

Trends in marriages in Russian megacities

Abstract

Big cities, especially megacities, have reputation of places not facilitating marriages because of change of moral values in favor for career and self-development. The result is postponement of marriages, extend of cohabitation and remarriages. Within my research I check this statement on examples of two Russian largest cities – Moscow and Saint Petersburg with more than 12 and 5 million inhabitants. Taking into account the size of the country, different nationalities with different attitude to marriage, which live in Russia, I conduct my analysis by comparison cities and the regions that surround them—Moscow region and Leningrad region. In the research I use official data of Federal State Statistics Service for period of last 25 year. The variables used in the analysis are marriage rate, marital age, divorce index and rate of remarriages. The results of the study indicate that in both megacities there is an increase of marriages rate and reduction of divorce index. Cities have almost the same age structure at the marital ages, though Saint Petersburg is slightly younger. While marital situation in both megacities does not have any significant difference, the considerable variation is observed in comparison with the Leningrad and Moscow regions. There is no evidence of later marriages in cities than in regions, moreover the divorce index is less in cities and remarriages are less popular. These results give us the reason to identify Russian megacities as untypical in the framework of demographic transition from point of view of marriages.

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Introduction

The results of the study indicate that during the period of last 25 years trends in marriages have changed in all examined areas, but the transformation itself looks different. Marriage rate in Moscow was higher than the rate in Moscow region 2003 and after that point has always shown less value. Nevertheless since 2004 the both regions show the upward trend (with slight fluctuation) and by 2015 the marriage rate in Moscow reached 8.1% and in Moscow region—8.7%. Opposite trend can be observed in Saint Petersburg: during all 25 years the marriage rate in the city was significantly higher than in

Leningrad region, what contradict the main hypothesis of this study. Moreover since 2004 the difference between regions increases each year: in 2015 marriage rate in Saint Petersburg was 10.9%, while in Leningrad region—only 5.6% (Figure 1).

The difference in marriage rate can be the consequence of the variation of age structure and precisely the average marital age. The roots of difference between Moscow and Saint Petersburg is that while capital of Russia has almost the same age structure (in “marriage ages”) as Moscow region, Saint Petersburg is significantly younger than Leningrad region.² Also Saint Petersburg is slightly younger than Moscow, where population is getting older much faster (Figure 2).

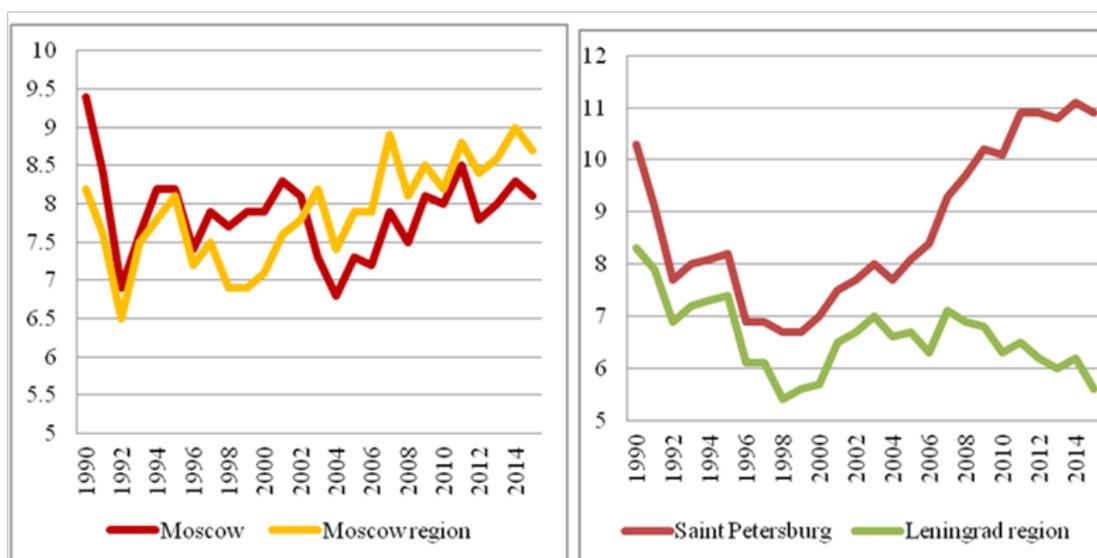


Figure 1 Marriage rate 1990-2015 (Russian Federal Statistics Data), %.

The difference in age at first marriage between cities and regions is significant among women – there marriages are concentrated in the age of 25-29 years in cities, while smother in regions. If we compare marital age structure in both megacities with each other, we will find any considerable difference neither for men nor for women (Figure 3). Recently in all examined regions we can observe the increase of marriages in which the bride is 25-34 years old what happens due to reducing proportion of early marriages. It is a general trend for Russia, but the peculiar thing is that in Moscow and Saint Petersburg the rate

of late marriages (bride is more than 35 years old) is significantly less, then in nearby regions—22.6 against 25.8 and 22.1 against 32.9 accordingly. It contradicts again the hypothesis of prevalence of late marriages in the big cities. On the other hand, the rate of early marriages is less in Moscow than in Moscow region (23.9 against 27.8) and slightly less in Saint Petersburg in comparison to Leningrad region (24.5 against 25.1). The difference in the age structure of marriages (age of bride) in examined megacities is almost negligible (Figure 4).

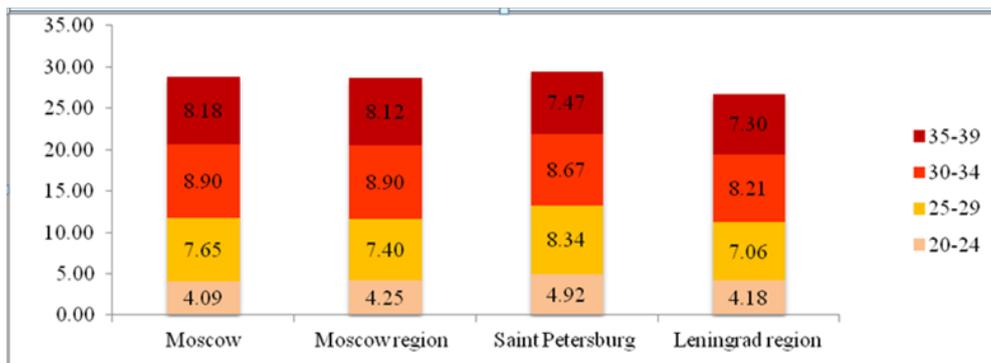


Figure 2 Age structure - proportion of female population in the age of most frequent marriages, 01.01.2017, (Russian Federal Statistics Data), %.

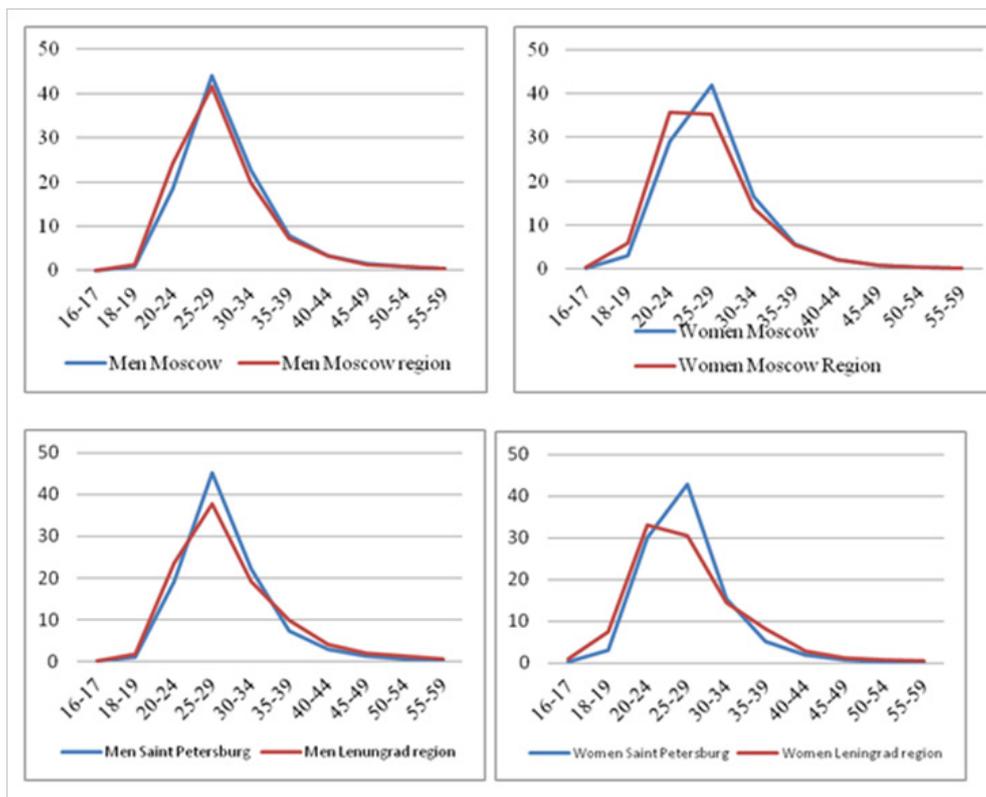


Figure 3 Age at the first marriage, 2015 (Russian Federal Statistics Data), %.

One of the main characteristic of the marital structure is rate of remarriage, which is the tight correlation with divorce rate (or more accurate divorce index).² Marital situation in Saint Petersburg can be characterized as more lively than in Moscow: there are more marriages and more divorces, as the result the value of divorce index in both

megacities is almost the same (43.5 divorces per 100 marriages). In all regions divorce index reached its maximum in 2002 and began to decrease after that year. Till now the reduction continues in both cities and in Moscow region (though with less speed), while in Leningrad region it stays stable (Figure 5).

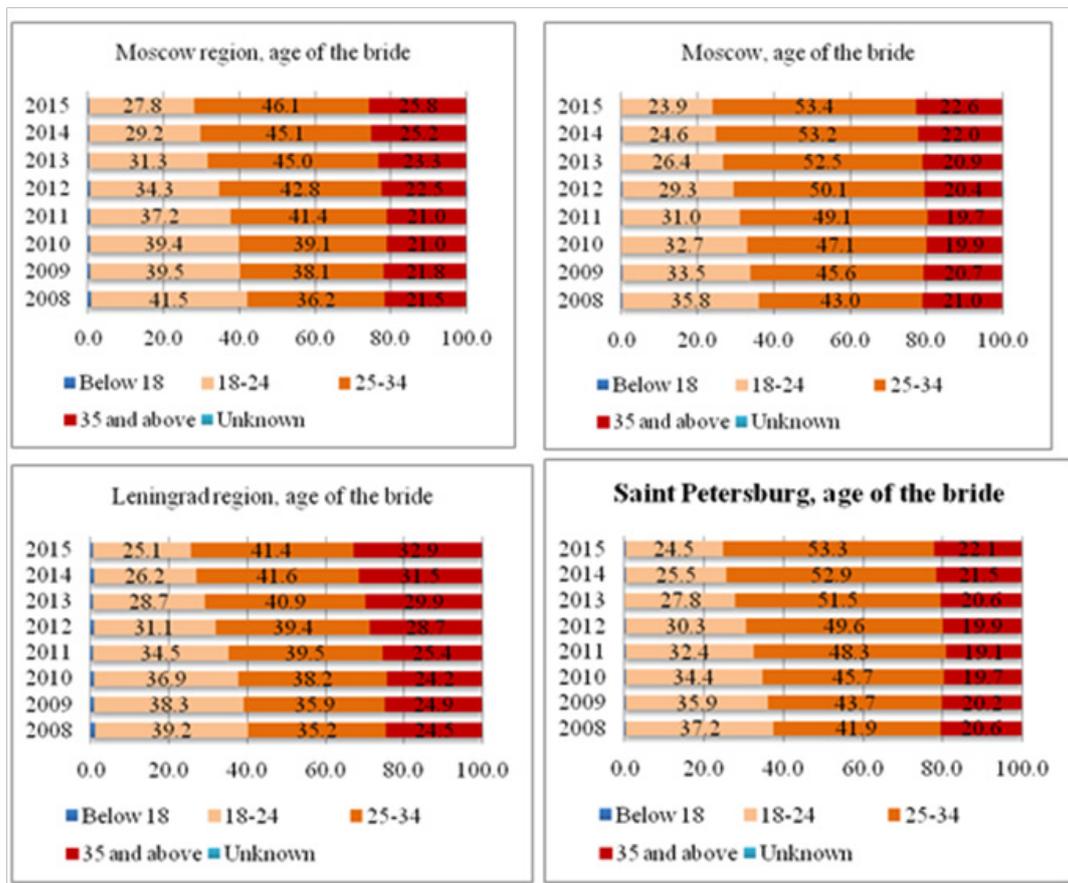


Figure 4 Average marital age of the bride, 2008-2015 (Russian Federal Statistics Data), %.

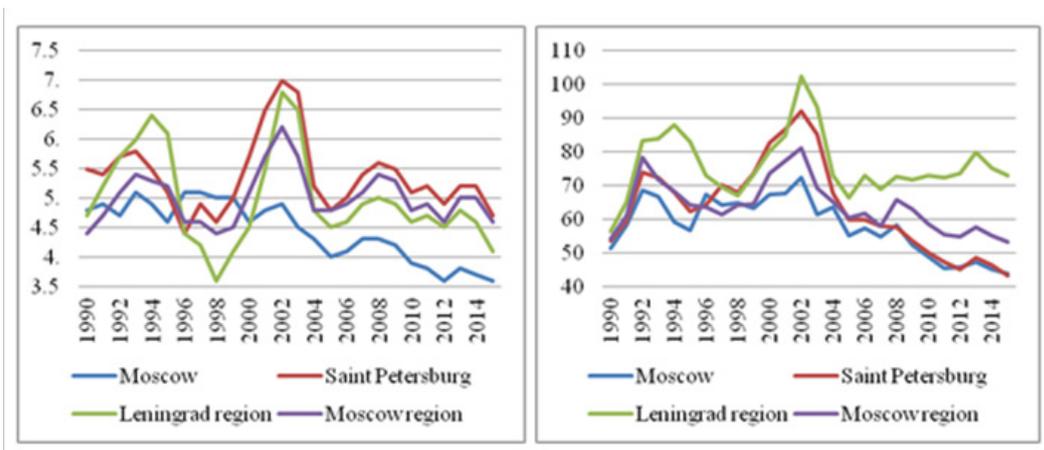


Figure 5 Divorce rate 1990-2015 (on the left) and divorce index (on the right).

Remarriages, again contradicting the main hypothesis of this research, are less popular in the megacities in comparison with regions—the highest proportion of remarriages is observed in Leningrad region, where 35% of men and 39% of women who got married in 2015 were divorced. If in 2011 the rate of remarriages was the highest in Leningrad region and in Moscow for men, a significant growth in Moscow region and Leningrad region lead to the fact

that now remarriages are more spread in regions in comparison to megacities (Figure 6). Finally, fertility rate in Moscow is lower than in Moscow region while in Saint Petersburg 1.5 times higher than in Leningrad region. Low fertility rate in Leningrad region, which is one of the lowest in Russia, is caused by age structure of population, especially women of childbearing age and socio-economic factors such as financial and social status and housing conditions (Figure 7).

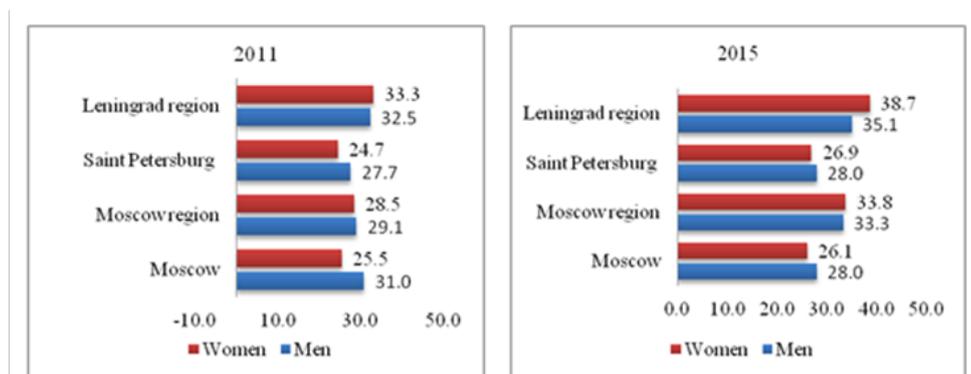


Figure 6 Rate of remarriages, 2011-2015, % (Russian Federal Statistics Data).

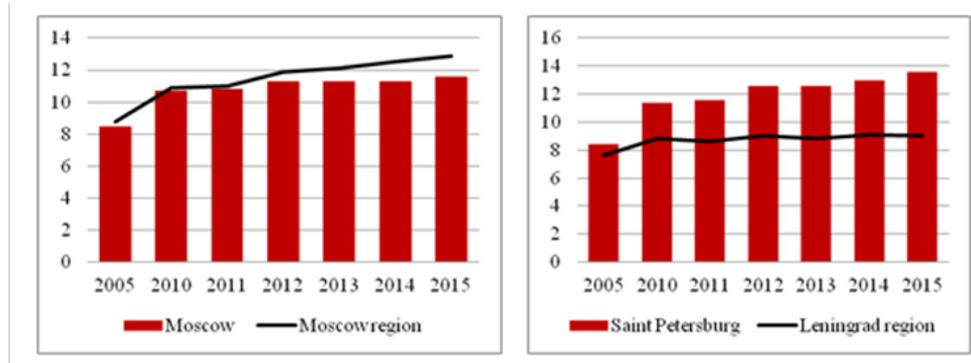


Figure 7 Number of children born per 1000 females, 2005-2015 (Russian Federal Statistics Data).

Conclusion

To sum up the results of the study, the difference of the marriage market between megacities is not considerable, more significant is the difference between cities and regions which surround them: analyzed cities demonstrate higher marriage and lower divorce rates. This phenomenon can be explained by strong migration flow of young people in “proper marital age” to megacities from nearby regions. If Moscow region is attractive for young migrants, Leningrad region is rather donor of work force – people prefer to come directly to Saint Petersburg. The plot below indicates the inflow of young women in the age of 15-29 years old to Saint Petersburg, though in Leningrad region the age structure of coming and leaving women is almost the same.

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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