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## **MARRIAGE PATTERNS IN KYRGYZSTAN**

The demographic study of nuptiality in Central Asia does not have a rich history. The best publications of Soviet demographers contain comparative analyses of nuptiality trends in different constituent republics of the Soviet Union, which were based on aggregate statistical data (Volkov et al., 1983; Karakhanov, 1977; Vishneskii, Tol'ts 1988). As a result, the specific internal characteristics of Central Asian peoples, regions, and social groups remained unexamined. With only a few exceptions (for example, Coale, Anderson, Harm, 1979), western scholars rarely addressed this subject during the Soviet period, in part because of a lack of knowledge of the data, and in part also because of official restrictions on access to demographic information. Thus, in his famous work "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective," John Hajnal expressed regret that he lacked sufficient data to construct a comprehensive description of conditions in non-European countries before their social structure began to change under European influence (Hajnal, 1965). However, the tsarist census of 1897 and the Soviet census of 1926 do contain information on marriage patterns for the peoples of Central Asia, which in those years still retained their traditional way of life.

The goal of this paper is to advance the study of nuptiality in Central Asia based on the case of Kyrgyzstan. The choice of Kyrgyzstan was determined in part by the openness of statistical data in that republic, and in part also by the high quality and accessibility of the results of the last census of 1999.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Kyrgyzstan is a multicultural, multiethnic society (Table 1). Thus, full analysis of nuptiality in this country requires examination of the marital behavior of different ethnic groups, and in particular that of the three most numerous peoples, the Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Russians.

Statistical data make it possible to follow the evolution of the marital structure of these ethnic groups over the course of practically the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the following study, several different indicators are used to represent the main features of marriage patterns for each ethnic group. The percentage of never or ever married in the 15-19 and 20-24 age groups and the singulate age at marriage (SMAM)<sup>2</sup> serve as the indices of marriage timing, while the percentage never married in the 45-49 age group is used as the index of marriage prevalence. The study devotes particular attention to changes in the age patterns of marriage since Kyrgyzstan became independent. For this purpose, special statistical coefficients and mean age at first marriage have been calculated for each of the three ethnic groups on the basis of current registration data. In addition, the prevalence of unregistered marriages has also been estimated. Furthermore, we have attempted to distinguish the main socioeconomic factors in the formation of marital unions among the peoples of Kyrgyzstan in different historical periods.

### ***Sources of Data***

There is a fairly rich statistical base for studying processes of marriage formation and dissolution in the states of Central Asia, including census data, current registration figures, and sample survey results.

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<sup>1</sup>The National Statistical Committee published the results of the census both in book format as a 15-volume series and in electronic format as a CD.

<sup>2</sup>The singulate age at marriage is a measure of the mean age at first marriage under condition of constant nuptiality and with specific assumptions as to mortality and migration. The computational procedure presented in Manual X. Indirect Techniques for Demographic Estimation (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.XIII.2), annex I. When there exist rapidly changing marriage patterns, the singulate mean age at marriage should not be calculated directly from the distribution by marital status and by age that is observed at single census and survey. In that case it is recommended to use a modified procedure, whereby SMAM is computed from the proportion single taken from two consecutive censuses (United Nations, 1990).

Since 1897, nine population censuses have been conducted in Kyrgyzstan. Eight of these (all but the first one) included a direct question on respondents' ethnicity. The census results of 1897, 1926, 1979, and 1989 provide information on the distribution of the population according to the basic categories of marital status: never married, currently married, widowed, and divorced/separated. In the remaining censuses (1937, 1939, 1959, and 1970), the adult population was divided into only two categories: currently married and not currently married. Finally, the 1999 census (the first census held in independent Kyrgyzstan) introduced two new categories: "those currently in officially registered marriages" and "those currently in unregistered marriages." In addition, this census also distinguishes between individuals who have officially registered the dissolution of their marriage ("divorced") and those who did not do so ("separated").

As the censuses (in particular the earlier ones) were being conducted, cases come to light in which respondents misrepresented their age and marital status. From the 1930s to the 1950s, when the state was carrying on a determined campaign against early marriages, indigenous residents of Kyrgyzstan sometimes misrepresented the marital status of girls who had not reached the age of majority. However, based on a comparison of Kyrgyzstan's census data with census results in other regions of the former USSR and with the results of sample surveys, the data for Kyrgyzstan appear to be fairly reliable. This, in turn, makes it possible to make inferences about the quantitative characteristics of marriage patterns that have been derived from Kyrgyzstan census data.

The first efforts to organize a system of marriage and divorce registration in Central Asia were undertaken by the tsarist administration as early as the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Karakhanov, 1977). In the 1920s the Soviet government began to introduce its own system of registering civil status, known by its Russian initials as "ZAGS." However, as a result of the indifferent and sometimes even hostile attitude of some of the indigenous population towards registration of demographic events, it took three decades for this system to become fully functional. In many cases, ethnic Kyrgyz couples would not register their marriage at the time they began cohabiting, but only following the birth of one or sometimes more of their children. Toward the end of the 1950s, the quality of record-keeping improved substantially. Marriage and divorce records in the Soviet Union included various forms of information on the groom and bride (sex, age, education, place of work, educational level, etc.), and also including their ethnicity. Beginning in 1958, statistical agencies began regularly processing data on marriages and divorces for the main ethnic groups of the Soviet Union. The former Soviet system for recording marriages and divorces has continued to function in independent Kyrgyzstan.

Special sociological surveys represent a further source of statistical information on marriage formation in Kyrgyzstan. The majority of these surveys were conducted as part of country-wide studies carried out by the USSR State Statistical Office. The largest of these studies was conducted as part of the 1985 microcensus, which was based on a representative sample of 5 percent of the total population of the Soviet Union. The results of this investigation were used to construct nuptiality tables for the main officially recognized ethnic groups ("nationalities") of the USSR, including the Kyrgyz (Darskii and Il'ina, 1990, 2000). However, scholarly and statistical publications presented the results specifically concerning the republics of Central Asia only in highly abridged form. This report also does not examine them in detail, leaving them as a "strategic reserve" for future research.

### ***Traditional Society***

During the late nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, the population of Kyrgyzstan was distinguished by extremely early marriage for women. According to the data of the 1897 census,<sup>3</sup> 35 percent of females aged 15-16 and 80 percent aged 17-19 were married.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that ethnic Kyrgyz represented almost 80 percent of the total population of Kyrgyzstan at the time. Other ethnic groups indigenous to Central Asia amounted to slightly more than 15 percent of the

Even in the European portion of the Russian Empire, where age at first marriage was low by European standards, the corresponding figures were only 0.8 percent and 20.9 percent. On the other hand, men in Kyrgyzstan tended to marry noticeably later than women in Kyrgyzstan, and even later than men in European Russia. Among men in Kyrgyzstan aged 20-24, more than 70 percent had never been married, whereas the figure in European Russia was only just over 50 percent (table 4). Nonetheless, as in other countries that were not characterized by Western European pattern, marriage in Kyrgyzstan was universal. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the proportion of women aged 45-49 who had never been married did not exceed 0.5 percent (table 5). Among men, despite their relatively higher age at first marriage, almost 95 percent had been married at least once by the time they turned 50.

The 1926 census results showed no marked changes in female marital behavior from the 1897 results. This suggests that the Bolsheviks' reforms in the areas of marriage and family policy, including legislation raising the minimum marriage age, had not begun to affect all regions of Central Asia.<sup>5</sup> Although the authorities' had already initiated their campaign against early marriage, the number of such unions remained as high as ever. The proportion ever-married among women in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan aged 15 to 20 was approximately 60 percent—more than four times higher than the corresponding figure for the Ukraine, Belorussia, and the European part of Russia. By age 25, almost 98 percent of women in Kyrgyzstan were married. The singulate age at marriage for female residents of Kyrgyzstan was 16.8 years, which was lower than in any other Soviet republic. Indeed, among the women of Kyrgyzstan SMAM was also lower than in most countries in the world for which nuptiality data from the first third of the twentieth century are available (table 8). Notable exceptions, where women married even younger than in Kyrgyzstan, include India, and Pakistan.

The materials of the 1926 census make possible a picture of the marriage status structure for Kyrgyzstan's various ethnic groups (Tables 2-7). For women, ethnic disparities were most marked among those aged 15 to 19. In this age group, the share of those ever married was noticeably higher for ethnic Kyrgyz (78.5 percent) than for Uzbeks (51.3 percent) and for Russians (30.2 percent). However, by age 25, the proportion of those ever married exceeded 90 percent among women of all nationalities. If Kyrgyz women's marital behavior is compared to that of other peoples of the USSR in the 1920s, the Kyrgyz women stand out in two significant respects. First, the proportion ever married among Kyrgyz women in the youngest age group (15 to 19) was higher than for any other Soviet ethnic group. Second, Kyrgyz women also displayed the lowest SMAM — 16.2 years. This age is substantially younger than among women of other Turkic ethnic groups of the Soviet Union: for Turkmen, Uzbek, Kazakh, and Azerbaijani women, the values of this indicator are all clustered between 17.6 to 17.9 years. Of course, Kyrgyz women's tendency toward early marriage is even more striking when they are compared to women of other Soviet ethnic groups, where the mean age at first marriage ranges from 18.2 years (for Armenian women) to 23.7 years (for Jewish women). Moreover, other ethnic groups residing in Kyrgyzstan also showed a pattern of early marriage for women, even when they were compared to representatives of the same ethnic groups in other republics of the Soviet Union. Thus, ethnic Russian and Uzbek women in Kyrgyzstan showed a lower age at first marriage than did ethnic Russian and Uzbek women in other Soviet republics.

Men belonging to Central Asian ethnic groups (Kyrgyz and Uzbeks) married significantly later than women—on average about 8 years later. The 1897 census showed that male SMAM was higher among the Central Asian peoples than in other countries with non-European and

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total, and migrants from other parts of the Russian Empire—including ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, and Poles—accounted for the remaining 5 percent. Thus, nuptiality data for the entire population of Kyrgyzstan may be treated as approximations of the corresponding figures for the ethnic Kyrgyz population.

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the 1897 census did not treat polygamous families separately.

<sup>5</sup> The census data are also compatible with the results of anthropological and ethnologic studies of the Kyrgyz (for example, Oshanin, 1927).

Eastern European marriage patterns, and indeed was approximately equal to that found in Western countries such as England and Belgium. While ethnic Russian men started their families earlier than men of Central Asian ethnic background, the difference between Russian men and women on this parameter did not exceed 3 years, which was comparable to the difference between men's and women's age at first marriage in Western European countries.

However, a comparison of the 1897 and 1926 census data for men of Central Asian origin reveals that the proportion of bachelors declined in all age groups during the intercensal period. This decline had the effect of lowering Kyrgyzstan's SMAM from 27 to 24.1 years. These related phenomena can probably be traced back primarily to two post-revolutionary changes in the republic's social structure: first, the redistribution of property (mainly herds and land) in favor of the poor; and second, the government's campaign against the practice of paying bride-money. As a result of this campaign, the process of saving money to pay the bride price (*kalym*) became less time-consuming and burdensome.

Every form of marital behavior is determined by both economic and social factors. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ethnic Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Russians displayed different economic and cultural characteristics. The Kyrgyz were primarily engaged in animal husbandry and led a nomadic life. The Uzbeks were mostly arable farmers and urban artisans. The Russians were peasants who had immigrated from European Russia. In 1926, only 1 percent of Kyrgyz lived in cities, while 45 percent of Uzbeks and 42 percent of Russians did so. But within the three ethnic groups under study, differences in marriage age between the urban and rural population were insignificant (table 3).

On the whole, Islamic marriage norms were easily compatible with the customs of Central Asian peoples in this domain. Islamic tradition permitted polygamy, helped orient the population toward early marriages, and supported the payment of bride-money. On the other hand, divorce appeared only with the consolidation of Islam in the region. Before Islamization, the Kyrgyz most likely held marriage to be indissoluble (Fiel'strup, 2002).

It should be noted that the Kyrgyz converted to Islam later than Uzbeks and the other peoples of Central Asia, and the majority of Kyrgyz were not fervent Muslims (Abramzon, 1946). To a significant degree, the distinctive features of their culture were determined not by Islam, but rather by their centuries-old nomadic way of life and the traditions associated with it. Thus, Kyrgyz women, like Kazakh women, enjoyed more freedom than did women among the sedentary peoples of Central Asia (Karakeeva, 1981). Contrary to widespread opinion, by the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, nuclear families, and not patriarchal ones, predominated among the Kyrgyz. However, numerous sources and field research have shown that Kyrgyz society did preserve some patriarchal features for a long time. As late as the 1950s, some people were still living in large families (Dzhumagulov, 1960).

The Kyrgyz' nomadic way of life probably determined their distinctive practice of extremely early marriage for girls. By Kyrgyz tradition, girls were considered to reach adulthood at the age of 13 to 15, and boys at 16 to 18. However, certain opposing factors restrained early marriage, especially for men. While because of bride-money parents realized a certain economic gain by giving their daughter in marriage, the same institution conversely meant that the marriage of a son entailed substantial expenditures. These financial pressures limited early marriages among men (Karakhanov, 1977). Therefore, youths rarely married at an early age, and those who did so generally came from well-to-do families. In poor families, it was in parents' interest that their sons postpone marriage, as later marriages for sons meant that they could continue working for their parents while accumulating herds for the payment of the bride price (Dzhumagulov, 1960).

The peoples who migrated to Kyrgyzstan from the European part of the Russian Empire—ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Russian Germans, and others—brought with them Eastern European pattern of marriage. The economic basis for that marriage pattern was the village community, with its rules of land tenure, which the immigrant peoples preserved. These rules

specified that an unmarried male peasant could not receive a land allotment (Mironov, 2000). In 1830 an imperial decree set the minimum age of marriage for Russian Orthodox subjects of the Russian Empire. For women, this threshold was set at 16 years; for men, 18.

When studying nuptiality it is important to bear in mind that the laws of the Russian Empire sharply differentiated people's lives based on their religious affiliation. Inter-ethnic marriages between individuals of different religions were an exceptional phenomenon. As late as the 1930s, despite the formal abolition of confessional barriers following the revolution, marriages between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples remained rare.

Thus, if we compare the findings of this study with known historical data, we find that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the distinctive characteristics of nuptiality among the main ethnic group in Kyrgyzstan—the Kyrgyz—gave marriage patterns on the territory of Kyrgyzstan the following distinguishing features:

1. In contrast to Eastern European and many Asian countries, Kyrgyzstan was marked by early marriage for women, late age of marriage for men, and a large age difference between spouses;
2. In contrast to Western European countries, Kyrgyzstan displayed an *extremely* young age at first marriage for women, an *exceptionally* low level of celibacy at ages 45-49, and a large difference between the ages at which men and women married;
3. The nuptiality characteristics found in Kyrgyzstan were most similar to those observed in other Central Asian republics.

### ***“Soviet marriage pattern”***

Significant socio-economic changes took place during the first decades of Soviet rule in Kyrgyzstan. The elimination of private property, the development of industry and the growth of cities, the transition from a nomadic to a sedentary way of life, the growing involvement of women in economic activity, and the emergence of an educational system—these and other factors all had a strong destructive impact on pre-revolutionary practices of marriage formation and dissolution. An important role in this process was also played by legislation concerning marriage and the family, religion, and ethnic relations.

The socialist revolution of October/November 1917 proclaimed equality between nations and between the sexes, freedom of marriage and divorce, and the separation of church and state.<sup>6</sup> In accordance with these principles, on June 14, 1921, the Central Executive Committee of the Turkestan ASSR issued a decree abolishing bride-money, establishing a minimum marriage age of 16 for women and 18 for men, and prohibiting polygamy and forced marriage for women. Then, in 1928, Chapter 10 of the USSR Penal Code was enacted, providing various legal penalties for polygamy, bride-money, and forced marriage involving a person below the legal marriage age. In 1937 the constitution of the Kirgiz Soviet Republic set a minimum marriage age of 18 for both men and women. The introduction of universal primary education in 1930, which was expanded in the late 1950s to include partial secondary education, also served as an important factor in raising women's marriage age. In contrast to the Russian Empire, the Soviet authorities required all the peoples of the Soviet Union to abide by identical laws. Nonetheless, changes in the matrimonial behavior of the peoples of Central Asia did not become apparent immediately, since the new principles regulating the formation of married couples coexisted with traditional customs and religious norms.

The most dynamic changes in marriage patterns among the peoples of Kyrgyzstan took place from the 1930s to the 1960s. The major change in this period was a reduction in the frequency of extremely early marriages. This was followed by the convergence of nuptiality parameters between the ethnic groups under study (tables 2-4) in the 1970s and 1980s (a period known in the Soviet Union as “the triumph of developed socialism”). In the 1920s, almost 80 percent of

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<sup>6</sup> All-Russian Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars, Decrees “On Civil Marriage,” “On Children,” and “On Authority over Records of Civil Status,” enacted December 18, 1917; Decree “On the Dissolution of Marriage,” December 19, 1918.

Kyrgyz women, 50 percent of Uzbek women, and 30 percent of Russian women aged 15 to 19 were married. By the 1980s, in contrast, indicators of extremely early marriages among women no longer differed significantly between these three groups: all these values were clustered in the range of 8 to 11 percent. (However, it is noteworthy that during the intercensal period of 1979 to 1989 the proportion of early marriages among women increased slightly.) Among men early marriages practically disappeared. Finally, the implementation of universal secondary education in the 1970s acted as a kind of guarantee against widespread early first marriage.

Once all these social transformations had unfolded, residents of Kyrgyzstan began to marry for the first time mainly when they were in their 20s. In addition, among women of the indigenous nationalities aged 20 to 24, the proportion never married increased ten-fold over the whole Soviet period, while the corresponding proportion for men practically did not change (table 4). This indicator changed least for Russian women (increasing by a factor of 3.75), while among Russian men it almost doubled. Thus, between 1926 and 1989, ethnic differences in age at first marriage decreased markedly. As a rough estimate, the singulate age at marriage of all women in Kyrgyzstan increased by 4.7 years, while the singulate age of men hardly changed. In consequence, the age difference between spouses diminished from 7.2 to 2.4 years. At the same time that the proportion of early marriages among women in Kyrgyzstan was declining, an opposite shift was taking place in the European part of the Soviet Union: marriage was “becoming younger.” As a result of this conjuncture of trends, Kyrgyzstan ceased to be the Soviet republic “with the earliest marriages,” and the Kyrgyz ceased to be the Soviet ethnic group with the earliest marriages. Thus, in 1989, the lowest SMAM for women in any Soviet republic was recorded in the Ukraine and Uzbekistan (21 years), followed by Moldova (20.9). In the Russian Federation and Belorussia this indicator was only 0.2 to 0.3 years higher than in Kyrgyzstan.

In Kyrgyzstan, as in the entire USSR, the Second World War exerted a major negative influence on nuptiality processes. The enormous mortality among the male population transformed many married women into widows. (Unfortunately, the results of the first post-war census of 1959 do not make it possible to estimate the scale of widowhood.) This deformation of the age-sex structure continued to influence processes of marriage-formation and marriage stability for many years (Il'ina, 1977). According to the results of the 1959 census, the most marked negative changes in marital status structure were found among Russian women: among those aged 40 to 59, on whom the war had taken the heaviest toll, the proportion currently married was almost 23 percent lower than it had been in 1939. The age group from 50 to 54 suffered the most. Whereas on the eve of the war 7 of 10 such women were currently married, 20 years later only half were married. Among women aged 20 to 24, the decline in the proportion who were currently married was just as significant—27 percent. This decline was a result not only of the war, but also of collectivization and industrialization. The period from 1932 to 1936 was marked by a fall in the birth rate. As a result, the ratio between the number of potential grooms and brides in each generation (the mean age difference between whom was about 3.5 years) was distorted. By 1959, the proportion of Kyrgyz women aged 40 to 59 who were currently married had declined by approximately 11 percent since the pre-war period; among Uzbek women, it declined by 6 percent.

During the post-war decades, the proportion of married men increased as compared to the pre-war period, especially among the republic's indigenous peoples. Among Kyrgyz men, the 1959 census found the highest level of nuptiality recorded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The proportion of Kyrgyz men aged 30 to 70 who were married exceeded 95 percent, and indeed for some ages it approached 99 percent. Both the increasing proportion of married men, especially at young ages, and the relatively high proportion of Kyrgyz women who were married, stem from the distinctive way of life and traditions of Kyrgyz society. Thus, during the post-war years, cases of polygamy were recorded, as were instances of the patriarchal “Kyrgyz law.” The latter refers to the custom of levirate marriage, by which a man is required to marry the widow of his elder brother (Abramzon et al., 1958). The process of normalization of marriage practices continued to unfold

in Kyrgyzstan, as indeed throughout the Soviet Union, right through the end of the 1970s (Volkov et al., 1983). As the number of people of each sex evened out over the post-war decades, a gradual increase in the proportion of currently married women took place, as did a certain decrease in the proportion of middle-aged and older men who were married. Such differences can be explained to some degree by the scale of the numerical disproportion between the sexes, which in turn resulted from a confluence of causes: mortality among men, ethnic differences in nuptial behavior, and post-war migration trends (namely, the departure from the republic of ethnic Russians who had been evacuated there during the war years).

However, even the war did not significantly influence the level of permanent celibacy among the peoples of the republic. The proportion of persons who had never married by the age of 50 remained low in Kyrgyzstan. According to 1979 census data, among women from the birth cohorts of 1918-1923 and 1924-1928, who found themselves in the most disadvantaged position on the marriage market, the proportion who had never married did not exceed 1.5 percent. In the Russian Federation, the analogous figure was just over 5 percent. Nonetheless, the results of the three post-war censuses suggest that from 1970 to 1990 a tendency toward an increasing the proportion single among those 45-49 began to appear in Kyrgyzstan (table 5).

The proportion of widowed people (both men and women) in the republic as a whole was twice as low in 1989 as in 1926. The declining share of widows and widowers in older age groups took place naturally, as the generations that had suffered high mortality during the war years were replaced by younger ones. The decline in mortality helped bring about a decline in the proportion of widowed people. However, the existence of significant sex differences in mortality levels meant that the level of widowhood was notably higher for women than for men. Thus, among women 40 to 49 years of age, 84 of every 1000 were widows, while among men in the same age group, only 13 of every 1000 were widowers. Ethnic differences in mortality and in the prevalence of higher-order marriages among widowed people explain why ethnic groups differed in their levels of widowhood (table 7).

Another important factor in changing marriage patterns was the liberalization of divorce procedures in the USSR in the mid-1960s.<sup>7</sup> Thereafter, divorce levels in the republic began to increase stably, especially among ethnic Russians (table 6). In 1989, 11.6 percent of Russian women and 6.9 percent of men aged 20 to 49 were divorced or separated. Among ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, the corresponding numbers were almost twice as low for the female population and three times as low for the male population. Because of the greater frequency of higher-order marriages among previously divorced men, the proportion of all women who were currently divorced was almost twice as high as that of men.

Changes in the marriage structure, and in particular the increasing proportion of unmarried young people and divorced and separated people, took a different course in urban and rural settings. As is well known, cultural and everyday traditions in the countryside are more resistant to the effects of modernization. During the postwar period, ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz residing in cities married later, and divorced more often, than those in villages. This statement applies especially to the female population, including ethnic Russians. The Russian males from the countryside used to get married earlier, than males from the urban areas.

The most significant in 1980s were the differences in the female nuptiality between the rural and urban population of Kyrgyzstan. So, nearly 55% of Kyrgyz urban females between the ages of 20 and 24 in 1989 were unmarried, whilst in the countryside their number was only 20.6% (in 1928 only 0.7% of females of that age group were unmarried). In such young ages, only 29% of Russian and 26% of Uzbek females residing in the cities were never married. The rise in SMAM among urban Kyrgyz women over the course of the 1980s is striking: from 22.1 to 24.0 years. This is the highest singulate age at marriage for women among any of the peoples

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<sup>7</sup> Before the Bolshevik revolution, people who espoused Orthodox Christianity were prohibited from divorcing. Islam permitted divorces, but they were exceptional occurrences. After the revolution, the right to divorce was declared. However, after 1944, divorces become more difficult to obtain in the USSR, in particular because of the introduction of high processing fees and more complicated legal procedures.

of Kyrgyzstan ever recorded before the dissolution of the USSR, matched only by the figure for urban Kazakh women. In rural areas, on the other hand, the singulate age for Kyrgyz women remained practically unchanged at 20.8 years. Especially low marriage prevalence pattern was among the Kyrgyz women residing in Bishkek – the largest city of the country. At the age group of 20 – 24 years, 70% of females were never married. With the Russians, this indicator was nearly twice as low.

Taken in its entirety, the marriage structure of the Kyrgyzstan population that had taken shape by the end of the Soviet period was characterized by two main features: a rather low average age at first marriage among women and men and a low level of permanent celibacy. This structure corresponds to the marriage pattern that was observed at that time throughout practically the entire USSR and the countries of Eastern Europe. It was distinguished from the pre-revolutionary Eastern European marriage pattern by two further features: the high proportion of divorced people and the low proportion of widowed people. Because these countries and Soviet republics shared a single social and economic system, they also evolved a highly similar mechanism for regulating matrimonial behavior. This mechanism was based on life-cycle events such as the completion of secondary school, conclusion of military service, graduation from universities or technical training institutes, and the beginning of working life. Early marriages was stimulated by norms of social control, which emerged in response to the official system for allocating housing and other goods, and also in response to the system of parents' support of children (United Nations, 2002).

### *Nuptiality in the 1990s.*

By their social impact, the reforms that occurred in Kyrgyzstan in 1990s, as well as in the other republics of the USSR, are comparable to the socialist transformation of 1920s. Return of the concept of private property, growth of unemployment and poverty, closing of the large high-tech enterprises and destruction of the previous social support system have changed the lives of people. This has primarily influenced formation of the marital unions.

During the transitional period crisis of the economy of Kyrgyzstan was the most severe in 1992 – 1994: the GDP shrunk by almost 40% (Kudabaev, 2002). In this particular time the decrease of nuptiality was most obvious in this country. In 1991 the maximal number of marriages was contracted in Kyrgyzstan thorough the whole history of their registration - i.e. 47 thousand, while in 1994 only 26 thousand, or 45% less. The crude marriage rate went down from 10.5% to 5.8%. In 2000 the crude marriage rate reached its minimum since the ending of the World War Two (5%). During the following years of economical stabilization it grew up to 5.8%.

It is worth noting that the nuptiality decrease in the 1990s was not the first in the history of Kyrgyzstan (Figure 1). Earlier its level was sharply decreasing in 1960s. During 1960 – 1964 the number of marriages decreased by 33%, while the crude marriage rate - by 42%. Such sharp changes of nuptiality were primarily explained by the structural factors – demographical “echo” of war. At that period, small-numbered war generation was entering to the active fertility age. Taking into account that at the end of 1950s – beginning of 1960s grooms were statistically by 3.0 - 3.5 years older their brides, the balance between the potential number of grooms and brides was distorted at the “marital market”. Therefore, by 1959 census, in the republic the number of males born in 1940 was three times higher than females born in 1943.

Later such strong disproportion in the age composition has leveled. The features of the age/sex structure of 1990s were favorable for the “marital market”. Bearing in mind that now a groom is in average 3.3 years older his bride, there are some 105 potential brides to 100 bridegrooms at the ages of 23 – 27 years. Large-numbered generations' entering the “marital market” supposedly makes the number of marriages higher. However, the marriages statistics shows, that this positives potential of the age structure was never realized.



In the transitional period, the number of registered marriages of the non-indigenous nations was going down most rapidly. Therefore, in 1991 – 2000 this number went down by 55% with the Russians, while with the Kyrgyz natives it made 46%. The main reason for such difference was the 300 thousand outflow of the Russian population. However, overall migratory influence over the marriages dynamics remained limited. Provided there was zero yearly migratory gain in 1989 – 1998, then under the current age-specific marriage rates the total number of the registered marriages could have grown by 6 %.

The main reasons for decrease of the number of marriages and the crude marriage rates of the most numerous nations in 1990s were not the structural factors, but in the changes of marital behavior, that could generally be ascribed to two main factors. The first of them is the change of attitude towards the registration of marriage; it is explained by the spread of cohabitation, i.e. non-registered marriages. The second is the postponing of marriages by the young and middle-aged couples and partial rejection of marriages by people of senior ages caused by the social-economic transformations.

### *Non-registered marriages*

The first national census of 1999 provides for the estimation of the number of consensual marriages in Kyrgyzstan. By its results, only 5.2% of females and 4.8% of males between the ages of 15 and 49 years stated during the census that their marriage is not registered. In the ages over 50, 4.3% of males and 2.4% of females did not officially register their marriages. Out of all marriages listed by the census, with the women between the ages of 15 and 49 the number of non-registered marriages made 8.5%; the corresponding indicator for men makes 8.2%.

Most frequently the matrimonial relations were not registered between the ages of 25 – 29 years with males (8.6%) and 20 – 24 years with females (8.4%). Among all the marriages of this age group, the non-registered marriages were mostly spread in the ages of 15 – 19 years, where they made 40% of all male marriages and 33% of female. However the nuptiality levels in these ages groups in 1999 was low. In the age group of 20 – 24, the number of non-registered marriages made 14% for females and 19% for males. The number of such marriages goes down with age. Among the youth, marriages are more often not registered in the rural areas; but in the ages over 25, the process is opposite. Doubtlessly the popularity of consensual unions in Kyrgyzstan is lower than in the countries of Northern and Western Europe (table 9). At the same time, the non-married relations in Kyrgyzstan were more frequent than in several countries of the Eastern Europe and the former USSR.

Among the most numerous ethnical groups, the Russian are not registering their marriages more frequently (6 - 8% of the general number of marriages in the ages of 15 – 49 years). The smallest number of consensual unions was revealed by the census of 1999 among the Uzbeks (2.7 – 3.7%). Among Kyrgyz people the number was 4.5 – 5.5%. At the same time the number of non-registered marriages among the Russians was higher in the rural than in the urban areas (in Russian Federation is the same picture). The situation is reverse with the Central Asian nations (figures 2-3). In young ages the consensual marriages are spread nearly equally among both Russians and Kyrgyz. However in the senior ages Russians do not register their marriages more often.

There is no direct information about the dynamics of non-registered marriages in Kyrgyzstan. To a point, the dynamics of the out-of-wedlock births give us a hint. Hence, in 1990s the share of out-of-marriage births grew up significantly - from 13 to 33%. Out of all out-of-wedlock births, some 65% were those non-registered on the parents' will. In the researches, they are often referred to as the births made in the consensual unions. The number of such births grew up twice during the last ten years. Such estimations lead up to conclusion about the dynamics of the births made out of registered.

Changes of relation towards marriage registration is caused by the number of factors: degradation of living conditions, changes of youth attitude towards marriage, possible difficulties of marriages registration in particular rural areas, return to traditional form of married status

recognition, more frequent cases of the illegal polygamist unions. Evidently, those who were previously married reject registration of marriage more often. In such case, the growth of the non-registered marriages partially compensates the evident decrease of the number of registered remarriages. This way or another to determine the nature of formation, vital activity and disintegration of consensual partnership one needs additional data received based on data of particular surveys. Never the less, based on the available data, one can conclude that the non-registered marriages could explain partially only small part of the registered marriages reduction. More significantly its dynamics was influenced by the process of postponing of family formation “to the better times”.

#### *Age-specific first marriage rates*

In order to trace a detailed picture of the evolution of the age model of nuptiality in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, we turn to age-specific first marriage rates of the second kind.<sup>8</sup> For these, in contrast to age-specific rates of the first kind, it is possible to construct annual series showing dynamics.

The intensity of first marriages declined sharply during the most difficult period of reforms from 1992 to 1994. Over these three years, the population of Kyrgyzstan in effect departed from the age distribution of the first marriage rates that had been in effect during the 1970s and 1980s (figures 4-5). The new pattern of intensity of first marriages, that of the “transitional period,” differed from that of the preceding “period of developed socialism” both by its lower intensity of marriage and by the “ageing of marriage.” That is, among those who were contracting marriages, the share of older people increased. In addition, changes in the age distribution of marriage were more significant for the male population than for the female population.

During the 1970s and 1980s, age coefficients of first marriage for men had a clear maximum in the age range of 20-24. But the 1994 value of the coefficients in the groups aged 20-24 and 25-29 was 1.8 times lower than it had been in 1990. In subsequent years these age rates continued to diminish, while at the same time it was beginning to rise in older age groups. By 2001, the coefficients of first marriage for those aged 25-29 had practically returned to their pre-reform level, while for those aged 30-34, they rose to the highest level in the last 20 years. The peak intensity of first marriages began to spill over into the 25-29 age range. At the same time, the age curve of marriage intensity took on a trapezoidal shape that was unique in post-Soviet republics. All of this is evidence that a process of carrying out postponed marriages is underway. Moreover, there seems to be a tendency toward “the ageing of marriage.” In 1990, the contribution of young people under 25 to total first marriage rate<sup>9</sup> comprised more than 60 percent of the total, and that of people from 25 to 34 was a further 33 percent. Ten years later, however, these age groups had reversed their relative positions and showed values of 41 percent and 50 percent, respectively.

Since the beginning of reforms, the most rapid decline in age specific first marriages rates among women has been recorded in those over 20 years old. Among young women under 20, the intensity of first marriage has remained relatively high. Therefore, in the mid-1990s, their

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<sup>8</sup> Age-specific first marriage rates of the first kind:  $\frac{{}_nFM_a}{{}_nS_a}$

where:  ${}_nFM_a$  is the number of the first marriage men or women aged  $a$  to  $a+n$  in a given year;  ${}_nS_a$  is the person years lived by men or women aged  $a$  to  $a+n$  who are exposed to the risk of the first marriage (i.e. single persons)

Age-specific first marriage rates of the second kind:  $\frac{{}_nFM_a}{{}_nP_a}$ ,

where:  ${}_nP_a$  is the total number of person years lived by men or women aged  $a$  to  $a+n$  (In: Wolfgang Lutz, Nuptialities Rates. In: Reading in Population Research Methodology. Volume 4. Chicago: UNFPA, 1993. pp. 13-4 — 13-5.)

<sup>9</sup> Total first marriage rate is  $\sum_{15}^{49} \frac{{}_nFM_a}{{}_nP_a}$

contribution to the summary coefficient of first marriages reached its highest value in the postwar period—40 percent. However, beginning in 1995, the intensity of first marriages at young ages began to fall rapidly, while in older age groups a rising tendency began to set in. In consequence, in 2001 the intensity of formation of new marriages among those under 20 was three times lower than in 1991, and lower than at any time since the end of the Second World War. The contribution of this group to total first marriage rate fell to 22 percent. At the same time, the age coefficient of first marriages in the 25-29 age group returned almost to its pre-reform level, and its contribution to the total first marriage rate even increased from 10 percent to 16 percent. In 2000-2001 the intensity of first marriage in the 20-24 age group also began to increase. In this fashion, the process of carrying out postponed marriages began in the female population as well.

The scale of the fall in the level of nuptiality is captured in the changes in the total first marriage rate and the mean age at first marriage. Thus, at the end of the 1980s, the total first marriage rate approached, and in rural areas even exceeded, a value of 1. This phenomenon was caused by an increase in the proportion of marriages contracted at a young age. However, during the period of transition following the fall of communism, the intensity of formation of first marriages declined by 42-44 percent—that is, almost by half. In cities, the coefficient diminished even more markedly (by 53-54 percent) than in rural areas. As a result of all the foregoing changes, marriage registration statistics showed that the mean age of newlywed couples fell until 1994, but then rose to its highest point in the last 25-30 years (table 10). The mean age of grooms increased 1.9 years over that recorded in 1993-1994 until in 2001 it reached 27.6. For those marrying for the first time, the mean age increased by 2.1 years to 26.7. The rise in the age of brides was smaller. This figure rose by 1.4 years (to 24.3) for all marriages, and by 1.6 years (to 23.4) for first marriages. There was a corresponding rise in the difference between the ages of grooms and brides, which approached the values recorded in the end of the 1950s.

Nuptiality fell at differing rates among people of different ethnic groups and among urban and rural residents. In particular, their “starting capacities” were different: total first marriage rates for ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks exceeded 1 in 1989, providing evidence that marriage was becoming younger (table 11). Nonetheless, as our calculations demonstrate, by the end of the 1990s total first marriage rates in rural areas were showing approximately equal values among all ethnic groups. But the low values for the coefficient recorded for Kyrgyz in urban areas are also noteworthy.

During the period of transition, ethnic differences (that is, those between Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Russians) in the age distribution of the marriage coefficient increased. Kyrgyz marriage patterns experienced the sharpest change. Indeed, the ethnic Kyrgyz are primarily responsible for the new shape of the age curve of the entire male population of the republic (figures 6-7). As a result of the marked fall in the age coefficients of the second kind in the 20-24 year-old age group and the lack of change in the coefficients of those aged 25-29, Kyrgyz men’s marriage patterns became the oldest of any ethnic group in the Republic. However, it should be noted that during the transitional period, the ethnic Kyrgyz population continued to be marked by differences in nuptiality between urban and rural residents. Urban Kyrgyz women’s age at first marriage was the highest in Kyrgyzstan (table 12). The extraordinarily low total marriage rate in cities is also noteworthy (table 11). It should also be noted that among the youngest group of rural men (those aged 15-19) the coefficient of marriage increased over the intercensal period.

Among ethnic Uzbeks, the scale of the fall in the frequency level of marriage was roughly similar to that for Kyrgyz: the total first marriage rate diminished by approximately the same amount for both these peoples. As concerns the age distribution of the coefficient, the peak remained in the age range between 20 and 24 years. As a result of the changes that had taken place in age pattern of marriage, the mean age at first marriage for men increased slightly over the intercensal period. For women it did not change, and it remains one of the lowest among the ethnic groups of Kyrgyzstan, for which statistical information is available. In the late 1990s, just

as in the late 1980s, the intensity of nuptiality process in urban and rural areas continued to be broadly comparable. It is worth to say Uzbek men aged 15 to 19 began to marry more often.

In the 1980, ethnic Russians In Kyrgyzstan resided mainly in cities in the north of the republic. Changes in their marriage patterns correspond on the whole to those taking place in Russia: a gradual increase in age patterns and decline in total number of marriages. However, the age at first marriage was lower for Russians than Kyrgyz, and higher for Russians than for Uzbeks.

The regional map of nuptiality processes in Kyrgyzstan has been determined by a number of differences between the north and the south of the country, including the distribution of the urban and rural population, levels of industrial development (the north of the republic is more developed in this respect), and the ethnic composition of the population. Thus, in 1999 the city of Bishkek showed the highest age at first marriage for women (24.8 years). In two northern oblasts, Chuyskaya and Issyk-Kul'skaya, inhabited predominantly by Russians and Kyrgyz, the value of corresponding indicator was 22.7-22.9 years. In other oblasts it clustered in the age range of 21.9-22.2 years. Two southern oblasts populated with Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, Batkenskaya and Oshskaya, were marked by a low mean age at first marriage for men (24.8 and 25.2 years, respectively). The highest mean age at first marriage in the late 1990s was found in Bishkek (26.9 years).

The causes of the fall in intensity of marriage among all nationalities should be sought in the changes people experienced in their daily lives during the period of political reform and economic crisis. A significant portion of marriages were postponed or did not take place at all as a result of the abrupt fall in the standard of living in 1992-1994; the rise in unemployment; and most importantly, the weakening and collapse of former mechanisms of parental and social support for young men. Many young men were not in a position to maintain a family themselves, and parents and relatives were no longer in a position to provide adequate financial support to young married couples. In addition, the increasing differences between the age patterns of marriage for the major ethnic groups suggest that the process of adaptation to new conditions has increased the role of ethnocultural factors. The reasons for these differences require further study.

#### *The Transformation of the Structure of Nuptiality in the 1990s*

The heterogeneity of marriage trends was reflected in differences in the marriage structure between the various ethnic groups of Kyrgyzstan.

*Proportion of population never married and singulate age at marriage.* Ethnic Russians showed the largest increase in the proportion of never-married people. For women aged 20-24, this proportion increased by a factor of well over 1.5; and for those aged 25-29, it almost doubled. For men in these age groups, the proportion increased by a factor of 1.2 and 2, respectively. Ethnic Kyrgyz, in contrast, showed more modest changes in marriage patterns. The never-married proportion of the Kyrgyz population increased most for those aged 25-29 (by a factor of 1.7 for men and 1.2 for women). At the same time, the proportion never-married among women aged 20-24 actually declined very slightly. Among Uzbeks, the transformations underway in society affected the relative size of the never-married population less than among any other ethnic group. Finally, the level of permanent celibacy actually increased for all ethnic groups, especially for Russians, but did not surpass the 5 percent threshold.

For ethnic Russians, the SMAM increased. However, estimates of its value calculated using the standard method should be regarded as artificially high. This is because the SMAM is inflated by the failure to account for the influence of mass migration on the size of some age groups. This problem is demonstrated when we examine a corrected estimate of SMAM obtained using Coale's method (tables 3). For each ethnic group, men's SMAM increased. However, among some ethnic groups, women's SMAM declined or did not change. In this context, the slight fall in the SMAM of urban Kyrgyz women is especially noteworthy. This fall results in

part from the growing exodus of the Kyrgyz population from villages into urban areas. The same observation holds true for Uzbek women.

*Proportion of population divorced and separated.* During the period of transition, the proportion of divorced and separated people increased, and their ethnic differentiation intensified (table 6). The main factor here was the fall in the probability of remarriage, especially for divorced women. Among ethnic Kyrgyz, the rate of increase in the divorced share of the population was smaller than among ethnic Russians. But the 1999 figures on divorced Kyrgyz men and women aged 40-49 were identical to those observed among Russians in 1979. The difference between Uzbeks and Russians remained more significant. At older ages, the proportion of divorced and separated Kyrgyz and Uzbeks is rather small because of the low level of divorce among them in the past.

*Relative size of the widowed population.* The relative size of the widowed population is the only feature of the marital structure for which ethnic differences have diminished. The level of widowhood rose because of the growth in mortality and because of the fall in the probability of remarriage among widowed people (table 7).

*Proportion of population currently married and not currently married.* Among all ethnic groups and practically all age groups, the declining intensity of first marriages and remarriages and the growing number of divorced and widowed people have led to a noticeable diminution in the relative size of the currently married population. This diminution is especially marked among ethnic Russians. For those aged 30-39, the proportion currently married declined by 10 percentage points among Russians, by 5 percentage points among Kyrgyz, and by less than 1.5 percentage points among Uzbeks. As a result, for example, around 25 percent of Russian men aged 35-39 were not currently married; that is, they were divorced, widowed, or never-married. For Kyrgyz men the comparable figure was 8 percent, and for Uzbek men, only 5 percent. Among women of the same age group, 30 percent of ethnic Russians, 18 percent of Kyrgyz, and 13 percent of Uzbeks were not currently married. The one age and sex group for which the share of those currently married did not decline, and indeed increased slightly, was Kyrgyz and Uzbek women less than 20 years old.

The capital of Kyrgyzstan Bishkek stands out from the rest of the country in its level of economic and cultural development and in the ethnic composition of its population. As a result of its special characteristics, Bishkek also differs from the rest of Kyrgyzstan in its nuptiality parameters. In 1999, the average age at first marriage was substantially higher here than in other parts of the republic: 26.5 years for men and 24.4 years for women. These figures exceeded those for the republic as a whole by 1.5 and 2.5 (!) years, respectively. Approximately 80 percent of men and 60 percent of women in Bishkek aged 20-24 had never been married. Along with Bishkek, the residents of Chuyskaya oblast, and the men of Issyk-Kul'skaya and Narinskaya oblasts, also tend to marry later. Again according to 1999 data for Bishkek, the difference between the age of brides and grooms marrying for the first time (2.1 years) was lower than in any other oblast of Kyrgyzstan. The age difference in Bishkek was almost 1 year lower than the national average (3.1 years). Indeed, if we compare Bishkek with the region showing the maximum age difference for the republic as a whole, Narynskaya oblast, we find that the age difference in Narynskaya (4.2 years) is more than double that in Bishkek. Moreover, the relative size of the divorced and separated population aged 20-49 was substantially higher in Bishkek than in the southern oblasts of Kyrgyzstan. The proportion of women who were divorced or separated was twice as high in Bishkek as in the south, and the proportion of men was three times as high. In addition to Bishkek, a high level of divorce is also observed in the Northern Chuyskaya and Issyk-Kul'skaya oblasts.

As compared with the final decades of Soviet rule in Kyrgyzstan, the 1990s were marked by increasing differentiation in marriage patterns along both ethnic and regional (that is, north-south) divides. As compared with developed countries, Kyrgyzstan continued to display a pattern of relatively early marriage.

### ***Summary and conclusion***

Nuptiality in Kyrgyzstan for last hundred years has undergone essential changes. In the first quarter of 20 centuries the specific type of marriage pattern is observed for the indigenous nations of the republic (Kyrghyzs and Uzbeks), which differs by the prevalence of super-early marriages of females, and relatively late ones of males, by significant difference in the age of spouses and low level of celibacy in ages 45-49. The reasons for this marriage pattern were the traditions of family relations, religious norms and economic build-up of the population, predominantly consisting of nomadic-Kyrgyzs. At the farming Uzbek's families, females were getting married later, than at the Kyrgyz ones. Nations that came to the territory of Kyrgyzstan from the European part of Russian empire - Russian, Ukrainians, the Russian Germans and others – adhered to the East European marriage pattern. The economic basic of this pattern was a peasant community with its rules of land tenure.

Socialist transformations having destroyed former style of life within the shortest terms, modernized matrimonial behavior of indigenous nations of the republic. Besides, the consequences of the Second World War, and migratory processes affected characteristics of marital structure and nuptiality dynamics. As a result, mass practice of super-early marriages of females has practically been stopped in 1960th. During the 20th century, the average envisaged marriage age of females has increased up by 4 years, and of males - has decreased down by 3 years. The divorce rate at the same time has significantly increased. Ethnic distinctions in marital behavior have not disappeared, but have slightly decreased. As a whole, marital structure of the population of Kyrgyzstan during 1960-1980 by its basic quantitative characteristics (low mean age of the first marriage of both females and males and low level of celibacy in ages 45-49) corresponded to the marriage pattern observed at this time practically through the whole territory of the USSR and in the countries of East Europe.

In 1990th on a background of the rapid disintegration of the former social system, the number of the registered marriages went strongly down. The main reason for that was the reduction the age intensity registered marriages because of postponing of marriages in the young age groups and partial refusal to get married in the elder reproductive ages. At the same time, as a result of change of attitude of a part of population towards registration of marriage the consensual matrimonial unions became widely spread. The ethnic differentiation of the processes of nuptiality in Kyrgyzstan has increased. Therefore, the Kirghiz males, as compared to the Uzbeks and Russians, in age distribution of age-specific first marriage rates of the second type, do not have the peak at age of 20-24 years. The Uzbek females' (unlike the Kyrgyz and Russian females) mean age of getting into the first marriage has not increased. However, despite of some "aging", the nuptiality in Kyrgyzstan is still early, and the proportion single among those aged 45-49 is low. Changes in marriage behavior in 1990th have occurred due to the degradation living standards and difficulties of the population's adaptation to the new social and economic conditions. The additional information obtainable by sociological surveys is necessary for the research of details of mechanisms of changes in marital behavior of particular ethnical and social groups.

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## Tables and figures.

Table 1. Ethnic composition of Kyrgyz republic (%)

Ethnic groups	1897	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	1999
Kyrgyz	77-80	66,8	51,7	40,5	43,8	47,9	52,4	64,9
Uzbeks	15-18*	11,1	10,4	10,6	11,3	12,1	12,9	13,8
Russians	5,0**	11,8	20,8	30,2	29,2	25,9	21,5	12,5
Other	...	10,3	17,1	18,7	15,7	14,1	13,2	8,8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Uzbeks and other Asiatic groups; \*\* -Russians and other European groups

Sources: Population censuses of Russian Empire, USSR and Kyrgyz Republic. For 1897 – author's estimations.

Table 2.

Percentage of currently married among those aged 15-19 by sex and ethnic groups

Ethnic groups	1897	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	1999
<b>Males All</b>	<b>7,2</b>	<b>9,2</b>	<b>1,8</b>	<b>4,1</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>1,4</b>	<b>1,1</b>	<b>1,1</b>
Kyrgyz	-	10,6	1,4	6,1	1,4	1,1	0,8	1,0
Russians	-	9,8	2,5	2,1	2,0	2,3	2,0	1,5
Uzbeks	-	1,3	1,1	3,5	0,8	0,9	0,7	1,5
<i>Urban population</i>		3,1	1,7	2,3	1,7	1,6	1,4	1,0
Kyrgyz	-	3,1	1,6	2,9	1,3	1,1	0,8	0,9
Russians	-	4,0	1,8	2,0	2,0	2,3	2,1	1,3
Uzbeks	-	1,6	1,0	2,2	0,8	0,9	0,7	0,7
<i>Rural population area</i>		10,0	1,8	5,0	1,5	1,3	0,9	1,1
Kyrgyz	-	10,5	1,4	6,8	1,5	1,2	0,8	1,0
Russians	-	12,6	3,2	2,2	2,0	2,2	1,7	1,8
Uzbeks	-	1,1	1,1	4,3	0,9	0,9	0,7	0,9
<b>Females All</b>	<b>59,1</b>	<b>61,3</b>	<b>21,4</b>	<b>24,5</b>	<b>12,2</b>	<b>9,3</b>	<b>10,4</b>	<b>10,8</b>
Kyrgyz	-	78,5	24,5	40,6	15,3	9,0	10,0	11,0
Russians	-	30,2	15,2	8,1	8,4	10,7	11,1	8,4
Uzbeks	-	51,3	25,6	25,2	14,8	8,1	10,0	10,9
<i>Urban population</i>		33,5	15,9	15,0	8,9	7,6	7,6	6,9
Kyrgyz	-	76,6	26,8	26,8	10,7	5,6	4,9	6,1
Russians	-	22,4	12,5	8,1	7,6	9,5	9,8	6,8
Uzbeks	-	42,9	26,6	25,5	12,9	7,5	9,6	10,1
<i>Rural population</i>		65,7	22,8	30,6	15,0	10,4	12,4	13,2
Kyrgyz	-	78,2	24,4	43,6	17,1	10,3	12,4	13,5
Russians	-	32,8	17,6	11,9	10,4	13,5	14,4	11,5
Uzbeks		55,3	25,2	25,0	16,0	8,4	10,2	11,3

Sources: Population censuses of Russian Empire, USSR and Kyrgyz Republic. For 1897 – author's estimations.



Table 3.

## Singulate age at marriage (years) by sex and ethnic groups

Ethnic groups	Males							Females						
	1897	1926	1979	1979/89	1989	1989/99	1999	1897	1926	1979	1979/89	1989	1989/99	1999
Total	27,0	24,1	23,7	23,8	24,0	24,6	25,0	16,8	16,9	21,3	21,3	21,6	21,6	21,9
Kyrgyz	-	24,4	23,6	23,9	24,0	24,8	25,1	-	16,2	21,3	21,4	21,8	21,8	22,0
Russians	-	21,7	23,8	23,8	24,1	24,2	26,2	-	19,3	21,3	21,3	21,4	21,4	22,9
Uzbeks	-	26,6	23,4	23,4	23,4	23,9	24,1	-	17,6	20,9	20,9	20,9	20,7	20,7
Urban population	-	24,8	24,1	24,2	24,4	25,2	25,7	-	18,6	22,1	21,9	22,6	22,5	23,2
Kyrgyz	-	24,8	24,5	24,9	24,9	25,5	25,8	-	16,2	22,1	23,1	24,0	23,5	23,7
Russians	-	22,9	23,7	23,7	23,9	24,1	26,4	-	19,3	21,7	21,7	21,6	22,4	23,4
Uzbeks	-	26,5	24,0	23,9	23,8	24,4	24,5	-	17,9	21,2	21,2	21,1	21,0	21,0
Rural population	-	24,0	23,4	23,5	23,7	24,3	24,6	-	16,7	20,7	20,7	20,8	20,8	21,0
Kyrgyz	-	24,3	23,2	23,5	23,7	24,4	24,7	-	16,0	20,6	20,7	20,8	20,8	21,0
Russians	-	20,7	23,9	24,2	24,5	24,4	25,9	-	18,6	20,5	20,5	20,7	20,7	21,8
Uzbeks	-	26,7	22,9	23,1	23,1	23,7	23,8	-	17,3	20,7	20,7	20,7	20,6	20,6

Sources: Population censuses of Russian Empire, USSR and Kyrgyz Republic. For 1897 – author's estimations.

Table 4.

## Percentage never married among those aged 20-24 by sex and ethnic groups

Ethnic groups	Males					Females				
	1897	1926	1979	1989	1999	1897	1926	1979	1989	1999
Total	70,6	56,0	58,5	<b>62,5</b>	<b>71,6</b>	3,3	2,3	29,1	<b>29,3</b>	<b>34,1</b>
Kyrgyz	-	59,6	60,3	64,7	73,3	-	0,7	28,9	31,5	34,5
Russians	-	32,8	55,8	57,9	70,6	-	8,2	30,0	27,8	45,4
Uzbeks	-	79,6	60,1	61,1	66,0	-	2,9	23,7	22,8	20,9
Urban population	-	60,2	63,7	<b>66,2</b>	<b>76,2</b>	-	7,6	38,4	<b>40,8</b>	<b>49,1</b>
Kyrgyz	-	69,9	72,2	74,6	78,8	-	0,7	48,8	54,2	53,2
Russians	-	45,5	55,8	56,3	72,0	-	12,1	33,1	28,9	50,2
Uzbeks	-	77,9	69,1	65,9	69,8	-	3,3	27,8	26,2	24,2
Rural population	-	55,2	53,7	<b>60,1</b>	<b>68,9</b>	-	1,6	21,1	<b>21,2</b>	<b>24,1</b>
Kyrgyz	-	59,4	54,2	60,7	70,5	-	0,7	19,7	20,6	23,8
Russians	-	21,5	55,9	61,6	68,1	-	5,3	22,3	21,5	34,7
Uzbeks	-	80,8	52,3	58,0	64,0	-	2,5	21,2	20,7	19,3

Tables 5.

## Percentage never married among those aged 45-49 by sex and ethnic groups

Ethnic groups	Males				Females			
	1926	1979	1989	1999	1926	1979	1989	1999
Total	0,8	0,7	<b>1,3</b>	<b>1,9</b>	0,2	0,9	<b>1,1</b>	<b>2,0</b>
Kyrgyz	0,8	0,4	0,7	0,9	0,1	0,3	0,4	1,4
Russians	0,9	1,2	2,4	4,6	0,9	1,4	1,9	3,4
Uzbeks	1,4	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,1	0,1	0,3	0,7
Urban population	1,7	0,9	<b>1,6</b>	<b>2,5</b>	0,4	1,3	<b>1,8</b>	<b>3,4</b>
Kyrgyz	2,2	0,9	0,8	1,1	0,0	0,8	0,8	3,2
Russians	1,3	1,1	2,2	4,2	1,0	1,4	2,2	3,7
Uzbeks	1,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,0	0,1	0,5	1,1
Rural population	0,7	0,6	<b>1,0</b>	<b>1,5</b>	0,1	0,6	<b>0,6</b>	<b>1,0</b>
Kyrgyz	0,6	0,3	0,6	0,9	0,1	0,2	0,4	0,7
Russians	0,7	1,5	3,0	5,3	0,8	1,4	1,3	2,6
Uzbeks	1,3	0,3	0,2	0,3	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,5
Total	-	0,0	1,1	1,4	-	0,8	0,3	0,8

Sources: Population censuses of Russian Empire, USSR and Kyrgyz Republic. For 1897 – author's estimations.

Table 6.

Percentage divorced and separated among those aged 20-49 by sex and ethnic groups

Ethnic groups	Males					Females				
	1897	1926	1979	1989	1999	1897	1926	1979	1989	1999
Total	<b>0,1</b>	<b>0,9</b>	<b>3,4</b>	<b>3,6</b>	<b>4,9</b>	<b>0,1</b>	<b>0,6</b>	<b>6,6</b>	<b>7,3</b>	<b>10,5</b>
Kyrgyz	-	0,8	1,6	2,3	4,0	-	0,2	2,5	5,5	9,6
Russians	-	1,2	4,4	6,9	10,6	-	2,3	9,2	11,3	17,0
Uzbeks	-	1,0	1,6	2,3	3,1	-	1,5	2,9	5,7	7,7
Urban population	-	<b>1,3</b>	<b>3,9</b>	<b>4,4</b>	<b>5,5</b>	-	<b>2,5</b>	<b>9,3</b>	<b>9,7</b>	<b>14,2</b>
Kyrgyz	-	1,1	1,4	1,9	4,9	-	1,1	3,6	7,3	12,8
Russians	-	1,5	4,2	6,7	11,2	-	3,5	9,7	12,1	18,6
Uzbeks	-	1,0	1,9	3,1	4,4	-	2,0	4,5	8,0	10,6
Rural population	-	<b>0,8</b>	<b>3,0</b>	<b>3,1</b>	<b>3,9</b>	-	<b>0,4</b>	<b>4,4</b>	<b>5,3</b>	<b>8,0</b>
Kyrgyz	-	0,8	1,7	2,5	3,6	-	0,2	2,1	4,8	7,8
Russians	-	1,0	4,7	7,4	9,7	-	1,3	8,0	9,0	13,3
Uzbeks	-	1,1	1,4	1,8	2,4	-	1,1	2,0	4,2	5,2

Sources: Population censuses of Russian Empire, USSR and Kyrgyz Republic. For 1897 – author's estimations.

Table 7.

Percentage widowed among those aged 40-49 by sex and ethnic groups.

Ethnic groups	Males					Females				
	1897	1926	1979	1989	1999	1897	1926	1979	1989	1999
Total	<b>3,0</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>1,4</b>	<b>1,3</b>	<b>1,3</b>	<b>10,6</b>	<b>17,3</b>	<b>8,7</b>	<b>8,4</b>	<b>9,0</b>
Kyrgyz	-	2,2	1,8	1,3	1,0	-	16,9	9,8	10,3	9,4
Russians	-	3,0	1,1	1,3	2,1	-	15,2	7,8	6,7	8,6
Uzbeks	-	2,6	1,5	1,0	0,9	-	22,9	9,0	8,7	8,3
Urban population	-	<b>2,9</b>	<b>1,2</b>	<b>1,2</b>	<b>1,7</b>	-	<b>18,9</b>	<b>8,3</b>	<b>7,5</b>	<b>8,9</b>
Kyrgyz	-	1,6	1,5	1,1	1,3	-	13,6	11,5	10,1	9,5
Russians	-	3,4	1,1	1,3	2,3	-	17,7	7,5	6,5	8,8
Uzbeks	-	1,1	1,6	1,1	1,2	-	21,3	9,5	9,3	9,3
Rural population	-	<b>2,4</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>1,3</b>	<b>1,0</b>	-	<b>17,1</b>	<b>9,0</b>	<b>9,2</b>	<b>9,2</b>
Kyrgyz	-	2,2	1,8	1,4	0,9	-	16,9	9,6	10,3	9,4
Russians	-	2,6	1,2	1,5	2,0	-	13,6	8,4	7,0	8,2
Uzbeks	-	2,9	1,5	0,9	0,7	-	24,4	8,1	8,4	7,7

Sources: Population censuses of Russian Empire, USSR and Kyrgyz Republic. For 1897 – author's estimations.

Tables 8.

Singulate age at marriage for the Asian countries and republics of the former Soviet Union, 1897-1935

Страна/регион	Год	Расчетный средний возраст вступления в первый брак (лет)		Разница в возрасте супругов
		Мужчины	Женщины	
Kyrgyzstan	1897	27,0	16,8	10,2
Kyrgyzstan	1926	24,1	16,9	7,2
European part of Russian Empire*	1897	24,2	21,4	2,8
Russian Federation	1926	23,0	20,9	2,1
Belorussian SSR	1926	24,6	22,4	2,2
Ukrainian SSR	1926	23,3	21,5	1,8
Armenian, Azerbaijan and Georgian SSR	1926	24,7	19,1	5,6
Uzbek SSR	1926	26,2	18,1	8,1
Turkmen SSR	1926	25,7	17,9	7,8
Pakistan**	1921	21,5	13,0	8,5
India**	1901	20,1	13,3	6,8
China**	1930	23,3	19,3	4,0
South Korea**	1925	20,5	16,5	4,0
Japan**	1920	24,9	21,1	3,8
Myanmar**	1911	23,9	20,4	3,5
Sri Lanka**	1901	24,6	18,3	6,3
Turkey**	1935	23,1	19,7	3,4

Sources:\* (Tolts, 1977); \*\* (United Nations, 1990); Author's calculations on the base of censuses 1897 and 1926.

Table 9 Prevalence of consensual unions in selected countries among those aged 20-24 (%)

Country and year of census or survey	Per cent of age group		Percent in all types of conjugal unions	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Denmark (1991)	21,2	33,8	82,2	75,2
Finland (1989-92)	30,8	23,2	51,7	32,4
France (1994)	15,8	23,9	79,0	61,9
Hungary (1990)	2,6	3,7	11,5	7,6
Portugal (1991)	1,8	2,9	10,0	8,0
Moldova (1997)	-	3,2	-	4,8
Russian Federation (2002)	5,2	8,0	21,8	18,9
Ukraine (1999)	-	6,0	-	10,2
Kyrgyzstan (1999)	5,1	8,4	19,1	14,3

Sources: United Nations, 2002; National Statistical Office of Kyrgyz Republic; State Statistical Agency of Russian Federation.

Table 10. Mean age at marriage\* (years)

Years	All marriages			First marriages		
	Males	Females	Difference	Males	Females	Difference
1959	30,3	26,9	3,4	30,0	26,6	3,4
1989	26,6	23,8	2,8	25,1	22,4	2,7
1990	26,4	23,5	3,0	24,9	22,2	2,7
1991	26,6	23,4	3,1	25,1	22,3	2,8
1992	26,3	23,3	3,0	24,9	22,0	2,9
1993	25,8	22,9	2,9	24,6	21,8	2,8
1994	25,7	22,9	2,7	24,8	21,9	3,0
1995	26,1	23,2	3,0	25,1	22,1	3,0
1996	26,4	23,2	3,2	25,4	22,2	3,1
1997	26,5	23,4	3,2	25,6	22,4	3,1
1998	26,9	23,6	3,2	25,9	22,7	3,1
1999	27,3	24,1	3,3	26,3	23,1	3,2
2000	27,3	24,0	3,3	26,4	23,1	3,2
2001	27,6	24,3	3,4	26,7	23,4	3,3

\* For married before age 50 years.

Table 11.

## Total first marriage rates, 1988/89 and 1998/99

Ethnic groups	Total		Urban population		Rural populationСело	
	1988/1989	1998/1999	1988/1989	1998/1999	1988/1989	1998/99
Males	0,99	0,58	0,88	0,44	1,06	0,66
Kyrgyz	1,01	0,55	0,88	0,32	1,07	0,67
Russians	0,90	0,60	0,92	0,59	0,85	0,63
Uzbeks	1,05	0,61	0,98	0,57	1,09	0,62
Females	0,99	0,56	0,88	0,41	1,06	0,66
Kyrgyz	0,98	0,54	0,75	0,30	1,10	0,67
Russians	0,94	0,61	0,91	0,59	0,99	0,66
Uzbeks	1,05	0,58	0,98	0,54	1,09	0,60

Sources: Estimated from data of National Statistical Office of Kyrgyz Republic

Table 12.

## Mean Age at first marriage

Ethnic groups	Total		Urban population		Rural populationСело	
	1988/1989	1998/1999	1988/1989	1988/1989	1988/1989	1998/99
Males	25,1	26,1	25,2	27,0	25,0	26,0
Kyrgyz	25,4	26,4	26,1	27,1	25,1	26,2
Russians	24,8	25,6	24,8	25,6	24,8	25,6
Uzbeks	24,3	24,7	24,6	25,0	24,2	24,6
Females	22,4	23,0	22,9	24,6	22,2	22,7
Kyrgyz	22,7	23,1	23,9	24,6	22,4	22,7
Russians	22,2	23,1	22,3	23,4	21,8	22,8
Uzbeks	21,4	21,4	21,4	21,4	21,4	21,3

Sources: Estimated from data of National Statistical Office of Kyrgyz Republic

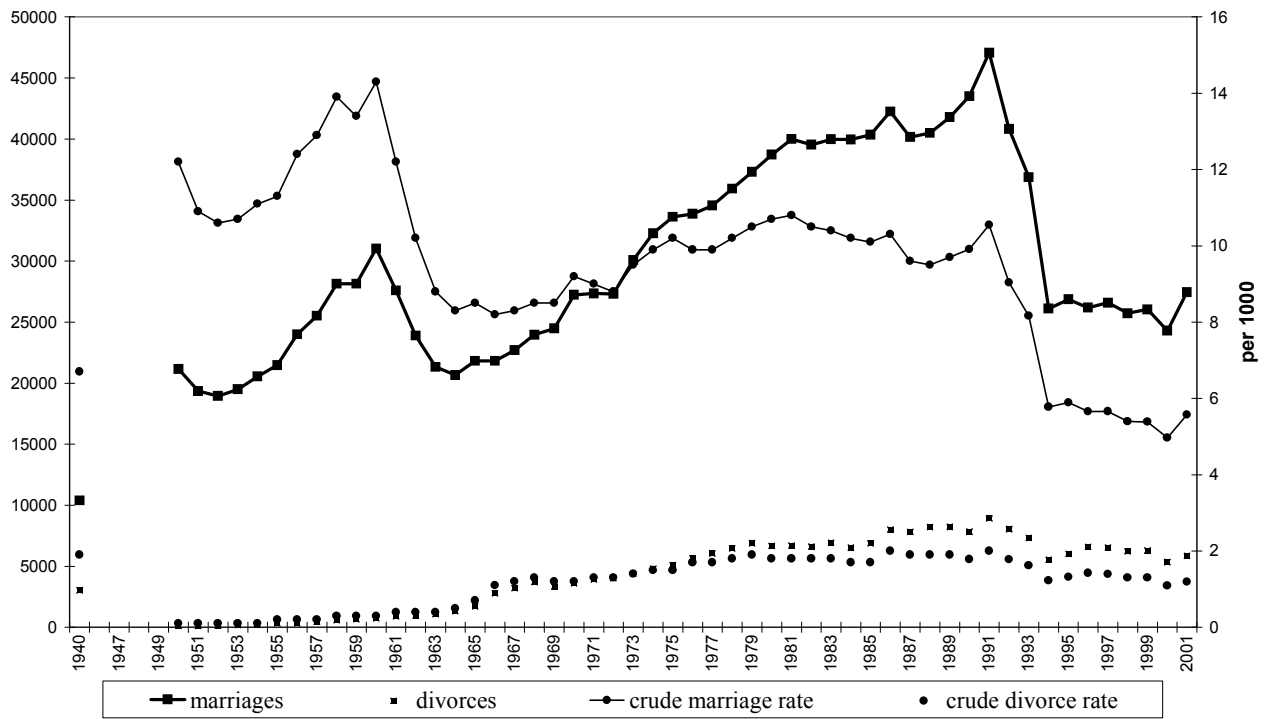


Figure 1. Marriages and divorces in Kyrgyzstan in 1940-2001.

Figure 2. Consensual unions as percent of age group, men (%)

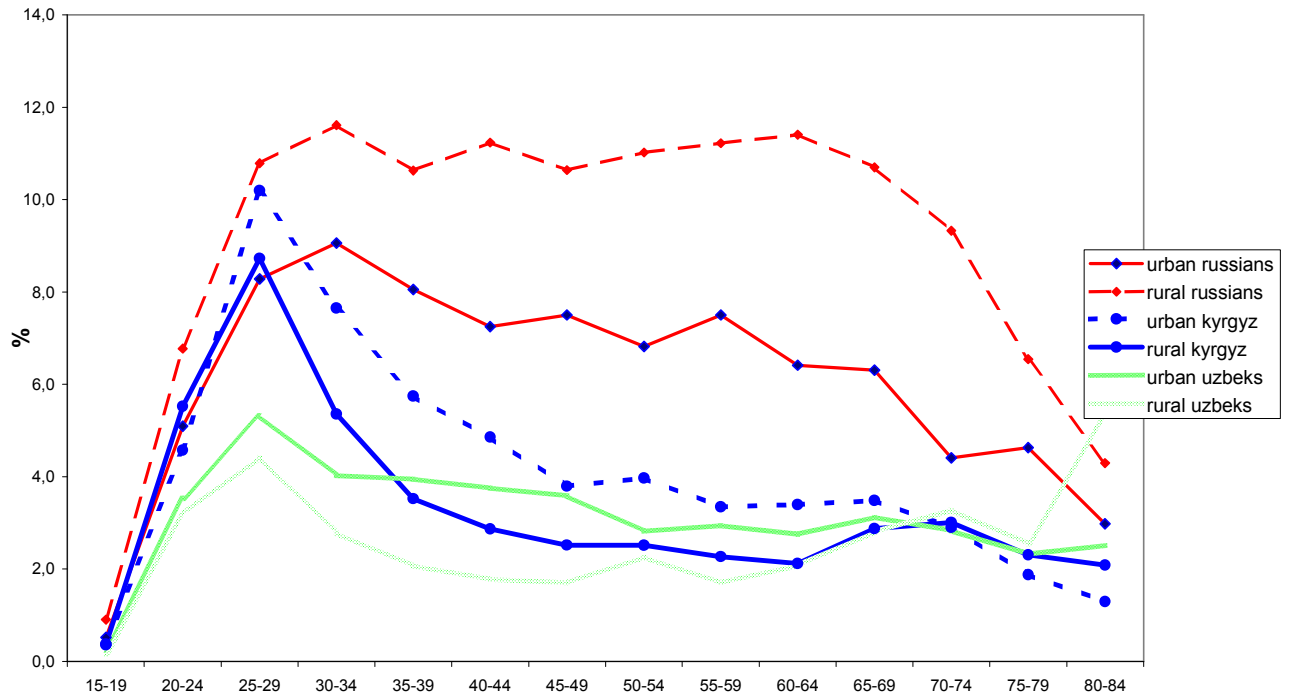


Figure 3. Consensual unions as percent of age group, women (%)

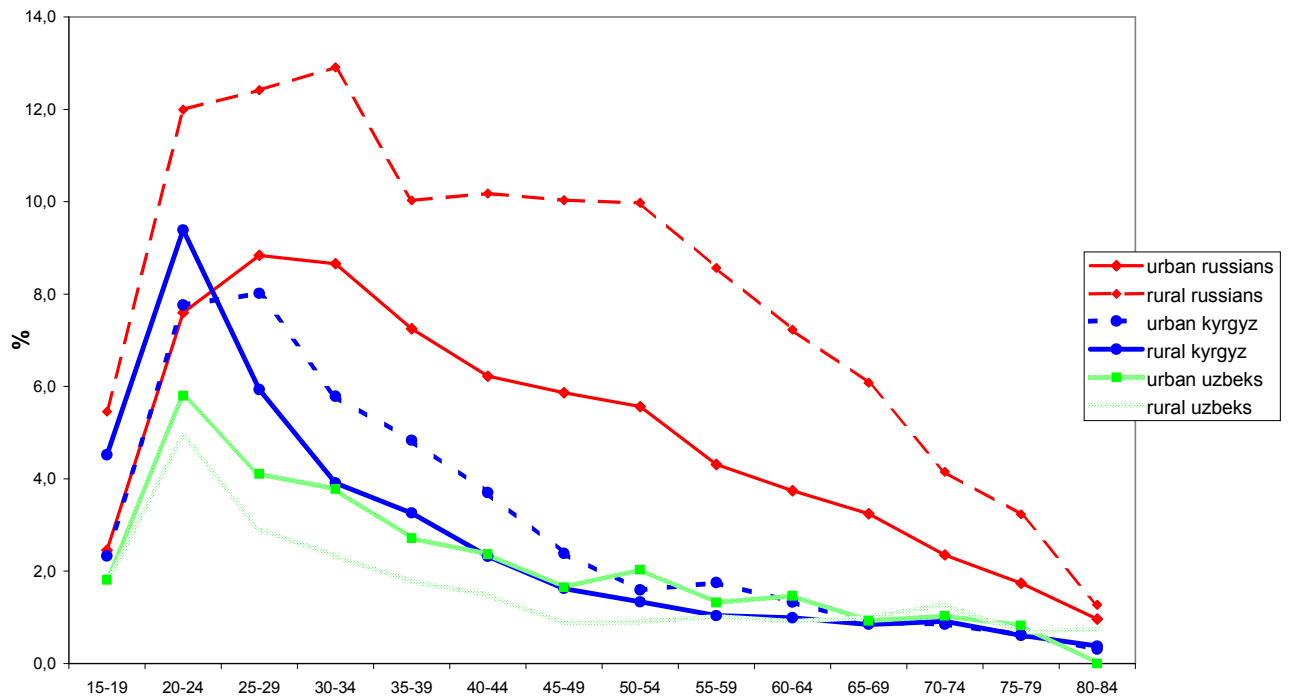


Figure 4. Age-specific first marriage rates, males (per 1000)

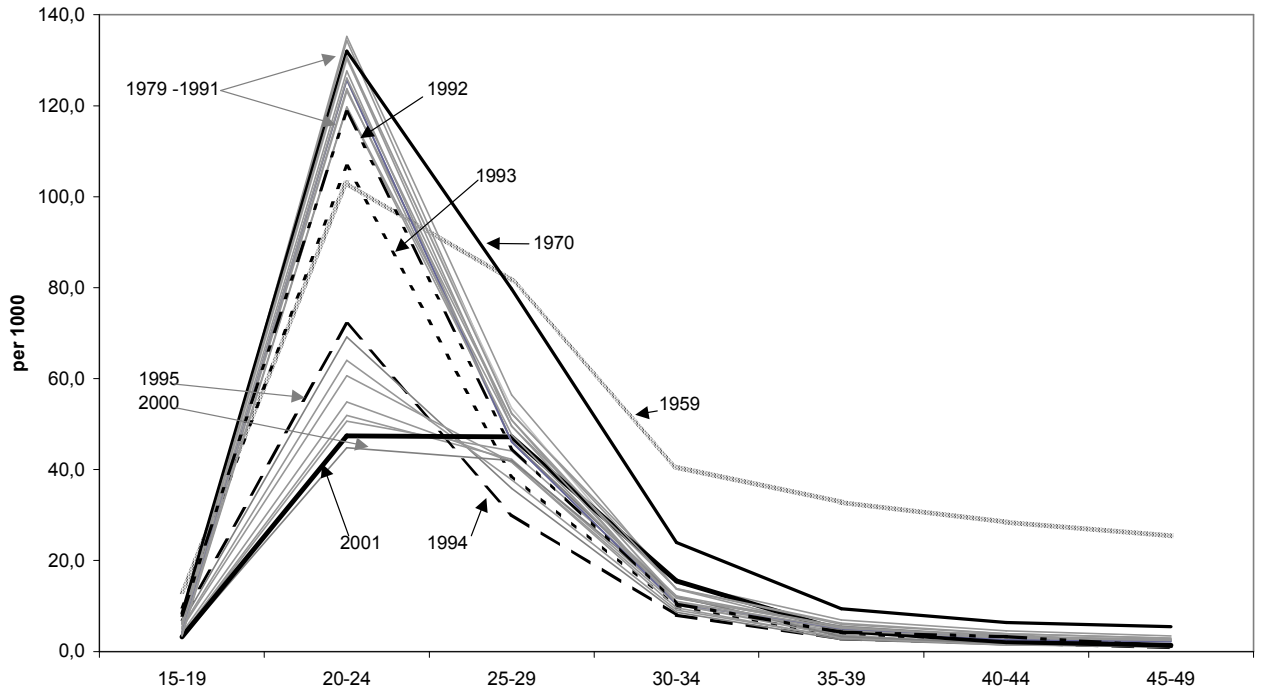


Figure 5. Age-specific first marriage rates, females (per 1000)

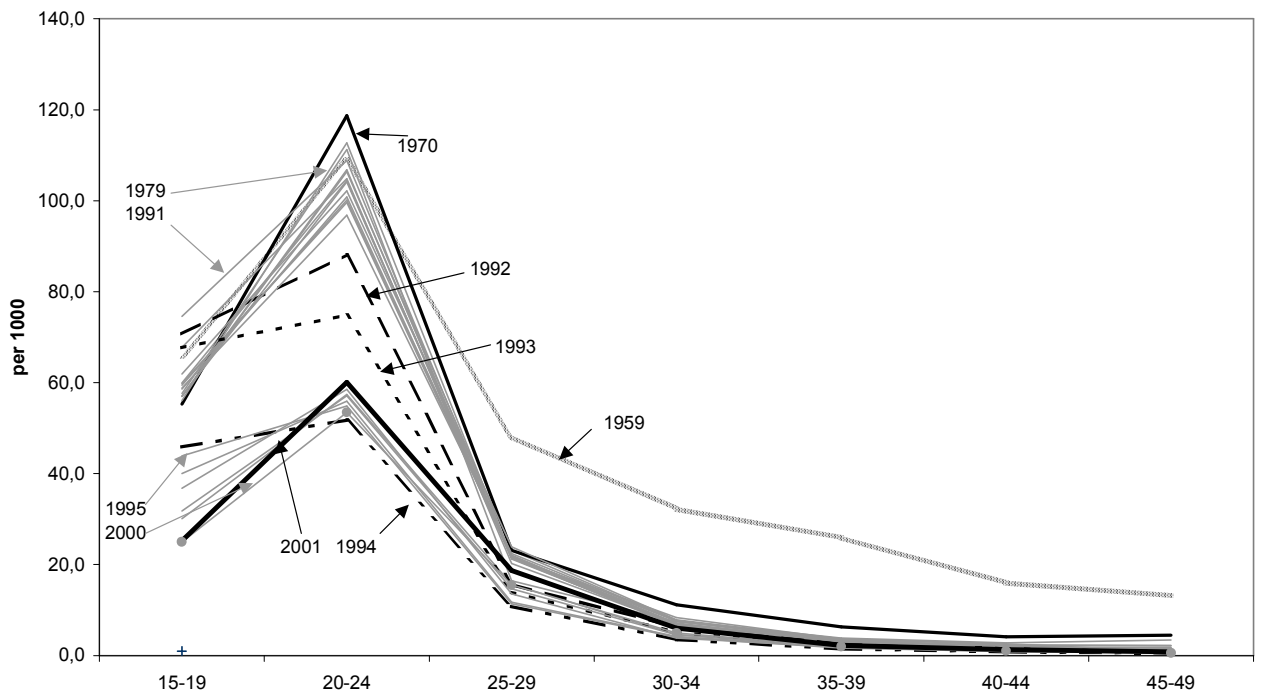


Figure 6. Age-specific first marriage rates by ethnic groups, males (per 1000)

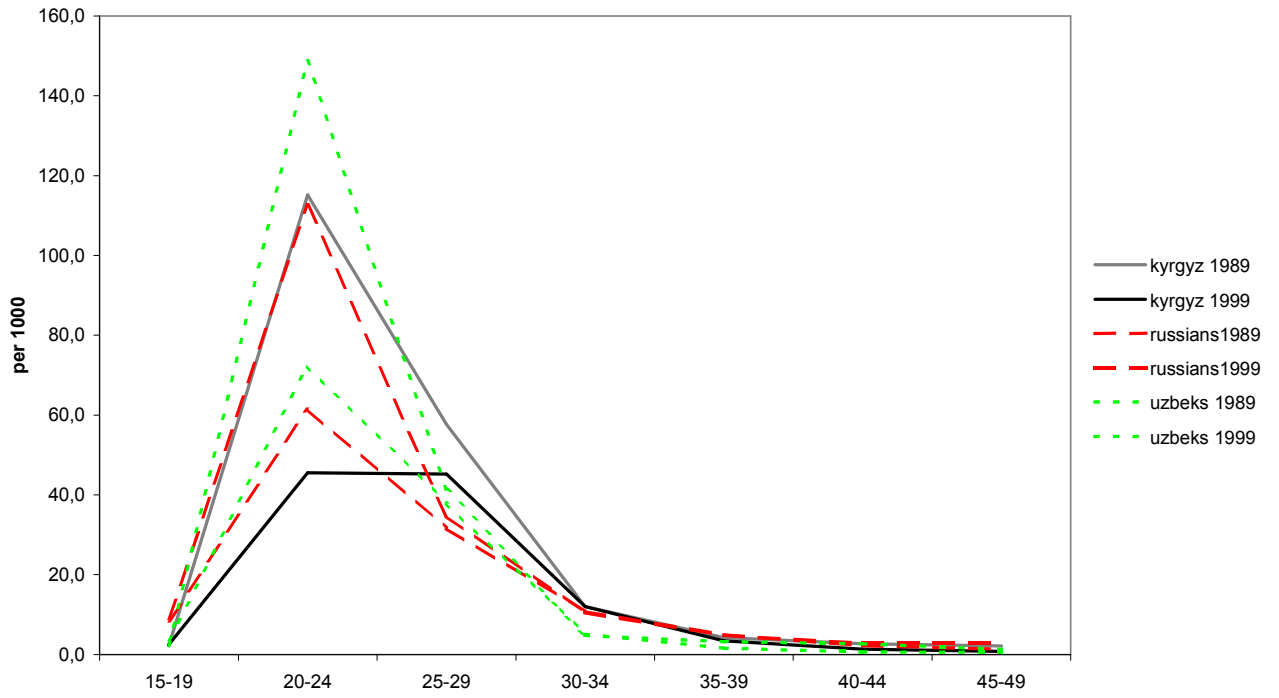


Figure 7. Age-specific first marriage rates by ethnic groups, females (per 1000)

