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Russians' Belief in Aliens, Magic and Superstition Plummets – Poll

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Russians are less likely to believe in the power of magic or the supernatural today than at any point in the past three decades, according to a state-funded survey published Tuesday.

Largely suppressed during Soviet times, pseudoscientific beliefs saw a resurgence in Russian society with the popularity of reality TV shows like "Battle of the Psychics" in the early 2000s. Between 1990 and 2015, the share of Russians who believed in the ability to predict the future — and in magic in general — grew to 55 percent and 48 percent respectively, the state-run VTsIOM poll said.

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In the four years since then, the share of Russians who believe in the ability to tell the future has dropped by 24 percent, VTsIOM said, while the percentage of Russians who believe in magic fell by 17 percent.

Less than a third of Russian respondents told VTsIOM in 2019 that they believe in the ability to foresee the future and in magic (31 percent each).

The share of Russians who believe in hypnotherapy has progressively declined from 61 percent in 1990 to 41 percent in 2015 and 22 percent this year. Likewise, belief in mental telepathy has shrunk from 41 percent in 1990 to 28 percent in 2015 and 18 percent this year.

VTsIOM conducted the phone survey among 1,600 Russian respondents on June 28.

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