

# SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

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## YOUNG FAMILY IN A METROPOLIS: DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECT



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*The article deals with the demographic characteristics of young families. The relevance of the study is due to the key role of young families in determining the demographic prospects of society development. First of all, it refers to the birth rate, the level and trends of which depend on the reproductive behavior of a young family. The aim of the work is to identify the peculiarities of the formation and fertility of young families in the metropolis of Moscow. The analysis, based on the data from the 2020 census and current statistics, showed that, on average, people in Moscow get married later, especially women.*

*The share of those whose marital relations are not registered is significantly higher in the capital. At the same time, the share of those born out of registered marriages is lower in Moscow than in Russia as a whole and in the urban population of the country. And this applies primarily to those born registered at the joint request of their parents. Later marriage (at least its registration) entails a later start of childbearing. However, a comparative analysis of the indicators of Moscow and Saint Petersburg shows that the significant one-time birth allowance for young families in Moscow probably partially counteracts the tendency to postpone childbearing. Data from the 2020 census showed that the average number of children in a young family unit in Moscow is lower than in Russia as a whole and in the country's urban population. Accordingly, the share of young married couples with children is lower, but the share of mothers with children is slightly higher, and the share of fathers with children is more than twice as high.*

*Young family, marriage, fertility, number of children, Moscow.*

### **Introduction**

Federal Law 489-FZ "On youth policy in the Russian Federation" dated December 30, 2020 defines a young family as "persons married under the procedure established by the laws of the Russian Federation, including those raising a child (children), or a person who is the sole parent (adoptive parent) of a child (children) up to and including the age of 35". A young family begins with marriage at a young age or the birth of a child outside a registered marriage.

The young family plays a key role in determining the demographic prospects of society and, consequently, its future. First of all, this applies to the birth rate, the level and trends of which depend on the reproductive behavior of the young family. And in conditions of relatively low mortality it is the level of fertility that determines the mode of reproduction of the population. No matter how high the life expectancy is, in order to keep the population at least from decreasing from generation to generation, the number of children born on average by one woman should be at least 2.1–2.2.

The issue of fertility as the main factor determining the reproduction of the population occupies a central place in demographic research (Taneva, Kirkova, 2020). Scientists have not yet identified any other way to optimally reduce the degree of demographic threats to the national security of the country, except for the creation of conditions for the formation of large numbers of large families with many children, which are a guarantee of survival of any nation (Shalin, Panchenko, 2019).

A young family is a key resource for increasing the birth rate in the country. Numerous studies show that family and family values occupy a consistently high place in the structure of values of young people. Various sociological surveys have revealed that the family is regularly among the top three priority values of young people, and in many studies, it is the family that takes the leading place (Ivanishko, 2023).

A.I. Malyshkina and her co-authors (Malyshkina et al., 2023) emphasize the influence of parents on the formation of young people's attitudes to creating a family and having children. It is in the parental family that attitudes to a healthy lifestyle and attention to one's health are laid down, ideas about family lifestyle and the desired number of children in the family are formed (Zemlyanova, Chumarina, 2018; Malyshkina et al., 2023; Taneva, Kirkova, 2020). A significant role in the formation of marriage strategy of young people is played by the socialization system - the example of the parental family: marriage during the student years is influenced by the number of children in the parental family, the nature of relations with parents, and the presence of family traditions (Rostovskaya et al., 2023). However, the majority of young spouses are oriented to a smaller number of children in the family compared to the generation of their parents (Kuzmenko, 2010). At the same time, not only the parental family, but also the health care and education systems act as the subjects of forming young people's attitudes toward family formation

and child rearing. According to (Dauletova et al., 2012), socio-psychological factors and public opinion about the ideal number of children in a family are of great importance for the formation of young people's reproductive attitudes. Regardless of which ideas are formed under the influence of a complex of many factors, at a certain point they have a strong influence on family planning. Public opinion about the optimal number of children can have significant demographic consequences.

Young people are much more likely to choose unregistered unions as an alternative to registered marriages: among respondents 18–20 years old who described themselves as married or married, two-thirds are in unregistered unions (according to census data, the same ratio is observed among married Russians under 16 years old), among respondents aged 21–24 years old the share of unregistered marriages is a quarter, among respondents aged 25–29 years old it is a fifth (Kobleva, 2023).

The results of Z.Kh. Kobleva's research show that the spread of unregistered relationships entails a real threat to the family and society. A family based on cohabitation cannot fully fulfill its inherent functions, primarily childbearing. The consequence is a decline in the birth rate, ageing of the population and incomplete reproduction of society. Moreover, the spread of unregistered relationships can lead to the following phenomena: loose sexual relations – unstable relationships – social orphanhood – declining birth rates – loneliness – social diseases – dissatisfaction with life and, as a consequence of all this, the disharmony of society. In fact, unregistered relationships is contrary to the self-preservation and development of society (Kobleva, 2023). Thus, the family is rapidly losing its institutional significance. Traditional values and relations in the family and marriage sphere are not demanded by society.

These provisions are confirmed in the work (Germanova, Khairullina, 2015): the family is currently becoming an uncompetitive value, loses its priorities, as a consequence, the birth of a child (more often one) and the creation of a family are postponed to a later period.

L.N. Petrova (Petrova, 2009) notes a revealing fact: the appearance of a child in a unregistered relationships most often leads to the registration of the relationship or to the breakup of the family. According to the author, a child, as a rule, strengthens the relationship between a man and a woman. Thus, with the spread of unregistered relationships, society loses the ability to reproduce the population with each successive generation. In this regard, the solution of problems in the field of demography becomes problematic. The work of I.A. Beginina and E.V. Ovchinnikova shows that young people in unregistered relationships are going to register marriage in case of pregnancy before the birth of a child (32% of respondents), after the birth of a child (38%), but one third of respondents are not going to register marriage in such situations (Beginina, Ovchinnikova, 2021). The results of the study (Panfilova, 2022) show that the indicators of "relationship satisfaction" and "focus on having and raising children" in partners in unregistered marriage are expressed to a greater extent than "readiness to register marriage", i.e. partners in unregistered marriage with high relationship satisfaction do not always seek to register marriage and create a family.

In Russia, same as in other developed countries, both the number of unregistered unions and the divorce rate are rather high. The chances of divorced women to have a new legal and lasting marriage are small. Remarriages break up as often as first marriages. All this leads to a further decline in the birth rate. The average number of children among women in unregistered unions is higher than among never-married and divorced women, but lower than among married women. Doubts about the reliability of relationships with unofficial partners lead to postponement of childbearing (Sinelnikov, 2019).

The predominant type of family in Russia remains a married couple with one, less often with two or more children. Another, very common type is the so-called single-parent families. Among the main reasons for the emergence of a single-parent family are legal and actual divorce, out-of-wedlock birth of

a child, and widowhood. Its distinguishing features are the presence of a minor child(ren) and the absence of marital relations. The central figure of a single-parent family in the overwhelming majority of cases is a woman.

At the same time, the desire of young people to have children depends significantly on government policies to improve the quality of life of young families. The willingness to have a certain number of children is conditioned by a number of socio-economic factors: material well-being, quality of life, increasing costs of raising children, and the contradiction between career and the desire to become a mother (Malyshkina et al., 2023; Zemlyanova, Chumarina, 2018; Lampic et al., 2006). Both the intention to remain childless and uncertainty about the intended family size and the lack of realization of fertility intentions are a consequence of economic insecurity, as measured by unemployment or economic inactivity (Berrington and Pattaro, 2014).

Quite a lot of works are devoted to the study of reproductive plans of young people, including students. According to the results, the majority of young people surveyed are oriented towards average number of children (Morozova, 2010; Shalin, Panchenko, 2019; Ostapenko, Subbotina, 2021; Lampic et al., 2006; Rostovskaya et al., 2023).

The determining components of reproductive behavior are attitudes and motives, norms and values that promote or hinder childbearing. In this case, reproductive behavior is determined by the value orientations of an individual, the allocation of priorities, their subsequent implementation and transmission to future generations (Bratukhin, Magazeva, 2015). There are very few studies devoted to the life values and reproductive attitudes of working youth, but in the works of O.A. Kuzmina<sup>1</sup> and N.V. Kositsyna (Kositsyna, 2020) show that health, happy family life and children are among the leading life values of working young people.

Young people strive for a high quality of life and have a well-developed sense of responsibility. Their attitudes towards family

and marriage correspond to the changing values of modern society. This is confirmed by many domestic and international publications. The need to complete their education, find a profession, and obtain a job that provides them with their own income, forces young people to delay the creation of a family and the birth of children until a later age (Zemlyanova, Chumarina, 2018).

In both developed countries and Russia, motherhood in adolescence has become rare, and at the age of 20–25 years, which in the past was the most typical age for having a first child, in most developed countries it is rare rather than common, and is increasingly common at the age of 30 and older. At the same time, childlessness has increased (Erofeeva, 2014; Beaujouan, Sobotka, 2022). Most students have signs of delayed parenthood, 55.6% of respondents plan to become parents in 4 or more years (Shalin, Panchenko, 2019).

Basically, in studies of life values and reproductive attitudes of young people, these characteristics are analyzed on samples of student youth. Most likely, this is explained by the accessibility of this category of young people for sociological surveys.

The majority of students plan further successful life in a family, which they want to see traditional, formalized in a registered marriage. For students, marriage, birth and upbringing of children, creation of material well-being and moral and psychological microclimate are not only joys and hopes, but also the solution of previously unknown problems. Youth is a determining factor on which the development and full functioning of the whole society depend. As a consequence, it is necessary to form in young people a serious attitude to the creation of a family, the correct idea of marriage, as well as to educate a careful attitude to family values (Moshchenok, Solntseva, 2019).

The results of the study conducted by A.V. Smirnova (Smirnova, 2010) show that reproductive attitudes are realized mainly within the framework of marriage, and for registered marriage it is an almost mandatory

<sup>1</sup> Kuzmina O.A. (2008). Value orientations of the working youth in modern Russia: Candidate of Sciences (Sociology) dissertation abstract. Stavropol.

component. Moreover, only one third of respondents in unregistered marriages have children. According to 60% of respondents, children play an important role in preserving and strengthening the marriage and establishing relations between spouses; 99% of respondents who do not have children plan to realize their reproductive attitudes in their marriage; among those who have children, only 63% of them do (i.e. one third of respondents who have children do not consider having children as one of the main goals of their marriage, considering their reproductive attitudes realized).

When planning fertility, students pay special attention to material and housing security of the family (the higher it is, the more children are planned in the family). The absence of such aspects of well-being will have a negative impact on the demographic situation in the country. Almost all respondents (94.2%) believe that without state support the birth rate will be low, which will lead to depopulation (Shalin, Panchenko, 2019).

The analysis of the results of surveys has shown that incentive payments are responded to mainly by low-income groups, which should be taken into account in the development of social policy, providing appropriate measures to equalize the chances of children from low-income families to maintain health, receive education and social services (Zemlyanova, Chumarina, 2018). Modern young families either refuse to have a second child or more than two children, or prefer to postpone the birth of a second child. According to some researchers, their behavioral strategies are not influenced by the available family support programs implemented by the government (Rostovskaya et al., 2023). According to E.K. Rudakova (Rudakova, 2020), the government misses a lot of mechanisms to increase fertility, including abortion prevention and work with young people to form positive forms of reproductive behavior.

Most young people believe that the monetary measures of demographic policy are insufficient. The resources for achieving the goal of increasing the birth rate lie primarily in creating the need for children, raising the

prestige of having many children, and creating stable economic conditions. A study of reproductive attitudes shows that those who are getting married are more oriented towards having children than other categories of the population. The majority of respondents would like to have two or three children in their family, but taking into account the existing conditions (first of all, the housing problem, insufficient level of income) the planned number of children is smaller. Among young people and the poor, there is a tendency to postpone having a child until their incomes are higher and more stable (Smirnova, 2010).

Based on the results of their research, Z.H.M. Saraliev and her co-authors (Saraliev et al., 2015) draw a conclusion that confirms and summarizes the results obtained in numerous studies by other authors. In Russia, same as in most other countries, under the influence of socio-economic and demographic factors, a new model of marriage and family is formed, characterized by late marriage and, as a consequence, postponing the birth of children. The growth of educational level is oriented towards the successful combination of family (including family with children) and professional career, which is especially noticeable among the female population.

The specifics of life in a megalopolis, especially in Moscow, probably significantly affects the formation of young families and their demographic behavior. On the one hand, greater opportunities for education and professional career, on the other hand, weakening of family ties, apparently, determines the postponement of marriage, at least its registration, greater prevalence of unregistered marital relations, postponement of childbirth and, probably, the orientation towards the birth of a slightly smaller number of children in the family on average.

The purpose of the study is to identify the peculiarities of the formation of young families and fertility in them in the metropolitan city – Moscow.

The demographic characteristics of young families in Russia as a whole and the country's urban population are used as a basis for com-

parison. The study is based on the data of state statistics. Special attention is paid to the results of the 2020 population census, which allowed us to obtain the characteristics of the structure and childbearing rate of young family units.

### Results

The data from the 2020 census shows that in Moscow, a metropolitan megalopolis, on average, people tend to get married later than in other parts of Russia. This is evident in the higher proportion of people who are never married or living in a marital union at the age range of 30–39 compared to the rest of Russia and the urban population (excluding Moscow). This trend is more pronounced among women, with a 23% share of never-married Muscovites in the 30–34-year age group, compared to 16% in Russia and 16% among the urban population. In the 5–9-year age group, these differences become less noticeable, with 15% in Moscow and

11% in both Russia and the urban population being never married. Saint Petersburg has a higher proportion of people in the 15–24 age group compared to Moscow (23.5% vs. 17.9%), but in the 35–39 year group, it is slightly lower than the capital (15.1% vs. 20.8%). (Tab. 1).

The proportion of never-married men aged 30–34 in Moscow is 30.8%, compared to 27.4% in Russia overall and 26.2% among the urban population excluding Moscow. At the age of 35–39, the proportion is 19.7%, 17.2%, and 16.1%, respectively. In Saint Petersburg, the proportion of never-married men at these ages is higher than in Moscow: 33% at 30–34 and 20% at 35–39.

Regarding men, the difference in indicators between Moscow and the urban population excluding Moscow is somewhat smaller than for women, which suggests that there is a lower average age difference in first marriage between men and women in Moscow. This is reflected in

**Table 1. Distribution of the population aged 30-39 by marital status, %**

	Age, years old	Married	Including		Never married, unmarried, conjugal union	Officially divorced	Divorced	Widows
			legally married	In an unmarried union				
<b>Women</b>								
Moscow	30–34	63.9	56.0	7.8	23.0	6.9	5.6	0.6
	35–39	68.2	60.9	7.3	15.4	9.2	6.3	0.8
Russia, total population	30–34	70.1	62.9	7.2	16.4	9.4	3.3	0.7
	35–39	71.4	64.4	7.0	11.4	12.0	3.8	1.3
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	30–34	70.0	63.4	6.6	16.1	10.0	3.3	0.6
	35–39	71.0	64.7	6.3	11.1	12.9	3.8	1.2
Saint Petersburg	30–34	64.1	57.0	7.0	23.5	7.8	4.3	0.4
	35–39	68.4	62.1	6.4	15.1	10.9	5.0	0.6
<b>Men</b>								
Moscow	30–34	58.6	50.7	7.9	30.8	4.6	5.5	0.5
	35–39	67.7	60.4	7.3	19.7	6.1	5.9	0.6
Russia, total population	30–34	63.9	56.5	7.4	27.4	5.6	2.9	0.3
	35–39	71.2	64.1	7.1	17.2	7.8	3.4	0.4
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	30–34	65.0	58.0	7.0	26.2	5.7	2.8	0.2
	35–39	72.3	65.7	6.6	16.1	7.9	3.3	0.4
Saint Petersburg	30–34	57.9	50.5	7.3	33.0	4.8	4.1	0.3
	35–39	68.0	61.3	6.7	20.3	6.7	4.6	0.4

Calculated from: Results of the All-Russian Population Census - 2020. V. 2. Age-sex composition and marriage status. Table 5. Population by age, sex and marital status by subjects of the Russian Federation.

a smaller difference between the proportion of never-married 30–39-year-olds among men and women in Moscow: 7.8 percentage points (p.p.) for 30–34-year-olds and 4.3 percentage points for 35–39-year-olds (compared to 11 percentage points and 5 percentage points in Russia as a whole, 10 percentage points and 5 percentage points among the urban population excluding Moscow, and 9 percentage points and 5 percentage points in Saint Petersburg).

In the group of 30–39-year-old Muscovites, the share of married persons is significantly lower than in Russia as a whole and among the urban population of the country. For women aged 30–34, it is 6.2 p.p. and 6.1 p.p. lower than in Russia as a whole and 6.1 p.p. lower than in urban areas (excluding Moscow); for women aged 35–39, it is 3.2 p.p. and 2.8 p.p. lower, respectively. In Moscow, the share of men aged 30–34 who are married is 5.3 p.p. lower than in Russia as a whole and 6.4 p.p. lower compared to the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow); at 35–39 years of age it is 3.5 and 4.6 p.p. lower, respectively.

However, these differences occur only at the expense of those in registered marriages. The share of those in unregistered marital unions at the age of 30–39 in Moscow is slightly higher than in the country as a whole and among the urban population of Russia (excluding Moscow). The share of Muscovite women aged 30–34 who are in an unregistered marital union is 0.6 p.p. higher than in Russia as a whole and 1.2 p.p. higher than in the urban population (excluding Moscow); in the 35–39 age group – by 0.3 and 1.0 p.p., respectively. For men in Moscow, this indicator is higher, compared to Russia as a whole, by 0.5 p.p. for ages 30–34 and by 0.2 p.p. for ages 35–39; compared to the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow), it is higher by 0.9 and 0.7 p.p., respectively.

The share of married women in Moscow is 0.2 p.p. lower than in Saint Petersburg, both at 30–34 and 35–39 years of age. The share of married men aged 30–34 in the capital is 0.7 p.p. higher than in Saint Petersburg, and 35–39 is 0.3 p.p. lower.

The share of those in unregistered marital unions in Moscow is higher than in Saint

Petersburg both at 30–34 years of age (women – by 0.8 p.p.; men – by 0.6 p.p.) and at 35–39 years of age (by 0.9 and 0.6 p.p., respectively).

Accordingly, in Moscow, the share of those who are in marital relations is higher among those who do not have them registered. Among women aged 30–34, the share is 12.2%, 35–39 – 10.7% (in Russia as a whole – 10.3 and 9.8%, respectively; in the urban population of the Russian Federation (excluding Moscow) – 9.4 and 8.9%; in Saint Petersburg – 10.9 and 9.4%). For men in Moscow, this indicator is 13.5% for ages 30–34 and 10.8% for ages 35–39 (in Russia as a whole – 11.6 and 10.0%, respectively; in the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow) – 10.8 and 9.1%; in Saint Petersburg – 12.6 and 9.9%).

The relatively high prevalence of unregistered marital unions is probably to some extent responsible for the fact that the share of those officially divorced in the age interval 30–39 in Moscow is lower than in Russia as a whole, in the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow) and in Saint Petersburg, but the share of those who separated is significantly higher (see Table 1).

The later marriage in Moscow is also evidenced by a slightly lower share of marriages in which the age of the bride and groom is less than 35 years, although in 2022 the differences between metropolitan residents, the population of Russia as a whole, and the urban population of the country have significantly narrowed. The share of such marriages in Moscow in 2022 amounted to 55.5%, decreased by 0.6 p.p. compared to 2021. In Russia as a whole, the decrease amounted to 4.6 p.p. (from 61.2 to 56.6%), in the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow) – 4.8 p.p. (from 60.4 to 55.6%), in Saint Petersburg – 1.9 p.p. (from 60.1 to 58.2%). It should be borne in mind, of course, that if the census data give marriage characteristics of those who lived in Moscow at the time of the census, the number of marriages registered in the capital includes a significant number of those in which the bride and groom do not live permanently in Moscow (for example, in 2021, the share of such marriages amounted to 29.3% of all marriages, regardless of the age

of the bride and groom). This can have a very significant impact on the current (calendar) marriage rates in Moscow.

Later marriage of the capital residents entails later childbearing (*Tab. 2*).

In 2022, 87.7% of first births in Moscow were to women under the age of 35 (inclusive). For comparison, the value of this indicator in Russia as a whole equaled to 92.9%, and in the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow) – 92.8%. The differences in the value of this indicator are even slightly greater for second (Moscow – 75.2%, Russia as a whole – 82.7%, the country’s urban population (excluding Moscow) – 81.8%) and third (62.5, 71.0 and 68.7% respectively) births.

The share of births to women under 35 years of age (inclusive) in the capital city by first births is slightly lower compared to Saint Petersburg as well (88.3% in 2022). However, the share of second and third births to women under 35 in Moscow is slightly higher than in Saint Petersburg (73.8% and 60.6%, respectively).

The data from the 2020 census showed that the highest proportion of women who had their first child under the age of 35 was recorded in the generation of women who were 60–64 years old at the time of the census. It is decreasing in younger generations (*Tab. 3*).

For women in the 45–49 age range at the time of the 2020 census, the proportion of women in Moscow who had their first child before the age of 35 is 91.2%, which is lower than in Russia as a whole (94.7%) and in the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow; 94.1%). For 40–44-year-old women this indicator is slightly higher, but it will eventually decrease in this generation when some women give birth to their first child in the period after the 2020 census.

Speaking of the age characteristics of women at the birth of children, it should be noted that in Moscow, since 2004, an additional significant lump-sum benefit has been paid at the birth of a child to parents under 30 years of age: at the birth of the first child in the amount of 5 subsistence minimums, the second – 7 subsistence minimums, the third and subsequent – 10 subsistence minimums. At the end of 2021, the age limit was raised to 36 years. The possible impact of this measure can be judged by comparing the figures for Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

In 2022, the average age of a mother giving birth to her first child in Moscow (28.24 years) was slightly lower than in Saint Petersburg (28.45). The same is true for second (31.25 and 31.60 years respectively) and third (33.23 and 33.46 years) births.

**Table 2. Proportion of births to women under 35 years of age (inclusive) by order of birth in 2020-2022, %**

	First births			Second births			Third births		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
Moscow	89.1	88.1	87.7	78.1	76.6	75.2	64.6	63.4	62.5
Russia, total population	93.6	93.2	92.9	85.1	84.2	82.7	73.6	72.3	71.0
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	93.4	93.1	92.8	84.2	83.4	81.8	71.2	70.1	68.7
Saint Petersburg	89.9	88.7	88.3	77.6	76.1	73.8	64.0	63.3	60.6
Calculated from: Rosstat data.									

**Table 3. Proportion of real generations of women who have given birth to their first child under 35 years of age, %**

	Age of women, years						
	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–69	Over 70
Moscow	91.9	91.2	93.2	94.2	94.8	93.1	90.9
Russia, total population	95.0	94.7	96.2	97.0	97.3	96.3	95.5
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	94.6	94.1	95.8	96.7	97.0	96.0	95.3
Calculated from: Results of the All-Russian Population Census - 2020. V. 9. Fertility. Table 4. Women living in private households, by age groups and age at which they gave birth to the first child, by constituent entities of the Russian Federation.							



According to the data of the 2020 census, up to the generation of women aged 50–54 at the time of the census, the share of women who gave birth to their first child at the age of under 30 in Moscow is slightly lower than in Saint Petersburg, while in younger generations it is higher (*Tab. 4*). Women who were 45–49 years old at the time of the census (actually, it was conducted in 2021, not 2020) were 28–32 years old in 2004, when the support measure started to take effect.

A young family can arise not only when a marriage is registered, but also when a child is born outside of a registered marriage (*Tab. 5*).

The share of births outside registered marriage to women under 35 in Moscow (2022 – 19.5%) is lower than in Russia as a whole (22.1%) and in the urban population (excluding Moscow; 20.1%), but higher than in Saint Petersburg (18.1%). In Moscow, the share of births registered at the joint request of parents is significantly lower. The share of births registered at the mother's request is lower in Moscow than in Russia as a whole (2021 and 2022), but higher than in the urban population of the country and in Saint Petersburg. At the same time, in Moscow, in contrast to the country as a whole, the urban population and Saint Petersburg, there are slightly more births

registered at the mother's request than at the parents' joint request (*Tab. 5*).

In the 2020 census, the population was interviewed by households. From the composition of private households in the processing of census materials, family units were identified. A family unit is a married couple with or without children, mother or father with children. A family unit may form an independent household or be part of a household with other relatives or non-relatives. The 2020 Census results separately identify young family units in which both spouses, or in the absence of a married couple, a mother or father is under 35 years of age.

The share of young family units in the total number of family units in Moscow (11.7%; the same in Saint Petersburg) is smaller than in Russia as a whole (14.9%) and in the country's urban population (excluding Moscow; 15.5%).

The average size of a young family unit is also significantly smaller in the capital. According to the 2020 census, it is 2.57 persons (2.88 in Russia as a whole and 2.81 in the country's urban population (excluding Moscow)). The average size of a young family unit in Saint Petersburg is the same as in Moscow (*Tab. 6*).

While in Moscow 58.9% of young family units consist of only two people, in Russia as a whole and in the country's urban population

**Table 4. Proportion of women in Moscow and Saint Petersburg who gave birth to their first child under 30 years of age in real generations of women, %**

	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–69	70 and older
Moscow	76.6	75.7	77.6	81.3	84.6	83.6	78.6	75.7
Saint Petersburg	73.4	73.3	76.4	81.5	85.4	84.3	79.7	77.2

Calculated from: Results of the All-Russian Population Census - 2020. V. 9. Fertility. Table 4. Women living in private households, by age group and age at which they gave birth to their first child, by constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

**Table 5. Share of births out of registered marriage among women under 35 years of age in 2020–2022, %**

	Share of births outside registered marriage			Including those registered					
				at the request of the mother			at the joint request of the parents		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
Moscow	19.3	19.7	19.5	10.3	9.9	9.8	9.0	9.8	9.7
Russia, total population	20.8	21.1	22.1	10.2	10.3	10.8	10.6	10.8	11.2
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	19.0	19.3	20.1	8.8	8.8	9.4	10.2	10.5	10.7
Saint Petersburg	17.6	17.9	18.1	6.7	6.8	6.9	10.9	11.1	11.1

Calculated from: Rosstat data.

**Table 6. Distribution of young family units by number of persons, %**

	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons and more	Average family unit size, persons
Moscow	58.9	28.4	10.2	2.6	2.57
Russia, total population	44.0	31.7	18.6	5.7	2.88
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	45.8	32.5	17.5	4.1	2.81
Saint Petersburg	58.4	28.8	10.8	2.1	2.57

Calculated from: Results of the All-Russian Population Census - 2020. V. 8. Number and composition of households. Table 11. Family units included in private households with adults under 35 years of age, by size and number of children under 18 years of age. Table 12. Family units included in private households with adults under 35 years of age, by size and number of children under 18 years of age by constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

**Table 7. Distribution of young family units by type, %**

	Married couples without children	Married couples with children	Mothers with children	Fathers with children
Moscow	22.2	28.1	35.3	14.4
Russia, total population	18.4	43.4	32.2	6.0
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	21.3	43.7	29.8	5.2
Saint Petersburg	23.2	29.8	35.8	11.2

Calculated from: Results of the All-Russian Population Census - 2020. V. 8. Number and composition of households. Table 11. Family units included in private households with adults under 35 years of age, by size and number of children under 18 years of age. Table 12. Family units included in private households with adults under 35 years of age, by size and number of children under 18 years of age by constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

(excluding Moscow) there are less than half of such units (44.0% and 45.8%, respectively). On the other hand, the number of young family units with four or more members in Moscow (12.8%) is almost twice as low as in the country as a whole (24.3%), and in the urban population of Russia (excluding Moscow) it is 21.6%.

In Russia as a whole and among the country's urban population, the most common type of young family units, according to the 2020 census, are married couples with children (43.4% and 43.7% respectively). In Moscow there are only 28.1% of them, in Saint Petersburg it is 29.8% (*Tab. 7*).

Among young family units in Moscow, mothers with children are more common (35.3%). In Russia as a whole (32.2%) and in the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow; 29.8%), their share is somewhat smaller, and in Saint Petersburg (35.8%) it is slightly higher. But the main difference in Moscow is the high share of young family units consisting of a father with children. According to the 2020 census, there are 14.4% of them in the capital, more than twice as many as in Russia as a whole (6.0%) and in the country's urban population (excluding Moscow; 5.2%).

In Saint Petersburg their share (11.2%) is higher than in Russia as a whole, but lower than in Moscow. This deserves special attention, and it is worthwhile to conduct a special sociological study of such family units.

One of the reasons why young family units in the capital are smaller in terms of the average number of people in them is the smaller average number of children in them (*Tab. 8*).

The average number of children per young family unit (regardless of the presence of children in it) in Moscow is 1.06. It is slightly higher in the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow) – 1.16, and even higher in Russia as a whole – 1.26. In Saint Petersburg this indicator (1.04) is slightly lower than in Moscow.

It is clear that this indicator is somewhat higher only for young family units with children. For the capital it is equal to 1.37, for the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow) – 1.47, and in Russia as a whole – 1.54. Even lower than in Moscow is the average number of children in a young family unit with children in Saint Petersburg (1.35).

In Moscow, the share of young family units with one child exceeds half (53.7%; Russia

**Table 8. Distribution of young family units by number of children under 18, %**

	Number of children						Average number of children	
	Without children	1	2	3	4	5 and more	per young family unit	per one young family unit with children
Moscow	22.5	53.7	19.4	3.6	0.5	0.2	1.06	1.37
Russia, total population	18.5	47.5	26.2	6.2	1.2	0.4	1.26	1.54
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	21.3	48.5	24.5	4.7	0.8	0.2	1.16	1.47
Saint Petersburg	23.3	53.9	19.1	3.2	0.4	0.1	1.04	1.35

Calculated from: Results of the All-Russian Population Census - 2020. V. 8. Number and composition of households. Table 11. Family units included in private households with adults under 35 years of age, by size and number of children under 18 years of age. Table 12. Family units included in private households with adults under 35 years of age, by size and number of children under 18 years of age, by constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

**Table 9. Distribution of young family units with children by type and number of children under 18 years of age, %**

	Number of children					Average number of children
	1	2	3	4	5 and more	
<b>Married couples with children</b>						
Moscow	62.3	30.1	6.6	0.8	0.2	1.47
Russia, total population	50.4	37.8	9.4	1.8	0.6	1.64
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	54.9	36.5	7.2	1.1	0.3	1.56
Saint Petersburg	63.1	30.8	5.4	0.6	0.1	1.44
<b>Mothers with children</b>						
Moscow	72.7	22.7	3.8	0.7	0.2	1.33
Russia, total population	65.5	26.7	6.1	1.3	0.5	1.45
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	68.6	22.5	4.8	0.9	0.3	1.39
Saint Petersburg	73.7	22.0	3.7	0.6	0.1	1.31
<b>Fathers with children</b>						
Moscow	75.5	20.8	3.0	0.5	0.2	1.29
Russia, total population	75.9	19.9	3.3	0.7	0.2	1.30
Russia, urban population (excluding Moscow)	78.1	18.5	2.8	0.5	0.1	1.26
Saint Petersburg	78.5	18.7	2.3	0.3	0.1	1.25

Calculated from: Results of the All-Russian Population Census - 2020. V. 8. Number and composition of households. Table 11. Family units included in private households with adults under 35 years of age, by size and number of children under 18 years of age. Table 12. Family units included in private households with adults under 35 years of age, by size and number of children under 18 years of age by constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

as a whole – 47.5%, the urban population of the country excluding Moscow – 48.5%), and together with the childless (22.5%) amounts to 76.2%. It should, of course, be borne in mind that the number of children or lack thereof is not the outcome for a young family, but only at the time of the census. That is, some young family units will still have children. It would be possible to judge about it more precisely if

there is an age distribution of young spouses (parents), but unfortunately it is not available in the development of census results.

In young married couples with children, the average number of children in Moscow (1.47) is lower than in Russia as a whole (1.64) and in the urban population of the country excluding Moscow (1.56). However, in Saint Petersburg (1.44) it is even less than in Moscow (*Tab. 9*).

In terms of the average number of children in family units consisting of young mothers with children, Moscow's difference is slightly smaller. In the capital this indicator is 1.33, for the urban population of the country (excluding Moscow) it is 1.39, in Russia as a whole it is 1.45, in Saint Petersburg it is 1.31.

There are practically no differences in the average number of children among young fathers. Moreover, it is slightly higher in Moscow (1.29) compared not only with Saint Petersburg (1.25) but also with the urban population of the country (1.26), and compared with the indicator for Russia as a whole (1.30) it is only 0.01 lower.

### Conclusion

The study found that, on average, there is a slight delay in marriage in the metropolis. This trend is more pronounced among women, and as a result, there is less of a gap in the age at which women and men get married in Moscow.

At the same time, the proportion of young people in unregistered relationships is higher in Moscow compared to Russia as a whole and among the urban population of the country.

Later marriage (at least its registration) largely determines later childbearing, but there is reason to discuss a possible counteracting positive influence of demographic policy. Since 2004, Moscow has paid a significant additional allowance for the birth of a child to parents under

30 years of age. And while in older generations of women, the share of those who gave birth under the age of 30 is lower in Moscow than in Saint Petersburg, this number is higher among younger generations. This may be due in part to the implementation of these support measures.

The analysis of the number of children in young families shows that the average number of children in Moscow is slightly lower than in Russia and among the urban population of the country.

Moscow differs significantly from other cities in terms of the distribution of young families. In the capital, there is a higher percentage of married couples without children and single mothers, and a lower percentage of couples with children compared to the rest of Russia. This makes Moscow an interesting city for further research on young families, especially considering that the number of fathers with children in Moscow is more than double that of the national average.

Based on the results of the study, we can talk about the specifics of demographic policy in the capital city. On the one hand, there may be measures that can, to some extent, counteract the delay in marriage registration and childbirth. On the other hand, in the metropolitan area, there are reasons to assume that the effectiveness of federal-level demographic policy measures will have its own specifics.

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