


HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF YOUTH IN BRICS COUNTRIES



Tom DWYER • Mikhail K. GORSHKOV

Ishwar MODI • LI Chunling

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 World Scientific

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Youth are, by definition, the future. This book brings initial analyses to bear on youth in the five BRICS countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, which are home to nearly half of the world's youth. Very little is known about these youth outside of their own countries since the mainstream views on "youth" and "youth culture" are derived from the available literature on youth in the industrialized West, which is home to a small part of the world's youth. This book aims to help fill in this gap.

The handbook examines the state of youth, their past, present and permits the development of insights about future. The BRICS countries have all engaged in development processes and some remarkable improvements in young people's lives over recent decades are documented. However, the chapters also show that these gains can be undermined by instabilities, poor decisions and external factors in those countries. Periods of economic growth, political progress, cultural opening up and subsequent reversals rearticulate differently in each society. The future of youth is sharply impacted by recent transformations of economic, political and social realities. As new opportunities emerge and the influence of tradition on youth's lifestyles weakens and as their norms and values change, the youth enter into conflict with dominant expectations and power structures.

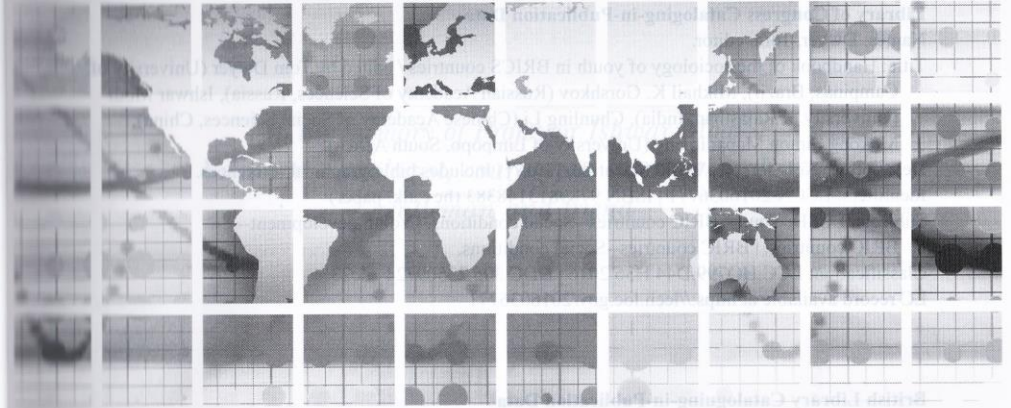
The topics covered in the book include politics, education, health, employment, leisure, Internet, identities, inequalities and demographics. The chapters provide original insights into the development of the BRICS countries, and place the varied mechanisms of youth development in context. This handbook serves as a reference to those who are interested in having a better understanding of today's youth. Readers will become acquainted with many issues that are faced today by young people and understand that through fertile dialogues and cooperation, youth can play a role in shaping the future of the world.

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*To the memory of Professor Ishwar Modi
Visionary sociologist, courageous internationalist,
gentleman and friend*

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Final Considerations and relevant young for our own opinion. Indeed, the two sides of the coin are not equal. Youth has acquired new space in the population studies agenda. It is examined by public policymakers, among others, especially because of demographic changes in adolescent fertility and the premature death of young males. All of these factors affect youth either positively or negatively, and have an impact on their transition into adulthood. Our research would like to shed light on these issues. Young people are seen as increasingly developed beings who are subordinated over a certain period, yet at the same time, they are expected to emerge from the transition with proper schooling and real possibilities for entering the job market. However, not all youth follow such a path since various exist for educational and occupational transition and these end up filtering the kinds of opportunities that are effectively available in the passage from adolescence into adult life. (2002, 2003, 2004) In this chapter, we have seen that the indicators of young Russians differ according to sex. Formal education levels have increased for young women while young men still try to make their way into economic activities as quickly as possible, even though, according to most recent indicators, many attempt to combine work and school. It is also worth noting that young women generally go through marriage and natal processes while they seek to affirm themselves socially. They have to juggle all of these roles in their daily lives while still entering the job market. Finally, the crime rate and violence are expressed in youth mortality. This is the case for a large number of Russian youth. The significant increase in masculine youth mortality noticeably affects the demographic structure of the country, but also reveals the social vulnerabilities faced by segments of youth, especially those from the poorest regions and who are non-white.

Figure 7.1: Demographic transition in the Russian Federation, 1990-2010. (continued)

Chapter 7

Demographics of Youth in Russia*

Sergei V. Zakharov and Ekaterina S. Mitrofanova

Young People's Changing Life Strategies¹

Currently in Russian society, the quantitative balance between different age groups is beneficial due to the “demographic dividend” caused by the small number of the elderly and a relatively small number of children (Figure 7.1). The situation is such that the dependency rate is actually the lowest in the country's history (Table 7.1). However, such a cost-effective age structure cannot last for long. The abundant young generation born in the 1980s will be replaced by smaller cohorts born in the 1990s (Figure 7.1).

*This chapter is based on the results of the study “The Newest Trends in Russia's Demographic Development and their Accounting for Socio-Economic Forecasting” carried out within the framework of the Basic Research Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in 2013. Authors would like to thank Michele Rivkin-Fish for her invaluable help in editing the English version of the paper.

¹As we know there is no universal, internationally recognized definition of “the youth” and its age boundaries. United Nations Population Fund, suggests people between 15 and 24. The Russian Federal State Statistics Service suggests that the youth comprise all those between 15 and 29. In this chapter, we will use the latter definition, since it incorporates both Russian and international standards (see Scherbakova, 2012); Youth in Russia (YIR, 2010).

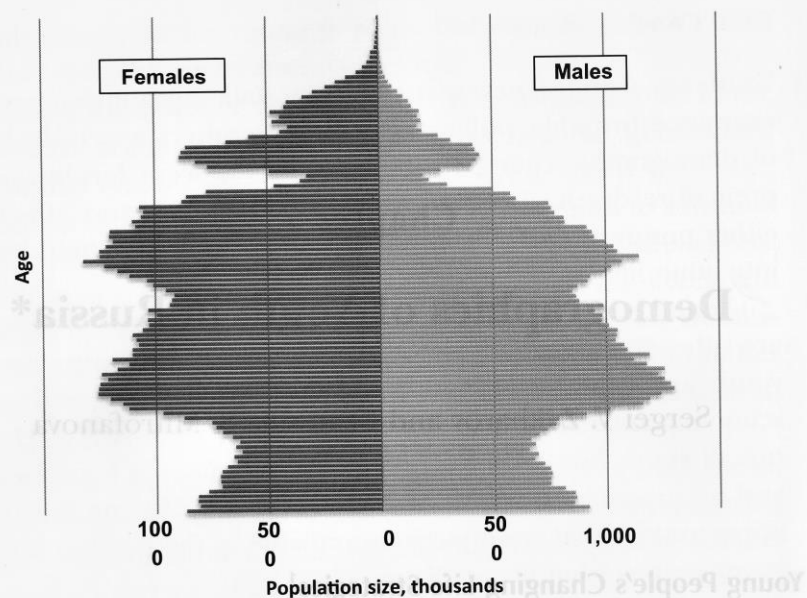


Figure 7.1: Age-Sex pyramid in Russia — 1 January 2012

Source: Rosstat unpublished data

Table 7.1: Dependency ratio in Russia based on census data and the medium variant of Rosstat projections for the years 2020 and 2030

Census year	Percentage of working age population	Dependency ratio per 1,000 working age population		
		Total	Children	Elderly
1926	51.6	936	770	166
1939	53.1	885	724	161
1959	58.4	713	512	202
1970	56.2	781	508	272
1979	60.4	656	385	270
1989	57.0	755	430	325
2002	61.3	631	296	335
2010	61.6	623	263	360
2020 (estimated)	55.4	805	328	477
2030 (estimated)	54.6	831	308	523

Source: Vishnevsky (2013)

According to medium-term scenario of population projections by Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service) in 2012, by 2030 the share of people below working age (under 16) will be equal to its present number (approximately 17%), while the share of those beyond working age will increase significantly — from 23% to 29%, assuming that the current retirement age remains the same (55 years for women and 60 for men). The small cohorts that are now entering the job market will bear the burden of high transfer obligations regarding the elderly. The inevitable tax increases and consequent reductions in individual and family expenditures will limit young people's life strategy choices and demographic behavior. In order to meet the challenge of the aging of Russia's population, modern youth and the upcoming generations will have to significantly increase their social capital and use it efficiently. Therefore, it is possible to assume that young people will adapt their demographic behavior to the fundamental socio-economic changes underway, they will seek new life strategies aimed at maintaining economic and demographic interrelationships between generations, though the probability of intergenerational conflicts is quite high.

What contributes to defining each generation's values, norms, behavior and, ultimately, its destiny, is the demographic and socio-economic situation at birth, as well as the economic and political situation in the country at the beginning of young people's professional, family, and reproductive lives. The slower the development of a country, the more uniform the behavior of different generations at the same life stages is.

In the post-WWII era, life courses became highly standardized when the Soviet authorities used both restrictive measures and incentives to stimulate people's economic, demographic, and social behavior to correspond to a limited number of acceptable scenarios (Blum *et al.*, 2009). Recent representative empirical studies have confirmed this fact. The data demonstrates that, for example, in the second half of the 20th century the interval between the time in which people entered their first partnership (marriage or cohabitation) and the birth of the first child was nearly identical across all Soviet generations and in all types of relationships (Mitrofanova, 2011) (see Figure 7.2).

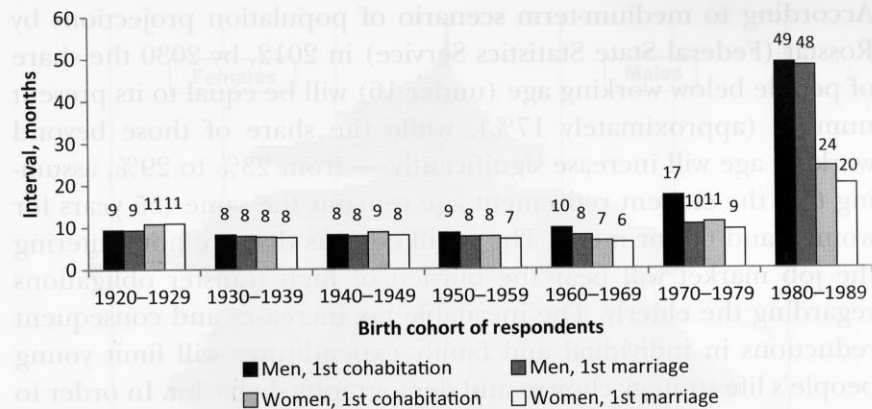


Figure 7.2: Median intervals between starting the first union and the first birth (by sex and type of partnership), months

Source: Mitrofanova (2011)

As Figure 7.2 shows, family behavior was stable and uniform from the end of WWII until the second half of the 1980s. One can also notice the standardization of reproductive, family, and sexual behavior. Entering into the first union was closely related to having the first child; doing one without the other was considered a deviation from the norm and was socially disapproved.

Nonetheless, people's practices began showing signs of change as early as the second half of the 1960s, and contradicted the existing normative order (Blum *et al.*, 2009: 153). The average age of sexual initiation was decreasing and, given the lack of efficient and widely available contraceptives, people's first sexual experiences often led to unwanted pregnancies. Such a situation had two possible outcomes: either an abortion or a "shotgun" marriage. Even though abortions were legal and widely available, not every young woman would decide to abort the first pregnancy, and therefore would choose to keep the child. This solution was also actively promoted by doctors, who were unanimous in cautioning about the negative consequences of aborting the first pregnancy. Since extra-marital births were still condemned, many young people got legally married earlier than they would have wanted, had circumstances

been different. Thus, while Western countries witnessed the disruption of this pattern (with sexual behavior going ahead of marital behavior, and the two becoming separated from one another), Russia, by contrast, witnessed the accelerated merging of youths' sexual, marital, and reproductive behavior.

Towards the end of the Soviet era, people experienced an increasing speed of the first life-cycle events that changed their status in social, family, educational, and professional spheres. All the stages that constitute the process of moving into adulthood coincided and competed with each other within a rather short period of 3–5 years (Blum *et al.*, 2009: 160). Young people were eager to become adults and acquire the prestige of being a parent, an employee, an educated person, and to become independent from their own parents. Soviet society provided access to a number of social benefits (i.e. the housing queue, promotion at work, and other advantages) and opportunities for vertical social mobility, but many of these depended to a large extent on a person's marital and family status. At the same time, the situation for young people was becoming more and more tense because they had to fulfill all the socially significant roles simultaneously (i.e. they needed to "become adults" fast).

Maintaining this traditional tie between sexual, matrimonial, and reproductive behaviors at an early age contradicted young people's educational and professional careers. The negative effects of this contradiction manifested themselves, for example, in an exceptionally high divorce rate compared to most other countries, a high incidence of abortion, widespread child abandonment, and a low probability of subsequent births. Early family formation increased the incidence of poverty and slowed down people's educational and professional development, as well as their geographical mobility. This "Soviet" model of demographic behavior had no future, for it was inherently irrational in the context of the inevitable societal and political modernization associated with the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial era.

The generations born in the 1970s–1980s, whose socialization coincided with drastic political and economic reforms, a rapid

increase occurred in the interval between entering their first union and having their first child. This might seem an insignificant empirical fact, but it actually provides evidence that a fundamental transformation of centuries-long demographic pattern in Russia was beginning to change. Sexual, marital, and reproductive behaviors are no longer as closely related as they used to be. This is caused by the introduction of widely available contraceptives, increased tolerance for cohabitation and extra-marital births, and the inclusion of sexuality-related issues in public discourse.

How did such changes become possible? What are the effects of such diversification of behavior patterns? We attempt to answer these questions in the sections below, through analyzing young people's marital, reproductive, sexual, and contraceptive behavior.

Young Russians' Demographic Behavior

The fundamental changes that occurred in the society from the end of the 1980s through to the early 1990s led to the opening up of the country, the abolition of censorship, and an increase in individual opportunities and choices. Older generations that grew up under socialism were used to wide State control over all life spheres found it much more difficult to adapt to the new conditions and to benefit from them. Young people, however, whose conscious experience was free of the ideologies of the past, grew up feeling that freedom, openness, diversity, and the availability of social goods were natural.

All this led to the diversification of needs and the acceptance of self-fulfillment as one of young people's main values, which corresponds with recent trends in developed countries (Inglehart, 1990; Van de Kaa, 1987; Lesthaeghe and Neels, 2002). The blind fulfillment of societally accepted norms gave way to the opportunity to make personal choices (Lesthaeghe, 1998). While existing values did not radically change, there was no longer a single set of values for everyone, and people began to consciously reflect and choose their values in relation to their own goals and interests.

Contemporary youth in Russia, i.e. the 1983–1997 birth cohorts, are very different from the previous generations in terms of their views, aspirations, and choices (Magun and Engovatov, 2004). The basic reason for this is the increased role of such “new” values as freedom, independence, and individualism (Yadova, 2012; Lissauskene, 2008). The views and choices that emerged from these values also became more diverse, inasmuch as they were no longer constrained by any typical behavior pattern.

Youth in the 21st century are oriented towards economics and independence rather than politics and ideology. Indifferent to politics (Panarin, 1998) and very pragmatic, young people are very distrustful of any displays of paternalism and want to reach their goals on their own (Blum *et al.*, 2009: 158). This is true when it comes to education, employment, and family life.

Modern youth are more ambitious, more mobile, and better educated than previous generations. They invest eagerly in their human capital with the aim of increasing their own value in the labor market. Born alongside the introduction of the Internet, mobile phones, and laptops, young people do not feel borders anymore; the world is open for them. The only remaining question is the need to personally evaluate one's reasonable chances of vertical and horizontal (geographical) mobility.

People who have not started a family or have not had children yet are also more mobile. The current trend includes a prolonged period spent on education and the postponement of marriage and parenthood. The intervals between these important life events are growing longer, while for previous generations they would usually occur over a rather short period of time (Blum *et al.*, 2009: 160–161). Nowadays, young people build their lives at a slower pace, taking more time to make important decisions and allowing themselves more choices in the world of opportunities.

Marriage and Partnership

While the communist principle that society should intervene in people's personal lives was questioned as early as the post-War

years, after 1991 the idea quickly evaporated under the pressure of people's need for privacy. The private sphere became sharply isolated and more intimate, making the psychological aspects of the family more important and increasing the importance of such values as love, equality, mutual support and understanding, self-fulfillment, and the partners' individual interests (Chernyak, 2009; Vovk, 2005a, 2005b).

Partners came to have higher demands for each other and successful marriages became more and more dependent on actual relationships between partners in the family (Chernyak, 2009). Divorce became more acceptable in society, and gender equality became more common among married couples (Magun, 2009).

Marriage is Becoming Less Attractive

Many of the factors that led people to register their marriage in the past had disappeared by the end of the 20th century. Marriage was no longer a pre-condition for obtaining the benefits available in Soviet times (such as getting onto the housing queue or getting promoted at work); it is no longer necessary to get the approval of family, colleagues and society, or to legitimate one's sexual relations (Gurko and Ignatova, 1997: 51).

As the State's stimulating (or sometimes restrictive) influences decreased, attitudes towards the institution of marriage itself began to change. The registration of marriage is losing its symbolic significance as a starting point of a cohabiting partnership. Young women who are also experiencing expanding educational, social, and career opportunities, no longer see marriage as the only path to self-fulfillment.

For women born in the 1950s and early 1960s, marriage was unquestionably the dominant form of partnership, and 95–99% of the time spent together with their partner at the ages of 25, 30, 35, and 40 was within marriage. Those born between 1965 and 1969 would, by the age of 35, have spent 90% of their time with an officially married partner. By the time they reached age 30, those born between 1970 and 1974 had already spent less than 80% of their

time, and their colleagues in the 1975–1979 cohorts had spent by age 25, a bit more than 75% (Zakharov, 2007: 125).

Women born in 1950s and 1960s and who have ever been in partnership spent, in legal marriage, 95–99% of the total time spent in all types of unions (with partners living together) by the age of 25, 30, 35 and 40. Women born between 1965 and 1970 have spent in legal marriage 90% of the total time spent in all types of unions (with partners living together) by the age 35. Women born between 1970 and 1975 have spent in legal marriage less than 80% of the total time spent in all types of unions (with partners living together) by the age 30. Women born between 1975 and 1980 have spent in legal marriage a bit more than 75% of the total time spent in all types of unions (with partners living together) by the age 25.

Around 50% of the women born in the 1950s would officially marry their partner by the end of the first year of their relationship, whereas only 30% of those born in the 1970s did so, demonstrating that the trend for the rapid legalization of intimate relations has ended (Zakharov, 2007: 102). If young people do not officially register their relationship within 3–5 years of cohabitation, it becomes very unlikely they will do so later. There is practically no difference between the number of marriages registered by the 5th year and the 10th year after the onset of cohabitation. Thus, not only is the registration of official marriage being postponed, but marriage also is being replaced by stable cohabitation relationships.

The early marriage model prevailed in Russia until the mid-1990s. According to the 1989 Census and the 1994 Microcensus, fewer than 60% of men and fewer than 40% of women aged 20–24 had never married, and among those aged 25–29, 21–24% of men and 12–14% of women had never married. Notably, the 1989 Census showed fewer single women among the youngest age groups compared with the 1979 Census, which meant that marriage was occurring even earlier.

The situation began to change rapidly in the mid-1990s. According to the 2002 Census, 73.6% of men and fewer than 52.6% of women aged 20–24 had never been married versus 77.5% and

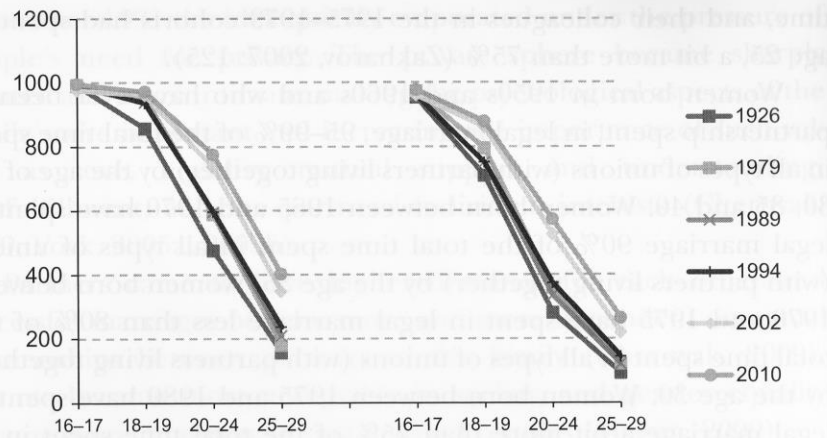


Figure 7.3: The proportion of never married men and women by age groups according to census data (for censuses that contained a relevant question)²

Sources: The All-Soviet Union Census of 1926. Volume LI. USSR. Chapter III. Marital Status, etc. Moscow-Leningrad, 1931; USSR Demographic Yearbook. Moscow, 1990: 190–191; Marital Status and Birth Rate in Russia (Based on the Microcensus of 1994). Moscow, 1995; Results of the Russian National Census of 1992. Volume 2. Sex-Age Structure and Marital Status. Moscow, 2004: 300–309; Rosstat unpublished data

57.2%, respectively, according to the 2010 Census (see Figure 7.3). Marriage by the age of 25 ceased to be a dominant norm. About 40% of men and over 25% of women had never married by the age of 30. These represent enormous demographic changes, even in the context of the extensive changes occurring over the course of the 20th century.

Figure 7.4 shows the decreasing popularity of marriage. The transformations of sexual and marital behavior that began in the 1960s and gained legitimacy in the 1990s led to the development of new behavior patterns in the new millennium.

²The censuses of 1939, 1959, and 1970 were excluded because they only considered two kinds of marital status of people: married or not married, which does not allow to distinguish between those never married, widowed, and divorced.

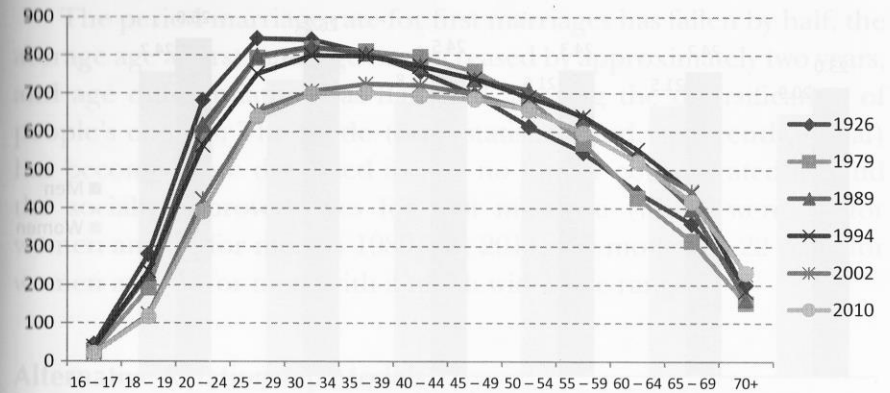


Figure 7.4: Married women. Russia, per 1,000 persons in each age group

Sources: Same sources as for Figure 7.3

Increased Age of First Marriage

Starting in the mid 1990s, marriage in Russia has been “getting older”. This is probably caused by the increased time spent in education and finding a stable job, as well as by the popularity of unofficial unions that often precede marriage and compete with it (Vishnevsky, 2007: 49–52; Zakharov, 2006).

Nowadays, the average age at first marriage for men is between 26.5 and 27.5 while, for women it is 24–25 (depending on the method of estimation). Thus, as Figure 7.5 shows, the average age at first marriage has increased by at least 2 years for both sexes in comparison with previous generations (Zakharov, 2007: 83).

In the 50 years following the 1926 Census, the age at first marriage did not significantly increase: only by 1.2 years for men and 0.6 years for women. The 1989 Census and 1994 Microcensus showed only slight changes in comparison to the 1979 Census. After 1994, however, the age at first marriage began to rise rapidly, increasing by 1.6–1.8 years in the 2002 Census and by 2.1–2.6 years in the 2010 Census.

A comparison of first marriage indicators for the same-age groups in 1989 and 2011 reveals significant differences in marital behavior between Soviet and contemporary young adults (Figure 7.6).

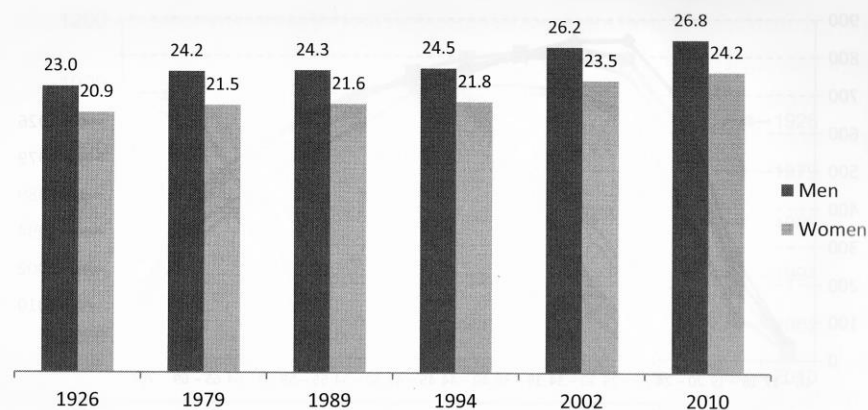


Figure 7.5: Singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM)³ 1926–1994

Source: Author's calculations based on the sources listed in Figure 7.3

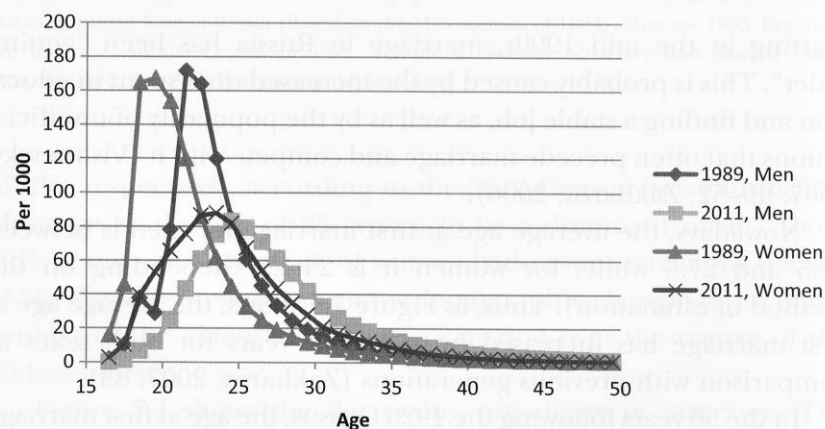


Figure 7.6: Age-specific first marriage rates. Russia, per 1,000 persons in each age group

Source: Authors' estimates based on Rosstat unpublished data

³Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM). SMAM was proposed by John Hajnal in the 1950s and was later recommended by the United Nations for broader use in demographic statistics. SMAM calculation is based on the number of the people who have never been married by age groups provided by censuses and sample studies. See *Patterns of First Marriage. Timing and Prevalence* (United Nations, 1990, 323–327).

The period marriage rate for first marriages has fallen by half, the average age at first marriage has increased by approximately two years, and age differentiation has flattened, proving the diversification of people's choices. The mode (both statistical and, apparently, social) has become more dispersed as it is no longer concentrated around the socially approved ages for first marriage (which were 19 for women and 21 for men in 1989). In 2011, the mode was 22 years for women and 24 for men, with a much wider age range.

Alternative Relationship Models

As noted above, besides the increased time spent in education, one of the reasons for postponing marriage is the increasing popularity of new, alternative relationship models that have become socially acceptable in Russia, i.e. “non-registered marriage”, cohabitation, consensual unions, or “de-facto marriage”,⁴ i.e. marital unions that are not officially registered with the Civil Registry Office.

In the past decades, more than 80% of women have cohabited with a partner by the age of 25, and those born after 1960 in general tend to live with their partner rather than contract marriage (Dolbik-Vorobey, 2003; Zakharov, 2007: 101).

Consensual unions are becoming a social norm in this new era, at least for young people (Vishnevsky, 2006: 100).

The first union is usually unregistered, and is less and less likely to become registered, (Vishnevsky, 2013) because it is often a temporary relationship based on a sexual partnership that is not intended to become a proper family with children (Zakharov, 2007: 126; Kon, 2010).

Among young people below the age of 20, there is only one registered marriage for every six non-registered couples. Non-registered relationships are also popular among those aged 21–24

⁴*De-facto* (not legally registered) marriages are often wrongfully called “civil marriages” in Russia. The term, however, first appeared in post-revolutionary France, and only came to Russia after the Revolution of 1917 and the Civil War to describe a marriage officially registered by civil authorities instead of religious ones.

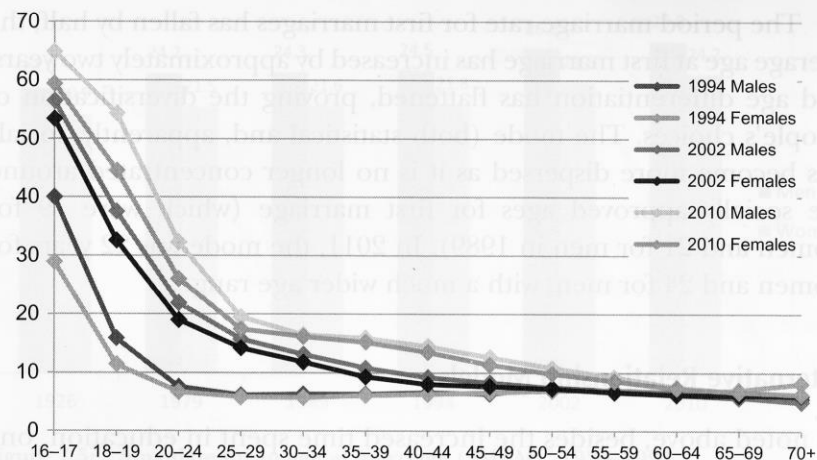


Figure 7.7: Percentage of non-registered unions to the number of men and women who stated they were married (both officially and unofficially). Russia 1994, 2002, and 2010

Sources: Marital Status and Fertility in Russia (Based on the 1994 Microcensus). Moscow, 1995; Results of the 2002 National Census. Vol. 2. Sex-Age Structure and Marital Status. Moscow, 2004: 300–309; Rosstat unpublished data

and even those aged 30–44, although in the latter age group there are already three registered marriages for each unofficial one (Vovk, 2005a).

Figure 7.7 shows the share of unregistered unions among those who stated they were married in the 1994 Microcensus (this was the first big survey in Russia which included such a question) and subsequent censuses.

It is notable that the proportion of informal unions was relatively small in 1994, when partnerships made up about one-third of all unions (both registered and non-registered) among the 16–17 year old age group, less so among older populations and reaching only 10% among 20 year olds. As of 2002 and 2010, partnerships also were not very common among more mature age groups (10–15% among those in their 30s and 40s). However, for the young cohorts aged under 25, partnerships are a popular alternative to official marriage. Nearly 55% of 16–17 year olds who declared that they

were married (officially and non-officially, note: in Russia since the 1930s the category “married” in population censuses refer to both officially and non-officially sanctioned “stable partnership/cohabitation”) in 2002 were in an unofficial union, the figure rose to 60% for girls and 65% for boys in 2010. The share of people aged under 35 in non-registered partnerships among all who declared themselves married has grown more than three times since 1994. Among people under 20, every second union is an unofficial one, while in the 20–24 age group every fourth marriage among women and every third among men has not been registered. Around 17% of women and 20% of men in the next age group, 25–29 year olds, also declared that they were living in a non-registered marriage.

However, one should bear in mind that, as many Russian sociologists explain, census data do not cover all the existing relationships and therefore underestimate the actual prevalence of informal unions in which the partners are cohabiting.

Let us analyze the data provided by the most reliable sample survey “Russian Generations and Gender Survey”.⁵ According to this 2011 survey of people aged 20–24, only every second man cohabitating with a woman had an officially registered marriage. Only slightly more women belonging to the same age group, 60%, stated that they were officially married to the partner they were cohabitating with (Figures 7.8 and 7.9). The popularity of officially registered marriages correlated with age, reaching 80% for both men and women aged 30. However, the proportion of relationships that are declared to be “official” decreased across all ages for both men and women between the first (2004) and the third (2011) waves of the survey. The reasons for this still await further analysis. It is possible that as the society is becoming more tolerant towards non-traditional family

⁵ Russian sample survey “Parents and Children, Men and Women in Family and Society” (RusGGs-2004, 2007, 2011) was conducted as part of the Generations and Gender Programme by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Russian coordinator of the program being the Independent Institute for Social Policy (Moscow). For more information on the project see <http://www.ggp-i.org/> (Accessed on 7 September 2016).

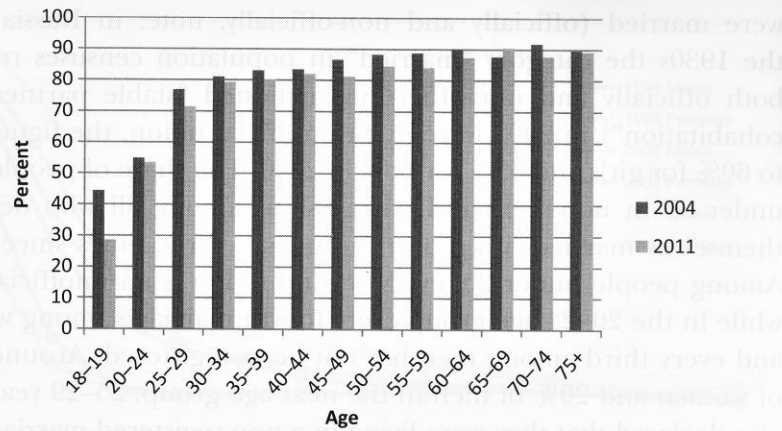


Figure 7.8: Proportion of men officially married to their cohabitating female partner (%) by age, 2004, and 2011

Source: Authors' estimates based on the RusGGS data

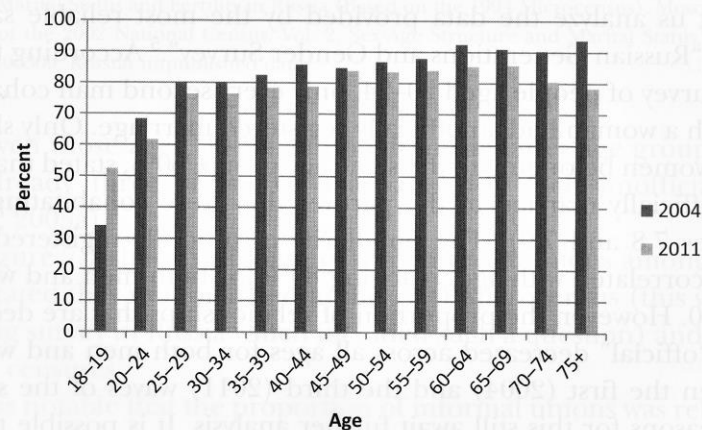


Figure 7.9: Proportion of women officially married to their cohabitating male partner (%) by age, 2004, and 2011

Source: Authors' estimates based on the RusGGS data

models, respondents have become more open and they answer the question, "Is your marriage registered?" more honestly, thus increasing the proportion of those acknowledging that their marriage is not official, even when the partners have children in common.

Fertility

When a society shifts from a traditional model of reproduction to a contemporary model in which couples deliberately control their childbearing, as occurred in Russia as well as in other countries, both quantitative and qualitative indicators of fertility change. Attitudes towards childbearing and its perceived value, and its place within the broader value system are changing. Having children is becoming a personal value, a choice that is rationally made (or rejected) rather than a socially imposed obligation (Vishnevsky, 1982: 154, 184).

Fertility Decline and Postponed Childbearing

In a context of multiple life opportunities, young people often postpone having a child until after they have finished their education and found a good job that allows them to provide for the child. Young people are also very pragmatic in their views towards having a second or more children; if their financial status is not high enough, they prefer to have only one child and ensure him or her a good education, etc., rather than have several children in a "low-quality" environment. This means that childbearing is not only postponed but also that the birthrate in general is falling.

Figure 7.10 shows the period total fertility rate by calendar year (for hypothetical generations) and cohort total fertility rate (for birth cohorts of women). Such a comparison of fertility rates shows that the rapid fall between 1987 and 1999 was circumstantial and, most probably, reflects period effects in the pace of family formation. In fact, the decrease in fertility among those born after 1960 was not as dramatic as one might think, looking at it through the prism of calendar periods.

However, the decrease continues. None of the post-war generations has managed to reproduce itself, inasmuch as the completed cohort fertility rate is less than 2.1 children per woman. Even though women born in the 1970s are still in the late phases of their reproductive cycle, it is already clear that they will not achieve high

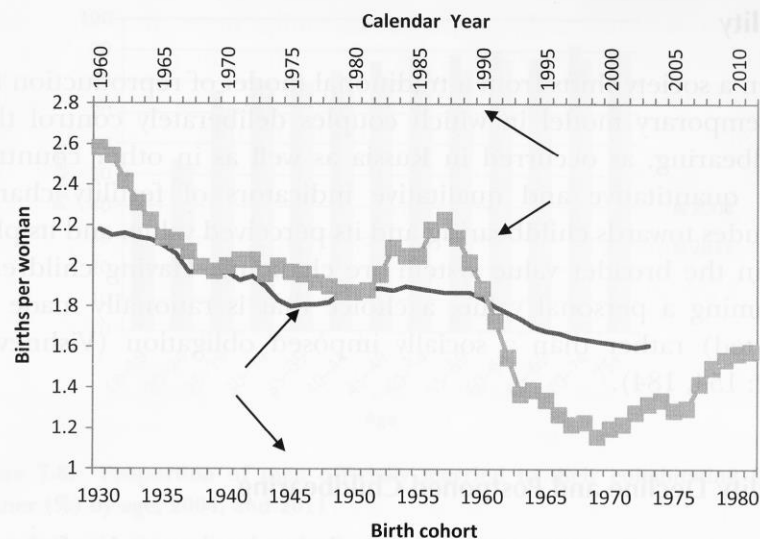


Figure 7.10: Total period and cohort fertility rates in Russia, 1930–1973 birth cohorts of mothers, for calendar years 1960–2011

Source: S.V. Zakharov's revised evaluation based on the original study presented in Zakharov (2005) and Zakharov (2008: 910)

fertility rates. The current estimates are that they will have 1.6 children per woman.

The analysis of cohort age-specific fertility rates shows not only the overall decrease in fertility, but also the ongoing postponement of childbearing (Figure 7.11).

The first three curves in Figure 7.11 represent the generations that entered reproductive age before *perestroika*, the next two are transitional generations, and the two curves at the bottom represent contemporary youth. The fertility of the post-*perestroika* generations differs from that of previous generations in terms of postponed childbearing and the way women manage their reproductive period. In the previous generations, fertility would normally increase before women reached age 35 and then stabilize, while each new generation manifests a trend of continuous childbearing through to age 40.

Such dispersal of events across time is caused by young people's efforts to optimize the overall landscape of their life course as the

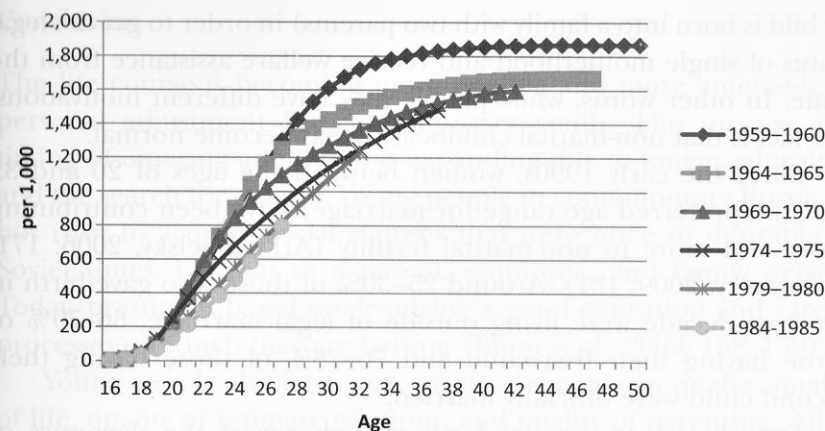


Figure 7.11: Cumulative fertility rates by age across female generations born in 1959–1985, by age — Russia, per 1,000 women

Source: Authors' estimates based on Rosstat unpublished data

society shifts towards a post-industrial stage of development. They strive to “adjust” their individual demographic calendar to ongoing changes in their specific, multifaceted life circumstances, in order to have a desired child at the preferred time, under preferred conditions, and with an appropriate partner (Zakharov, 2002).

Increasing Non-Marital Fertility

Since the legitimization of non-registered partnerships and, therefore, pre-marital sex, the attitude towards non-marital childbearing has changed. Unplanned pregnancies used to lead to early marriages aimed at “covering up” pre-marital sex (Golod, 1996; Gurko and Ignatova 1997; Kon, 1997). Currently, however, having children outside of an official marriage is no longer shameful, and often actually results from the partners' rational choice.

Many couples do not see any difference between children being raised in officially registered marriages or cohabitation partnerships, although some do register their relationships several years after bearing children. Some single women choose to have children by themselves. There are even those who do not name a father (even if

a child is born into a family with two parents) in order to get the legal status of single motherhood and receive welfare assistance from the State. In other words, while people may have different motivations, the fact is that non-marital childbearing has become normal.

Since the early 1990s, women between the ages of 20 and 35 (i.e. the preferred age range for marriage) have been contributing more and more to non-marital fertility (Arkhangelsky, 2006: 171; Vishnevsky, 2009: 131). Around 25–30% of those who gave birth in the past decade were living outside of legal marriage, 66–70% of those having their first child and 76–78% of those having their second child were officially married.

Data based on annual birth records reveal the dynamics of non-marital childbearing among youth (Figure 7.12).

In 1990, children born out-of-wedlock to 15–19-year-old mothers constituted 20% of all live births (slightly over 10% for 20–29-year-olds), and this proportion increased by a factor of two in 20 years. The highest cumulative gain occurred among mothers under 20, the lowest in the 25–29-age cohort, which can be explained by the fact that young people under 25 prefer cohabitation, while those over 25 tend to officially register their marriage.

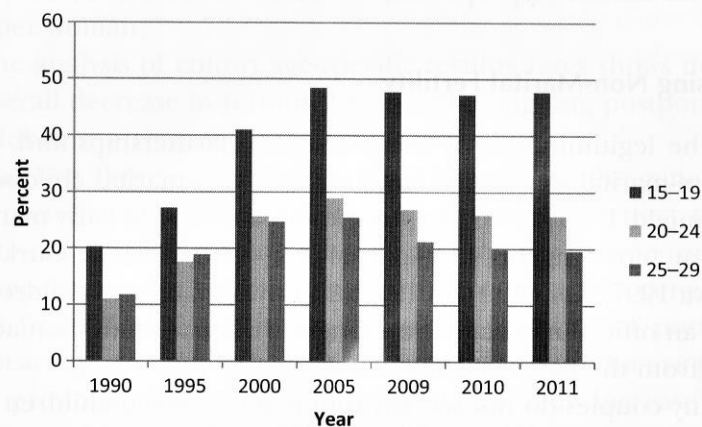


Figure 7.12: Percentage of non-marital births among all live births to mothers aged 15–29. Russia, 1990–2011

Source: Vishnevsky (2010: 112)

Conclusion

The life course is becoming more flexible and more amenable to personal adjustment for contemporary youth. The process and timing of entering adulthood is expanding due to longer education and the search for oneself. Young people in contemporary Russia do not rush to acquire social statuses that were once so desirable in Soviet times, i.e. that of a parent, employee, and family person. Today, prestige is based on acquiring a good education and career, processes on which they are betting (Blum *et al.*, 2009: 158–159).

Young people also have very specific demands for quality: quality of life, quality of intimate relations, and quality of parenting. All of this has motivated young people to ceaselessly look for an appropriate job, home, partner, and to invest in their children, preferring quality to quantity.

Efficient family-planning tools have separated marital, reproductive, and sexual behavior, transforming these into three different spheres of self-fulfillment. All of these stages, now stretched out through time, reflect individual needs and perspectives. The increasing dispersal of timing of marital relations and childbearing reveals that young people are postponing important demographic events further and further.

Russians have only recently acquired the opportunity to efficiently manage the most prolific period of their lives — youth. They attempt to start planning their lives as early as possible and to construct it sequentially in a personally tailored way.