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Marriages and divorces

2011

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PREFACE

This statistical release presents information on civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions that were registered in 2011 in the South African national marriage registration systems maintained by the Department of Home Affairs. It highlights trends in the number of marriages and unions as well as demographic and other characteristics of the couples. The release also reports on divorces that were granted in 2011 by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. It focuses on trends in divorces from civil marriages, characteristics of plaintiffs, age at the time of divorce, duration of marriage and divorces involving couples with children.

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KEY FINDINGS

1. Introduction

There are two main sources of marriage and divorce statistics in South Africa; namely, those compiled from censuses and surveys and those compiled from vital registration and administrative records. The data from each of these sources give different aspects of information on marriages and divorces in the country. Census and survey data are by nature, subjective individual information that provide cross-sectional data on individuals' marital status (single, married, divorced, widowed, etc). Therefore marriage and divorce in this context cover different types of marriages and associated divorces that took place at different periods in people's lives. However, not all types of marriages and divorces are registered.

The specific types of marriage and divorce that can be registered in South Africa are stipulated and governed by legal frameworks. Unlike surveys, registered marriages and divorces data are based on continuous recording of these events as they take place. The management of registered marriages or unions is the responsibility of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), with different legislations as follows:

- Civil marriages are administered through the Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No. 25 of 1961) as amended, and its associated regulations.
- Customary marriages are governed by the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No. 120 of 1998) that came into effect on 15 November 2000.
- The Civil Union Act, 2006 (Act No. 17 of 2006) governs civil unions and it came into operation on 30 November 2006.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) is responsible for handling matters relating to the dissolution of registered marriages and civil unions. This responsibility of the department is mandated through:

- The Divorce Act, 1979 (Act No.70 of 1979), as amended; and
- The Jurisdiction of Regional Courts Amendment Act, 2008 (Act No. 31 of 2008) as amended, which came into effect on 9 August 2010.

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) publishes data on marriages for citizens and permanent residents that are collected through the civil registration systems of DHA. Before 2008, the data in the annual release covered only civil marriages. However in 2009, Stats SA started publishing available data on customary marriages and civil unions. The registration of customary marriages and civil unions began in 2003 and 2007, respectively.

In addition to marriages and civil unions, Stats SA also publishes data on divorces from civil marriages. The divorces are successful applications for divorce in accordance with a decree that has been issued. Divorce cases belong to civil marriages that were registered in different years but whose divorce decrees were granted in the same year. Both the marriages and divorces data are based on the calendar year. It is important to note that although both the data on civil marriages and divorces are collected in the same year, the two data sets are not linked to each other. Hitherto, only divorce cases from civil marriages have been published. Publication of statistics on divorces from registered customary marriages and civil unions will be made available when sufficient data have been registered.

As a result of the coming into operation of the Jurisdiction of Regional Courts Amendment Act, 2008, there has been an increase in the number of courts mandated to deal with divorce cases from 12 to 62 courts. However, due to differentials in human, physical and technical infrastructure, not all the courts are in a position to deal with the demand of completing, compiling and mailing the divorce forms from the courts to Stats SA regularly. By September 2012, Stats SA had received divorce forms from 43 courts. The 2011 divorce forms that will be received later will be processed and used to update the 2011 results, which will be published in the 2012 annual release.

2. Marriages

2.1 Civil marriages

2.1.1 Trends in civil marriages (2002–2011)

Information provided in Table 1 shows that a total of 167 264 civil marriages of South African citizens and permanent residents was registered at the Department of Home Affairs in 2011. This number includes 311 (0,2%) marriages of South African citizens and permanent residents that were solemnised outside the borders of South Africa but subsequently registered in South Africa. The table further shows that the number of registered marriages fluctuated between 2002 and 2008, after which there was a consistent decline. During the period 2002–2011, the highest number of marriages was recorded in 2008 (186 522) and the lowest number in 2011 (167 264). The 2011 figure of 167 264 civil marriages shows a decrease of 2,1% from the 170 826 marriages recorded in 2010.

Over time, the number of civil marriages in South Africa varied by month of registration. As shown in Figure 1, the warmer months (beginning from September and peaking in December) are generally the most popular months for solemnising marriages. In 2011, the highest number of marriages [27 676; (16,5%)] took place in December compared to June which recorded the lowest number of marriages, [10 254; (6,1%)].

2.1.2 Solemnisation of marriages

The Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No. 25 of 1961) requires that only licensed marriage officers solemnise civil marriages and issue a marriage certificate. Civil marriages are generally solemnised at the offices of the DHA and at chapels or religious buildings. After a solemnisation ceremony, the marriage officer issues the couple with an unabridged marriage certificate (BI-27) free of charge and submits the marriage register at any DHA office for the recording of the marriage particulars in the National Population Register (NPR).

Table 2 shows the distribution of civil marriages registered in 2011 according to the way in which the marriage was solemnised: (i) 'DHA marriages' for marriages solemnised by DHA marriage officers and (ii) 'religious marriages' for marriages solemnised by priests/religious persons. It is observed that 85 311 (51,0%) of the 167 264 marriages were solemnised by DHA marriage officers and 56 405 (33,7%) by 'religious' rites. The type of solemnisation rite was not specified in 25 548 (15,3%) marriages.

The table also provides information on province of marriage registration. The province of registration is not necessarily the province of usual residence of the couple since couples could marry at a place of their choice and the registration of the marriage can take place in a DHA office of choice of the couple. In addition, a marriage officer can register the marriages he or she solemnises in any DHA office.

The results presented in Table 2 show that in 2011, the highest number of all marriages was registered in Gauteng [34 267; (20,5%)], followed by Western Cape [27 596; (16,5%)], KwaZulu-Natal [27 545; (16,5%)] and Eastern Cape [26 980 (16,1%)]. Western Cape had the highest proportion of registered marriages solemnised by 'religious' rites (47,7%) and Limpopo had the lowest (21,7%). The highest proportion of marriages solemnised by DHA marriage officers was observed in North West (74,5%) and the lowest in Mpumalanga (33,6%). However, these results need to be interpreted with caution given that the proportion of civil marriages with unspecified way of solemnisation differed widely by province. For example, 36,0% of marriages in Mpumalanga did not state the way of solemnisation compared to only 2,9% in North West.

2.1.3 Marital status at the time of marriage

Data presented in Table 3 indicate that most of the marriages in 2011 for both bridegrooms and brides were first-time marriages. For bridegrooms, there were 139 666 (83,5%) bachelors, 5 469 (3,3%) divorcees and 2 363 (1,4%) widowers. For the brides, 146 655 (87,7%) were spinsters whilst 3 521 (2,1%) were divorcees and 1 864 (1,1%) were widowers. The marital status of 19 766 (11,8%) bridegrooms and 15 224 (9,1%) brides was not recorded.

It is also observed from Table 4 that irrespective of their marital status, men generally married women who had never been married (spinsters). Thus, 131 731 (94,3%), 1 254 (0,9%) and 1 337 (1,0%) spinsters, divorcees and widowers respectively married bachelors. In addition, irrespective of the fact that more divorcees and widowers married spinsters, the proportion of male divorcees who married female divorcees (16,8%) was higher than the proportion that married widows (1,2%). Similarly, the proportion of widowers who married widows (16,1%) was higher than the proportion that married female divorcees (1,7%).

2.1.4 Age at the time of marriage

Population scientists are interested in the age at first marriage or union because of its theoretical link to exposure to the risk of pregnancy, childbearing and ultimately to fertility. This link tends to be weakened in populations where pre-marital fertility is widespread. Nevertheless, age at first marriage or union continues to be a good proxy for measuring not only fertility but other health and socio-economic indicators relating particularly to the role and status of women in society. The importance of this indicator is, to some extent, underscored in South Africa through the marriage legislations that put restrictions on marriages involving minors (persons under 18 years old). These minors require the consent of a parent, a guardian or a commissioner of welfare before entering into a marriage. In addition to the above consent, boys under 18 years and girls under 16 years of age require the consent of the Minister of Home Affairs before they can marry.

In 2011, marriages of 18 bridegrooms and 238 brides aged less than 18 years were registered, with 11 bridegrooms and 223 brides marrying for the first time (see Table 5). Furthermore, Figure 2 indicates that the highest number of bachelors [36 650 (26,2%)] were aged 30–34 years whereas the highest number of spinsters [49 243 (34,0%)] were aged 25–29 years. There were more spinsters compared to bachelors at younger ages (less than 30 years) and vice versa at older ages (30 years and older).

The overall median ages by year of registration presented in Figure 3a shows that the median ages have remained more or less constant for both bridegrooms (34 years) and brides (30 years), with a constant age difference of four years. Figure 3a to Figure 3d further show that women generally entered marriage at younger ages than men, with wide age difference between spouses depending on the marital status of couples at the time of current marriage. In addition, the median ages at current marriage was lowest for those marrying for the first time, followed by those widowed and highest for divorcees.

For first time marriages, the median ages for bachelors and spinsters were 34 years and 29 years respectively in 2011, giving an age difference of four years (see Figure 3b). The ages of brides remained at 29 years throughout the 5-year period between 2007 and 2011, while for males the median age was 32 years between 2007 and 2009 and increased to 33 years in 2010 and 2011. For remarriages, the median ages for widowers and widows in 2011 (Figure 3c) were 48 years and 30 years respectively, resulting in an eighteen-year age gap. The median ages for widowers consistently increased every year from 43 years in 2007 to 48 years in 2011 whereas the median ages for widows were quite stable at 29 years from 2007 to 2008, and increased to 30 years in 2009 until 2011. Median ages at marriage for divorcees are shown in Figure 3d. It is observed that the median ages for male divorcees were generally constant over the five-year period, with an increase of one year from 51 in 2007 to 52 in 2008, and remained at this level until 2011. In comparison, the median age of female divorcee increased from 45 years in 2007 to 47 years in 2011. There was a five-year age difference in the median ages between male and female divorcees in 2011.

Despite the fact that men tend to marry younger women, data in Table 4 indicate that in 2011, 24 507 (14,7%) bridegrooms were younger than their brides whilst 12 504 (7,5%) were of the same age as their brides. This observed age pattern is the same irrespective of the marital status of the bridegroom at the time of marriage (see Figures 4a to 4c). However, the magnitude differs by the marital status of the spouses at the time of marriage. For example, as much as 43,5% of bachelors who married divorcees were younger than their brides (Figure 4a) and 17,9% of male divorcees who married widowed women were also younger than their brides (Figure 4c). A relatively smaller percentage (5,7%) was observed for male divorcees marrying spinsters who were older than themselves (Figure 4c).

2.2 Customary marriages

2.2.1 Trends in the registration of customary marriages (2003–2011)

In 2011, 5 084 customary marriages were registered at the Department of Home Affairs, indicating a decline of 49,1% from 9 996 customary marriages registered in 2010. It is observed from Table 6 that the number of registered customary marriages fluctuated between 2003 and 2007 after which there was a consistent decline. The highest number of registered customary marriages was recorded in 2004 (20 301) whilst the least number was recorded in 2011 (5 084).

The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No. 120 of 1998) prescribes that customary marriages entered after the commencement of this Act must be registered within a period of three months after the conclusion of the marriage and those entered before the Act to be registered within 12 months of the commencement of the Act. Figure 5 shows that the majority of customary marriages were registered later than the year of marriage. During the period from 2007 to 2011, the proportion of marriages that were registered in the same year they took place, ranged from only 4,7% in 2007 to 14,2% in 2011, indicating a modest increase over time.

2.2.2 Marital status at the time of customary marriage

Since the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 does not prohibit a male person already in a customary marriage to enter into a civil marriage or another customary marriage, it would be of interest to distinguish between first time spouses and those who have married before (i.e. those in polygynous marriages, divorcees, widows and widowers). However, in the absence of data on marital status at the time of the registration of customary marriage, this distinction cannot be made.

2.2.3 Age at the time of customary marriage

The age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage is presented in Table 7. In 2011, there were 14 (0,3%) bridegrooms and 174 (3,4%) brides who were younger than 18 years. The median ages at the time of customary marriage are presented in Figure 6. Similar to civil marriages, bridegrooms were generally older than brides, with an age difference of about five to six years for customary marriages registered between 2007 and 2011.

For both bridegrooms and brides, median ages at the time of customary marriage increased gradually over time – median ages of bridegrooms increased from 30 years in 2007 to 32 years in 2011 and those for brides increased from 24 years to 27 years during the same period. A further comparison of the ages of bridegrooms and brides (see Figure 7) shows that in 2011, 83,9% of bridegrooms were older than their brides whilst 11,2% were younger than their brides and 5,0% were of the same age.

2.3 Civil unions

2.3.1 Trends in the registration of civil unions (2007–2011)

Data in Table 8 show that in 2011, 867 civil unions were registered (including the registration of nine civil unions of South African citizens and permanent residents living outside South Africa). In general, the number of civil unions registered in South Africa increased from 80 in 2007 to 888 in 2010 and then declined marginally to 867 in 2011. The provincial distribution of civil unions registered in 2011 indicates that Gauteng (381) and Western Cape (238) were the provinces with the highest number of registrations of civil unions. In total, nearly three quarters (71,4%) of civil unions in 2011 were registered in these two provinces. Since 2008, the lowest number of registered civil unions was recorded in North West, with only three civil unions registered in 2011.

2.3.2 Marital status at the time of civil union

It would be of interest to distinguish between first time spouses and those who had married before (i.e. divorcees, widows and widowers) and the type of marriage relationship they were in. However, in the absence of data on marital status at the time of the registration of civil union, this distinction cannot be made.

2.3.3 Age at the time of civil union

Spouses are distinguished as spouse-1 and spouse-2, based on the information completed by the spouses at the time of civil union registration. The number of civil unions classified by the ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of the solemnisation of civil union is presented in Table 9. It is observed that there were five spouses-1 and 10 spouses-2 that were younger than 20 years old.

As observed from Figure 8, the median ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of solemnisation of the civil union declined since 2007. Furthermore, the median ages of spouses-1 were greater than those of spouses-2. Over the five-year period, the yearly differences in the median ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 ranged between two and four years. The median ages of spouses-1 declined by four years from 40 years in 2007 to 36 years in 2011. Similarly, the median ages of spouses-2 declined by two years from 36 years in 2007 to 34 years in 2011. Data in Figure 9 further show that spouses-1 were generally older than spouses-2. In 2011, 58,4% of spouses-1 were older than their spouses, whilst 34,1% were younger than their spouses and 7,5% were of the same age.

3. Divorces

3.1 Trends in divorces (2002–2012)

The 2011 data on divorces reported in this statistical release covers data from 43 courts as highlighted in Section 1 (Introduction), based exclusively on divorces from civil marriages. From these courts, a total of 20 980 divorces from civil marriages were processed. This indicates a decrease of 1 956 (8,5%) divorces from the 22 936 cases processed in 2010, which may largely be explained by some 2011 divorce forms that did not reach Statistics South Africa before this publication (see Table 10). The table shows that the total number of divorces generally fluctuated over the period 2002–2011, with the highest number observed in 2005 (32 484) and the lowest in 2011 (20 980).

Table 10 also provides data on divorces classified by year the divorce was granted and population group. Couples from the white population group dominated the number of divorces between 2002 and 2007, after which the black African couples had the highest number of divorces up to 2011. In 2002, 45,2% of the divorcees were from the white population group whereas 22,5% came from the black African group. By 2011, 35,8% of the divorcees were from the black African population group and 32,1% from the white population group. The proportions of the divorcees from the coloured and the Indian/Asian population groups were quite invariable during the ten-year period. However, there was a notable increase in the proportions of divorcees from the coloured population group (from 13,9% in 2010 to 16,6% in 2011).

3.2 Characteristics of plaintiffs

The 2011 data presented in Table 11 show that there were more female 10 408 (49,6%) than male 7 212 (34,4%) plaintiffs. The plaintiff was unspecified in 3 355 (16,0%) of divorces. With the exception of females from the black African population who had a lower proportion of plaintiffs (39,7%), the proportion of female plaintiffs from other population groups was above 50,0%. That is, 56,8%, 56,2% and 52,4% of plaintiffs from the white, coloured and Indian/Asian population groups, respectively, were females. However, it should also be noted that the black African population group had a much higher proportion of unspecified sex of the plaintiff (22,4%).

Table 12 provides information on the occupation of the plaintiffs. It is noted that a high proportion of the plaintiffs (13,5% of the males and 19,4% of the females) did not indicate the type of occupation they were engaged in at the time of divorce. In addition, 27,3% and 30,6% of the males and females respectively were not economically active at the time of divorce.

For specified occupations, most of those who divorced in 2011 were in clerical and sales occupations (11,5%) and managers and administrators (10,2%), with some differences observed by sex of the plaintiff. Husbands who divorced were largely managers and administrators (14,7%) while females who divorces were mainly in clerical and sales occupations (18,2%). Less than a quarter of males (23,6%) and females (20,2%) were in the professional and managerial occupations. Very few plaintiffs were in farming and related occupations.

3.3 Solemnisation of marriages that ended in divorce

Data presented in Table 13 show that 3 961 (18,9%) of the 2011 divorce cases were from marriages that were solemnised by religious rites and 16 080 (76,6%) by DHA marriage officers. This indicates that in general, the marriages that are eventually dissolved are mostly solemnised by DHA marriage officers, which also follows from the fact that most marriages are solemnised in this way. A similar pattern was also found among all population groups, although the magnitude differs. Over 90% of divorces for the black African (91,0%) and the coloured (91,3%) population groups were solemnised by DHA marriage officials, compared to 83,9% for Indians/Asians and 42,6% for the white population.

3.4 Number of times married

Table 14 shows that the 2011 divorce cases for both males and females were mainly from individuals who had married once. About 80,0% of divorces for males and females were from first-time marriages compared to approximately 10,0% from second-time marriages. About 2,0% of males and females were getting divorced for at least the third time.

3.5 Age at the time of divorce

The median ages at divorce in 2011 were 42 years for males and 38 years for females, indicating that males generally divorced at older ages than females, with a difference of about four years. The median age for males was up from 41 years in 2010 while it remained the same for females for 2010 and 2011. The pattern of median ages in 2011 by population group (see Figure 10) shows that black African males had the highest median age (43 years) at the time of divorce while females from the mixed group had the lowest median age (34 years). The age difference at the time of divorce was highest for black African couples (five years) and was between two and three years for other couples.

Detailed information on age by population groups and sex is presented in Figures 11 and 12 as well as Tables 15 and 16. Although there are differences in the ages at which most males and females from the various population groups divorced, the age patterns are quite similar. The data reveal that there were fewer divorces among the younger (less than 25 years old) and the older (55 years and older) divorcees. For male divorcees, the peak age group at divorce was 35–39 for Indian/Asian and coloured population groups while the peak for the black African and white population groups was 40–44 (Figure 11). In the case of females, the peak age group was generally at age group 35–39 for all population groups (Figure 12).

3.6 Duration of marriage of divorcing couples

Tables 17 and Table 18 show the number of divorcees by duration of marriage for divorces granted in 2011. The largest number [5 535 (26,4%)] of the divorces were for marriages that lasted between five and nine years. This group is followed by marriages that lasted less than five years [4 489 (21,4%)]. Thus, almost half (47,8%) of the 20 980 divorces in 2011 were marriages that lasted for less than 10 years.

Divorces for the black African, coloured and Indian/Asian population groups occurred mostly to couples who had married for five to nine years whereas for the white population group those that divorced did so mostly during their first five years of marriage (see Figure 13). Furthermore, the number of divorces for the white population consistently declined as the duration of marriage increased and this pattern is observed for marriages lasting for five to nine years for the other population groups.

3.7 Divorces involving couples with children

In 2011, 11 475 (54,7%) of the 20 980 divorces had children younger than 18 years (see Table 19). The proportions of divorces with children were quite high among the coloured population group (64,4%), Indians/Asians (57,8%) and the black Africans (57,1%). The distribution of the number of children affected by divorce shows that 37,4% were from the black African population group; 27,1% from the white population group and 20,2% from the coloured population group. As provided in Table 20, there were 18 571 children (younger than 18 years old) involved in divorce indicating that, on average, there was between one and two children per divorce.

4. Summary and concluding remarks

This statistical release provided information on civil and customary marriages, civil unions and divorces for 2011, based on data from the South African national marriage registration systems of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and data of divorces granted by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. The information on marriages and divorces is important for understanding the formation and dissolution of marriage relationships.

In total, 167 264 civil marriages were registered in South Africa in 2011, most of which were solemnised by DHA marriage officers. The highest number of civil marriages was registered in Gauteng, followed by KwaZulu- Natal and Eastern Cape, and the lowest was registered in Mpumalanga. The majority of civil marriages in 2011 for both brides and bridegrooms were first time marriages, with women generally entering into marriage at younger ages than men.

The number of registered customary marriages was 5 084 in 2011, which declined from a total of 9 996 recorded in 2010. The majority of bridegrooms were older than their brides, with the gap in median ages at registration of marriage much wider for customary marriages than other types of marriages.

Less than one thousand (867) civil unions were registered in South Africa in 2011, most of which were registered in Gauteng and Western Cape, and lowest in North West. Spouses recorded as spouses-1 were usually older than those recorded as spouses-2.

With regard to divorces, the data from the 43 courts showed that 20 980 divorces were granted in South Africa in 2011. Among these divorcees, there was an apparent increase in the proportion of divorces for black Africans from 2002 to 2008 while the reverse was true for the white population group. Divorces were mainly from people who had married for the first time. There were more female than male plaintiffs although males generally divorced at a later age than females. About 18 571 children were affected by divorces that took place in 2011.

Overall, the information provided in this release showed fluctuations over time in the number of marriages, unions and divorces in the country. Areas of improvement in the quality of data were noted, particularly relating to completeness of information pertaining to unspecified province of registration, way of solemnisation and marital status at time of marriage for the data on marriages and civil unions; and unspecified population group and occupation of plaintiff for the divorces data. Concerted efforts are needed from the public, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and Statistics South Africa to improve the quality and content of information on marriages and divorces in South Africa.

Figure 1. Number of civil marriages by month of solemnisation, 2007–2011

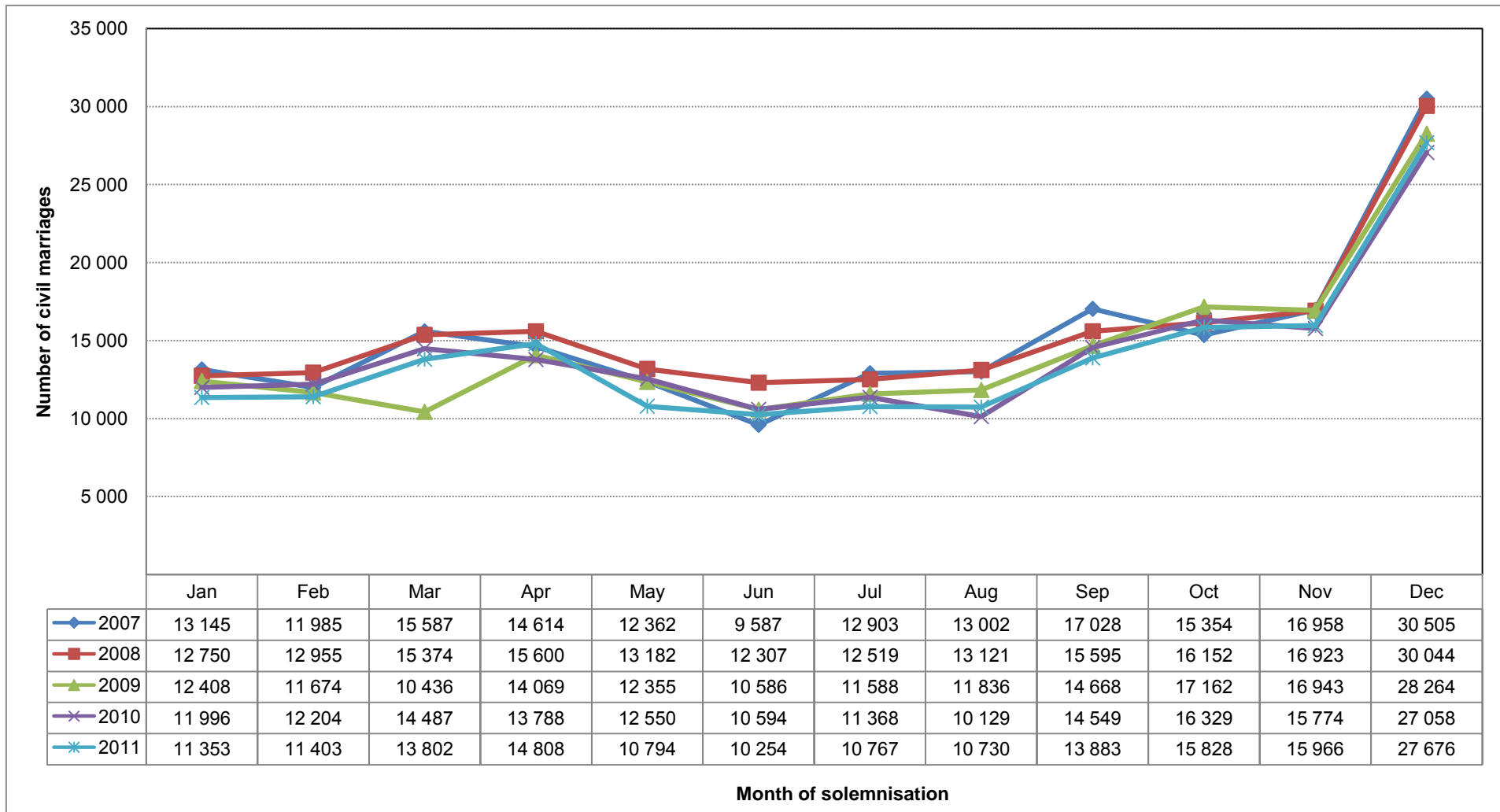
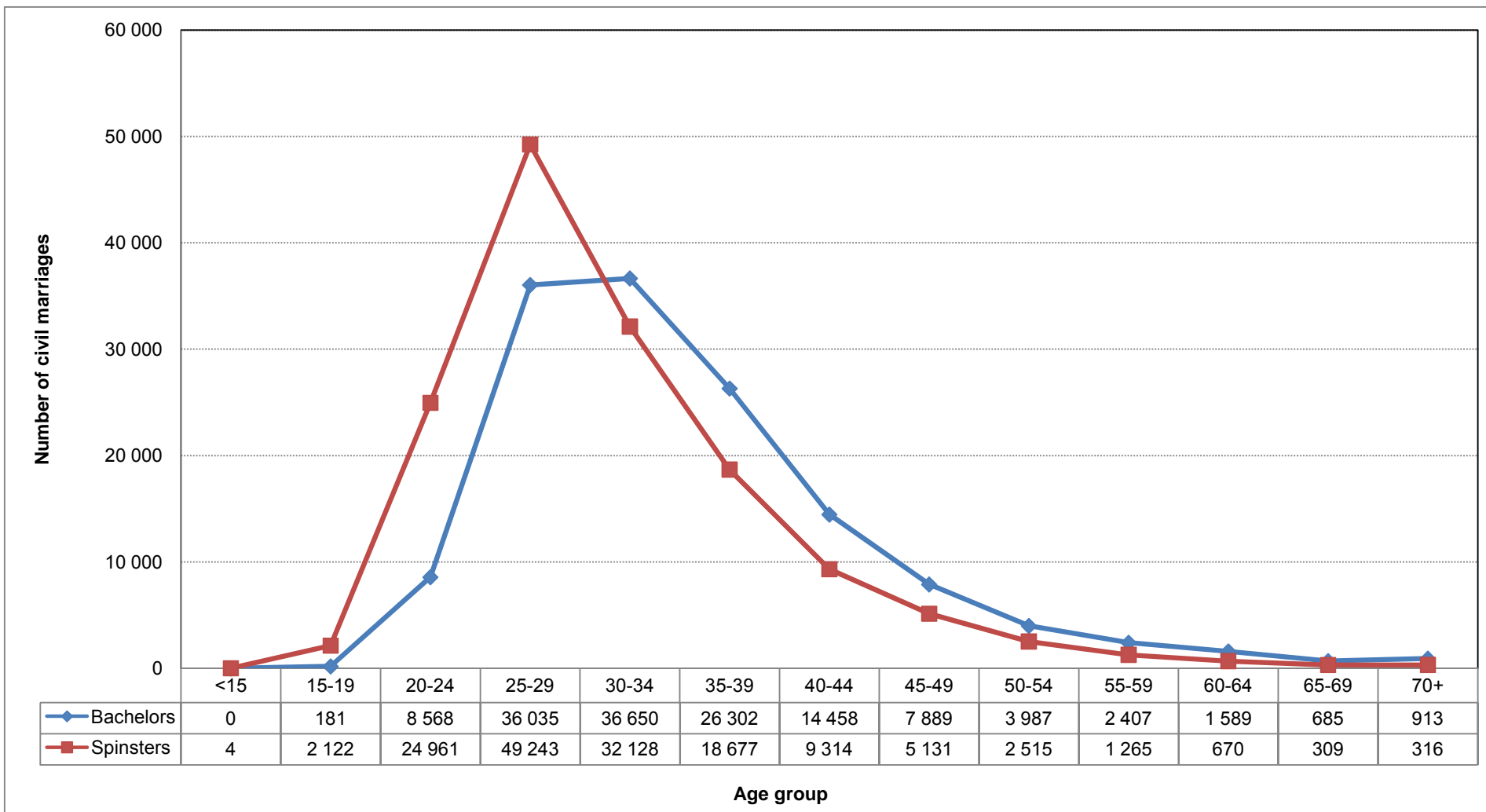


Figure 2. Number of civil marriages for bachelors and spinsters by age group, 2011*



*Excluding 2 cases with unspecified age

Figure 3a. Median ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of civil marriage, 2007–2011

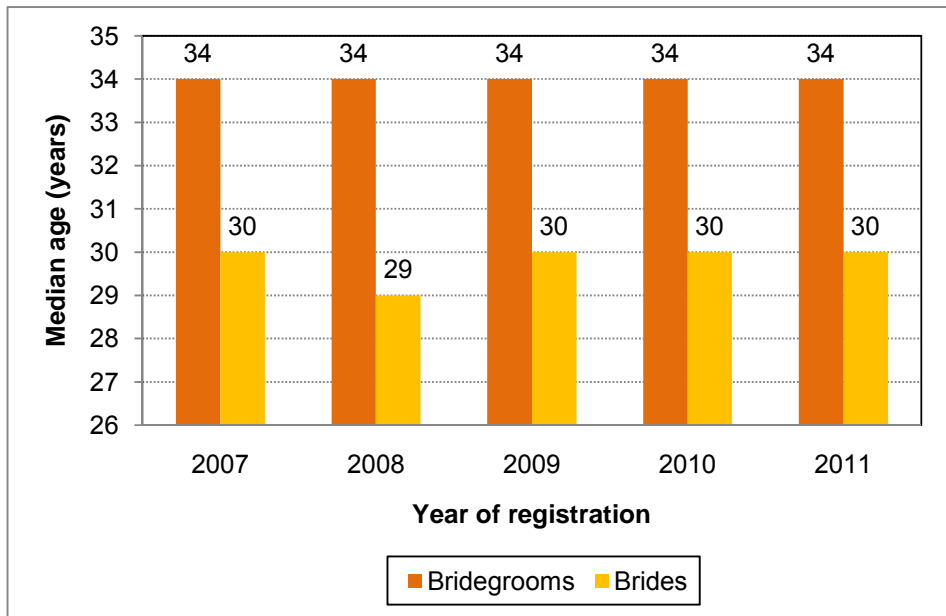


Figure 3b. Median ages of bachelors and spinsters at the time of civil marriage, 2007–2011



Figure 3c. Median ages of widowers and widows at the time of civil marriage, 2007–2011

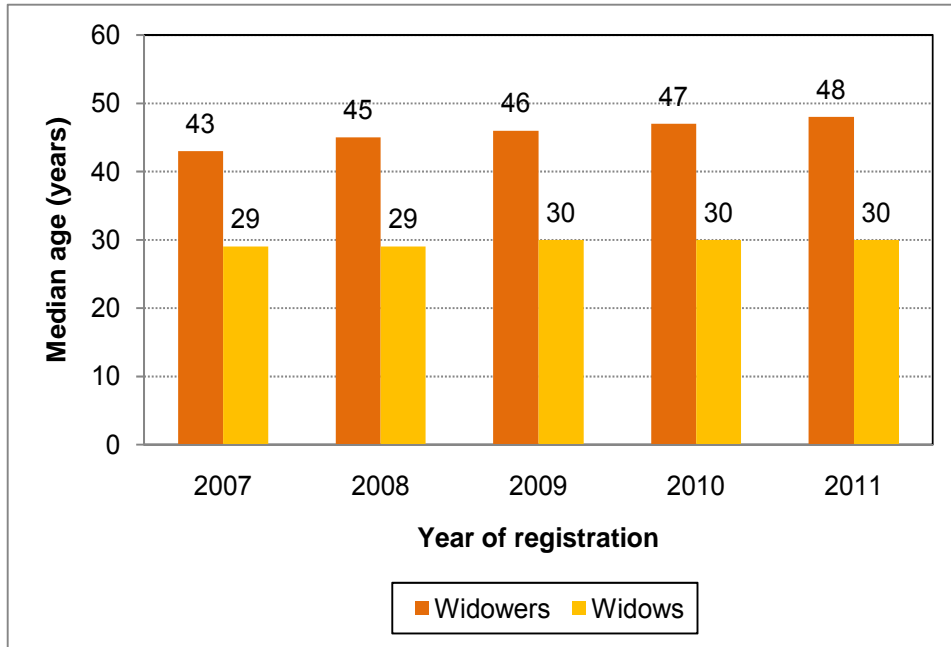


Figure 3d. Median ages of male and female divorcees at the time of civil marriage, 2007–2011

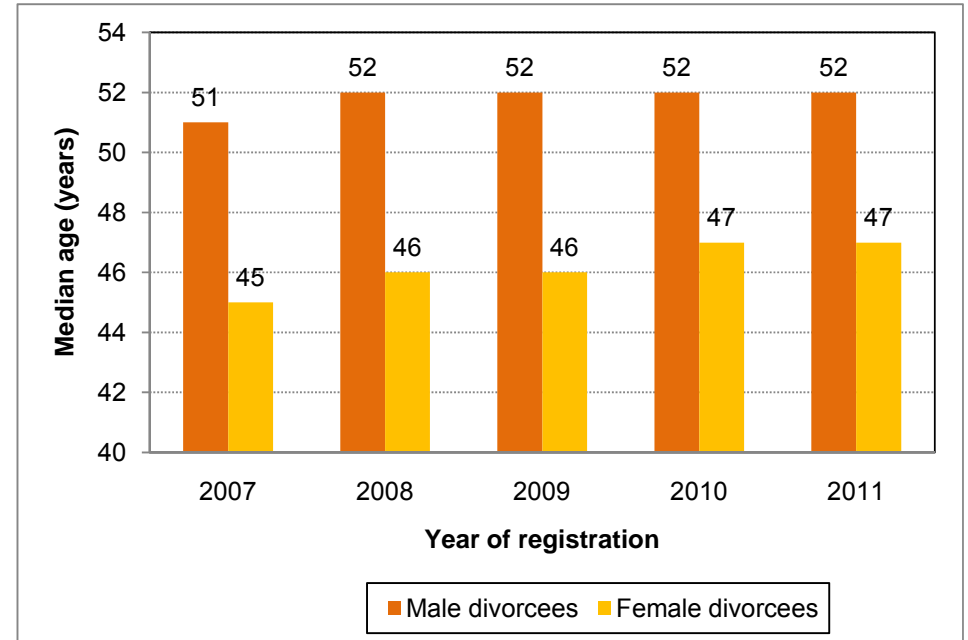
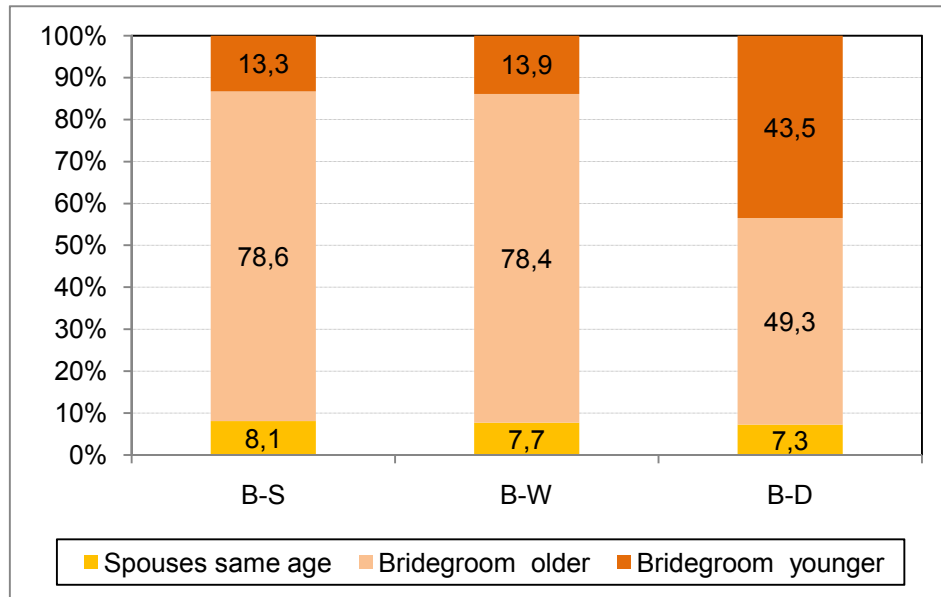
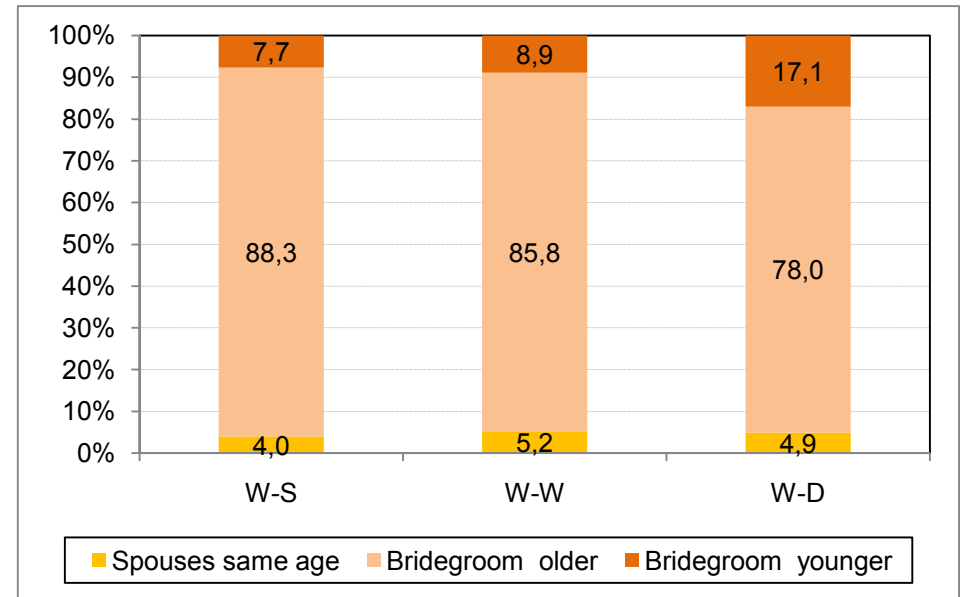


Figure 4a. Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage (bachelors), 2011*



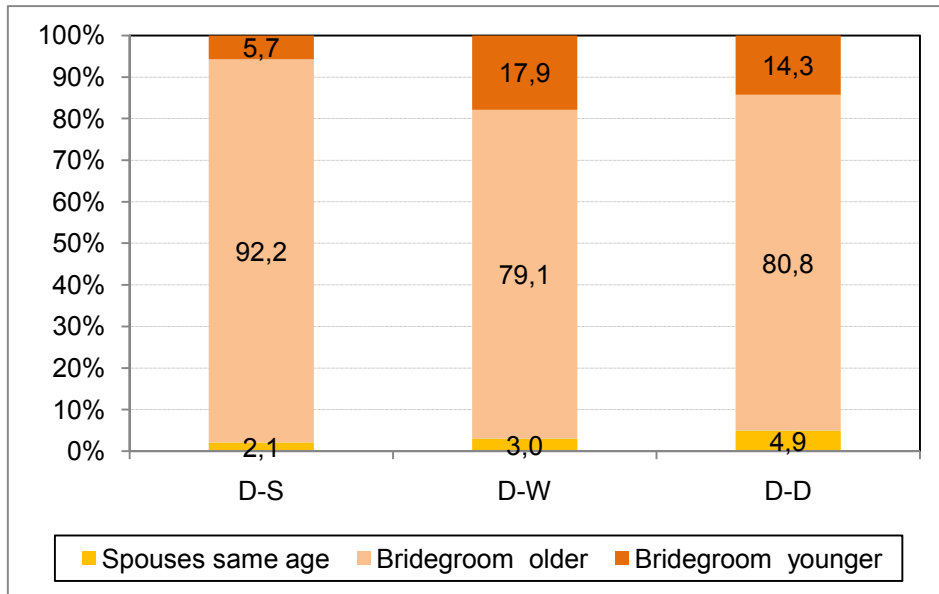
* B – S = Bachelor to Spinster
 B – W = Bachelor to Widow
 B – D = Bachelor to Divorcee

Figure 4b. Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage (widowers), 2011*



* B – S = Widower to Spinster
 B – W = Widower to Widow
 B – D = Widower to Divorcee

Figure 4c. Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage (divorcees), 2011*



* D – S = Divorcee to Spinster
 D – W = Divorcees to Widow
 D – D = Divorcee to Divorcee

Figure 5. Percentage distribution of customary marriages by year of marriage and time it took to register the marriage, 2007–2011

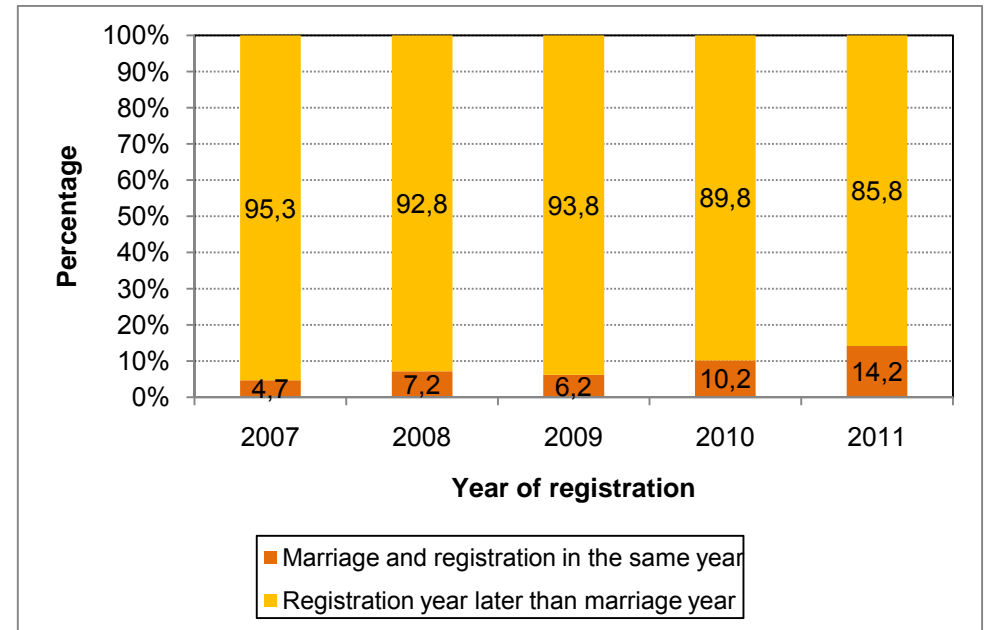


Figure 6. Median ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, 2007–2011

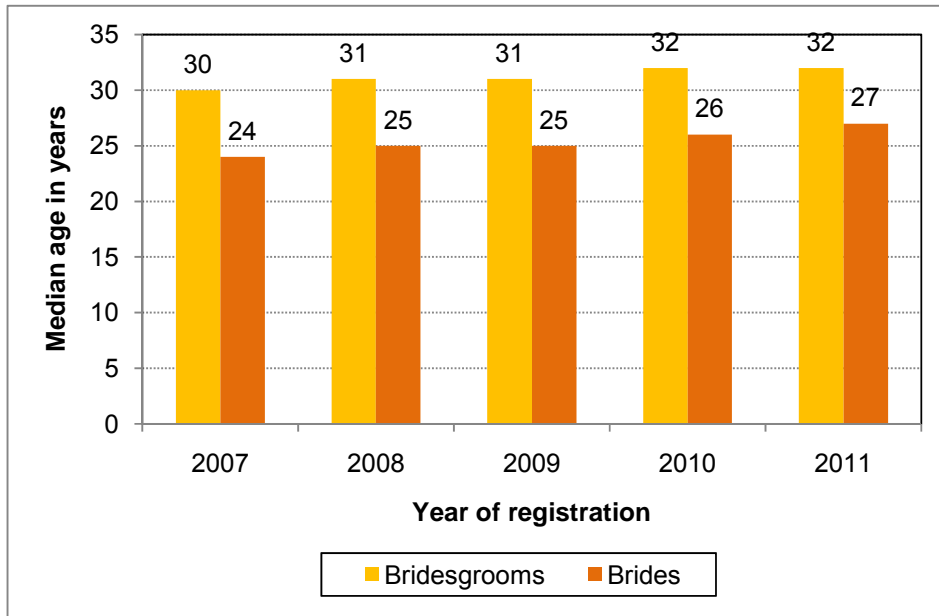


Figure 7. Percentage distribution of customary marriages by age differences between spouses at the time of marriages, 2007–2011

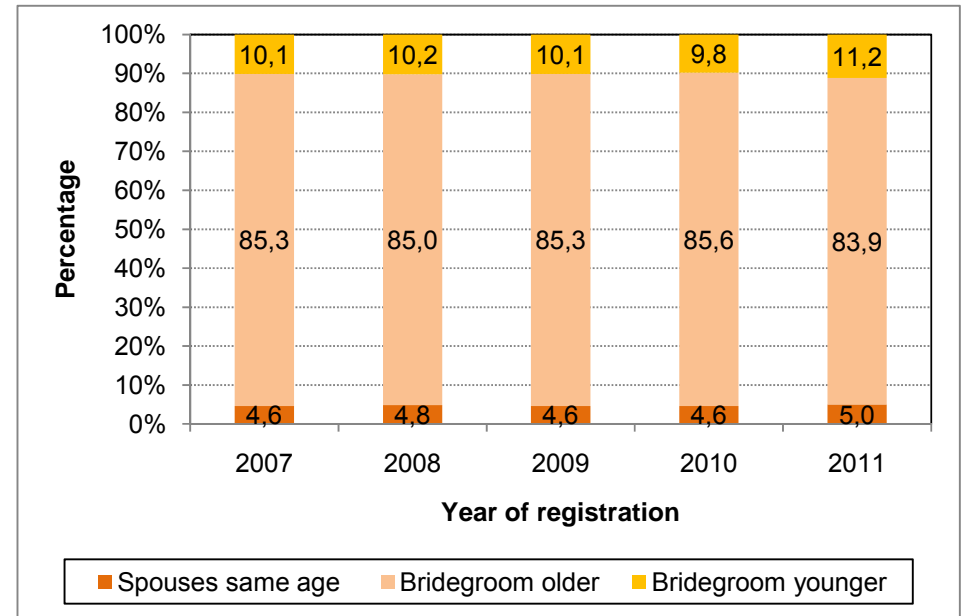


Figure 8. Median ages of spouses in civil unions, 2007–2011

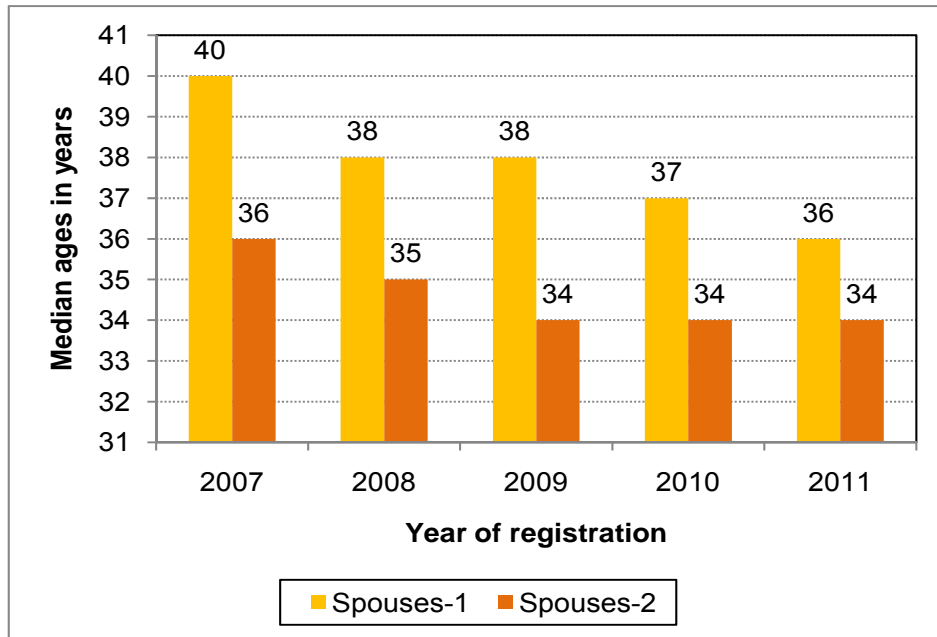


Figure 9. Percentage distribution of civil unions by age differences between spouses at the time of union, 2007–2011

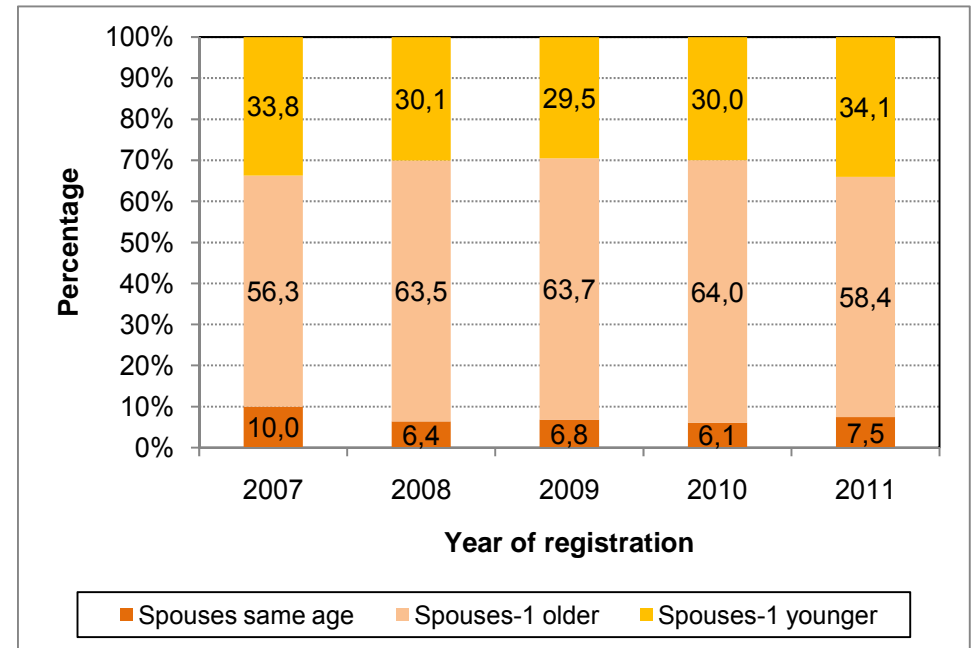


Figure 10. Median ages of divorcees by sex and population group, 2011

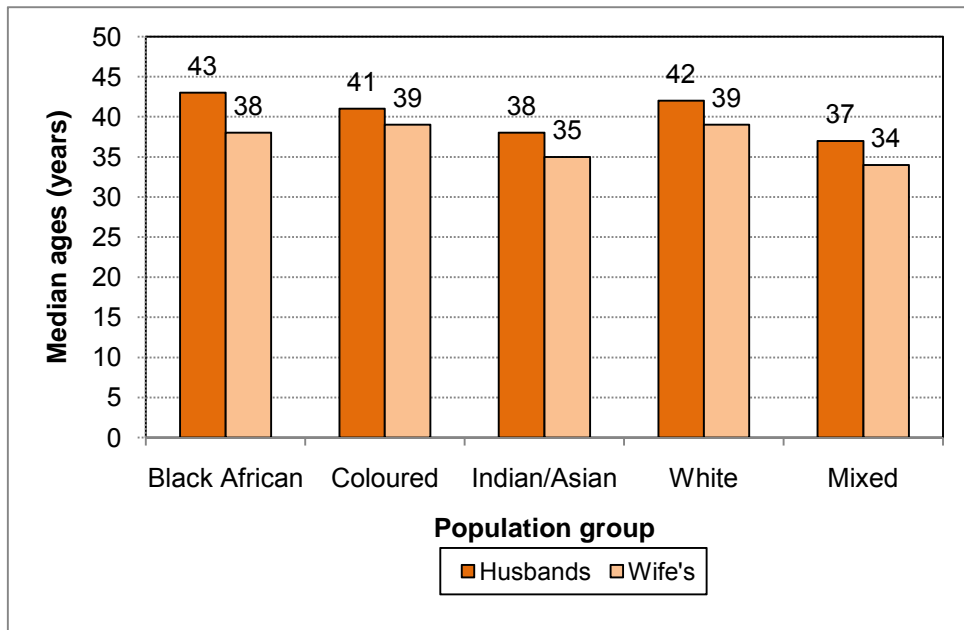


Figure 11. Number of divorces by age group and population group (males), 2011

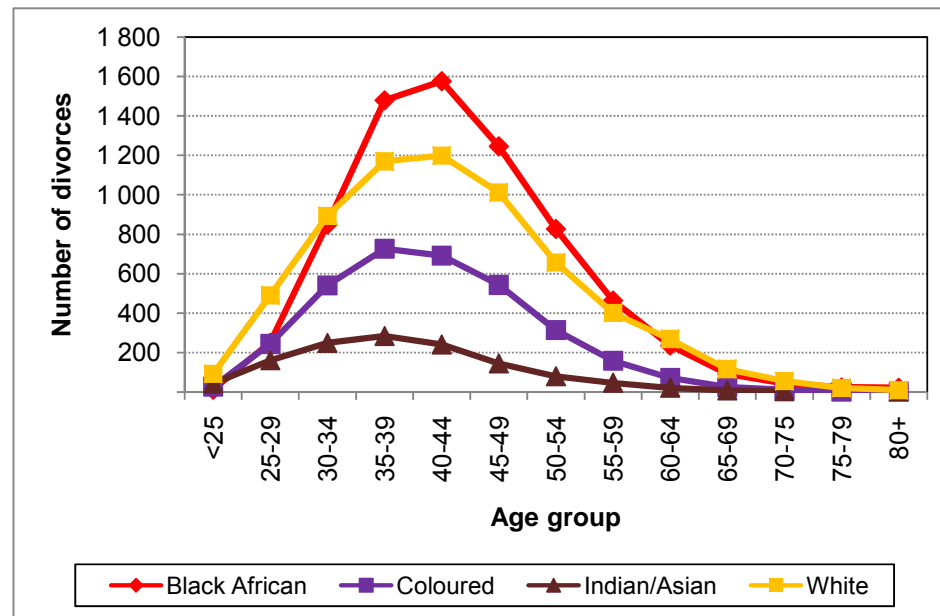


Figure 12. Number of divorces by age group and population group (females), 2011

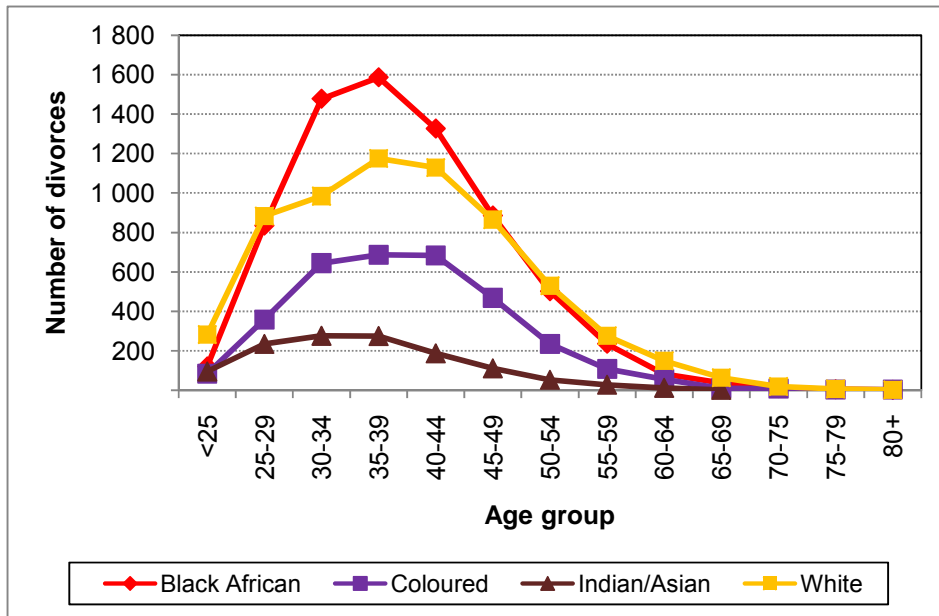


Figure 13. Number of divorces by duration of marriage and population group, 2011

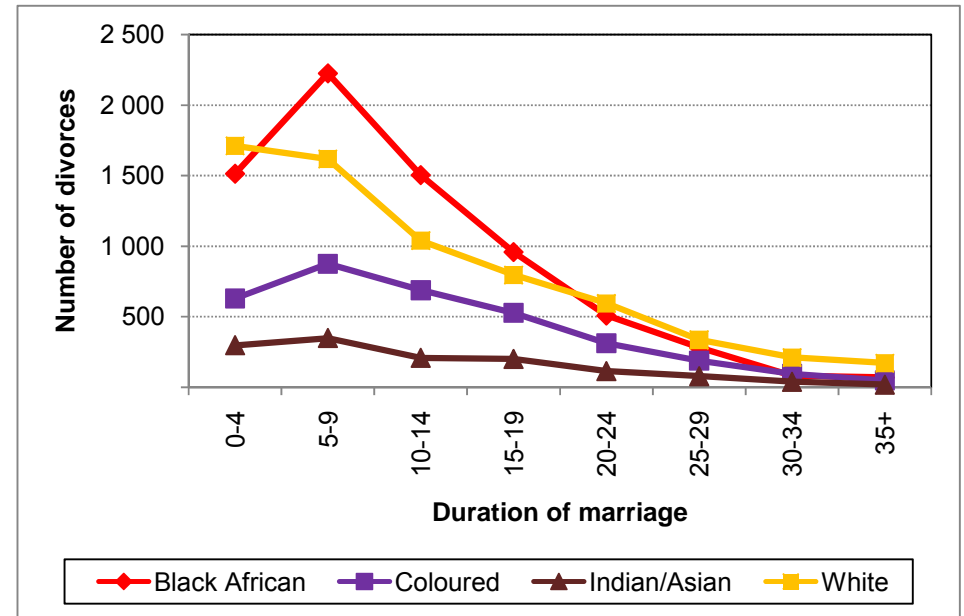


Table 1. Number of registered civil marriages in South Africa, 2002–2011

Year of registration	Number of marriages
2002	177 202
2003	178 689
2004	176 521
2005	180 657
2006	184 860
2007	183 030
2008	186 522
2009	171 989
2010	170 826
2011	167 264

Table 2. Number of civil marriages by way of solemnisation and province of marriage registration, 2011

Province of registration	Way of solemnisation				Percentages			
	Grand Total	DHA	Religious	Unspecified	Total	DHA	Religious	Unspecified
Grand Total	167 264	85 311	56 405	25 548	100,0	51,0	33,7	15,3
Western Cape	27 596	11 636	13 150	2 810	100,0	42,2	47,7	10,2
Eastern Cape	26 980	12 721	9 618	4 641	100,0	47,1	35,6	17,2
Northern Cape	5 063	2 756	1 931	376	100,0	54,4	38,1	7,4
Free State	10 560	6 669	3 513	378	100,0	63,2	33,3	3,6
KwaZulu-Natal	27 545	12 940	9 995	4 610	100,0	47,0	36,3	16,7
North West	10 846	8 082	2 451	313	100,0	74,5	22,6	2,9
Gauteng	34 267	18 190	9 384	6 693	100,0	53,1	27,4	19,5
Mpumalanga	7 268	2 443	2 205	2 620	100,0	33,6	30,3	36,0
Limpopo	11 044	6 822	2 400	1 822	100,0	61,8	21,7	16,5
Outside South Africa	311	301	10	-	100,0	96,8	3,2	0,0
Unspecified	5 784	2 751	1 748	1 285	100,0	47,6	30,2	22,2

Table 3. Number of civil marriages for bridegrooms and brides by marital status at time of marriage and province of marriage registration, 2011

Province of registration	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Grand Total	167 264	139 666	5 469	2 363	19 766	167 264	146 655	3 521	1 864	15 224
Western Cape	27 596	22 452	887	66	4 191	27 596	23 588	702	36	3 270
Eastern Cape	26 980	22 730	790	315	3 145	26 980	23 764	542	215	2 459
Northern Cape	5 063	4 277	209	52	525	5 063	4 516	139	32	376
Free State	10 560	8 881	397	173	1 109	10 560	9 274	255	198	833
KwaZulu-Natal	27 545	23 756	950	528	2 311	27 545	24 949	432	412	1 752
North West	10 846	9 206	355	113	1 172	10 846	9 737	243	60	806
Gauteng	34 267	27 833	1 083	572	4 779	34 267	29 117	763	484	3 903
Mpumalanga	7 268	5 959	270	185	854	7 268	6 303	170	138	657
Limpopo	11 044	9 462	345	217	1 020	11 044	10 099	147	129	669
Outside South Africa	311	249	3		59	311	260	7	1	43
Unspecified	5 784	4 861	180	142	601	5 784	5 048	121	159	456

Table 4. Number of civil marriages by marital status of husband and age differences between spouses at the time of marriage, 2011*

Age difference	Grand Total	Bachelor to					Divorcee to				
		Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Total	167 264	139 666	131 731	1 254	1 337	5 344	5 469	3 245	917	67	1 240
Bridegroom older	130 253	107 631	103 549	618	1 048	2 416	4 780	2 992	741	53	994
Bridegroom younger	24 507	20 792	17 552	545	186	2 509	509	185	131	12	181
Same age	12 504	11 243	10 630	91	103	419	180	68	45	2	65

Age difference	Widower to				
	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Total	2 363	1 887	41	381	54
Bridegroom older	2 070	1 667	32	327	44
Bridegroom younger	192	145	7	34	6
Same age	101	75	2	20	4

*Excluding 19 766 marriages with unspecified marital status of bridegroom

Table 5. Number of marriages by marital status at the time of marriage and ages of bridegrooms and brides, 2011

Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Total	167 264	139 666	5 469	2 363	19 766	167 264	146 655	3 521	1 864	15 224
<18	18	11	-	7	-	238	223	1	14	-
18	38	38	-	-	-	627	584	5	16	22
19	135	134	-	-	1	1 338	1 275	6	20	37
18-19	173	172	-	-	1	1 965	1 903	4	55	3
20	365	361	1	3		2 202	2 147	1	50	4
21	793	787		5	1	3 562	3 466	4	84	8
22	1 508	1 470	1	31	6	4 966	4 848	6	92	20
23	2 527	2 480	3	37	7	6 627	6 484	6	101	36
24	3 526	3 470	1	40	15	8 185	8 016	9	105	55
20-24	8 719	8 568	6	116	29	25 542	24 961	26	432	123
25	5 279	5 195	5	54	25	9 789	9 574	10	90	115
26	6 777	6 664	6	64	43	10 697	10 385	20	104	188
27	7 647	7 487	9	75	76	10 478	10 131	24	87	236
28	8 410	8 176	15	73	146	10 248	9 844	27	66	311
29	8 790	8 513	11	74	192	9 765	9 309	41	52	363
25-29	36 903	36 035	46	340	482	50 977	49 243	122	399	1 213
30	8 370	8 049	15	59	247	8 471	7 934	42	55	440
31	8 222	7 844	18	64	296	7 908	7 317	52	44	495
32	7 855	7 421	26	53	355	6 930	6 331	48	36	515
33	7 137	6 647	26	28	436	6 205	5 545	52	35	573
34	7 243	6 689	52	28	474	5 610	5 001	72	29	508
30-34	38 827	36 650	137	232	1 808	35 124	32 128	266	199	2 531

Table 5. Number of marriages by marital status at the time of marriage and ages of bridegrooms and brides, 2011 (continued)

Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
35	6 826	6 137	56	23	610	5 209	4 489	94	26	600
36	6 619	5 863	69	18	669	5 024	4 299	96	20	609
37	6 111	5 284	79	21	727	4 481	3 735	113	16	617
38	5 582	4 664	111	27	780	3 945	3 180	104	9	652
39	5 336	4 354	135	2	845	3 797	2 974	121	11	691
35-39	30 474	26 302	450	91	3 631	22 456	18 677	528	82	3 169
40	4 261	3 337	118	12	794	2 852	2 091	89	9	663
41	4 503	3 475	148	9	871	3 021	2 260	105	6	650
42	3 885	2 831	145	29	880	2 648	1 880	125	9	634
43	3 709	2 718	154	42	795	2 492	1 754	124	7	607
44	3 066	2 097	160	56	753	2 017	1 329	97	19	572
40-44	19 424	14 458	725	148	4 093	13 030	9 314	540	50	3 126
45	2 921	1 905	167	72	777	1 910	1 236	133	19	522
46	2 832	1 745	194	80	813	1 746	1 094	121	26	505
47	2 621	1 552	188	94	787	1 673	1 047	108	40	478
48	2 468	1 428	172	109	759	1 482	885	132	40	425
49	2 263	1 259	187	90	727	1 410	869	102	47	392
45-49	13 105	7 889	908	445	3 863	8 221	5 131	596	172	2 322
50	1 773	912	177	87	597	1 167	614	109	37	407
51	1 782	934	180	82	586	1 071	616	100	47	308
52	1 517	727	165	86	539	911	475	100	42	294
53	1 549	794	141	86	528	822	444	94	39	245
54	1 334	620	171	59	484	703	366	74	39	224
50-54	7 955	3 987	834	400	2 734	4 674	2 515	477	204	1 478

Table 5. Number of marriages by marital status at the time of marriage and ages of bridegrooms and brides, 2011 (concluded)

Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
55	1 204	558	162	59	425	605	310	91	30	174
56	1 064	525	145	62	332	566	284	80	37	165
57	1 032	467	140	68	357	449	223	54	28	144
58	893	430	133	49	281	436	228	55	31	122
59	835	427	146	53	209	424	220	69	27	108
55-59	5 028	2 407	726	291	1 604	2 480	1 265	349	153	713
60	762	381	122	33	226	330	157	65	20	88
61	793	393	151	30	219	317	172	51	18	76
62	610	302	98	49	161	214	100	48	7	59
63	596	287	109	40	160	260	137	52	13	58
64	506	226	112	30	138	219	104	48	16	51
60-64	3 267	1 589	592	182	904	1 340	670	264	74	332
65	409	194	84	25	106	174	83	45	2	44
66	312	137	80	15	80	136	66	34	8	28
67	278	122	69	13	74	134	74	30	3	27
68	253	99	80	11	63	108	35	36	5	32
69	302	133	94	18	57	101	51	33	1	16
65-69	1 554	685	407	82	380	653	309	178	19	147
70+	1 817	913	638	29	237	564	316	170	11	67

Table 6. Number of registered customary marriages in South Africa, 2003–2011

Year of registration	Number of marriages
2003	17 283
2004	20 301
2005	19 252
2006	14 039
2007	20 259
2008	16 003
2009	13 506
2010	9 996
2011	5 084

Table 7. Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2011

Age	Bridegrooms	Brides
Total	5 084	5 084
<18	14	174
18	12	177
19	46	242
18-19	58	419
20	68	274
21	114	299
22	157	268
23	198	269
24	191	248
20-24	728	1358
25	230	270
26	251	236
27	243	234
28	264	225
29	206	210
25-29	1 194	1 175
30	241	192
31	225	181
32	193	152
33	163	140
34	157	127
30-34	979	792

Table 7. Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2011 (continued)

Age	Bridegrooms	Brides
35	194	133
36	147	110
37	140	99
38	145	97
39	127	81
35-39	753	520
40	102	72
41	110	68
42	107	55
43	84	48
44	88	53
40-44	491	296
45	76	52
46	76	36
47	79	38
48	62	28
49	54	23
45-49	347	177
50	51	21
51	47	19
52	48	19
53	34	11
54	31	10
50-54	211	80

Table 7. Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2011 (concluded)

Age	Bridegrooms	Brides
55	33	10
56	27	7
57	18	4
58	23	5
59	21	7
55-59	122	33
60	19	6
61	26	9
62	17	6
63	10	2
64	11	6
60-64	83	29
65	16	3
66	7	2
67	7	3
68	9	4
69	6	4
65-95	45	16
70+	57	9
Unspecified	2	6

Table 8. Number of registered civil unions in South Africa by province of registration, 2007–2011

Province of registration	Number					Percentage				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Grand Total	80	732	760	888	867	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Western Cape	16	191	227	261	238	20,0	26,1	29,9	29,4	27,5
Eastern Cape	-	41	30	24	29	0,0	5,6	3,9	2,7	3,3
Northern Cape	1	11	43	75	93	1,3	1,5	5,7	8,4	10,7
Free State	1	23	20	26	28	1,3	3,1	2,6	2,9	3,2
KwaZulu-Natal	8	74	87	79	63	10,0	10,1	11,4	8,9	7,3
North West	2	6	5	9	3	2,5	0,8	0,7	1,0	0,3
Gauteng	49	362	324	391	381	61,3	49,5	42,6	44,0	43,9
Mpumalanga	3	7	11	11	16	3,8	1,0	1,4	1,2	1,8
Limpopo	-	15	10	10	7	0,0	2,0	1,3	1,1	0,8
Outside South Africa	-	2	3	2	9	0,0	0,3	0,4	0,2	1,0

Table 9. Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2011

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
Total	867	867
18	1	7
19	4	3
18-19	5	10
20	5	7
21	6	8
22	11	20
23	17	18
24	22	32
20-24	61	85
25	19	29
26	22	37
27	29	35
28	29	32
29	34	45
25-29	133	178
30	29	30
31	43	28
32	40	44
33	34	33
34	39	36
30-34	185	171

Table 9. Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2011 (continued)

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
35	34	37
36	24	30
37	32	37
38	24	36
39	30	28
35-39	144	168
40	40	27
41	28	21
42	22	25
43	24	22
44	26	15
40-44	140	110
45	20	19
46	24	11
47	23	16
48	20	19
49	22	7
45-49	109	72
50	17	15
51	8	8
52	8	8
53	6	2
54	4	4
50-54	43	37

Table 9. Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2011 (concluded)

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
55	3	5
56	7	3
57	7	3
58	2	4
59	2	5
55-59	21	20
60	10	2
61	3	6
62	1	2
63	1	-
64	15	10
60-64	-	2
65	-	-
66	2	-
67	1	2
68	2	-
69	5	4
65-69	6	2
70+	3	5

Table 10. Number of published divorces in South Africa by population group, 2002–2011

Year	Total	Numbers						Percentages					
		Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
2002	31 370	7 050	3 581	1 525	14 171	365	4 678	22,5	11,4	4,9	45,2	1,2	14,9
2003	31 566	7 657	3 911	1 508	12 639	532	5 319	24,3	12,4	4,8	40,0	1,7	16,9
2004	31 768	8 965	3 300	1 648	12 437	594	4 824	28,2	10,4	5,2	39,1	1,9	15,2
2005	32 484	8 672	3 568	1 635	11 582	538	6 489	26,7	11,0	5,0	35,7	1,7	20,0
2006	31 270	9 113	3 451	1 676	11 079	613	5 338	29,1	11,0	5,4	35,4	2,0	17,1
2007	29 639	9 055	3 558	1 715	9 935	865	4 511	30,6	12,0	5,8	33,5	2,9	15,2
2008	28 924	10 110	3 057	1 802	9 481	902	3 572	35,0	10,6	6,2	32,8	3,1	12,3
2009	30 763	10 528	4 016	1 610	9 981	2 912	1 716	34,2	13,1	5,2	32,4	9,5	5,6
2010	22 936	8 169	3 189	1 294	6 995	31	3 258	35,6	13,9	5,6	30,5	0,1	14,2
2011	20 980	7 517	3 473	1 359	6 730	-	1 901	35,8	16,6	6,5	32,1	0,0	9,1

Table 11. Number of divorces by sex and population group of the plaintiff, 2011

Population group	Number				Percentage			
	Total	Males	Females	Unspecified	Total	Males	Females	Unspecified
Total	20 980	7 217	10 408	3 355	100,0	34,4	49,6	16,0
Black African	7 517	2 852	2 982	1 683	100,0	37,9	39,7	22,4
Coloured	3 473	1 004	1 951	518	100,0	28,9	56,2	14,9
Indian/Asian	1 359	443	712	204	100,0	32,6	52,4	15,0
White	6 730	2 193	3 826	711	100,0	32,6	56,8	10,6
Unspecified	1 901	725	937	239	100,0	38,1	49,3	12,6

Table 12. Number of divorces by sex and type of occupation of the plaintiff, 2011

Occupation	Number				Percentage			
	Total	Males	Females	Unspecified	Total	Males	Females	Unspecified
Total	20 980	7 217	10 408	3 355	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Professional, semi professionals and tech occupations	1 674	640	1 034	-	8,0	8,9	9,9	0,0
Managers and administrators	2 134	1 061	1 073	-	10,2	14,7	10,3	0,0
Clerical and sales occupations	2 412	516	1 896	-	11,5	7,1	18,2	0,0
Transport delivery and communications	371	337	34	-	1,8	4,7	0,3	0,0
Services occupations	1 573	717	856	-	7,5	9,9	8,2	0,0
Farming and related occupations	57	46	11	-	0,3	0,6	0,1	0,0
Artisans apprentice and related occupations	561	454	107	-	2,7	6,3	1,0	0,0
Production foreman, mine and quarry worker	691	501	190	-	3,3	6,9	1,8	0,0
Not economically active	5 159	1 972	3 187	-	24,6	27,3	30,6	0,0
Unspecified	6 348	973	2 020	3 355	30,3	13,5	19,4	100,0

Table 13. Number of divorces by population group and way of solemnisation of the marriage, 2011

Population group	Number				Percentage			
	Total	Religious	DHA	Unspecified	Total	Religious	DHA	Unspecified
Total	20 980	3 961	16 080	939	100,0	18,9	76,6	4,5
Black African	7 517	380	6 844	293	100,0	5,1	91,0	3,9
Coloured	3 473	207	3 171	95	100,0	6,0	91,3	2,7
Indian/Asian	1 359	166	1 140	53	100,0	12,2	83,9	3,9
White	6 730	2 869	3 652	209	100,0	42,6	54,3	3,1
Unspecified	1 901	339	1 273	289	100,0	17,8	67,0	15,2

Table 14. Number of divorces by number of times married at the time of divorce, 2011

Number of times married	Number		Percentage	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Total	20 980	20 980	100,0	100,0
Once	16 425	16 599	78,3	79,1
Twice	2 386	2 063	11,4	9,8
Three or more times	421	377	2,0	1,8
Unspecified	1 748	1 941	8,3	9,3

Table 15. Number of divorces by age and population group (males), 2011

Age group	Population group						
	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
Total	20 980	7 702	3 523	1 376	6 801	7	1 571
<25	180	12	27	42	92	1	6
25-29	1 198	251	243	160	490	-	54
30-34	2 700	849	541	248	893	-	169
35-39	3 883	1 479	726	283	1 170	2	-
40-44	3 993	1 576	691	240	1 199	1	286
45-49	3 187	1 246	543	144	1 012	1	241
50-54	2 041	827	314	79	657	-	164
55-59	1 157	464	158	46	401	-	88
60-64	639	236	71	21	269	-	42
65-69	259	91	25	7	117	-	19
70-74	124	42	11	3	56	-	12
75-79	50	24	1	-	21	-	4
80+	37	22	2	1	10	-	2
Unspecified	1 532	583	170	102	414	2	261

Table 16. Number of divorces by age group and population group (females), 2011

Age group	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
Total	20 980	7 647	3 515	1 366	6 771	2	1 679
<25	611	120	84	95	281	-	31
25-29	2 454	834	358	235	882	-	145
30-34	3 594	1 477	644	276	983	1	213
35-39	4 010	1 586	686	275	1 174	1	288
40-44	3 591	1 326	683	187	1 128	-	267
45-49	2 536	885	468	111	864	-	208
50-54	1 436	501	234	53	529	-	119
55-59	721	235	107	28	275	-	76
60-64	328	82	56	12	148	-	30
65-69	120	36	10	2	63	-	9
70-74	40	10	7	-	18	-	5
75-79	13	4	3	-	5	-	1
80+	5	1	3	-	1	-	-
Unspecified	1 521	550	172	92	420	-	287

Table 17. Number of marriages by duration of marriage and age group (males), 2011

Age group of husband	Duration of marriage									
	Total	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35+	Unspecified
Total	20 980	4 489	5 535	3 782	2 738	1 695	992	485	340	924
<25	180	171	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25-29	1 198	857	334	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
30-34	2 700	1 087	1 326	275	12	-	-	-	-	-
35-39	3 883	846	1 537	1 126	371	3	-	-	-	-
40-44	3 993	586	1 006	1 057	982	355	7	-	-	-
45-49	3 187	347	554	607	691	712	270	6	-	-
50-54	2 041	209	300	311	311	346	394	170	-	-
55-59	1 157	115	144	147	178	140	181	187	65	-
60-64	639	77	92	91	75	55	68	70	111	-
65-69	259	40	37	30	31	23	24	19	55	-
70-74	124	19	25	23	17	9	11	7	13	-
75-79	50	8	9	10	6	3	3	5	6	-
80+	37	6	7	8	8	1	3	3	1	-
Unspecified	1 532	121	155	90	56	48	31	18	89	924

Table 18. Number of marriages by duration of marriage and age group (females), 2011

Age group of wife	Duration of marriage									
	Total	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35	Unspecified
Total	20 980	4 489	5 535	3 782	2 738	1 695	992	485	340	924
<25	611	535	76	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25-29	2 454	1 360	1 031	63	-	-	-	-	-	-
30-34	3 594	968	1 724	818	84	-	-	-	-	-
35-39	4 010	581	1 237	1 264	814	114	-	-	-	-
40-44	3 591	431	640	822	966	647	85	-	-	-
45-49	2 536	258	354	380	489	551	434	70	-	-
50-54	1 436	146	189	190	178	212	294	227	-	-
55-59	721	52	91	94	89	74	93	115	113	-
60-64	328	30	41	35	34	25	22	39	102	-
65-69	120	18	11	19	13	12	14	8	25	-
70-74	40	6	6	8	4	3	4	1	8	-
75-79	13	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	-
80+	5		1	3	-	-	1	-	-	-
Unspecified	1 521	103	132	84	65	56	43	23	91	924

Table 19. Number of divorces with and without children by population group, 2011

Population group	Number				Percentage			
	Total	Divorces without children	Divorces with children	Unspecified	Total	Divorces without children	Divorces with children	Unspecified
Total	20 980	9 458	11 475	47	100,0	45,1	54,7	0,2
Black African	7 517	3 201	4 295	21	100,0	42,6	57,1	0,3
Coloured	3 473	1 227	2 237	9	100,0	35,3	64,4	0,3
Indian/Asian	1 359	573	785	1	100,0	42,2	57,8	0,1
White	6 730	3 489	3 228	13	100,0	51,8	48,0	0,2
Unspecified	1 901	968	930	3	100,0	50,9	48,9	0,2

Table 20. Number and percentage distribution of children involved in divorces, 2011

Population group	Total number of children involved	Percentage
Total	18 571	100,0
African	6 937	37,4
Coloured	3 753	20,2
Indian/Asian	1 224	6,6
White	5 169	27,8
Unspecified	1 488	8,0

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. Purpose of the statistical release

The purpose of the statistical release is to provide information on marriages, unions and divorces recorded in South Africa in 2011. The data on marriages and unions was gathered from the Department of Home Affairs while information for divorces came from the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development through divorce courts, based on the number of divorce forms that had reached Stats SA by the time of publication of this release.

2. Scope and coverage

The data on marriages currently cover registered civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions in South Africa. The divorce data cover cases for filed divorces from civil marriages that had been granted. Undocumented cases of abandonment or divorces that had been granted by religious or traditional authorities are not reported in the release. Divorce data from registered customary marriages and civil unions will be reported when sufficient data become available

3. Data

Stats SA downloads the data on civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions from the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) through State Information Technology Agency (SITA). The data are processed and analysed for publication.

Data on divorces are collected from the divorce courts using a standard structured questionnaire prepared by Stats SA. The questionnaires are regularly completed by the courts as divorce decrees are granted. They are consolidated and mailed to Stats SA head office. At Stats SA the questionnaires are sorted and captured according to court and calendar month; processed, analysed and published.

4. Limitations

The release focuses on presenting the demographic characteristics of the married and divorced persons. The information does not cover other important issues such as the causes and impact of divorce.

The marriages and divorces data reported in this release are not linked, although both refer to registrations in 2011. Divorces come from marriages that were registered in different years.

5. Definitions of terms

Civil marriages: these are marriages registered according the Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No. 25 of 1961). In the release the term 'civil' is used to include marriages that were solemnised by marriage officers in the Department of Home Affairs and those that were solemnised by religious marriage officers.

Customary marriages: these are marriages that are negotiated, celebrated or concluded according to any of the systems of indigenous African customary law which exist in South Africa as prescribed in the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No. 120 of 1998).

Civil unions: refers to the voluntary union of two persons who are both 18 years of age or older, which is solemnised and registered by way of either a marriage or a civil partnership, in accordance with the procedures prescribed in the Civil Union Act, 2006 (Act No. 17 of 2006).

Mixed population group: refers to couples with different racial backgrounds.

Occupation: occupation is coded using the Standard Classification of Occupations, Report No 09-90-01, first Edition, 1986 published by Stats SA.

6. Symbols

- = Nil

< = Less than

≥ = Equal to and greater than

GENERAL INFORMATION

Marriages and divorces, 2011

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