and moral regenerators of the community.

This functionalist interpretation of pilgrimage was challenged first and most famously by Edith and Victor Turner. They argued that pilgrimage does not merely extend, continue, or replicate the normal social order. Rather, pilgrimage as a 'kinetic ritual' is best understood as a liminoid phenomenon that 'offers liberation from profane social structures' (Turner and Turner 1996 [1978]): xviii, 9) – it is social anti-structure.[104] As such, it offers pilgrims a temporary release from the mundane structures and hierarchies of everyday life. At the heart of anti-structure, is the theoretical concept of *communitas*. Communitas is described as a 'spontaneous, immediate, concrete, not abstract' form of community that generates 'undifferentiated, egalitarian, direct, extant, nonrational, existential' bonds with one's fellows (Turner and Turner 1996: 250). According to the Turners, the communitas experience and the movement to a sacred periphery are at the heart of a pilgrim's motivation.

The communitas model has been criticised, however, because it interprets pilgrimage as either 'supporting or subverting the existing social order' (Eade and Sallnow 2000: 3; see also Sallnow 1981). John Eade and Michael Sallnow argued that this interpretation is misleading because people actually attach multiple and conflicting meanings to their participation in rituals related to the sacred. In their view, the meaning of the sacred is not given but contested and a source for competition: 'pilgrimage is above all an arena for competing religious and secular discourses, for both the official cooptation and non-official recovery of religious meanings' (Eade and Sallnow 2000: 2).

Nevertheless, communitas does not necessarily exclude contestation, and can even be subsumed within it (Coleman 2002: 360). Just as the level of communitas may change over time, the degree of overt contestation is likely to vary according to circumstances (Coleman 2002: 359ff.). For this reason, Simon Coleman tried to bridge the gap between community and contestation, and described the work by Eade and Sallnow as reflecting a 'healthy scepticism towards overtly essentialist claims' (Coleman 2002: 362). Instead, he concluded, we cannot assume that pilgrimage 'must be "about" any one thing, whether it be heightened conflict or the heightened absence of it' (Coleman 2002: 363).

Many businessmen describe the role of pilgrimages in words reminiscent of Durkheim's, but in reality, the trips (and workplace itself) are riddled with tensions and cleavages between the businessmen and their employees. Similarly, the anti-structural elements in pilgrimages that are stressed by the Turners (1996) are less pronounced when the whole workplaces take part

[104] The Turners prefer 'liminoid' to 'liminal' because it is a 'voluntary, not an obligatory social mechanism' (Turner and Turner 1996: 34f.).

than when individuals undertake pilgrimage alone (see Naletova 2006, 2010). In contrast, my material shows how important social structure and hierarchy were at certain moments during the pilgrimage trips, when employees maintained distance from their bosses and tried to avoid offending behaviour in their presence. In addition, employees formed groups according to their group affiliation at the workplace. Because the inherent power relations and structures of the enterprise were upheld during the trips, it is also difficult to argue that the pilgrimages produced a strong sense of communitas. Nevertheless, much of the meaning of the pilgrimage is contested, and both businessmen and employees attach conflicting meanings to these trips. Businessmen anticipate that the pilgrimages will involve a religious experience, some form of education, and group cohesion, while employees report more diverse expectations and experiences. Some employees take part wholeheartedly in the religious rituals, while others celebrate a day off with wine and vodka.

Historic and Contemporary Aspects of Pilgrimage in Russia

In contrast to Islam, pilgrimage in Christianity is not prescribed as a necessary precondition for salvation, nor is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible. But soon after Christianity became the state religion in Byzantium in 312 AD, the first Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem took place. Emperor Constantine's mother, Helena, was among one of the first pilgrims, and in the following decades the popularity of pilgrimages rapidly increased (Coleman and Elsner 1995: 78). By the late fourth century, Gregory of Nyssa, a bishop in Asia Minor, began to criticise the practice. In his second epistle, he argued that 'change of place does not effect any drawing nearer to God' (cited in Coleman and Elsner 1995: 80). Social criticism also developed, focusing on the possibility that pilgrimages undertaken by women involved sinful behaviours. Despite these early criticisms, pilgrimage continued to develop as an element of Christian practice, becoming widespread across medieval Europe and Russia.

Pilgrimage was known in Russia well before the 1917 Revolution. From the eighteenth century onwards, 'pilgrim-professionals' made spiritual wanders across the country (Naletova 2010: 244). In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the popularity of pilgrimage increased, and it became a vibrant topic in Russian literature (Poplavskaia 2001: 12; Kirill 2004: 5f.; Naletova 2010: 244). In socialist times, pilgrimage was forbidden and was only legalised in 1988 when Gorbachev allowed the more public expression of religion. In contemporary Russia, pilgrimages have gained in popularity again, and monasteries, churches, and other sacred sites attract many believ-

ers.[105] Among the most popular pilgrimage sites in the central part of Russia are Sergiev Posad (veneration of Sergii Radonezhskii), Optina Pustyn' (veneration of Amvrosii Optinskii), and Diveevo (veneration of Serafim Sarovskii). Besides these well-known sites, there are monasteries, miraculous icons, and holy springs of local importance, which are also visited by many believers. There is hardly any region without its own geography of the sacred.

In order to control the vibrant development of pilgrimage, the Russian Orthodox Church has taken steps to exercise more influence on pilgrimage practices and their attached meanings. As a result, pilgrimage trips are increasingly organised by local eparchies or monasteries, and it is likely that pilgrimage service centres will be established in every eparchy (Kirill 2004: 6ff.). These trips would be guided by priests or more experienced believers, and would be designed to draw people closer to the Church and initiate inchurchment (*votserkovlenie*) (Kirill 2004: 9). Moreover, in 1999 a central pilgrimage centre, administered by the Church's Department for External Relations, was opened in Moscow. It organises conferences, seminars, and round tables for representatives of eparchies, monasteries and churches, and since 2001 has published the journal *The Orthodox Pilgrim* (*Pravoslavnyi Palomnik*) (Kirill 2004: 7).

Survey data on participants of pilgrimages suggest that women, the elderly, and the better educated are overrepresented among pilgrims (Naletova 2010: 252). The observance of religious practices like fasting and church attendance is significantly higher among participants in pilgrimage than among non-participants, but, nevertheless, the backgrounds of pilgrims are diverse and their commitment to the Church is sometimes fragile (Naletova 2010: 253f.; Kormina 2010). In addition, not all pilgrims follow the exact prescriptions of the Church.

Pilgrimages can be organised in different ways and by different agents, including the Church and independent travel agencies. Jeanne Kormina (2010) distinguishes three categories of visitors to monasteries, which confirm my own observations: *avtobusniki*, people who arrive by bus and only stay for a short time; pilgrims (*palomniki*) who spend more time in the monastery and do not necessarily arrive by bus; and workers (*trudniki*) who not only visit the monastery, but stay for longer and work for free.

[105] According to Metropolitan Kirill (2004: 7), in 2004, 2 million people took part in pilgrimages within Russia and 50,000 in pilgrimages outside Russia (mainly to Israel and Greece). Kirill draws on a survey carried out by the Russian section of the GfK institute (*Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung*, a market research institute from Germany). Naletova supports Kirill's claim and estimates that two to three million Russians participate in pilgrimages (2010: 251, n. 13). However, no official records are kept.

'Workers' often come in the summer and autumn, and help bring in the harvest from the monastery's garden, clean the monastery, or help to renovate it. There is some overlap between the second and the third categories, because *palomniki* also accept small work orders by priests, which are called *poslushanie*.[106]

The three categories have different connotations. Whereas the first category is named after its means of transport, the bus, the other categories are related to the purpose of the trip. Committed believers, nuns and monks, and people who stay in a monastery for a longer period, often do not value the *avtobusniki* because they do not consider this to be a genuine pilgrimage. In contrast, pilgrims who arrive on foot, having walked the whole distance in a procession (*krestnyi khod*), are the most admired (Naletova 2006). As in the discourse surrounding churches 'built with tears', physical hardship associated with walking and working during pilgrimage is especially valued because it is considered to bring grace (*blagodatnyi*), and to be a genuine form of penance. According to this perception, exertions and hard work are necessary additions to prayers at the sacred place.

The understanding of work as form of penance was also emphasised on one occasion, a one-day pilgrimage trip to a convent, where all the members in the pilgrimage group received small work orders from the head of the monastery (*igumen'ia*). I was assigned, with three other men, the task of clearing an attic that was to be enlarged. In addition to a blessing and lunch, we each received 100 roubles (less than 3 euros) for the day's work. To receive money for work in a monastery is rare, and the money was perceived as recognition for the special hardship of the work. My co-workers understood the money as 'blessed money' (*blagoslovlennye den'gi*) that should be kept and not spent for everyday purposes. One of the workers decided to put it in a frame and to exhibit the blessed money in his living room. Although we arrived by bus, and belonged to the category of *avtobusniki*, through our participation in work we were able to claim the trip to be a genuine form of penance. This understanding was made possible by the fact that we received the work order.

[106] *Poslushanie* literally translated means both 'obedience' and 'work of penance'. In both senses, it is guided by religious leaders and considered to be a penitential effort.



Plate 7. Two pilgrims accept a work order (*poslushanie*) from a nun and help to harvest black currants in the monastery at Diveevo (Diveevo 2007).

Although long monastery stays are highly valued, they are also rare. Most people experience time constraints and pilgrimage tours by bus which only last for a few hours or days are more popular. Whether a bus tour is organised by a travel agency or the Church, it must observe certain regulations imposed by the Church, like offering food suitable for fasting, and providing only basic facilities (no luxuries or entertainment). Some bus tours, such as those organised by the diocese, also incorporate introductory lectures by priests about the history, meaning, and importance of the places to be visited and Russian Orthodoxy more generally. Others, such as those organised by a parish or a group of parishioners for themselves, also facilitate socialising and community building among believers.

In recent years, a new form of pilgrimage has gained popularity, which is businessmen organising pilgrimages for themselves and their employees. The attitude of the Church and of believers towards this development is ambivalent. On the one hand, the Church considers it important to incorporate as many Russians as possible in religious activities, but on the other, questions are raised about the extent to which this 'national stroll' (*narodnoe gulianie*) is related to religion and pilgrimage. The head of the

diocesan pilgrimage office complained, for example, that a construction company had held a bathing holiday (*kupal'nyi otpusk*) at one of the holy springs.

Motivations to Undertake Pilgrimage

According to the official reading of the Russian Orthodox Church, pilgrimage is the veneration (*poklonenie*, *poklonnichestvo*) of sacred places through prayers and worship to God (Golovkov 2001: 15). This veneration is considered to bring grace to the pilgrim. In addition, more popular interpretations (including those made by church representatives) identify pilgrimage as a form of penance, which also draws grace to the pilgrim (Eade and Sallnow 2000: 21). Accordingly, many believers welcome hardship and privation during their travels to sacred places.

Such hardships during pilgrimages were also emphasised by Sonia and Anastasia, two of my informants who accompanied me on pilgrimage. Sonia is about 45 years old and works as a teacher in an Orthodox organisation that arranges religious courses for school classes. In addition, she sings in the church choir of one of the nearby parishes and could be described as belonging to the circle of inchurched parishioners. She is also interested in local history, writes articles about religious history, and is active in promoting the foundation of a museum for Alexander Nevsky, the famous Russian prince who successfully fought against the Swedes and was canonised in 1547.[107] Sonia highlighted the hardships of pilgrimage when recounting a previous journey she had made.

> Pilgrimage is so hard, so exhausting (*tak tiazhelo, tak utomitel'no*). We were in the bus for so long [several hours], and arrived early in the morning at the monastery in Diveevo. Before sunrise, we went to the moat (*kanavka*) where St Serafim saw the Holy Mother, and went around the monastery three times. During this time we prayed 140 times to Her [Holy Mother]. After the service, we went to the holy spring of St Serafim, but I was so tired (*ia tak ustala*) that I did not want to bathe. But the priest ordered me to bathe, and told me that he had blessed this spring (*ia blagoslovil etot istochnik!*). What to do? One has to do what the priest says (*Nado sobliudat', chto sviashchennik skazhet*).

In contrast to Sonia, Anastasia does not belong to any parish and attends church services irregularly. Nevertheless, she has religious needs (*religioznye potrebnosti*), as she told me, and joins a group pilgrimage every

[107] For more details on the topic of writing about local history (*kraevedenie*), see also Benovska-Sabkova (2009).

year. Anastasia is about 45 years old, and works as a lecturer for foreign students at one of the universities in Vladimir. Anastasia pointed to similar hardships when she told me about her experience of a pilgrimage trip.

> When we arrived at this monastery near Rostov Velikii, the priest ordered us to work there (*poslushanie*). The priest sent me to the kitchen, and I had to clean potatoes with the others. We were cleaning potatoes for about three or four hours! I hurt my hands (*u menia boleli ruki*), and because I was talking too much the priest instructed me to say prayers while cleaning potatoes: ten times '*Mariia raduisia*' (Hail Mary) and after that the Lord's Prayer (*Otche nash*). So I counted them with potatoes. Although it was very hard (*tiazhelo*), I still found it was very good (*bylo ochen' khorosho*).

In addition to the penitential aspect, many neophytes claim to have strong religious and spiritual experiences while being on pilgrimage. Most of today's pilgrims have only recently started to engage with Orthodoxy and are not closely connected to any of the local parishes. But they are still in search of spiritual experience and report strong emotional feelings when they are at sacred places (see also Naletova 2006; Kormina 2010: 280ff.). Asked about their motivations to make a pilgrimage, many believers replied that they did not have to explain it to other believers, only to non-believers. Often they claimed to feel some strength (*chuvstvo sily*) coming from the relics. Furthermore, many of the pilgrims mentioned a feeling of holiness (*chuvstvo sviatosti*) they experienced at sacred places or when they kissed the relics. In addition, some pilgrims commented on how pilgrimage groups experienced *sobornost'* as the participants endured hardship together.[108] But the experience of what Irina Naletova (2010) described as a 'kenotic community' during pilgrimage may also be rare. I never experienced such a close-knit community during my pilgrimages and people who accompanied me shared my impression. Often they complained about the loss of the community spirit during pilgrimage which had occurred in recent years. Those who did describe this feeling organised their trips with acquaintances and people from their parish.

Other attempts to explain the popularity of pilgrimage in postsocialist Russia have compared it with tourism and against other forms of religious belonging. Jeanne Kormina (2010), for example, has addressed both topics.

[108] The Russian word *sobornost'* describes a community of believers experiencing the divine, united through liturgical practice and the sacraments (Walters 1988: 90). Russian philosophers and theologians like Nikolai Berdyaev (1947) and Alexei Khomiakov have developed social and political doctrines based on the concept of *sobornost'*, expanding the application of the term to multiple groups, including the Church, the Russian nation, or a smaller group of believers. The term is sometimes translated as 'communality' to reflect the emphasis on shared experience.

She argued on the one hand, that pilgrimage is akin to tourism, but reflects a deep longing for authenticity (cf. Boissevain 1996: 12). On the other hand, Kormina (2010: 280f.) also described pilgrimage as a 'user friendly' version of Orthodox Christianity. Drawing on Grace Davie's notion of 'believing without belonging' in contemporary Britain (Davie 2003), Kormina argued that, similar to the British, contemporary Russians do not want to belong to a parish, but, unlike the British, they still do want to engage in organised religious practices (Kormina 2010: 281). Like the major holidays of Christmas and Easter (when many Russians attend church services), pilgrimage provides the occasional opportunity to attend services, confession (*ispoved'*) and take communion (*prichastie*). Of these two perspectives, I consider the second more important to explaining the appeal of pilgrimage:

Yet the increasing popularity of pilgrimage among businessmen and people in power during recent years requires some additional explanation. In the following interview, Ivan, the businessman previously introduced in chapter 4, explains how he understood the general turn to religion and the needs being addressed by pilgrimage.

> There is yet another moment, a very interesting one. I realised it when I met with civil servants of higher levels. In 2002, it happened that I worked in the Caucasus to help eliminate the results of the flood. There were people from the Ministry for Emergency Situations (MChS) and the Federal Construction Agency (*Gosstroi RF*), these civil servants are the top managers, so to say – of our authorities. They were very interested in religion. These people were between 45 and 55 years old. And, of course, according to their standing, they had learned a lot and had two or three degrees: in economy, engineering, and jurisprudence. And they could draw on their knowledge from books. They loved to read. Although they had been Communists until then, until perestroika, had learned in institutes, had been members of the Komsomol, had been leaders. But when they saw the country in such a difficult state: chaos, catastrophe, crisis, and so on – they began to return to the history of Russia. Why has Russia been a strong state, why has there been such a strong Church – her influence was strong, right? But these civil servants, they themselves were dealing with the teachings of Orthodoxy, so to say. They ordered their subordinates to study the Bible, to go to church, and to go to all the religious seminaries: to Zagorsk[109], to Suzdal' and to monasteries (*Oni zastavliali svoikh podchinennykh tozhe izuchat' Bibliiu, khodit' v tserkov', znachit, ezdit' na vsiakie*

[109] Zagorsk was the name of Sergiev Posad during socialist times. Now it is a famous pilgrimage site where the relics of Sergii Radonezhskii are venerated.

religioznye seminary, znachit, v Zagorsk, v Suzdal', v monastyri tam i t.d.).

In this interview Ivan describes a widespread pattern in contemporary Russia, which he perceives to be characteristic for leading people in the administration. Although they were brought up as atheists in socialist times, Ivan notices a general turn towards Orthodoxy among them. Former membership in Communist organisations is no obstacle, and is often reinterpreted and described in terms of continuity. However, this re-orientation goes beyond the individual level, with high-ranking civil servants putting pressure on their subordinates to follow the trend. In a manner reminiscent of socialist practices, special emphasis is put on education, and subordinates are compelled to take part in various religious events and to learn about the meaning of these events.

However, this trend is not limited to the state administration because I noticed similar practices among leading businessmen like Artem whom I introduced in chapter 3. I became acquainted with Artem through the recommendation of the head of the regional association for businessmen. Artem called me and invited me to his business which had more than 600 employees at that time. During my first visit, he showed me the part of his company that was located not far from his headquarters. Later that day, a meeting was held where all the heads of the different departments within the enterprise (directors of various hotels, hostels, restaurants, and shops) reported about the activities and developments of the last year. Most could report a considerable growth in the last year and promised a sustainable development in the future. After the official part of the meeting had concluded, dinner was served and vodka bottles circulated. When most of the staff had left the meeting, Artem invited me, some of the directors, and some of the female secretaries and accountants, to his dacha where he promised to show me a real Russian sauna – in order to remember (*na pamiat'*). After this 'initiation ritual', I was trusted and invited to return whenever I could find the time.

Like the civil servants mentioned above, Artem organised pilgrimages for himself and the employees in his enterprise.[110] Due to the fact that his company has become quite big, he organises a pilgrimage for each department. As to the reasons for organising pilgrimages, Artem mentions personal benefits such as the sacred energy or strength that comes from relics, or a feeling of tranquillity (*spokoistvie*), and the desire to gain religious experiences. But in addition to these personal religious motivations, Artem also mentions educational motivations and the goal of strengthening the community spirit in the collective. Many elements of Ivan's description of leading

[110] In addition to his collective pilgrimage tours, Artem also goes on individual pilgrimage to Diveevo which is near his native village.

civil servants who have turned to religion also apply to Artem: he was a member of the Communist Party, he had a leading position in socialist times, and he has only recently started to engage with Orthodoxy more thoroughly. Like the leading civil servants, Artem also takes a paternalistic position towards his employees and tries to teach them moral values. He often complained about the youth and their low moral standards, and emphasised his responsibility as a businessman towards younger people in his company.

> Artem: Tobias, you already know ... but our conversation goes beyond the topic of my firm (*razgovor za ramki firmy vykhoditi*). This is my personal opinion. I will not discover America for you, not for someone else, and not for the press. I only give my personal opinion. Why did I come to God? In the last four or five years, I started fasting. I am baptised, they baptised me after birth. The longer I live and the bigger the firm I manage, the better I understand the aspect of morality. And also religion. And these are no rumours or stories (*po naslyshke*). I turned to God. Why? Because, unfortunately, our 'pop' morality (*popsovaia moral'*) – the morality of a Ksiusha Sobchak[111], or channel NTV 3 – it leaves a lot to be desired. It ruins the youth. Drugs, prostitution, and a lot of other negative [things] ... How can people make an advertisement for young people which says, 'Take everything from life!' (*Beri ot zhizni vse!*)?[112] What does 'everything' mean? Before taking one has to give something. Right?
>
> Tobias Köllner: Yes, yes.
>
> Artem: And what do we give to young people? The mother gives them their life; the society gives them – what? Education and upbringing (*obrazovanie i vospitanie*). These are, if we talk about the Ten Commandments, 'our obligations' (*dolgi nashi*) ... There is the Lord's Prayer (*Otche Nash*). You came into this world and you received something, and you should leave something after you – to say it in Russian. Am I right?
>
> Tobias Köllner: You are right.
>
> Artem: Where does it come from? Of course, it stems from the media that publicise prostitution, drugs, and many other things. Films – which ones do we have? Why should we watch violent films from America? Zhirinovskii is right when he says: we have our Russian

[111] Kseniia Sobchak is the daughter of the ex-mayor of St Petersburg, Anatolii Sobchak. She is widely considered to lead a frivolous life of endless partying, and is often compared to Paris Hilton.

[112] This is an advertisement for Pepsi Cola which many Orthodox believers vehemently criticise.

> way, our mentality. I try, on the basis of my company, to do something new. But I will go my way, the traditional way.
> Tobias Köllner: This is important.
> Artem: I am sensitive (*Ia sensornyi*). You have seen my relations [with the collective]. I can feel what people need, which needs (*potrebnosti*) they have. Right?
> Tobias Köllner: Right.
> Artem: In my firm I have more than 600 employees. And, of course, I care (*zabotit'sia*) for them. When it comes to morality, of course, I see that the children of my employees are, more or less, all are more or less normal and good, so to say, although these elements and drugs are around – gypsies, and others without any culture. Everything is built on the basis of the family and that is why I tell them: No, no, no – this is a sin. You will not use it [drugs], you should not do it. But when you leave it on its own (*broshen na samotek*), you will see that everything depends on the family and the society. Ninety per cent, probably seventy or eighty per cent of all this depends on the family.
>
> And this collective is like a family. Maybe, even to such an extent that it is better than your own family because you spend the biggest part of your time in the collective. Today, my employees go to St Petersburg, which is good for the community spirit (*kooperativnyi dukh*).

Artem and I had talked about his religious beliefs on previous occasions, but in this interview, he made a series of connections between his own religious beliefs, and his social responsibility as an entrepreneur. His chain of associations is quite revealing because he foregrounds his choices with a critique of the media and the pop morality it promotes through imported Western films, products, and advertising slogans. Such morality, he says, leads to drug use and other social problems, especially among youth.[113] Artem feels responsibility to society; he concludes that social problems are best addressed through the family; and he equates his firm with a large family. Thus, he engages with his employees in ways that should support their moral education and upbringing, and extend into their own families and society at large. Yet nowhere in our discussion does he describe the specific attraction of Russian Orthodoxy. He simply says, Zhirinovskii was right: there is a Russian tradition that suits society's needs better than the Western imports. This tradition, for Artem, is Orthodoxy.

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[113] The phenomenon of drug addiction is not restricted to big cities like Moscow or St Petersburg. An acquaintance of mine from Vladimir mentioned that 15 out of the 25 pupils in his son's class had died due to drug addiction.

Artem applies his goal of acquainting his employees with Russian history and Orthodoxy by organising several trips to religious (Sergiev Posad, Diveevo) and secular places (St Petersburg) each year. Due to the enterprise's large size, the trips are made by smaller groups of about 30 to 50 persons. In addition, Artem uses the trips to strengthen the coherence inside the work collective. Artem claims that he can 'feel what people need', but success of his attempts to bring his employees closer to Orthodoxy has to be evaluated critically. I took part on a pilgrimage he organised to the monastery at Sergiev Posad, and found employees' responses to be mixed.

The pilgrimage to Sergiev Posad in summer 2007 was quite exceptional for its size, as about 150 people took part. The group gathered at one of the restaurants near the company's headquarters, and Artem gave a short speech before the group dispersed to several buses. In the speech, Artem stressed the importance of St Sergius for Russian history. I went with a group of 13 young people (between 25 and 40 years old) I knew from the administration and the car park. Although all of them were baptised, none of them went to church regularly or observed fasts. Upon arrival at the monastery, the whole group reassembled for the monastery tour, but then dispersed quickly afterwards. Some employees went to the churches, but our group left the monastery grounds and went to a nearby fast-food restaurant. Although we talked about Orthodoxy and St Sergius for a short time, these employees had little interest in Orthodoxy and pilgrimage, and seemed to be little convinced by Artem's efforts to influence them.

Nikolai is another example of a businessman who thinks that educational efforts should be carried out inside the enterprise. He is about 60 years old and the owner of an engineering business that employs approximately 35 people. Like Artem, he had a leading function during socialism, considers himself to be an Orthodox believer, and claims responsibility not only for himself, but for his employees as well. He considers educational work to be important and has organised collective tours to Sergiev Posad and Abramtsevo.[114] Although Nikolai considers religion to be important, the trips he organises lack the specific religious connotation, unlike those in Artem's case. He perceives none of the tours as pilgrimage but calls them trips (*poezdki*). Nevertheless, a peculiar mixture of religious and secular motivations remains inherent in the educational work because, in his view, these journeys should help his employees to engage and get acquainted with Russian history and religion. Unfortunately, I never took part in any of these trips and can give no more details.

[114] Abramtsevo was a small settlement of artists in the nineteenth century that was funded by a merchant. It was especially famous for the painters of Russian realism.

Artem and Nikolai both stress the positive influence of religion on the collective in this context, although they use different terms, 'pilgrimage' and 'trip'. Whereas Artem and Nikolai favour the idea of organising collective trips to religious and historic places for their employees, Tatiana strongly opposes this idea. She has a completely different understanding of pilgrimage as something that requires individuals to make serious efforts in prayer and religious observances. These efforts, she thinks, cannot be accomplished in short group trips.

> Tobias Köllner: When I went on pilgrimage to Diveevo and Sergiev Posad I saw businessmen who were accompanied by their employees. They required everybody to go on a pilgrimage.
> Tatiana: Then, what do you understand pilgrimage to be? [full of indignation] I understand a trip as a pilgrimage when believers walk to sacred places and pray for all of us. It is not: I went and requested a forty-day prayer (*sorokoust*) or ... This is not pilgrimage! Do you understand?
> Tobias Köllner: Yes.
> Tatiana: Pilgrimage – this is when people gather, right? Having a belief and going from one sacred place to another. If possible, they reach Diveevo and from Diveevo they go to Israel, and from Israel they go somewhere else. And they pray for all the people (*narod*), only in this case do I understand it as pilgrimage. These are people who have their inner belief and pray for all of us. For those who do not have sufficient time. One prays for unity (*edinitsa*), right? For one's nearest, for one's relatives, and for others, right? These people, in general, dedicate themselves to praying our sins away (*posviashchaiut sebia otmoleniiu nashikh grekhov*), all of them. That's why for me pilgrimage has only this meaning.
> Tobias Köllner: I also noticed some employees drinking beer and having fun.
> Tatiana: Well, the head of the enterprise organised the tour, so everybody has to go. But I perceive this as an excursion (*ekskursiia*). This is no pilgrimage (*palomnichestvo*). This is a different matter, these are different things. But when it is in the sense that I understand it, I would answer: this is something different. This is only – like someone who goes there and watches, right? Does something without knowing what he does. Again, it is like the fashion of blessing cars – someone blessed it and so I am going to bless it as well. If I go to Diveevo once, then, I became what, a pilgrim? No! Pilgrimage – this is when you really live according to the rules of the Church, when you adhere to particular rules, if you go in order to pu-

> rify yourself, to pray and to ask for others. I think that this is important. It is important for all of us, for everything, for all the people.

Tatiana, the director of one of Vladimir's biggest business schools, and a professor of economics, strongly disagrees with referring to collective trips as pilgrimage. In Tatiana's view, pilgrimage needs serious efforts and has nothing to do with a bus trip to a monastery where one simply requests a prayer. She says that it has become fashionable, like blessings, to organise pilgrimages for one's employees. But as with the blessing of cars, the act only makes sense if one proceeds to live according to the Church's prescriptions and rules. In addition, she stresses the importance in pilgrimage of walking to a sacred place, and of praying there not only for one's own wishes, but for those of everyone else as well. This highlights the aspect of penance that is connected to hard work and hardship, as I have mentioned earlier. Furthermore, pilgrimage in her perception does not stop at the first sacred place, but goes further, and is thus a dedication (*posviashchenie*) of one's life to this purpose rather than a single trip.

In many respects, Tatiana's background is quite similar to that of entrepreneurs who do organise collective pilgrimage trips for their workers. Tatiana is in her mid-fifties. During socialism, the school she now directs was part of the Marxist-Leninist Scientific Institute in the biggest enterprise in Vladimir. She had worked there in socialist times, and continued to work there after the massive restructuring of the enterprise. In 1997, she opened a private business institute and started to work with three teachers and sixteen students. Now it is one of the biggest business schools in Vladimir, with several hundred full-time students and more than one thousand part-time students. Tatiana considers herself to be an Orthodox believer, but – like other entrepreneurs – is selective in her observance of religious practices. She wears only skirts and dresses (no trousers), and keeps modified fasts, but she does not attend weekly church services.

The Experience of Group Pilgrimage

My first encounter with Orthodox pilgrimage took place on the Eve of Epiphany (*Kreshchenie*) on 18 January, 2007, on a night pilgrimage to the nearby village of Bogoliubovo. I went with a group organised by one of the parishes in Vladimir. We arrived shortly before midnight, and walked about two kilometres from the monastery in the village centre to the Church of the Intercession on the River Nerl'. On the way, I noticed a large group of young people who had come by car and walked in the same direction. While walking through the rain on the muddy path, they had a lot of fun, joking and drinking beer. Next to the church was a small pond that was still covered with ice. A fire brigade was present, and had removed the ice on one side for

bathing. At midnight, Orthodox priests remembered Jesus Christ's baptism on that day and blessed the water. The young people were the first to take a bath in the cold water, making a lot of noise. Later, older people joined quietly. In the meantime, it was possible to fill bottles with holy water (*sviataia voda*) in the church next to the pond, and the young people filled their emptied beer bottles with the water. After taking a bath, our group walked back to the monastery in order to attend the services. At the service, I saw none of the young people, and when we left, our car was the only remaining vehicle in the parking lot that had been crowded when we arrived shortly before midnight. Although the priests were present during the bathing in the pond and the service in the monastery, the two events seemed to be only loosely connected.

The impression that different meanings were attached to religious events, which formed during my first pilgrimage, was reinforced during another pilgrimage trip (organised by the Vladimir eparchy) to the convent in Diveevo where the relics (*moshchi*) of Serafim Sarovskii are venerated. I was invited by a friend who had been there several times before, and we went with a group that consisted of about 100 pilgrims. About two-thirds of them were women. The youngest participant was five years old, and the oldest participants were in their seventies. Some of the pilgrims went as families, but I also noticed two groups of elderly ladies. All the participants in our group followed the Orthodox dress code, and most of the pilgrims carried empty bottles and canisters to fill holy water. We met at a church in Vladimir, and after a collective prayer, we departed at midnight and arrived at half past four o'clock in the morning. At Diveevo, our group encountered a business collective on a pilgrimage trip. Our groups converged at one the holy springs, where we saw several of these men drinking vodka; they bawled, yelled, shouted and called one another 'idiots' (*duraki*) as they jumped and swam in the water, which had a temperature between 4–8° C. It was only after the bath that they sobered up and followed the prescribed rules again. Members of the group I was travelling with were disgusted; they asked each other how one could behave in such a way at a sacred site and criticised the men's behaviour. As others talked to our priest about the incident, he told us that this had become a quite common experience for him because more and more enterprises went to pilgrimage places collectively. But he regretted this development because he thought that many of the employees were not committed believers and gained little from the experience.

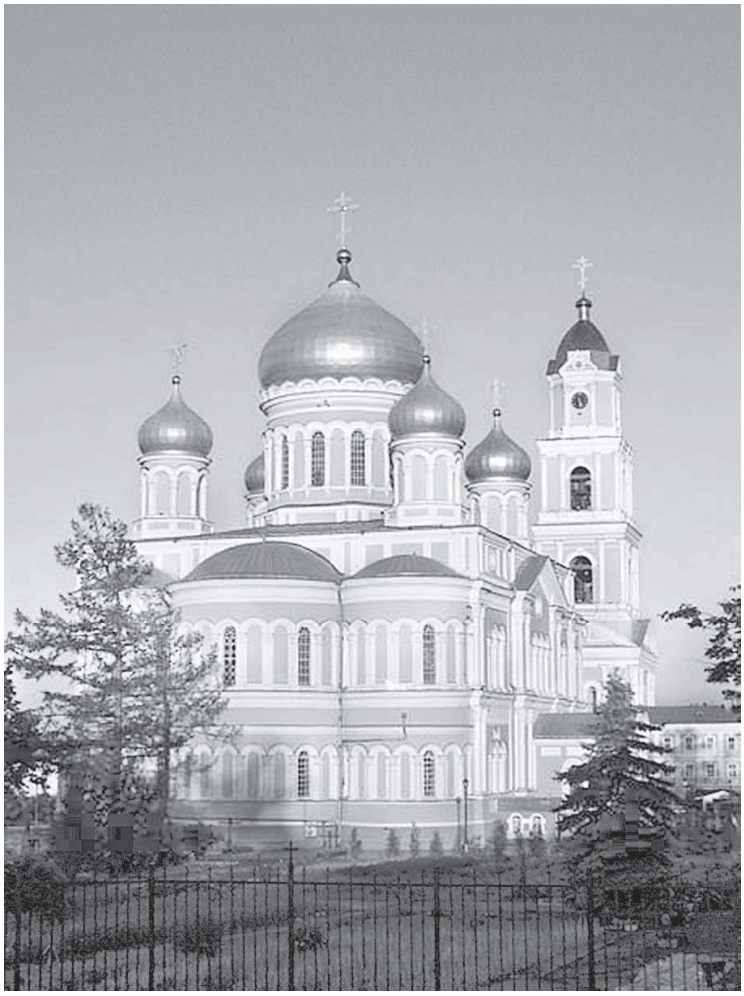


Plate 8. One of the newly renovated cathedrals at the convent in Diveevo. Recently, the monastery received substantial donations and funding by the Russian state and private businessmen from Moscow, as is indicated by plaques on the church walls. The convent is still expanding and plans to buy adjacent property. This has led to an incredible rise in land prices in the small town (Diveevo 2007).

Soon after this incident, I took part in another tour that was organised by the diocesan pilgrimage office and went to the Sergii-Trinity monastery in Sergiev Posad. I knew in advance that a whole enterprise was among the pilgrims. The enterprise consisted of sixteen people – two men, thirteen women and the owner. Two of the women were about twenty years old, whereas the rest of the employees were between forty and fifty-five years old. The enterprise was engaged in the development and sale of real estate projects. The business owner, Sergei, is in his fifties and considers himself deeply religious.

The whole group, including Sergei's employees, met at half past five o'clock in the evening in a church in Vladimir. After a collective prayer inside the church, we boarded the bus that had already been blessed by the

priest. Soon after our departure, the priest began to talk about the history of Orthodoxy and Sergiev Posad in particular.

The priest reminded the passengers that Sergiev Posad is connected to St Sergii Radonezhskii whose relics are kept and venerated there. St Sergii was a fourteenth century Russian nobleman and monk (d. 1392) who tried to organise resistance against the Mongols by founding monasteries to preserve the unity of the Russian people and keep alive the Orthodox faith. The priest described the reign of the Tatars from 1251 until 1480 (*mongolo-tatarskoe igo*) as a just punishment (*nakazanie*) for the offences committed by Russians in earlier years.[115] After finishing his explanations, the priest offered pilgrims the opportunity to make confession (*ispoved'*) in the bus. Many people made use of this opportunity because confession (as well as fasting) is a necessary precondition for taking communion (*prichastie*) at the sacred site.

When we arrived in Sergiev Posad, the priest guided us around the monastery and explained some of its details, but then left to meet with some of the monks. Thus the group dispersed quickly and most of the pilgrims first went to venerate the relics of Sergii Radonezhskii. The church was crowded with people, so we had to queue with many other pilgrims. Not far from us, I noticed a young couple that was waiting for a monk. When the monk arrived, the man immediately took a stack of banknotes from his pocket, counted them, and tried to give the money to the monk. The monk was reluctant to take the money, and I wondered if they were bargaining, but eventually I understood that the monk's reluctance was more likely related to the very public nature of the exchange.

The monk refused the money he was offered, led the couple to a place where he had placed two crosses – which he handed to them – and then circumvented the line of people waiting to venerate the relics of St Sergii. At the shrine, he laid both crosses on the relics for a moment, and then returned them to the couple. Placing crosses, or other objects, on the relics is thought to transmit some of the sacred energy from the relics which will then protect the owner of the blessed object. We lost sight of the monk and the couple after this moment, but later saw them leaving the monastery together in a jeep. Like us, the couple seemed to be on a pilgrimage, but in contrast to us, and in contrast to most Russians, they could afford to 'rent' a monk for a day to arrange special access and provide individual service to them. The event reflects a widespread practice because monks in well-known monasteries earn their living by offering their services to pilgrims. Sometimes these are

[115] As mentioned in chapter 4, this notion of just punishment is often ascribed to periods of crisis in Russian history, including the crisis in the years following socialism. This underlines the importance of these interpretations for believers.

well-off Russians who rent them for a day's tour of the monastery, grant them special access, and perform religious rituals for them. Most people in our group took no notice, but some did, and two elderly people expressed a negative view of the behaviour of the couple as they went past the queue.

After the veneration of the relics of St Sergii, our group joined a service in one of the neighbouring churches. Some of the participants had confessed to the priest in the bus and could take part in the communion, but two women who decided to go to confession in the monastery did not succeed because of the long queues. Many other pilgrimage tours had even less time, and only walked through the church, and took a quick glance at its interior. In order to avoid the service, a guard was posted at the church entrance to keep the door closed during communion. Many of the participants in our tour appreciated his strictness (*strogost'*), but people from other groups squabbled with him because they were in a hurry, and had to catch their buses.

The next event on our pilgrimage tour was a visit to an outpost (*skit*) of the Sergii-Trinity monastery that was situated on the outskirts of the city. Its founder, St Philipp, is currently in being canonised. The monks had organised an event called *soborovanie* for us and other tours. *Soborovanie* means both extreme unction for people facing death and the anointing of ordinary believers. The latter, as in our case, is considered to be a very serious form of prayer that keeps one healthy or may even cure illnesses. Until that point, the people from the enterprise had attracted little attention from other members of our group. But when we had to register for the *soborovanie* and pay 50 roubles (1.5 euros), the employees from the enterprise attracted the attention of other believers and group members. Sergei, the entrepreneur, joined eagerly, but most of his employees were uncertain and discussed whether they should register. Most were reluctant to pay for the service, but they still joined the group and followed it to the church's crypt. There, they gathered in the back, while those who had paid formed ten rows in the front. A monk noticed that the group gathered in the back had no candles (which all those who had paid received), and insisted that they leave. The majority of them seemed to be relieved, and left quickly. All those who had paid lit their candles and started to sing 'Hear me oh God, hear me oh Lord, hear me oh Holy' (*Uslyshi menia Bozhe, uslyshi menia Vladyka, uslyshai menia Sviatyi!*). The singing went on for at least half an hour, while two monks went around and anointed every individual with blessed oil, painting crosses on the forehead, cheeks, chin, throat and both sides of the hands.

None of the persons from our group except the entrepreneur had seen anything similar before. Nevertheless, everyone took part in the singing, and

nearly all the participants praised the spiritual atmosphere in the crypt and stressed the positive feeling they got from the *soborovanie*. Afterwards, people told me that the common prayer, sung in a monotone, was especially considered to bring grace, and was understood as a form of religious community (*sobornost'*). The entrepreneur, I noticed, took part enthusiastically – he sang loudly, crossed himself as prescribed and prayed eagerly – and seemed to appreciate the whole event.

When we left the crypt, I saw the rest of the employees again. They were sitting in a meadow not far from the monastery's entrance, enjoying a picnic. Although it was fasting time (*Petrovskii post*), they were eating sandwiches with meat and cheese – in contrast to their boss who observed the fast. As long as no one was around, especially the priest or the entrepreneur, the employees also shared vodka (among the men) and wine (among the women). Knowing that their behaviour would not be considered appropriate by their boss or the priest, the employees drank secretly, mixing the alcohol with juice. Obviously they wanted to enjoy the day without raising too much disapproval.

The last stop of our pilgrimage was a holy spring (*sviatoi istochnik Sergiia Radonezhskogo*) that was situated about 20 kilometres from Sergiev Posad. Bathing in holy springs is part of almost every pilgrimage trip, and most participants consider it to be nearly as important as attending the service and taking communion. According to the most widespread interpretation, bathing in holy springs purifies the body and soul. Moreover, some people attach curing effects to bathing. In general, cold water is considered to weaken the body and cause illness, but people claim that no one has ever become ill after bathing in a holy spring – a testament to the water's holiness and healing properties.[116] According to a third, bathing in holy springs produces a direct religious experience by recreating the experience of baptism. Pilgrims often express their desire for this experience by wearing a head scarf and a white vest or robe, and saying the prayer 'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' (*Vo imia Ottsa i Syna i Sviatogo Dukha*) before plunging three times into the water. Many of the pilgrims had bottles with them which they filled with holy water from the spring, so that they could make use of the healing and purifying qualities during future illness or periods of distress.

[116] Interestingly, secular and religious notions intermingle on the question of bathing in very cold water, as for example, in the Soviet practice of ice swimming that was considered to be good for one's health.



Plate 9. A woman is taking a bath in a holy spring. Like most believers, she follows the prescribed rules and wears a head scarf and a white vest. For men, there are no such strict rules (Diveevo 2007).

On the way to the spring, the employees drank more alcohol, and it became louder in the bus because some of them were already in a good mood. From the bus, we had to walk about two kilometres to the spring where a waterfall filled an open basin. After the long walk in the hot sun, one of the employees, a woman in her early twenties, ran the last metres to the basin and jumped into the water without taking off her clothes. The others laughed and joined but changed their clothes before they did so. After the bath in the cold spring the employees sobered up and relaxed in a nearby meadow. Their alcohol had run out and most became tired after a long day in the bus.

On the way home, I joined their company and tried to get more information about why they had joined the pilgrimage tour. The most common answers were: 'We wanted to have a nice day together with other colleagues' and 'It was for free because the entrepreneur paid for it (*na khaliavu*)'. I tried to get more information about the employees' religious

beliefs and practices, and the meaning they attached to the trip, but they were reluctant to talk at length. It is probable that they had seen me speaking with their boss earlier in the day, and perhaps they feared that I would tell them about their drinking. Or perhaps, they were reluctant to talk about such topics when their boss had demonstrated his own religious commitments so strongly throughout the day. In addition, I had the impression that employees wanted to keep distance from their boss, and even believers among them were not willing to show their religiosity openly.

Conclusion

By drawing on John Eade and Michael Sallnow's (2000) notion of the sacred as contested, I have tried to show that the meaning attached to pilgrimages undertaken by workplaces is not homogeneous but contested. Focusing on the pilgrimages of complete enterprises, I noticed a marked difference between the motivations and the meanings given to the trip by the employees and by the entrepreneur. However, it is not my intention to present a simplistic dichotomy and to deprive employees' understanding of pilgrimage of any religious meaning. A more nuanced interpretation becomes possible if we take into consideration an observation which was first mentioned by the Turners. They noted that pilgrimage and tourism are not antagonistic, but interconnected, as 'a tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist' (Turner and Turner 1996: 20). More precisely, they made a distinction between the approach and the return road, for 'When the pilgrim advances toward his ultimate sacred goal, he tends ... to do penance, pay his devotion, and prepare for the holy climax at the central shrine. When he returns ... his attitude is now that of a tourist rather than a devotee' (Turner and Turner 1996: 22).

Corresponding to the Turners' findings, my material suggests a similar difference between approach and return. For most employees, the climax was in the veneration of the relics of St Sergii because up to that point they had behaved as part of the group and followed the prescribed rules. A turning point was the unexpected and unknown event of *soborovanie* and being excluded from it. Afterwards, the religious excitement calmed down and gave way to a more relaxed feeling of celebrating a day off with one's colleagues.

Similar intersections between pilgrimage and tourism have been identified in other parts of the world, and both phenomena are often considered to be two sides of the same coin (Cohen 1979, 1992; Eickelman and Piscatori 1990; Turner and Turner 1996: 20; Coleman and Crang 2002; Badone and Roseman 2004; Coleman and Eade 2004). Instead of seeking to limit the interpretation of pilgrimage to the expression of religious devotion, as if

religion were an autonomous and isolated realm of experience (Coleman 2002: 363), it might be more useful to distinguish different objectives or modes of experience of travellers. This was the approach that Erik Cohen (1979) took by separating recreational, divisionary, experiential, experimental, and existential objectives. If applied in such a wide way, findings from pilgrimage studies can be used to make substantial contributions to the general study of human behaviour (cf. Coleman 2002: 363).

In addition, striking parallels between the pilgrimage tours by enterprises in contemporary Russia and tourism in socialist times can be noted. Here the last Soviet generation (Yurchak 2006) is very important as they experienced organised tours under socialism and are the main organisers of such events today. Studies of tourism in socialist societies have widely emphasised the contributions that tourism was expected to make 'in building socialist societies and creating socialist citizens' (Gorsuch and Koenker 2006: 8). Tourism under socialist regimes, as Anne Gorsuch and Diane Koenker further argued, 'was a state-sponsored project dedicated to educating and strengthening both the citizens and the state' (2006: 14). In this way, tourism became a means of integration that helped individuals to internalise the nation (Gorsuch and Koenker 2006: 10).

The trips that Artem planned for his employees had clear educational and moral goals, yet even his attempts to bring employees nearer to Orthodoxy have to be judged as ambivalent. On the one hand, a certain interest in famous religious sites and their history was observable, but, on the other hand, employees were reluctant to take part in unfamiliar religious events and expressed the desire to spend more social time with their fellow workers. Although employees came into contact with Orthodoxy and learned a lot about religion and Russian history during pilgrimage, the efficacy of the pilgrimage is difficult to estimate. How these teachings could be connected to work in the company or applied to everyday life remains a pivotal question for the success of the educational attempts by entrepreneurs.

Attempting to place Russian pilgrimage trips into the broader context of pilgrimage studies shifts attention to the attitudes of all pilgrims, and has thus led me to consider the effects predominantly on employees. But what are the effects of pilgrimage on the businessmen who organise trips for their employees? In order to explicate the underlying motivations of businessmen for organising pilgrimages, two interpretations seem possible. First, I would like to draw on the work by Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch (1989) that illustrates the inherent tension between short-term individual profits and long-term reproduction of the social and moral order, but allows for their reconciliation over time. Businessmen in contemporary Russia face similar problems – on the one hand, individual profits are of utmost importance in a

setting where many former state benefits are cut and have to be paid by the individual (health care, pensions, education, and costs of living). But on the other hand, the negative results of social, political, and economic changes are still clearly visible and have led to the perception of a deep moral crisis in Russia. Here an important change in the self-understanding of businessmen and leading civil servants as an elite comes into play. Although new configurations of power and interest exist, as described in previous chapters, businessmen experience systematic political pressure to favour Orthodoxy. At the same time, many also experience and describe a new perception of their self and role in society that draws them to engage with Orthodoxy more closely and promote it to others. As in Artem's case, the 'horrible 1990s' (*strashnye 1990-e gody*) were often mentioned by businessmen as the main reason for engaging with Orthodoxy more closely.

Therefore, I draw on Alexei Yurchak's concept of 'entrepreneurial governmentality' that allows for a wider understanding of entrepreneurship. Yurchak claimed that 'the most striking aspect of this form of entrepreneurial agency is that it is directed not so much at personal enrichment at any cost as at building a meaningful personal reality in different spheres of everyday activity and within different and quickly changing regimes of power' (2002: 310f.). As organisers of others' time, activities, and perspectives, entrepreneurs are not only interested in personal material gain. Instead, the motivation to organise pilgrimages for oneself and for one's employees derives from a longed-for and newly-found meaningful reality which entrepreneurs hope to transmit to their employees. Yurchak limited his claims about the validity of 'entrepreneurial governmentality' to the late socialist period and the first decade after socialism, but it was still valid in the second decade after socialism as well. The 'last Soviet generation' has not vanished, and still actively plays an important role in public administration and business. The experience of educational work (*vospitatel'naia rabota*) and similar socialist practices is still shaping everyday perceptions and customs, resulting in the interesting consequence of organising pilgrimage trips in order to teach one's subordinates or employees.

But this multiplicity and complexity of pilgrimage motivations and practices raised widespread criticism by believers and church representatives, which led to debates about the notions of a 'real pilgrimage'. The ambivalence can be seen best in discussions about the collective trips, which became the focus of a discourse – pilgrimage (*palomnichestvo*) or excursion (*ekskursiia*). In this chapter, I have tried to give a more nuanced description and have argued that, deviating from the statement given by bishop Egor'evskii Mark, it is not possible to make clear distinctions between the attached meanings given to these trips. In contrast, I have characterised

pilgrimages as a peculiar mixture which creatively combine religious, educational, and community-forging notions and interpretations.

In the following chapter, I draw further attention to the interplay between the state and the Russian Orthodox Church to examine nation-building attempts and the particular role of businessmen in this context. As will be shown, through their donations and their mediation between representatives of Church and state, businessmen play an important role and initiate events that strengthen tradition on the local level and tie people to the Russian nation.

Chapter 7

Ritual and Commemoration: Church-State Relationship and the Politics of Memory

The state has its own goals!

(*U gosudarstva svoi tseli!*)
Abbot Giorgii

They [state and Church] live in one atmosphere!

(*Oni zhe zhivut v odnoi atmosfere!*)
Tatiana, entrepreneur

Several social scientists have convincingly argued that rituals were an integral component of everyday life in the socialist period and provided legitimation for the Communist rulers (see Lane 1981; also Binns 1979 and 1980). In recent years, public rituals have again gained high social significance in Russia. They have become more and more important, and the celebration of May Day (1 May) or Victory Day (9 May) has gained wide attention and coverage in the media. During the time of my fieldwork, many public rituals from socialist and pre-socialist days were revived and reintroduced in a transformed version. Anastasia Mitrofanova concluded that the Orange Revolution of 2003 was responsible for the reinvigoration of public rituals in both Ukraine and Russia (2005: 181ff.). According to her interpretation, a peaceful displacement of the government in Russia, as happened in Ukraine, was feared and led to increased nation-building efforts by state authorities and the presidential administration. New national holidays were introduced, new monuments were erected, and various movements concerned with nation-building were initiated that supported the president and his party (see also Wanner and Steinberg 2008). The importance of national symbols is far from new because national ideas had gained ground under socialism in some areas of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Despite their international ideology, socialist leaders also drew heavily on national symbols to link the state to the 'nation' and to tradition (see Walters 1988: 84 for Stalinist Russia; Hann 1990 for Hungary; Verdery 1995 for Romania).

But the development in contemporary Russia has not been only initiated by national leaders. Local elites also have an increasing interest in

public rituals. The crisis of the Soviet Union and its subsequent demise led to a heightened quest for identity reaffirmation (cf. Agadjanian and Rousselet 2005: 48). In this way, the celebration of local historic events provided an excellent ground, on the one hand, for the state to link local people to national history and, on the other, for local people to improve their position within the community. In rural Bulgaria, for example, Deema Kaneff noted similar attempts of local people to use village festivities and meetings to consolidate their social status within the village by making evident their personal connections to figures located at the centre of national power (2004: 4–7). After 1989, she found that these practices had ceased, and local communities lost the deep networks that connected them to the national centre during the socialist period (Kaneff 2004: 4, 176ff.). In Russia, any interruption to the networks connecting local communities with national centres seems to have been relatively short-lived; by the time of my research in 2006–07, people were eagerly trying to establish and expand their personal connections with the centre. Certainly this is related to the fact that Vladimir is not a remote village but in close distance to the capital Moscow.

Moreover, it is important to note that the events celebrated and the ways in which they are celebrated are changing considerably. In addition to holidays from the socialist past, like May Day, new religious public holidays and religious processions have been introduced. In addition, events, which had a secular meaning during the socialist past, have now taken on a religious meaning. Thus clergymen take part, religious symbols are on display, and the whole ceremony is couched in religious language. Moreover, a new meaning is attached to the historic events, as the foundation of a city becomes a 'baptism', and the victory in a battle is perceived as an example of the religious communality (*sobornost'*) of the Russian people.

The primary aim of this chapter is the analysis of public rituals because they help us to understand the complex Church-state relationship in contemporary Russia. In the analysis, I put special emphasis on the role of businessmen in these events, as they are essential for the Church-state relationship for three reasons. First, businessmen are able to support ongoing projects financially, which other people and even some state institutions are unable to do. Second, through their engagement in politics (being members of the local and national parliaments), and their donations to the Russian Orthodox Church, some businessmen have been able to establish lasting personal relationships with people in the administration and with high-ranking clergymen (see chapters 4, 5 and 6). Finally, and most importantly, some businessmen are really motivated and willing to support these projects for reasons that I will explore below. In this way, some businessmen serve as brokers or mediators between local authorities and representatives of the

Russian Orthodox Church and promote religiously oriented nation-building on the local level. Hence I will take a closer look at this 'triangle' and show the interrelation between businessmen, church representatives, and the local administration.

In order to illustrate my arguments I have chosen two ethnographic examples. The first example is the celebration of the Day of National Unity (*Den' Narodnogo Edinstva*) on 4 November; the second is the unveiling of a monument dedicated to Prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich. The introduction of the Day of National Unity is a national initiative, but the construction of the monument stems from a local initiative. Nevertheless, the construction of the monument also partakes in the national programme 'From Kaliningrad to Chukotka' (*Ot Kaliningrada do Chukotki*) through which similar monuments were erected all over Russia. The programme was financed by the national charitable fund Nikolai Chudotvorets (*Blagotvoritel'nyi Fond Sviatitelia Nikolai Chudotvortsa*).[117] Strong support from state and non-state institutions on the federal level indicates that both events followed a general trend in Russian politics which favours Orthodoxy, and supports the Russian Orthodox Church's attempts to reappear in the public sphere. Although the mayor of Vladimir claimed both events to be public expressions of people's wishes, they were clearly introduced by members of an elite because most local people initially held indifferent attitudes towards both events, and only participated in later stages of their implementation.

Church-State Relationship

According to the Russian Constitution, the Russian Federation is a secular state, and religious and political spheres are separate (*Konstitutsiia* 2005: Article 14). Furthermore, all religious associations are equal before the law (ibid.).[118] But under the presidency of Boris Yeltsin (1992–1999), the first steps were taken to favour the so-called 'traditional religions': Orthodoxy, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism (Federal Law No. 125 'On freedom of conscience and religious associations' of 26 September 1997). The law distinguishes between religious groups and 'traditional' religious organisations, and only grants certain privileges (like tax exemption) to the latter. In addition, the law reintroduces obligatory registration for religious organisations, a practice that was introduced in 1929 by Stalin and only abolished as recently as 1990. The preamble of the Constitution explicitly mentions the

[117] *Nikolai Chudotvortsa* is St Nicholas, the performer of miracles.

[118] 1. *Rossiiskaia Federatsiia – svetskoe gosudarstvo. Nikakaia religiia ne mozhet ustanavlivat'sia v kachestve gosudarstvennoi ili obiazatel'noi.*

2. *Religioznye ob''edineniia otdeleny ot gosudarstva i ravny pered zakonom.*

'special role of Orthodoxy in Russian history and for the formation and development of spirituality and culture' (*Konstitutsiia* 2005). The policy of favouring Orthodoxy took more elaborate forms under the first two presidencies of Vladimir Putin (2000–2008), when the patriarch and the president were often shown side by side on television, many church buildings were declared to be national heritage, which made them eligible for state funding, and voluntary religious education was introduced in state schools.

These constitutional and legal modifications indicate that the official separation between state and Church has been contested by clergymen and state officials. The most dominant interpretation of the Church-state relationship within the Russian Orthodox Church traces its origins to a legal code introduced in the sixth century by Emperor Justinian that describes the Church-state relationship as a 'symphony'.[119] In the historical understanding, which assumes a monarchy, Church and state were not understood as separate entities, but as two complementary parts, as the body and soul, of one and the same entity (*Osnovy* 2000 III.4). Following this understanding, the state protected the Church, and the Church, in return, supported the state (Kirill 2005). In recent official documents of the Russian Orthodox Church, such as the 'Bases of the Social Concepts' (2000), the historical role of the concept of the symphony is acknowledged.[120] But, the Church now suggests that in contemporary Russia, a compromise should be reached between the historical relationship and the radical separation of Church and state that is often associated with the French Revolution (*Osnovy* 2000 III.4). This compromise would include mutual non-interference in internal affairs and a 'harmonious' relationship between both in the spheres of 'peacemaking, morality, education, charity, preservation of heritage, development of law, health care, culture and art, opposition to pseudo-religious structures, and others' (*Osnovy* III.8).[121] In practice, however, many clergymen clearly support a more formalised version of cooperation and certain privileges as granted in a theocracy or monarchy (Patriarch Kirill, then Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, in a televised address, 27 January 2007).

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[119] 'Symphony' has its origins in the Greek language and means 'harmony'. The concept was used by the Byzantine emperor Justinian (483–565) in the Sixth Novella where he talked about the priesthood and the imperial dignity as complementary rather than separate entities. In an ideal case, internal cohesion and unity between both is reached and allows for the establishment of a state order that follows divine ideals (cf. Buss 2003: 107; Forbess 2005: 31).

[120] Some authors (see e.g. Benz 1957: 143f.; Kapterev 1909–12) suggested that the Byzantine ideal of harmony between state and Church had been abandoned since Ivan IV (1530–1584) and had resulted in the domination of the state over the Church.

[121] The interpretation of 'pseudo-religious structures' is wide and sometimes includes charismatic Protestant groups.

Like representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, leading state officials support a closer cooperation between state and Church. At the time of the Orthodox Christmas in 2004, the then President Vladimir Putin gave a televised address in which he stated:

> There should be no artificial barriers. Orthodoxy – this is a part of Russian culture. One should not completely draw a line between the culture and the Church. Of course, by law in our country the Church is separate from the State, but in the soul and the history of our people it is all together. It always has been and always will (cited in Simons 2005: 7).

This televised statement clearly reflects the official position and a common trend of cooperation and interrelation between state and Church. But this position is not limited to the elite – in many everyday conversations Orthodox believers expressed their hope that the state would promote Orthodoxy in a more active way. The introduction of new public holidays and the construction of new monuments were often perceived to be part of this process.

Rituals, the Politics of Memory, and Religion

In contemporary Russia, public rituals play an essential role for questions pertaining to identity, nation-building, and Orthodoxy. Most of the rituals discussed in this book pertain explicitly to Orthodoxy, but I have not found it necessary to make a distinction between religious and secular rituals. Many examples could be listed where the nation is perceived to be a sacred entity. As Sally Falk Moore and Barbara Myerhoff argued, many characterisations are 'likely to apply to religious as well as secular [rituals]' (1977: 5). Indeed, rituals related to nation-building often have a clear overlap with religious rituals because the nation is often perceived and defined as a sacred entity.

One path for connecting religious rituals to nation-building is suggested by the work on collective memory that has its origins in Emile Durkheim's sociological writings. Durkheim interpreted rituals as having the double effect of attaching a believer to his god and strengthening the bonds between individual and society (1957a: 226). Durkheim's recognition of the fundamental importance of the bonds between individual and society were later developed and applied by others to a range of topics. Maurice Halbwachs (1980 [1950]), in particular, developed the concepts of collective memory and the techniques of remembrance. Halbwachs claimed that individual memory had an important social dimension, and was both acquired and activated through membership and activity in a social group (e.g. kinship, religious or class affiliation). Rituals were among the techniques of memory that he identified.

Halbwachs's work was later criticised for providing few answers as to how collective memory was transmitted between generations (Connerton 1999: 38). Paul Connerton tried to close the gap by drawing on findings in psychoanalysis, and distinguished two ways of bringing the past into the present: acting out and remembering (1999: 25). Drawing on these findings, he further distinguished between 'incorporating' and 'inscribing' practices (1999: 72ff.). Practices of incorporation, such as smiling and handshaking, involve bodily learning; practices of inscription, which include photographs and written accounts, transmit information about the past without requiring the learner to recreate past practices. My ethnographic material from Russia shows the importance of both commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices. In church rituals, for example, participants are not only confronted with the meanings inscribed in symbols like icons or flags, but are also incorporated and have to take an active part through prayer, veneration, and carrying flags and icons. In this way, the practices of inscription and incorporation ultimately overlap.

Both Halbwachs and Connerton, however, gave little attention to the problem of the groups and factions within social groups, or how their presence affects the creation and transmission of collective memory (cf. Pine, Kaneff and Haukanes 2004: 11). And indeed, this is an important topic because my material indicates that different social groups have different motivations for participating in public rituals. For this reason, I distinguish between different groups at these events and try to show their underlying motivations. The groups are the Russian Orthodox Church, the officials of the Russian state, and local businessmen.

Politics and Religion, or the State and the Russian Orthodox Church

Throughout this book I do not study politics and religion separately and avoid a hard juxtaposition of both spheres (see also Bax 1991; Wolf 1991). Religion does not only deal with the sphere of meaning, and politics does not exclusively deal with the sphere of power. On the contrary, both aspects are tightly entwined in what has been called an 'antagonistic interdependence' (Bax 1991: 11). Thus I follow David Kertzer who distinguished four different political ends in rituals and extended his findings to the religious sphere: organisational integration; legitimation; the construction of solidarity; and the inculcation of political or religious beliefs (1991: 87).

Organisational integration and the construction of solidarity are enabled through incorporating practices, like participation, in the rites where 'the citizen of the modern state identifies with larger political forces that can

only be seen in symbolic form' (Kertzer 1988: 1). These findings are confirmed by Paul Connerton who extended such interpretations to the religious sphere. Connerton interpreted rituals as group reinforcing, and claimed that the 'community is reminded of its identity as represented by and told in a master narrative' (1999: 70). Both the construction of the monument and the Day of Unity, follow such a master narrative, and establish symbolism in different ways. The monument connects the foundation of Vladimir to a wider national history and the introduction of Orthodoxy, while the simultaneous participation in the celebration of the Day of National Unity across Russia gives people the impression of being an integral part of one nation – irrespective of their ethnic belonging.

In addition, my interpretations draw on Max Weber's concept of charisma (1990 [1922]: 140ff., 654–687). For Weber, charisma was one of the legitimate forms of domination, but it is constantly endangered and tends to dissipate quickly (Weber 1990: 142ff., 656ff.). Weber differentiated between two ways of transforming charisma into more durable forms of legitimacy: *Veralltäglichung* and *Versachlichung* (see also Schluchter 1988b, 2005). Whereas *Veralltäglichung* leads to the destruction of charisma by traditionalising and legalising it (Weber 1990: 661ff.), *Versachlichung* transforms personal charisma into institutional charisma (*Amtscharisma*) (Weber 1990: 671ff.). Agathe Bienfait (2006) has argued, for example, that the institutional charisma of the Catholic Church depends partly on the canonisation of saints; through canonisation, the Church receives 'legitimation through repersonalisation'. But the process of canonisation itself, as Stefan Samerski has shown, is subject to change, and can at times be used for political purposes (Samerski 2002: 134–169). Similarly, we can understand the construction of monuments and the reintroduction of holidays as ways in which both the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church draw on historic personalities in order to supplement their institutional charisma. In public ceremonies they do this by showing the connections between the state or the Church and the personal charisma of historical figures including Prince Vladimir, Alexander Nevsky, and Dmitrii Pozharskii.

The symbols used during these rituals deserve special attention because they serve as personifications of entities which are otherwise difficult to describe – for example, state, nation, or Orthodox community. Furthermore, the meaning attached to symbols is often ambiguous and open to conflicting interpretations (Kertzer 1988: 11). In some cases, even religious references may not be interpreted as such, but assigned other meanings. For example, sociologist Robert Bellah has claimed that the reference to God in public speeches in America 'means so many different things to so many different people that it is almost an empty sign' (1991: 170). Only the con-

text of their use gives symbols a discrete meaning, through the inclusion of other actions and objects. Rituals are important precisely because they help people to assign meanings to symbols.

Another important aspect for both state and Church in these rituals is legitimation and the inculcation of political or religious beliefs. In this way, evocations of and appeals to the past could be interpreted as attempts of 'legitimation by tradition' (Lindquist 2006: 75). As Paul Connerton noted, 'images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order' (1999: 3), and thus rituals which reference tradition are often efficient means for enhancing group consciousness. In post-Soviet Russia, both state and Church use references to tradition to enhance their legitimacy as individual institutions. However, because the institutions were historically intertwined, and because the Church is generally perceived to safeguard national as well as religious tradition[122], references by one institution tend to implicate the other institution, and to build a sense of the mutual legitimacy and interdependency between Church, state, and nation.

Despite the strong interrelation between Church and state in ritual affairs, priests and bureaucrats have different goals for ritual activities. Whereas the priests stress the importance of bringing Orthodoxy to the public and attracting believers to the Church, representatives of the state administration aim to promote nation-building and to establish personal connections between the local community and the political and religious centres. Thus, administrators also plan to use newly established connections for their own personal projects.

Entrepreneurs

At the beginning of this chapter, I noted that entrepreneurs are able to support public rituals financially, establish relationships with people in the state administration and in the Church, and are motivated and willing to support public rituals. Here I focus on the last point: Why do businessmen support public rituals? As revealed in the discussion about donations in chapter 5, businessmen support rituals for both instrumental reasons and out of deep personal convictions. Participation in such public rituals brings possibilities for legitimation and influence, but businessmen also partake in a wider quest to reaffirm their own identity through an engagement with tradition (cf. Agadjanian and Rousselet 2005: 48).

[122] Agadjanian and Rousselet (2005: 36ff.) distinguish two Russian words for tradition: *traditsiia* and *predanie*. Whereas the former is a generic term equal to the English word 'tradition', *predanie* suggests that something is handed on in a religious sense. According to both authors, *predanie* is thought to guarantee invariability and has a strong normative aspect (2005: 36f.).

As in the socialist period, public rituals have already become normalised, but this does not reduce the degree to which businessmen can use them to creatively express their own beliefs. Alexei Yurchak argued that during the late socialist era, 'the form of ideological representations ... became increasingly normalized, ubiquitous, and predictable' (Yurchak 2006: 14). As a result, a performative shift took place where the 'constative dimension [of rituals] open[ed] up to new meanings' (Yurchak 2006: 24). Standardised forms of public discourse and ritual acts gained an enabling effect, as they allowed participants to engage 'in new, unanticipated meanings, aspects of everyday life, interests, and activities' (2006: 27). In a similar way, I argue, the newly introduced postsocialist rituals have been normalised to a great extent, and the particular meanings attached to different historical figures have become more or less fixed. Nevertheless, public rituals still enable participants to achieve personal goals and to express innovative meanings through normalised forms. In part, businessmen seek new social connections that can be used for other religious, political, and economic projects. But businessmen are not only cynical opportunists who apply 'dissimulation practices', as suggested by Oleg Kharkhordin (1999). On the contrary, just as Richard Rottenburg (1992) found with managers in socialist times (see also p. 144), postsocialist businessmen experience a cognitive and emotional dissonance that has to be resolved through the internalisation of ideas that were originally not their own. Rituals, then, serve as 'a valuable way for people to express their social dependence' (Kertzer 1991: 86).

The Day of National Unity (*Den' Narodnogo Edinstva*)

After the death of Ivan the Terrible in 1584, his weak-minded son Fedor I became the tsar, but relied on Boris Godunov to run the state's affairs. Later, conflict between Fedor I and other heirs escalated into civil war. One heir who claimed to be one of Ivan's sons, called Dmitrii, succeeded with the help of Polish supporters to ascend the throne in 1605. Because the real Dmitrii is said to have died in 1591, the new tsar was widely considered a 'False Dmitrii' (*Lzhedmitrii*). The first False Dmitrii's reign lasted less than a year, but for the next six years, Russia was ruled by a succession of other tsars who were supported by Poland and Sweden. Prince Dmitrii Pozharskii and the merchant Kuz'ma Minin conquered Moscow on 4 November 1612 and cast out the Polish troops who were quartered there. Today, the period preceding the installation of the Romanovs in 1613 is remembered as a 'time of disorder' (*smutnoe vremia*). From 1649–1917, 4 November was celebrated annually as the Day of National Unity to commemorate these historical events and the successful conquest of Moscow. In 2005, it was reintroduced as a public holiday. Moreover, this day has a religious connotation

because on the same day the icon Our Lady of Kazan (*Kazanskaia ikona Bozhiei Materi*) is venerated; Our Lady of Kazan is said to have helped Prince Dmitrii Pozharskii in his conquest of Moscow on 4 November 1612. Through its 'divine intervention', the icon gained great popularity and new churches were built and dedicated to Our Lady of Kazan (e.g. on the Red Square in Moscow). The icon is still believed to be one of the most effective icons for protecting Russia in difficult times. Like the events in the seventeenth century, many of the major victories during the Second World War, including the Battles of Leningrad, Stalingrad, and *Volokolamskoe shosse* in Moscow, are believed to be the result of the divine intervention of this icon. Since 2005, the secular remembrance of the 'liberation' (*osvobozhdenie*) of Moscow and the veneration of Our Lady of Kazan are closely connected at public rituals.

Despite attempts by the United Russia Party to fix the meaning of 4 November, the interpretations given to this holiday have conflicted from the beginning of its celebration. The introduction of a new public holiday on 4 November was first proposed by the Interreligious Board in September 2004. It was supported by the United Russia Party and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR), and by President Vladimir Putin and Patriarch Aleksii II. Other political parties, like the Russian United Democratic Party 'Yabloko' (*Iabloko*), remained sceptical and some, including the Communist Party, were strictly against its celebration because the proposal for the new law that would enact its celebration also provided for the abolishment of the 7 November as a public holiday commemorating the October Revolution. Nevertheless, the new law (Federal Law No. 201) was enacted on 29 December 2004, and the public holiday was first celebrated in 2005. In the following years the attached meanings diversified further and have led to different celebrations: United Russia and the LDPR celebrate the unity of the Russian people and the victory over the Polish occupiers, Russian nationalists often organise 'Russian marches' (as they did in Moscow in 2006), other political parties organise meetings against xenophobia, and the Communist Party ignores the 4 November and organises marches on 7 November.

In Vladimir, the festivities on the Day of National Unity on 4 November, as in most other cities, took place in the central square and were organised by the United Russia Party and the youth organisation Ours (*Nashi*).[123] Activities by other parties were not visible on that day. Iurii, the owner of the dumpling company described in chapter 4, had an active role in the

[123] The Democratic Antifascist Youth Movement, *Nashi* (*Molodezhnoe Demokraticheskoe Antifashistskoe Dvizhenie*), is a pro-presidential organisation that was established on 16 April 2005 out of the former youth movement Walking Together (*Idushchie vmeste*) (see also Mitrofanova 2005: 185). It is closely associated with the United Russia Party.

organisation of the central celebration. Iurii is a representative of the United Russia Party in the Russian national parliament and one of the most successful businessmen in Vladimir Region. In addition to the company that produces the Russian dumplings (*pel'meni*), he owns a television channel, a newspaper company, and several other enterprises. He was first to suggest that the holiday be publicly celebrated in Vladimir, and won the support of the mayor who is also a member of the United Russia Party. In addition, Iurii donated money for the organisation of and the catering for the event, and publicised the day's speeches in his media outlets.

The celebration started at half past nine o'clock in the morning, with an estimated 200 people in attendance. Most of the participants were connected to United Russia or Ours in one way or another, and wore party stickers on their lapels. During the meeting, most people carried Russian national or United Russia Party banners. In addition to several representatives of the United Russia Party, an archpriest (*protoierei*) attended the meeting, gave a speech, and conveyed greetings from the archbishop. Although most church officials seemed to be reluctant to take part in such overtly political events, Iurii succeeded in engaging the priest who performs the blessing ceremonies at his enterprise.

The meeting took place in Vladimir's central square and began with bells ringing in the nearby cathedral. A party representative welcomed the crowd, and then a singer performed Russia's national anthem. Four party representatives then spoke: the head of the local party subdivision, the mayor of Vladimir, Iurii as the local member of the national parliament, and the head of the party's local parliamentary group. Each speaker stressed the importance of history as a lesson for the present. Most of the audience applauded after every speech, and I heard some expressions of approval. The increasing authority of the Russian Federation in the international arena and improvements in the economic sphere were often directly connected with the tenure of President Vladimir Putin: 'Putin is a great guy!' (*Putin – molodets*!), 'He [Putin] rightly said' (*On pravil'no skazal*), or 'He [Putin] did it right' (*On pravil'no sdelal*).

Although the festivities were dedicated to the secular state holiday, all the speakers couched this event in religious language and stressed the importance of Orthodoxy for national unity. Unity in the Orthodox faith was described as being essential in difficult times and for future developments and related to the slogan, 'As long as Russia is united – we are invincible' (*Poka Rossiia edina – my nepobedimy*). Iurii, for example, made a comparison between Prince Dmitrii Pozharskii and President Vladimir Putin 'who, like Prince Dmitrii Pozharskii, found the country in a state of despair and disorder, but succeeded in uniting the country against all enemies inside and

outside Russia'. The mayor continued this line, and praised the 'progress made in the last years in the economic sphere as well as in the international arena'. Again, he stressed the importance of unity for the 'strengthening of the state' (*ukreplenie gosudarstva*), and claimed that 'only unity can be the fortress for the restoration of the power of our land' (*tol'ko edinstvo mozhet stat' oplotom vosstanovleniia moshchi nashei strany*). As the mayor ended his speech, he shouted the slogan attributed to Dmitrii Pozharskii '*Kupno za edino*!' (Together for one!), and the crowd answered him with the same slogan. The other two speakers of the political party gave similar interpretations, and they all stressed the importance of unity for the further development of Russia, connecting this to the progress made since the United Russia Party had come to power in 2002.

The last speaker was an archpriest of the Russian Orthodox Church. Couched in religious language, his address stressed the uniting role of Orthodoxy and praised the Church that had 'kept the Holy Rus' together'. He then drew a parallel with contemporary Russia, where 'Orthodoxy is again an important factor for the unity of Russia', and he expressed his belief that the religious concept of 'communality' and 'togetherness' that is expressed in the term *sobornost'*, 'could be transferred to the whole of society'. 'The spiritual (*dukhovnyi*) and moral (*nravstvennyi*) spheres', he claimed, 'provide an important ground for unity, as they are built on Orthodox teachings'. After the priest's speech, a folk band played and a folk dance group performed. The speakers disappeared shortly to attend a similar meeting in the house of culture, lay flowers at the monument of Alexander Nevsky[124], and attend the festivities for Dmitrii Pozharskii at the famous monument in the nearby town of Suzdal'. Although the performances continued for an hour, most people left the square, or entered the cathedral where they attracted some attention due to the flags on their lapels and the banners they carried.

[124] Alexander Nevsky (1220–1263) is a Russian prince who successfully fought against the Swedes and the Germans. In 1547 he was canonised. Whether and how Alexsander Nevsky could actually be linked to the Day of National Unity seems unimportant – more important is his role in Russian history, which is similar to the one given to Dmitrii Pozharskii and Kuz'ma Minin. In this way, arguments about the ambiguity of symbols (e.g. Kertzer 1988) and the normalisation of rituals (Yurchak 2006) are confirmed.



Plate 10. The Day of National Unity. The sign says that the event was organised by the Vladimir branch of the United Russia Party (Vladimir 2008).

The participants in this event were mainly activists of the youth organisation Ours or supporters of the United Russia Party. Thus the participation in the ceremony at the Day of National Unity reinforced group cohesion and supported the inculcation of particular political beliefs and interpretations. The event attracted little participation from other people, and none of my colleagues from the newspaper company or any of my other friends attended the event. Most of them spent the day at home with their families or friends, and took no notice of the events in the city centre. The meaning of the festivities was unclear to them, and some perceived the new holiday as a substitute for former public holidays that had been held on the dates of 7 and 8 November to commemorate the October Revolution. My observations correspond with surveys on the national level carried out by the Levada Centre, which indicate that many Russians do not know what holiday is celebrated on 4 November.[125] Data collected in 2005 and 2006 indicate that approximately half of Russia's population is aware of the Day of National Unity.

[125] See http://www.levada.ru/om2006.html, accessed on 01 September 2009.

Awareness appears to be increasing – probably due to the wide coverage of the event in the local and national media.

The Unveiling of the Monument

On 28 July 2007, a warm and sunny summer day, a new monument was unveiled in the city centre. The new monument was erected on a previously open space in a park with a panoramic view of the Kliaz'ma River valley. In the years before the erection of the monument, the place had been populated on warm summer evenings by young people drinking beer and chatting. The monument is dedicated to Prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich the Red Sun (*Kniaz' Vladimir Sviatoslavich, Krasnoe Solnyshko*), and Bishop Fedor Suzdal'skii. Prince Vladimir was the grandson of St Olga, the first Orthodox believer from Russian lands, and he reigned over the Kievan Rus' from 978 until his death on 28 July 1015.[126] Even though Olga converted, her son did not, and her grandson Vladimir was raised as a pagan. According to popular narratives, Vladimir converted to Orthodoxy sometime around 988, when envoys told him about the beauty of the Orthodox churches in Constantinople. Prince Vladimir is sometimes depicted as a Russian version of St Paul because of his role in establishing the Russian Orthodox Church. After his conversion, Prince Vladimir introduced Orthodoxy as a state religion, and the Church expanded north as the Rus' extended their political power in the following years. According to recent interpretations, he is considered to have founded the city of Vladimir in 990.

Yet the circumstances of how and when the city of Vladimir was actually founded are contested. Until the late 1980s, Vladimir was considered to have been founded in 1158 by Prince Vladimir Monomakh. Then new interpretations appeared, which regarded some chronicles as counterfeit, and connected the foundation of Vladimir to the establishment of the diocese of Suzdal' in 990 (Suzdal' is about 35 kilometres from Vladimir). This reinterpretation allowed for millennial festivities that were held in 1990. In the aftermath, most people accepted the newly given interpretation, although some local historians remain sceptical.

During the spring and early summer, the park where the monument was to be erected was closed for the ongoing construction work. When the monument was unveiled, suddenly it became obvious that the whole park had been renovated with the construction of new alleys and benches. As the day of the opening approached, the media fuelled rumours that President Vladimir Putin and Patriarch Aleksii II might take part in the ceremony. My colleagues in the newspaper company, however, remained sceptical and

[126] According to the Julian calendar, he is celebrated on 15 July.

considered it most likely that this was a newspaper hoax (*gazetnaia utka*) in order to attract more visitors. They were right.

The festivities started with a morning service in Dormition Cathedral (*Uspenskii sobor*) which is situated only 200 metres from the monument. More people than usual attended the service, and by its end, the cathedral was truly crowded. In the last hour, increasing numbers of representatives from the city and regional administration, businessmen, and journalists arrived. At the end of the service, Archbishop Evlogii gave a speech that explained the background of the event:

> When Prince Vladimir was 25 years old, he found the truth (*nashel istinu*) [converted to Orthodoxy]. He reigned in purity (*v chistote*). He baptised the Russian people (*krestil russkii narod*) and supported the Holy Church (*Sviataia Tserkov'*) by founding new churches and monasteries. It was a time of mass baptism (*massovye kreshcheniia*) and this led to what became later known as Holy Rus' (*Sviataia Rus'*).
>
> Normally, a change in faith (*izmenenie very*) leads to distortions and the death of culture and spirituality (*kul'tura i dukhovnost' pogibaiut*). But here it was different. Holy Rus' was baptised and because of this, they [culture and spirituality] did not die, but the baptism led to a stimulation (*rastsvet*) [of the Holy Rus'].

Using religious language (e.g. 'found the truth', 'reigned in purity', and 'baptised the Russian people') the archbishop explained that the introduction of Orthodoxy to Russia by Prince Vladimir was an extraordinary event. Contrary to the ambiguous attitude of many believers and even of some priests, he did not mention any of the problems linked to the introduction of Christianity as a state religion into Russia. Sometimes believers and priests differentiate between a historical period of 'true believers' (*iskrennye veruiushchie*) in apostolic times (until Christianity became a state religion in Byzantine), and the following years when Christianity became a state religion and people converted in order to gain access to prestigious jobs reserved for Christians. Many of the best positions within the Byzantine state administration could only be occupied by people who adhered to the Christian faith. Likewise, as some priests explained to me, Orthodoxy in Russia was introduced as a state religion and followed the Byzantine tradition. Thus from the beginning, monasteries were not only places of worship, but also administrative centres of the Kievan Rus'.

The archbishop, however, did not mention such contestations and after he had ended his speech, a procession (*krestnyi khod*) led congregants from the church to the monument. The monument site was closed to the public and reserved for invited guests – priests, journalists, representatives of the

city and regional administration, businessmen, and representatives of the charitable organisation Nikolai Chudotvorets. Accordingly, ordinary believers had to remain on the margins of the square. After the church bells stopped ringing, the archbishop prayed in front of the monument and carried out a blessing ceremony (*chin osviashcheniia*). Afterwards, all attendees sang the Russian national anthem, and soldiers gave a salute with their guns. Flowers were laid at the monument and speeches were given.

The first speaker was, again, Archbishop Evlogii. This time he read greetings from Patriarch Aleksii II, who praised the religious revival in Vladimir and described the monument as an 'example of the people's love for their motherland'. The archbishop then continued in his own words, and stressed the historic importance of the 'baptism' (*kreshchenie*) for the Rus' and today's Russia. 'Without the Church, such a development would have been impossible', because it 'laid the spiritual and moral foundation of the new state'.

Most of the following speakers agreed with the archbishop and praised the role of Orthodoxy in Russian history and for uniting the Russian people. They especially emphasised the way that Orthodoxy had contributed to the 'spiritual' and 'moral' development of Russia. The mayor of Vladimir also underlined the importance of the baptism for Russia, and described the monument as 'one step to the rallying (*splochenie*) of our nation' because it commemorates the common foundation in Christianity. In addition, he stressed that 'the monument shows the great history of the city'. This allows its inhabitants 'to be proud of their history, to be proud of their city', which he perceived to be a precondition for the 'love of the motherland' (*liubov' k rodine*) and patriotism.

The only speaker who offered a slightly different interpretation was the Communist governor of the Vladimir Region. He made no references to religion, and avoided referring to the foundation of the city as a 'baptism'. In contrast, he stressed the political aspects of the city's foundation, and described the ascension of the Kievan Rus' as being accompanied by the introduction of new laws. At the end of the ceremony, the archbishop read out the names of people to whom prayers were dedicated. These prayers were requested for the mayor, the governor, and the donors (most of whom local businessmen), and would be said in ten well-known monasteries for the duration of one year. After the official part of the ceremony had come to an end, the bells again rang, and a fun fair opened with displays depicting different epochs in the city's history including the Mongolian conquest, the defence of the Golden Gate, and Vladimir's reign as the religious capital of Russia.



Plate 11. During the opening ceremony in Vladimir no party flags were visible. In front of the monument, the flag for Vladimir Region flies on the left side, the Russian flag is in the middle, and the city's flag flies on the right (Vladimir 2007).

The monument's construction emerged as a cooperation between businessmen, the Church, and local administration. The original idea for the monument's construction emerged during a trip to Bari, Italy in 2004, made by the mayor, the governor, the archbishop, and several businessmen. The trip was made specifically to Bari because the relics of St Nicholas, considered to be Russia's national saint, are kept there. The trip was paid for by several businessmen, including Gennadii[127], and involved components of business, pilgrimage, and the development of political relations between both churches and cities. Once the idea for the monument had been proposed, businessmen continued to take a leading role in its implementation. Gennadii used his connection with the national charitable fund Nikolai Chudotvorets to have the monument included in the national programme 'From Kaliningrad to Chukotka', which provided funding for monuments dedicated to important personages throughout Russia.

[127] For more details about Gennadii see chapter 5.



Plate 12. The unveiling of a similar monument in Maikop that was also included in the programme 'From Kaliningrad to Chukotka'. In contrast to the event in Vladimir, the ceremony was monopolised by the United Russia Party, as indicated by the banners and coats (Maikop 2004).
Online available at: http://www.nikola-ygodnik.narod.ru/Raznoe_066.html.

With the help of the Nikolai Chudotvorets fund, Gennadii, like Iurii, was able to connect the spheres of politics and religion with his business. On the one hand, as a member of the regional parliament representing the United Russia Party, Gennadii has good contacts with people in the administration, and on the other hand, he was able to establish a lasting personal relationship with the archbishop through his funding of religious events and other donations (see chapter 5 for more details). Moreover, his donations brought him into contact with big charitable organisations like Nikolai Chudotvorets that act on the national level, and made the establishment of new connections with power holders possible. In this way, both Iurii and Gennadii were able to strengthen their positions in the local community by initiating projects that required the support of contacts in positions of national leadership. Hence, it becomes obvious how initiatives on the local level are connected to the

national level through personal relations. Although the idea for the construction of the monument evolved on the local level, it could only be realised because it coincided with initiatives on the national level. Elsewhere, such events may be exclusively managed by representatives of a single political party, but the situation in Vladimir was slightly more complicated. The Communist governor had also taken part in the trip to Bari, and Gennadii told me that when the governor heard the idea for a monument, he supported it immediately. For this reason, the monument's unveiling ceremony drew on Orthodoxy and provided an opportunity for nation-building, but could not be used for an election campaign, as happened elsewhere (see plate 12).



Plate 13. A woman from an Orthodox sisterhood carries flowers in the procession (*krestnyi khod*) from the Dormition Cathedral to the monument (Vladimir 2007).

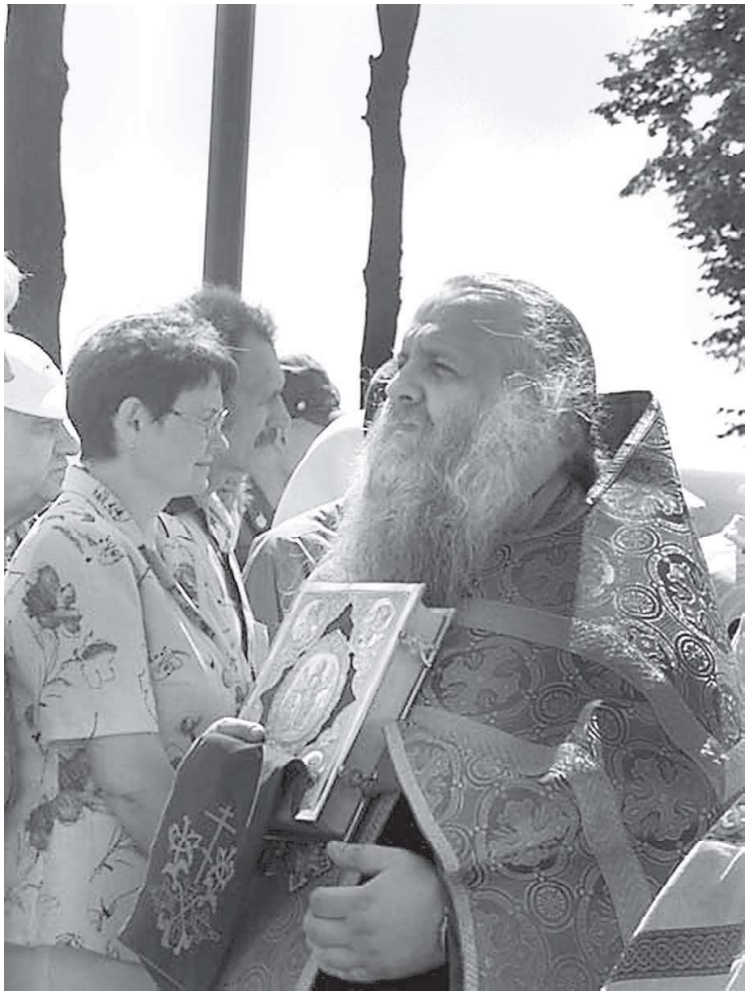


Plate 14. A priest carries the Bible and assists the archbishop during the opening ceremony of the monument (Vladimir 2007).

The week after the monument was unveiled, I talked to Gennadii, who described the monument itself and the meaning that he attributed to it.

> Some days ago a monument for the founder of our city was opened. And beside him walks a monk, father Fedor, who baptised the local people – our ancestors. He was our first priest. This was very important, just the adoption of Christianity for Russia ... Not for Russia, but for Rus' probably because this happened 1,000 years ago ... I do not know how to explain it ... This was one of the most important facts in our history. Such an extraordinary event. And it made us Russians a nation – religion did, I mean. Out of the tribes who lived here 1,000 years ago, only religion made them into a nation (*Iz tekh plemen, kotorye zdes' zhili, tam 1,000 let nazad, imenno religiia, ona sdelala iz plemen natsiiu*). And this really happened. The Church, she is inseparably connected to our history (*nerazryvno sviazana s nashei istoriei*).

Gennadii's description is particularly interesting because it reflects an apparent transformation of his own understanding of Russian history and the centrality of Orthodoxy to it. Gennadii is the son of one of the leading Communist bureaucrats in Vladimir. Despite his non-religious upbringing and the strong influence of Communist ideology on his education, the interview shows that he now attaches great importance to a more religious interpretation of Russia's past and national identity. He is convinced that religion and the state are inseparable and stresses the important role of religion in Russian history. As he told me in a later conversation, it would be a distortion of history for him to disconnect the foundation of Vladimir from Orthodoxy. This interview clearly shows that the participation in such public rituals is not only used for personal economic motives, but, at least to some extent, reflects Gennadii's religious notions, interpretations, and Russian identity. Accordingly, Gennadii supported the erection of the monument in financial and political terms because, in his view, it helps local inhabitants to become acquainted with their religion and history.

The monument dedicated to Prince Vladimir was the second monument in Vladimir unveiled after the demise of socialism. In 2004, a monument dedicated to Alexander Nevsky was erected. As in the later case, the cost had been met by local businessmen and Gennadii's company had been a major contributor. Although the project was already finished when I arrived, I heard rumours about the way the city administration had raised the necessary funds. Due to the fact that the city is short of money, the mayor proposed to erect the monument using donations from local inhabitants. According to his assertion, this was historically the way in which monuments were erected and cities were embellished. But because voluntary donations were too small to cover the cost of the monument, the city authorities pressed local enterprises to help meet the cost. Many entrepreneurs still remembered this, and were happy that this time the Nikolai Chudotvorets fund participated and donated a considerable amount of money to the Prince Vladimir monument.

In contrast to the festivities on the Day of National Unity, the unveiling of the monument was well attended (I estimated about 1,000 people). It attracted wide attention, and many participants were believers who came to support the event with their prayers. In addition to committed believers, it also attracted other social groups, and in the following days and weeks most local people went to see the monument. Most of them liked it, and many expressed their pride in the city's history, and forced me to give my opinion as well. Only the figure of Bishop Fedor caused some confusion because few people had previously known about his historical role.

The Clergy's Perspective on the Church-State Relationship

Most of the clergymen with whom I talked were not happy with the current Church-state relationship, and criticised the lack of financial support from the state. The state, they argued, gains much help from the Church, and should support it accordingly. I have already demonstrated that the Russian Constitution, taxation laws, major political parties, and leading political figures all provide substantial support to the Church. What more could the Church want? Does it merely lack adequate financial support for the scale of its public services?

At the beginning of this chapter, I cited a remark by Abbot Giorgii, the head of one of the monasteries in Vladimir, that the state has its own goals. His remark came in answer to my question about how the Church interacted with the state, and he replied derogatorily that it would be good if the state did not interfere in inner Church affairs at all, because the state has its own goals that do not necessarily coincide with those of the Church. Abbot Giorgii's opinion was shared by Father Vladimir whom I have quoted several times in the previous chapters. Here is how he describes his understanding of the Church-state relationship:

> There is a desecration of the sacrament, a profanation of the Church (*profanizatsiia tainstva, profanizatsiia tserkvi*). [...] And the state begins to behave in a similar way [here he refers to the attitude of businessmen to Orthodoxy] towards the Church. The state does not understand what the Church is. It does not understand the depth of the Church. And I do not know if there will be a moment when the state understands this. Why? For the state, it is not profitable to understand the Church like the Church understands itself.
>
> The Church is a part of Christ, his body. And so, when we tell the state that it is like this, the state is forced to make some serious efforts. Therefore, it is easier for the state to see the Church like some service (*Poetomu gosudarstvu proshche vosprinimat' tserkov' kak nekotoruiu uslugu*), in the spiritual sense (*dukhovnogo plana*). Last time we talked about this – like a social institution. One that consoles the sick and dying. This is an example of our unity, an example of our culture (*obraz nashego edinstva, obraz nashei kul'tury*). And today, it is a fashion to say: 'The Church is the keeper and guardian of our folk traditions' (*Tserkov' est' khranitel'nitsa narodnykh traditsii*). This makes me really very sad. Because the keeper of our traditions – these are the museums. Please – there in the boxes you will find our traditions: dresses, clothes, spoons, and forks which were used by our ancestors; carriages in which they travelled.

The remarks by Abbot Giorgii as well as the above excerpt from the interview with Father Vladimir suggest a critical attitude towards the way in which state officials treat the Russian Orthodox Church. At personal meetings, the cooperation is depicted in a different light, compared to public events where everything seems to be harmonious. Father Vladimir makes serious accusations against the state, which he claims to misunderstand and exploit the Church. He clearly criticises how the state makes use of the Church's potential to unite people, as the speakers at the Day of National Unity attempted to do with their repeated references to the importance of the Church for national unity. Moreover, he notices a contradiction between his own understanding and popular perceptions. Whereas the Church is commonly described as the guardian of traditional culture that is no longer in use, he understands the Church as a living community of believers. Tradition, understood as a collection of 'dead' things, is better guarded by museums than the Church.

Nevertheless, both Abbot Giorgii and Father Vladimir take part in public rituals alongside businessmen and state representatives. Both men had been present for the monument's unveiling, although neither had been at the ceremony on the Day of National Unity. When I asked them why they had attended the unveiling, they explained that such opportunities allow them to draw public attention to the Church. In this way, both hope to show the beauty of Orthodoxy and to attract believers. In addition, Father Vladimir acknowledged the importance of personal relations with businessmen, and said he even feels obliged to participate in political events when the businessmen who confess to him request his presence.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the Church-state relationship in contemporary Russia and has drawn special attention to the role of businessmen in supporting, mediating, and financing projects which bring state and Church together. In this way, I contend, the introduction of new public holidays and the construction of new monuments allow us a broader understanding of the claims to authority and nation-building. Here, local initiative is successfully combined with developments on the national level and politics 'from above'. By examining these public rituals, I have distinguished the different motives of the respective actors. Whereas members of the political elite try to legitimate their policies and show a clear aspiration to rebuild a one-party state, which they paraphrase as a search for unity, the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church are far more cautious. The remarks of leading local clergymen suggest that they are aware of the problematic Church-state relationship, but pursue their own goals when taking part in public events.

Pragmatic reasons among clergymen seem to prevail in order to fight the former 'domestication' (Dragadze 1993) of religious practice. Thus, church representatives advocate a more public role of Orthodoxy and agree to participate in public events in order to draw more attention to the Church's goals. For this reason, the Russian Orthodox Church engages in the public sphere through participation in public rituals and the organisation of public processions on various religious holidays including Easter and some days dedicated to important saints and icons. Moreover, most believers and priests are in favour of stronger reference to Russian history and Orthodoxy. But some of them suspect that the close alignment with the state's project of nation-building is detrimental to the Church.

Businessmen express ambivalent goals in their financial and political support of such public events. Many explicitly support nation-building and the legitimation of the existing political order, but their active support for public rituals may be more closely connected to their interest in improving their social position in their home communities. In this way, the rituals are used to establish connections with the centre and its resources. Often the participation in rituals is accompanied by membership in a political party, which remains an important vehicle for making these links successful. Both Iurii and Gennadii, for example, use their participation in public rituals as a platform for mobilising and developing connections with other party members at the regional and national levels. When they succeed in generating funding and support for local projects from these 'higher' levels, businessmen like Iurii and Gennadii also improve their position in the local community.

However, I have also tried to show that in addition to the instrumental uses that businessmen make of public events, they also relate to the affective dimension of ritual. The depth to which businessmen are individually affected is difficult to gauge, but certainly statements such as those expressed by Gennadii during private interviews indicate that the ideas and associations that are made during public speeches are also internalised, at least to some degree. Accordingly, businessmen's participation in, and support for, public rituals should not be interpreted as mere 'show' (*pokazukha*), but should also be interpreted as an attempt to (re)create a meaningful order in the postsocialist context.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

Since perestroika, Russia has undergone simultaneous economic and religious reforms. Economic reforms have given room for private entrepreneurial initiative, and the public expression of religion has been legalised, enabling religious groups to reappear in the public sphere. Inspired by Max Weber's Protestant ethic thesis, I undertook field research with businessmen to investigate the nature of the relationship between Orthodoxy, morality, and entrepreneurship in contemporary Russia. Where and how, I asked, do the spheres of economy and religion influence, reinforce, and complement each other?

My data does not reveal an 'elective affinity' between Orthodoxy and entrepreneurship that would parallel Weber's thesis about Protestantism. Indeed, there does not appear to be any direct relationship between Orthodoxy and entrepreneurship in the context of the economic transformations of postsocialist Russia. Nevertheless, this book has shown that the two spheres are not detached from each other. On the contrary, there are manifold interconnections and interrelations in which religion and entrepreneurship influence, reinforce, and complement each other. Often these connections are made within the sphere of morality. Thus, moral discourses, which draw on religious, historic, and other sources, prove to be important instruments to connect Orthodoxy and economy.

One aspect of this relationship shows that businessmen are not rational profit-maximising individuals, but that they are also influenced by social context and moral discourses. Generating profits is certainly very important for all the businessmen I interviewed, but for many, it is not the only reason for engaging in business. Entrepreneurial activity is also perceived as providing the financial means to support religious and other institutions, and to allow for influencing the moral and social development of one's employees. In addition, some of the businessmen like Pavel or Father Vladimir changed the type of business activity with which they were engaged after having received 'signs' from God. Thus, Orthodoxy, 'shapes how people explain

suffering, form values, craft identities, and imagine change' (Wanner and Steinberg 2008: 3). Businessmen also need ways to formulate goals, explain success and failure in personal and professional ventures, understand themselves, and make new decisions. In contemporary Russia, Orthodoxy provides many of the guidelines and precepts for businessmen, the most important aspects of which are revealed in how businessmen practise Orthodoxy at home and in the enterprise (chapter 4), donate to the Russian Orthodox Church (chapter 5), initiate pilgrimage tours for the complete workforce (chapter 6), and take an active role in the public promotion of Orthodoxy (chapter 7).

Among businessmen, moral notions are important as ideals, but they are not always applied in everyday contexts. Thus the Orthodoxy practised by businessmen is ambivalent: at times it is characterised by fear of evil forces, at other times by notions of national history and cultural heritage, and yet at other times by barely disguised efforts to profit financially and politically. Such ambivalence, however, about whether practices that are described as 'religious' actually conform to church teachings is neither restricted to businessmen as a group, nor to a set of practices, like giving donations. Questions about the relationship between belief and practice, sincerity and instrumentality, and limited and profound understandings of Orthodoxy, permeate social practice and discourse in all spheres of social life in contemporary Russia. These questions, however, are most clearly articulated in relation to the market and the Church.

The relation between Orthodoxy and entrepreneurship is complex, and in some ways mutually constitutive. The Russian Orthodox Church also responds to dominant economic models and practices, when building churches, paying priests, and expanding its community services. In the context of limited state support, parishioner tithes and donations, endowments, or tax revenue, the Church must find alternate sources of income – and engaging in various forms of 'business' is one strategy. Many such business ventures are easily reinterpreted as formalised opportunities for believers to make donations: standardised price lists for religious services; the production and marketing of religious paraphernalia like candles and icons; and the encouragement of private donations. In general, most believers accept the Church's engagement with 'economic logic' as an unfortunate, but necessary, consequence of insufficient financial support from the state, but there are some believers who note the danger that the Church, or at least some of its priests, are susceptible to corruption and may lose their spirituality by engaging with profit-making activities (chapter 3).

Despite the empirically observable overlap between religious and economic spheres of activity, everyday discourses tend to establish two interre-

lated dichotomies that oppose economy and Orthodoxy. In the first dichotomy, actions by businessmen are perceived as purely self-interested attempts to maximise profit at society's expense. By contrast, the behaviour of other people like believers, priests, or one's co-workers is described as morally acceptable. This first dichotomy is often complemented by a second dichotomy which opposes two different time frames: socialism and postsocialism. In comparison to the postsocialist period, with its marked social dislocations, the socialist period is perceived as having had a strong moral and social order. The introduction of capitalism, so the popular argument goes, is responsible for the perceived sharp decline in morals. In both dichotomies, the pursuit of profit and individual wealth is considered inherently immoral. Thus, it is popularly assumed that one cannot possess deep spiritual beliefs and still engage in profit-making activities.

My material, however, shows that both dichotomies are too rigid and become blurred when one looks at practices. Thus, I have tried to show that although the importance of moral premises from socialist times is diminishing, the interpretation of a 'moral vacuum' is misleading. There is neither a social group like businessmen, nor a particular form of the economy like capitalism, which is characterised by a complete lack of morality. On the contrary, this book has aimed to show that the moral premises of the socialist times have not vanished, but that they have been supplemented by the rising importance of religious teachings, especially those stemming from Orthodoxy. In this way, I argue, Orthodoxy has become one of the key sources of morality for Russian society, and for businessmen too.

The religiosity of businessmen is therefore characterised by a constant tension between seeking individual gains and upholding social or moral values. This is a recurring topic in the book. In chapter 3, I first described the conflict between two models of Christian belief which are exemplified in the Bible by Martha and Mary, the two sisters of Lazarus. Whereas Martha symbolises activity, commonly associated with businessmen, her sister Mary represents contemplation, which, according to public opinion, is exemplified by priests, monks, and believers. In everyday life, however, boundaries become blurred and separations are more difficult to maintain. Thus neither businessmen nor religious people follow one model exclusively. Businessmen also pray, put emphasis on religious blessings, and organise pilgrimages for their employees. For their part, priests often engage with worldly matters: funding has to be organised, repairs and construction work have to be arranged, and prices for religious paraphernalia and services have to be set. As a result, both societal groups hold similar ideals, and both complain about the loss of spirituality and sincerity of others. Their complaints are not only directed at the other group, but also to the group of which they are part:

other businessmen cheat, and *other* priests embezzle donations or receive lavish gifts from wealthy donors.

The tension between worldly activities and spiritual values is further explicated in chapter 4, where I examine the religious beliefs and practices of businessmen in the workplace. I have shown that businessmen have feelings of anxiety, hold beliefs in evil forces, and consider accidents, divorce, or death as God's punishment for one's sins. This is a widespread attitude in contemporary Russia and prevails in other social groups as well. In order to prevent harm to themselves and their enterprises, and in order to be protected, businessmen seek benediction from priests (*blagoslovlenie*) for their actions, and ask for priestly blessings (*osviashchenie*). When businessmen engage in these practices, however, they are accused of perceiving Orthodoxy as a kind of magic or spiritual service (*dukhovnaia usluga*), and of treating Orthodox services as only one possible source of protection among others. This widespread 'just in case' (*na vsiakii sluchai*) attitude is generally criticised for failing to reflect real belief in a true religion. But businessmen are additionally criticised for ingeniously combining their desire for insurance against anxiety and uncertainty with attempts to generate extra income. Indeed, some businessmen also try to capitalise on the widespread social concern for securing protection and blessings by having their products blessed; blessed cars, honey, and even dumplings, can be sold to a wider market at higher prices than their unblessed equivalents. Again, this ever-deepening critique of businessmen's sincerity resembles the pervasive complaint about the loss of spirituality and sincerity of others, as described in chapter 3.

In chapter 5, I examined the motivations of businessmen who make large donations for the construction of churches. The construction of churches is generally considered a form of penance (*pokaianie*), and businessmen are often motivated to help build churches to compensate for their own sins, and to help other believers (and sinners) through the physical and institutional expansion of the Church. But businessmen also engage in self-interested calculation and attempts to acquire political capital by publicising their donations to church construction projects. In the chapter, I differentiated between personal religious motivations; political motivations; and Weiner's (1992) idea of keeping-while-giving. In practice, however, these three motivations are hard to separate because they overlap. Moreover, the penitential efforts of businessmen are discursively erased by most people who draw a distinction between churches that are 'built with gold' (*postroena na zolote*), and those that are 'built with tears' (*postroena na slezakh*). Long-standing historical and societal interpretations have privileged churches 'built with tears' (i.e. in which believers contribute their labour to

the construction) because the hardship and asceticism demanded from the labourers is considered a superior form of penance. By continuing to oppose these two kinds of church construction, other believers challenge the penitential efforts of businessmen as too easy a way to do penance. In so doing, they also undercut the attempts by businessmen to create a positive image of themselves in society as sincerely repentant.

Chapter 6 dealt with trips of the whole workforce of an enterprise to places of historic importance in Russia and to religious sites. These trips generate yet another discourse on forms of religious practice: could they be called pilgrimages (*palomnichestva*), as the organising businessmen called them, or were they some sort of excursion (*ekskursiia*), as most believers understood them? They seemed to be a bit of both because the understandings and motivations of the participants were equally mixed. Businessmen, drawing on their experiences in former socialist collectives, 'recycled' (Luehrmann 2005) the educational excursion into postsocialist conditions. In this way, socialist practices for enhancing morality in the work group reappeared, and was overlaid with religious meaning. Again, there was tension, as the personal religious motivations of the businessmen were combined with attempts to strengthen the community spirit and the efficacy of the workforce, and with efforts to increase employees' individual morality through religious education.

Finally, chapter 7 examined the role of businessmen in the Church-state relationship of contemporary Russia. Under the first phase of Vladimir Putin's presidency (2000–2008), special emphasis was put on strengthening Russian Orthodoxy, as the president and the patriarch were often shown side by side in the media and the state gave financial support for the construction of churches. In addition, new public holidays with mixed religious and political connotations, such as the Day of National Unity, were introduced, and monuments have been newly erected to commemorate important historic and religious figures. As I have tried to show, this politics of memory aims at nation-building, and ties local people to bigger entities, respectively the nation and the Orthodox community. Businessmen are important for projects undertaken by both the state and the Russian Orthodox Church because they fund the events and construction work, and prepare the arrangements between state and church representatives. This brokering role is possible due to businessmen's extraordinary connections with Church hierarchs (see chapter 5 on donations and the relation to spiritual teachers) and high-ranking political figures. However, such events have yet another function, as they provide an excellent ground for local people such as businessmen to establish and strengthen connections to the centre. In this way, they are also able to consolidate or improve their position within the local community.

However, the tension between seeking individual gains and upholding social and moral values is neither unique to businessmen nor to postsocialist Russia. Marcel Mauss (1990 [1925]) long ago concluded that most motivations in economic activity are hybrid, and urged researchers to put contrasting notions such as generosity and utility 'into the melting pot once more' (1990: 73). The tension and ambivalence found among Russian businessmen is also found in many other, if not all, human communities. As Jeremy Boissevain claimed, people often act according to moral values, but 'a sociological model which suggests that people normally act in this way is naïve' (Boissevain 1974: 7). Instead, it is better to assume that any human is 'a manipulator, a self-interested operator, *as well as* a moral being' (emphasis added). Businessmen in contemporary Russia support Boissevain's interpretations very well, and the balance of these components in their beliefs and practices was a recurrent topic of social and individual concern. Like Boissevain's interlocutors, Russian businessmen do not deny their moral foundations, but were 'constantly trying to better or to maintain … [their] position by choosing between alternative courses of action' (Boissevain 1974: 6).

To conclude, I want to step back from the ethnographic details and turn to a second finding which is related to broader questions concerning Orthodoxy. Although Orthodoxy is often described as static and conservative – and the Russian Orthodox Church cultivates this image – the emphasis on practice allows for the acceptance and integration of a variety of beliefs, interpretations, and innovations, as long as they do not contradict basic principles (Badone 1990: 131; Stewart 1991: 141; Naumescu 2007: 18f.). My ethnographic observation of the interactions between businessmen and priests and other church officials, confirms that the application of the tenants of Russian Orthodoxy are much more flexible and dynamic than most church officials, believers, or religious scholars like to acknowledge. New interpretations continually emerge and circulate through leaflets, the media, and priestly advice, as well as through popular and informal local discourses, interpretations, and practices. Church doctrine may remain untouched in official texts, but the plethora of sources for individual exegesis provides a practical mode for believers to answer their everyday questions and problems in changing social, political, and economic contexts.

Consequently, it is not possible to speak of a single coherent or legitimate Russian or Orthodox morality. Rather, we find 'multiple moralities' (Zigon 2011) which allow for different interpretations and courses of action, none of which explicitly contradict the axiological teachings of the Church. Among entrepreneurs, the establishment of a personal relation with a spiritual teacher (*dukhovnyi nastavnik*) often provided more satisfying guidance

than that offered during regularly scheduled services. Businessmen choose a spiritual teacher according to their preferences, for example a rigid priest or a charismatic monk, and establish long-lasting relations with him. Such a relationship is marked by a high degree of independence from the Church's axiological teachings, and depends on the exegesis, interpretation, and advice of the individual teacher. As a result, the meaning attached to religious practices can vary considerably from those of inchurched parishioners. Nevertheless, most entrepreneurs did not really 'believe without belonging' (Davie 2003). They 'practised without belonging' to a specific parish, but even then entrepreneurs remained at least loosely connected to one or several parishes in their local community, as demonstrated in their patterns of donations. Even more importantly, perhaps, is to note that businessmen did not seek to establish radically different forms of religious practice or belief for themselves. Instead, they considered themselves to be members of the wider Orthodox community, paid attention to Orthodox norms, and carried out Orthodox practices that closely follow those of other believers in Russia.

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Practising Without Belonging?
Entrepreneurship, Morality, and Religion in Contemporary Russia

Inspired by Max Weber's Protestant ethic thesis, this book examines the intersection of Russia's economic transformation and religious revival in the sphere of morality. As revealed through the ethnographic study of businessmen in the city of Vladimir, the relations between Church and state, politics and religion, and belief and practice, are deeply ambiguous. Businessmen experience social and political pressure to practise Russian Orthodoxy, and they experience a constant tension between their desire to uphold moral values and their need to seek individual gains. As personal spiritual teachers *(dukhovnye nastavniki)*, priests guide businessmen in both their religious and business practices. These relationships are mutually beneficial, but they produce 'multiple moralities' that allow for different interpretations and courses of action among professed Orthodox believers. Businessmen 'practise without belonging' because they hold only loose connections to parish communities, even as their commitment spurs the reconstruction of churches and the revitalisation of religious events, personages, and symbols in everyday life and national history.

Tobias Köllner was a member of the focus group "Religion and Morality in European Russia" at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and received his PhD from the University of Leipzig in 2011. He is currently a member of the *Zentrum für Transformationsforschung* (ZTF) and a consultant for *RKW Sachsen-Anhalt.*

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