



stats sa

Department:
Statistics South Africa
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa, ISibalo House, Koch Street, Salvokop, Pretoria, 0002
www.statssa.gov.za, info@statssa.gov.za, Tel +27 12 310 8911

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Marriages and divorces

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PREFACE

This statistical release presents information on civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions that were registered in 2022 in the South African national marriage registration system maintained by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). It highlights trends in the number of marriages and unions as well as demographic and other dynamics amongst married partners. The release also reports on divorces that were granted in 2022 by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) and Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ). It focuses on trends in divorces, demographic and occupational characteristics of the plaintiffs, age at the time of divorce, duration of marriage at the time of divorce and divorces involving couples with children less than 18 years. The information on marriages and divorces is important for understanding the formation and dissolution of marriage relationships and its implications on the household structure and composition.



Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

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1. Introduction

There are three main sources of marriage and divorce statistics in South Africa; namely, those compiled from population censuses; household-based sample surveys and administrative data (i.e. those compiled from civil registration systems and administrative records). The data from these sources provides information on different aspects of marriages and divorces in the country. Census and survey data are by nature subjective and provide cross-sectional data on individuals' marital status (never married, married, divorced, widowed, etc.). Marriages and divorces in this report cover different types of marriages and associated divorces that took place at different periods in people's lives but registered/granted in 2022. The 2022 mid-year population estimates [(*Mid-year population estimates, 2022* (statistical release P0302))] are used to calculate crude rates in the report.

Unlike in census and survey data, registered marriages and divorces data are based on the continuous recording of these events as they take place. Not all marriages are registered in South Africa, as some are not recognised by the law of the country. The three types of marriages that are recognised by the law include civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions. The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) is responsible for managing registered marriages and unions under the following legislations:

- 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) which came into effect on 15 November 2000.
- The Civil Union Act, 2006 (Act No. 17 of 2006) which came into operation on 30 November 2006, governs civil unions (relationships between same-sex couples that are legally recognised by state authorities). The act accommodates persons who cannot or wish not to enter into a marriage under the Marriage Act, 1961.

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) publishes data on marriages for South African citizens and permanent residents that are collected through the civil registration systems of the DHA. Before 2008, the data in the annual release of *Marriages and divorces* (statistical release P0307) 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.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) and Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ) are responsible for handling matters relating to the dissolution of registered marriages (civil and customary) 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), which came into effect on 9 August 2010.

Data on divorces is obtained from various regional and high courts that deal with divorce matters. The data are based on successful divorce cases that have been issued with a decree of divorce. Divorce cases came from marriages that were registered in different years as well as divorce cases that were filed in different years but whose divorce decrees were granted in 2022. It should be noted that although both the data on the marriages and divorces are collected in the same year, the data sets are not linked to each other.

2. Marriages

2.1 Civil marriages

2.1.1 Trends in the registration of civil marriages (2013–2022)

Information provided on Figure 1 below, shows that 111 784 civil marriages of South African citizens and permanent residents were registered at the DHA in 2022. The figure further shows that the number of registered marriages consistently declined in the ten-year period (2013 to 2022) except for a slight increase of 0,6% between 2015 and 2016 and an increase of 5,0% between 2021 and 2022. During the period between 2013 and 2022, the highest number of marriages was recorded in 2013 (158 642) and the lowest number in 2020 (89 338).

Figure 1: Number of registered civil marriages in South Africa, 2013–2022

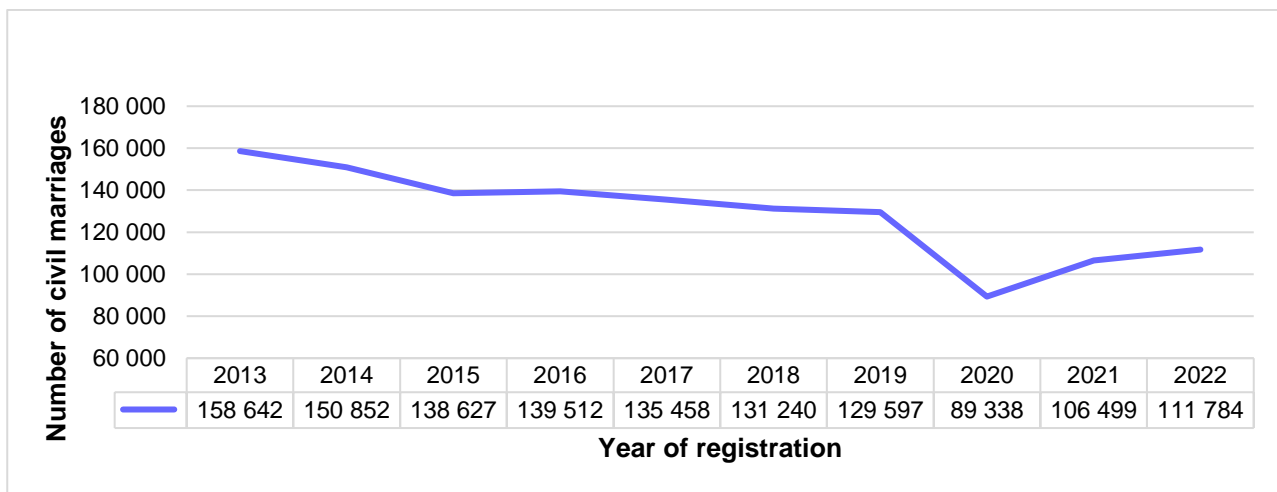
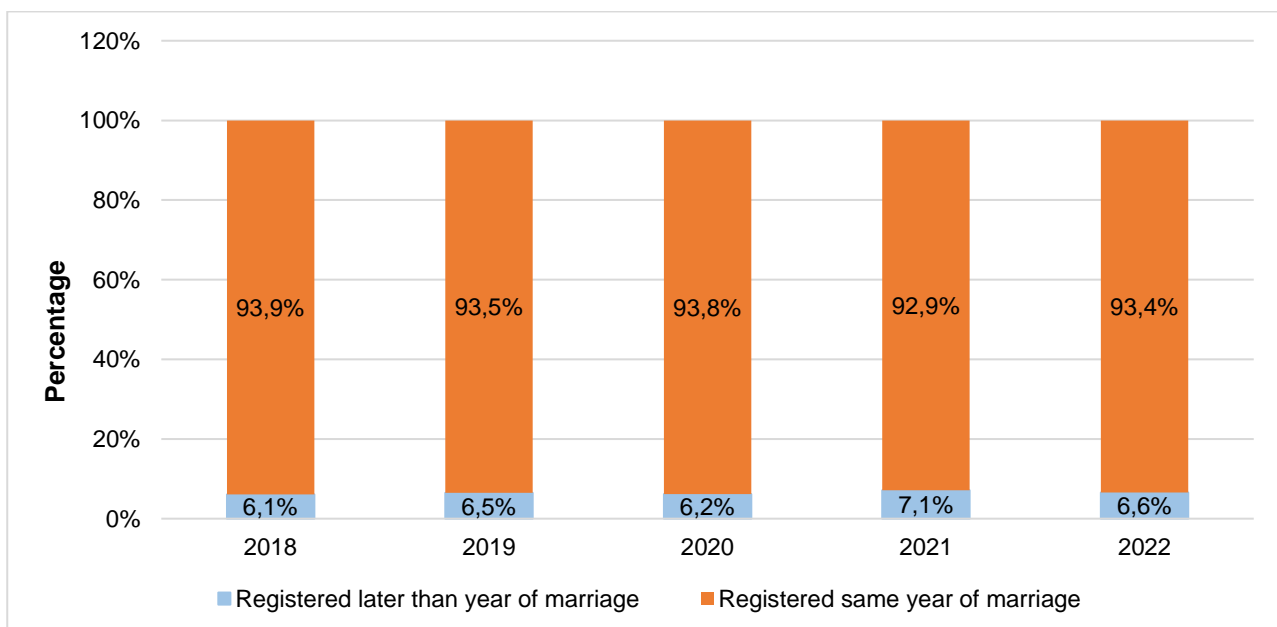


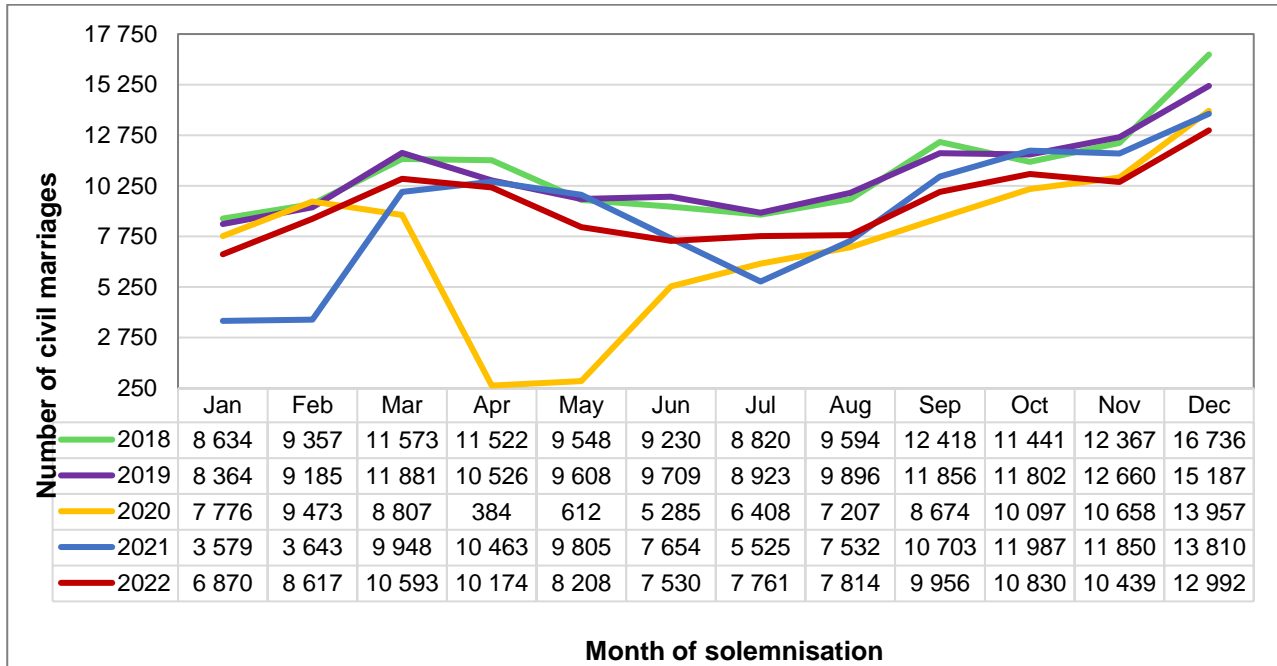
Figure 2 below shows that 93,4% of civil marriages were registered in 2022, which is the year they occurred. Generally, since 2018 there is a similar pattern of marriage occurrence and registration.

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of civil marriages by year of registration and occurrence, 2018–2022



The seasonal monthly variation in the registration of civil marriages is observed in Figure 3 below. Generally, the warmer months (beginning from September and peaking in December) are the most popular months for solemnising marriages in South Africa. In 2022, the highest number of marriages [12 992 (11,6%)] took place in December and the lowest number of marriages, [6 870 (6,1%)] occurred in January. The national lockdown regulations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic had negative impact on marriage solemnisation between 2020 and 2021.

Figure 3: Number of civil marriages by month of solemnisation, 2018–2022



2.1.2 Solemnisation of civil 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 by civil marriage officers at DHA offices and by religious marriage officers at chapels or religious buildings. After a solemnisation ceremony, the marriage officer issues the couple with an abridged hand-written marriage certificate, at no cost, and submits to the marriage register at the DHA office where he/she is registered, for the recording of the marriage particulars in the National Population Register (NPR).

Table 1 on page 4 shows the distribution of civil marriages registered in 2022 according to the way in which the marriage was solemnised. Under ‘way of solemnisation’, the terms: (i) ‘DHA’ is used for marriages solemnised by civil marriage officers and (ii) ‘Religious’ for marriages solemnised by priests/religious persons who are marriage officers. It is observed that more than half, 63 539 (56,8%) of the 111 784 marriages were solemnised by DHA marriage officers and 34 630 (31,0%) by ‘Religious’ rites. The type of solemnisation rite was not specified in 13 615 (12,2%) marriages. Table 1 further shows that 412 (0,4%) marriages of South African citizens and permanent residents were solemnised outside the borders of South Africa but subsequently registered in South Africa.

The table also provides information on provincial variations in marriage registration. The province of registration is not necessarily the province of usual residence of the couple since couples could marry at any place of their choice. The results further indicate that, in 2022, the highest number of marriages was registered in Gauteng [29 096 (26,0%)] and the lowest in Northern Cape [3 334 (3,0%)]. Looking at ways of marriage solemnisation within each province, Free State had the highest proportion of marriages, 75,3% (5 422) solemnised by civil marriage officers. Western Cape recorded the highest proportion, 47,2% (7 700) of marriages solemnised by religious marriage officers. Wide differences of 'unspecified' way of solemnisation by province were noted. For example, 32,6% (1 940) of marriages in Mpumalanga had 'unspecified' method of solemnisation compared with 0,5% (88) in Western Cape.

Table 1: Number and percentage distribution of civil marriages by province of marriage registration and way of solemnisation, 2022

Province of registration	Grand Total	Way of solemnisation			%			
		DHA	Religious	Unspecified	Total	DHA	Religious	Unspecified
Grand Total	111 784	63 539	34 630	13 615	100,0	56,8	31,0	12,2
Western Cape	16 312	8 524	7 700	88	100,0	52,3	47,2	0,5
Eastern Cape	10 243	6 283	2 627	1 333	100,0	61,3	25,6	13,0
Northern Cape	3 334	1 619	798	917	100,0	48,6	23,9	27,5
Free State	7 205	5 422	1 652	131	100,0	75,3	22,9	1,8
KwaZulu-Natal	18 349	11 167	5 015	2 167	100,0	60,9	27,3	11,8
North West	7 481	4 036	3 129	316	100,0	54,0	41,8	4,2
Gauteng	29 096	16 132	7 447	5 517	100,0	55,4	25,6	19,0
Mpumalanga	5 946	2 413	1 593	1 940	100,0	40,6	26,8	32,6
Limpopo	7 631	5 547	885	1 199	100,0	72,7	11,6	15,7
Outside RSA	412	388	23	1	100,0	94,2	5,6	0,2
Unspecified	5 775	2 008	3 761	6	100,0	34,8	65,1	0,1

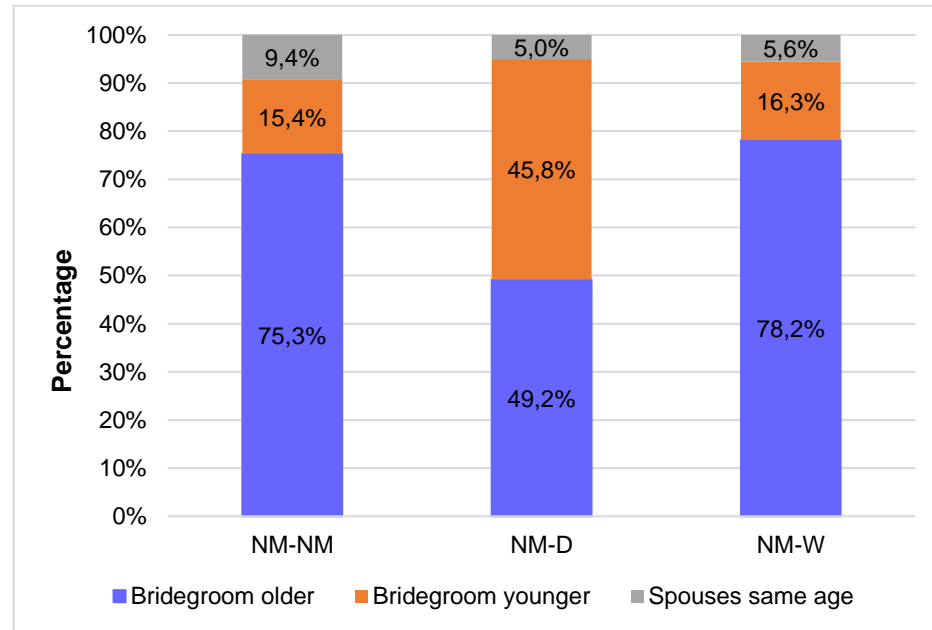
2.1.3 Marital status at the time of civil marriage

Table 2: Number of civil marriages by province of registration and marital status of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2022

Province of registration	Bridegrooms/ Men					Brides/ Women				
	Never married	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Never married	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified	Total
Total	89 624	4 734	596	16 830	111 784	95 452	2 938	367	13 027	111 784
Western Cape	12 671	784	11	2 846	16 312	13 339	578	1	2 394	16 312
Eastern Cape	8 032	568	36	1 607	10 243	8 727	293	22	1 201	10 243
Northern Cape	2 677	193	7	457	3 334	2 873	113	5	343	3 334
Free State	5 635	372	44	1 154	7 205	6 086	260	45	814	7 205
KwaZulu-Natal	15 223	725	152	2 249	18 349	16 255	331	87	1 676	18 349
North West	6 139	325	22	995	7 481	6 587	198	14	682	7 481
Gauteng	23 039	1 022	165	4 870	29 096	24 376	729	99	3 892	29 096
Mpumalanga	4 783	256	47	860	5 946	5 097	151	24	674	5 946
Limpopo	6 512	246	68	805	7 631	6 986	95	32	518	7 631
Outside RSA	363	6	-	43	412	372	5	-	35	412
Unspecified	4 550	237	44	944	5 775	4 754	185	38	798	5 775

Table 2 above shows the number of civil marriages for bridegrooms and brides by marital status at the time of marriage in 2022 and province of registration. The table indicates that the majority of marriages in 2022 for both bridegrooms and brides were first-time marriages in all provinces. For bridegrooms, there were 89 624 (80,2%) never married men, 4 734 (4,2%) divorcees and 596 (0,5%) widowers. For the brides, there were 95 452 (85,4%) never married women whilst 2 938 (2,6%) were divorcees and 367 (0,3%) were widows. The marital status of 16 830 (15,1%) bridegrooms and 13 027 (11,7%) brides were unspecified. Looking at marital status in each province, a high proportion of marriages between bridegrooms and brides marrying for the first time was observed in Limpopo contributing 6 512 (85,3%) and 6 986 (91,5%) respectively. The profile of those that were remarrying showed that remarriages were more prevalent in divorcees compared to the widowed, 4 734 (4,2%) bridegroom divorcees compared to 596 (0,5%) widowers and 2 938 (2,6%) bride divorcees compared to 367 (0,3%) widows.

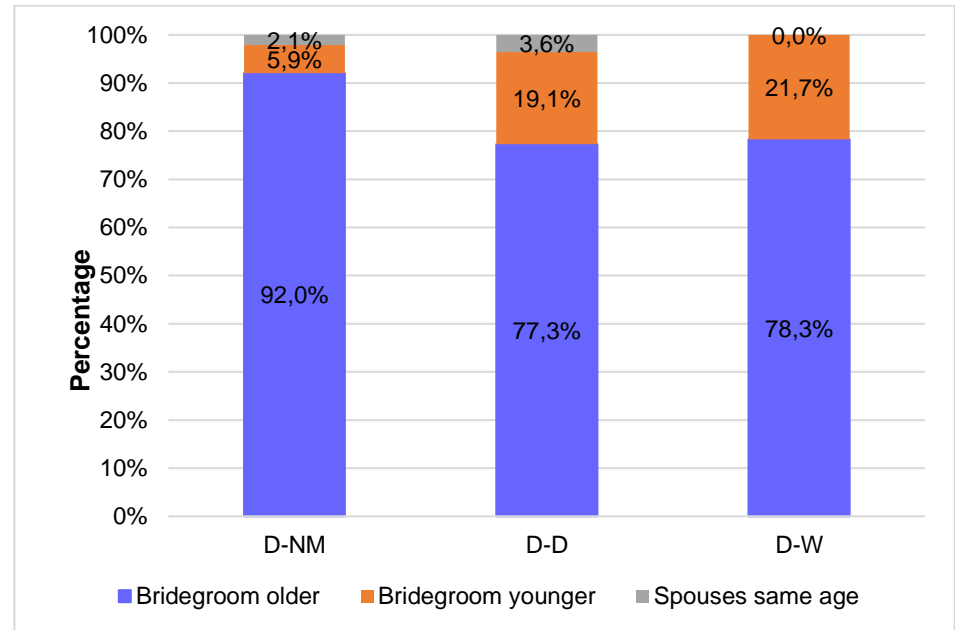
Figure 4a: Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage (never married men), 2022



*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding up

NM – NM = Never married men to Never married women
 NM – D = Never married men to Divorcee
 NM – W = Never married men to Widow

Figure 4b: Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriages (male divorcees), 2022

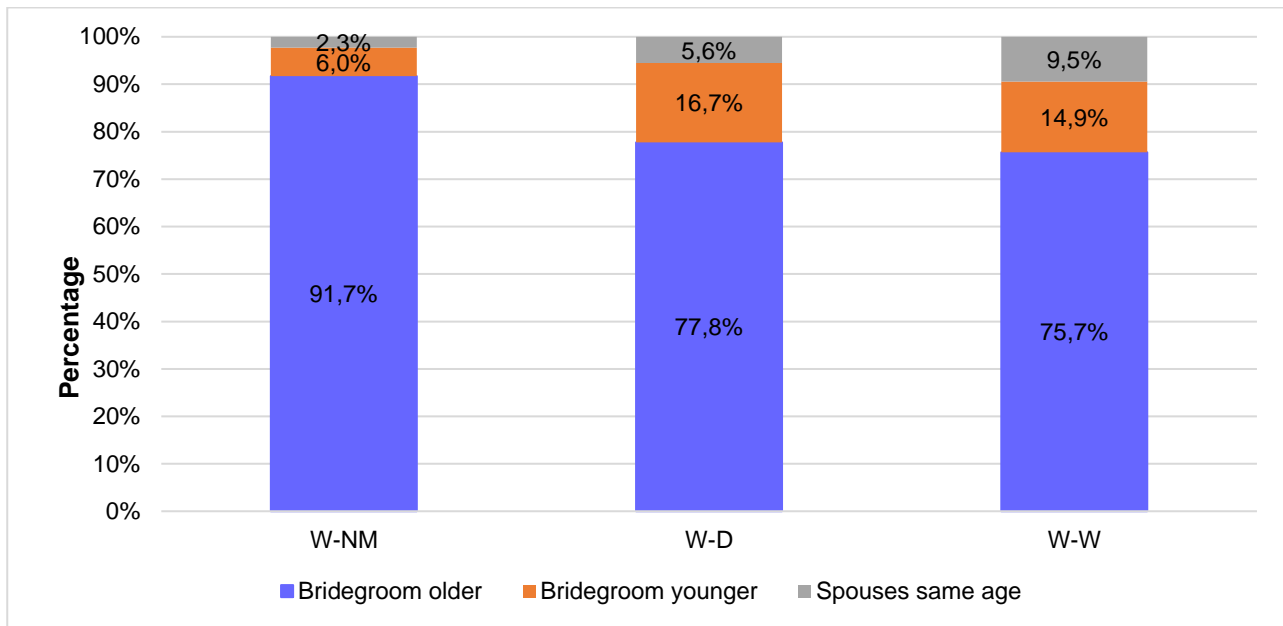


*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding up

D – NM = Divorcee to Never married women
 D – D = Divorcee to Divorcee
 D – W = Divorcee to Widow

It is observed on Figure 4a to 4c on pages 6 to 7 that most men opt to marry women who have never been married before. This observed age pattern is the same irrespective of the marital status of the bridegroom at the time of marriage. However, the magnitude differs by the marital status of the spouses at the time of marriage. For example, 45,8% of never married men who married divorcees were younger than their brides (see Figure 4a) and 21,7% of male divorcees who married widowed women were also younger than their brides (see Figure 4b).

Figure 4c: Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage (widowers), 2022

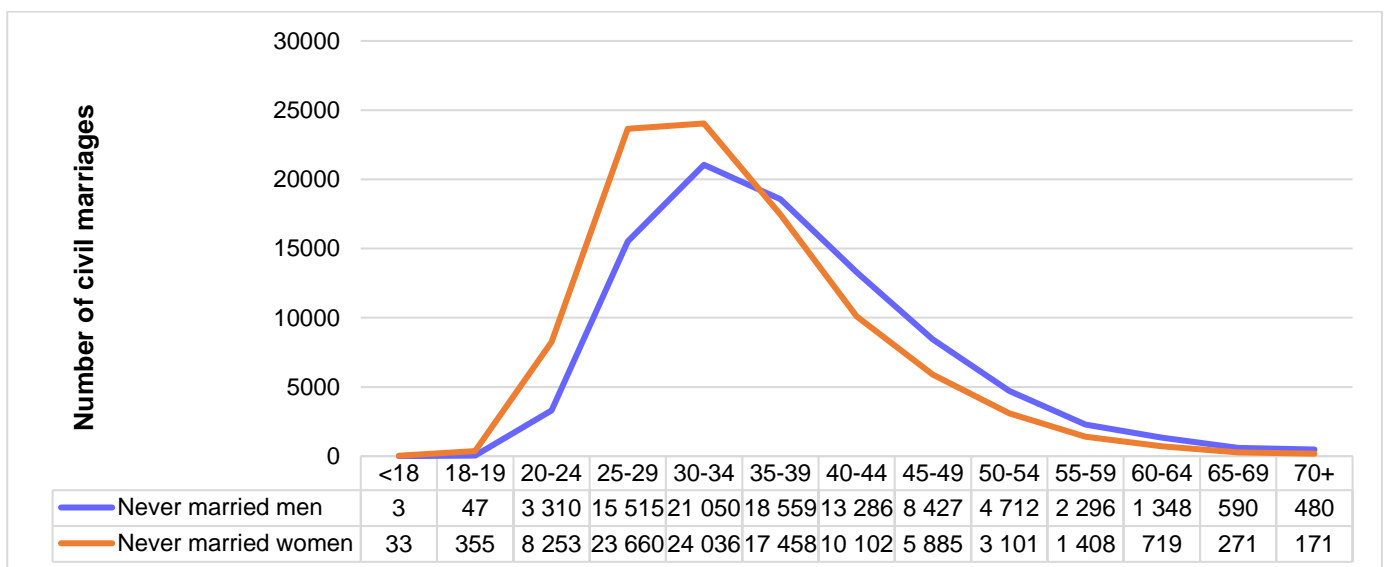


*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding up

W – NM = Widower to Never married women
 W – D = Widower to Divorcee
 W – W = Widower to Widow

It is observed on Figure 4c above that majority of widowed men married women who have never been married before, 91,7%. The proportion of widowers who married older widows was 14,9% and widowers who married widows of their same age was 9,5%.

Figure 5: Number of civil marriages for never married men and women by age group, 2022



*Excluding one case with unspecified age of never married man.

Figure 5 above indicates that the highest number of never married men and women were aged 30–34 years with 21 050 (23,5%) and 24 036 (25,2%) respectively. Figure 5 further shows that there were more never married women compared to never married men at younger ages (less than 35 years) and vice versa at older ages (35 years and older).

Table 3: Number of civil marriages by age differences between spouses at the time of marriage and marital status of husband, 2022

Marital Status	Grand Total	Age differences				
		Bridegroom older	Bridegroom younger	Same Age	Unspecified	
Grand Total	111 784	84 133	18 290	9 360	1	
Never Married	Total	89 624	66 031	15 319	8 273	1
	Never Married	84 326	63 469	12 968	7 888	1
	Divorcee	972	478	445	49	-
	Widow	252	197	41	14	-
	Unspecified	4 074	1 887	1 865	322	-
Divorcee	Total	4 734	4 092	501	141	-
	Never Married	2 598	2 391	153	54	-
	Divorcee	864	668	165	31	-
	Widow	23	18	5	-	-
	Unspecified	1 249	1 015	178	56	-
Widower	Total	596	533	43	20	-
	Never Married	482	442	29	11	-
	Divorcee	18	14	3	1	-
	Widow	74	56	11	7	-
	Unspecified	22	21	-	1	-
Unspecified	Total	16 830	13 477	2 427	926	-
	Never Married	8 046	7 118	631	297	-
	Divorcee	1 084	689	310	85	-
	Widow	18	14	4	-	-
	Unspecified	7 682	5 656	1 482	544	-

Table 3 above suggests that men tend to marry younger women, as 84 133 (75,3%) of the 111 784 bridegrooms were older than their brides. However, 18 290 (16,4%) bridegrooms were younger than their brides and 9 360 (8,4%) 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. However, the magnitude differs by the marital status of the spouses at the time of marriage.

2.1.4 Age at the time of civil marriage

Population scientists are interested in the age at first marriage or union because of its theoretical link to exposure to the possibility of pregnancy, childbearing and ultimately to fertility (Bongaarts, 1978). 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 children under 18 years. These children require the consent of a parent, a guardian or a commissioner of child welfare before entering into a marriage. In addition to the above consent, boys younger than 18 years and girls younger than 15 years of age require the consent of the Minister of Home Affairs before they can get married.

Figure 6a: Median age of bridegrooms and brides at the time of civil marriage, 2018–2022

Figure 6b: Median age of never married men and women at the time of civil marriage, 2018–2022

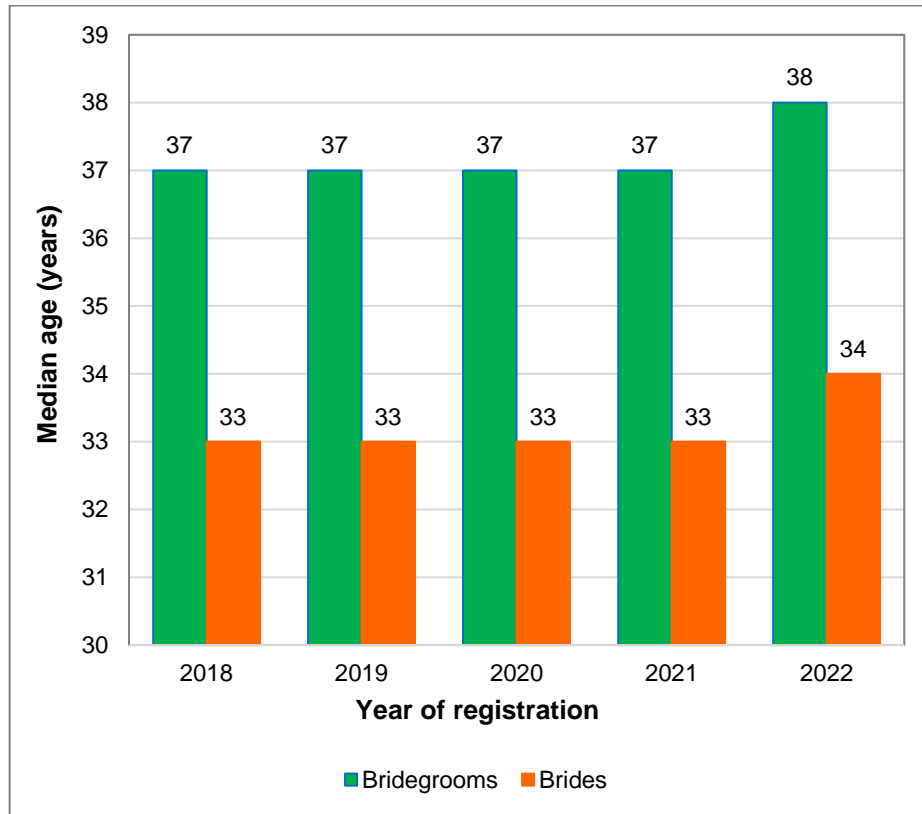


Figure 6a above shows that the median age of bridegrooms is always higher than the median age of brides. The median ages of bridegrooms and brides remained the same from 2018 to 2021 with 37 years and 33 years for bridegrooms and brides respectively. Their median age has increased to 38 years for bridegrooms and 34 years for brides in 2022. The median age of couples marrying for the first time is shown on Figure 6b. The median ages of never married men increased from 35 years in 2021 to 36 years in 2022 whilst that on never married women increased from 31 years to 33 years during the same period.

Figure 6c: Median age of male and female divorcees at the time of civil marriage, 2018–2022

Figure 6d: Median age of widowers and widows at the time of civil marriage, 2018–2022

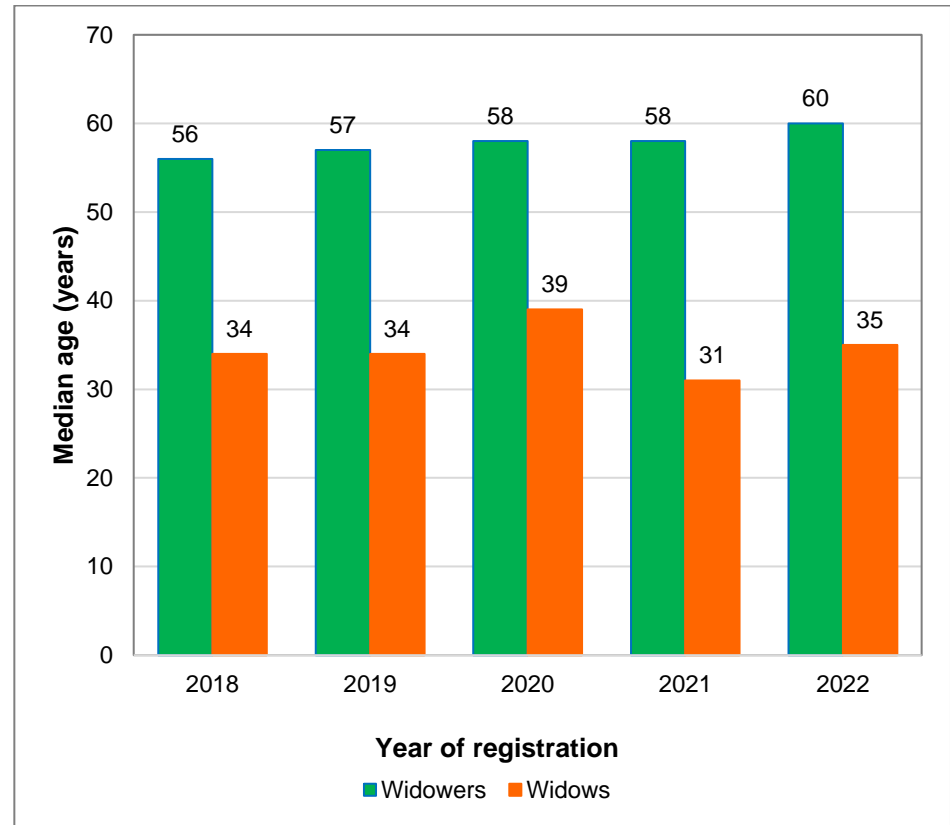
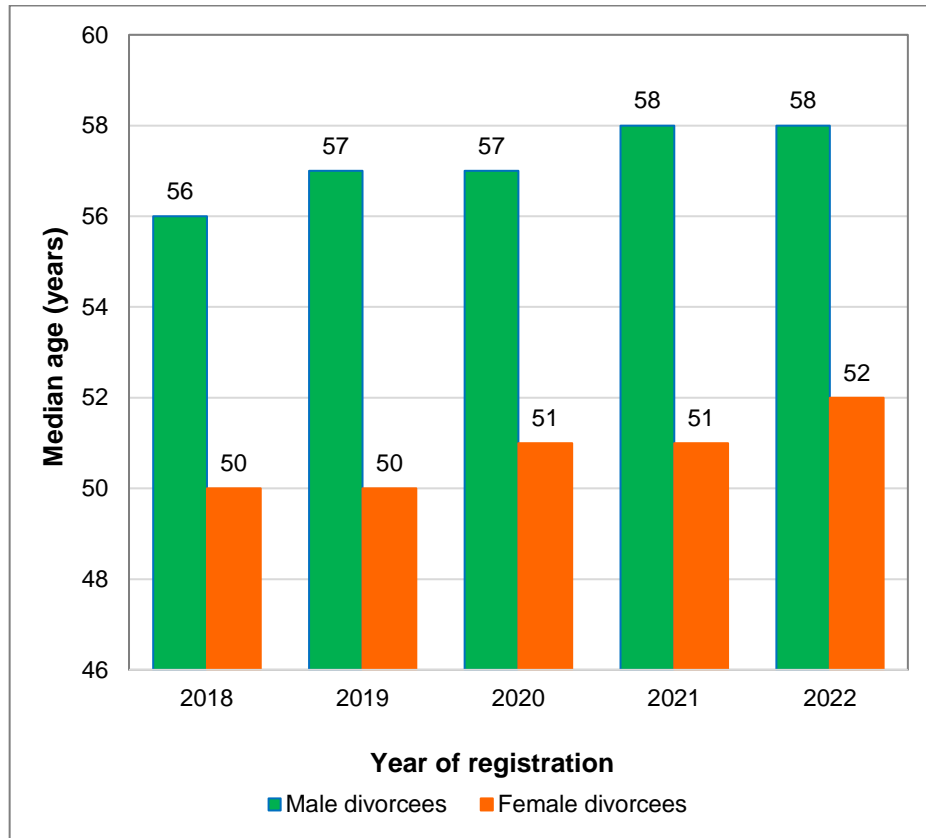


Figure 6c and Figure 6d show the median ages of remarrying as a result of being divorced and widowed. The median age of male divorcees increased from 56 years in 2018 to 58 years in 2022 and the median age of female divorcees increased from 50 years to 52 years during the same period. There was a six-year age difference in the median ages between male and female divorcees who married in 2022. The median ages of widowers and widows in 2022 were 60 years and 35 years respectively, resulting in a 25-year age gap.

2.2 Customary marriages

2.2.1 Trends in the registration of customary marriages (2013–2022)

The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No. 120 of 1998) prescribes that customary marriages that were entered into after the commencement of this Act must be registered within 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.

In 2022, 4 376 customary marriages were registered at the DHA, indicating an increase of 63,5% from 2 676 customary marriages registered in 2021. It is observed from Figure 7 below that the number of registered customary marriages fluctuated between 2013 and 2020 and there was an increase from 2021 to 2022. The highest number of registered customary marriages was recorded in 2022 (4 376) whilst the lowest number was recorded in 2020 (1 585).

Figure 7: Number of registered customary marriages in South Africa, 2013–2022

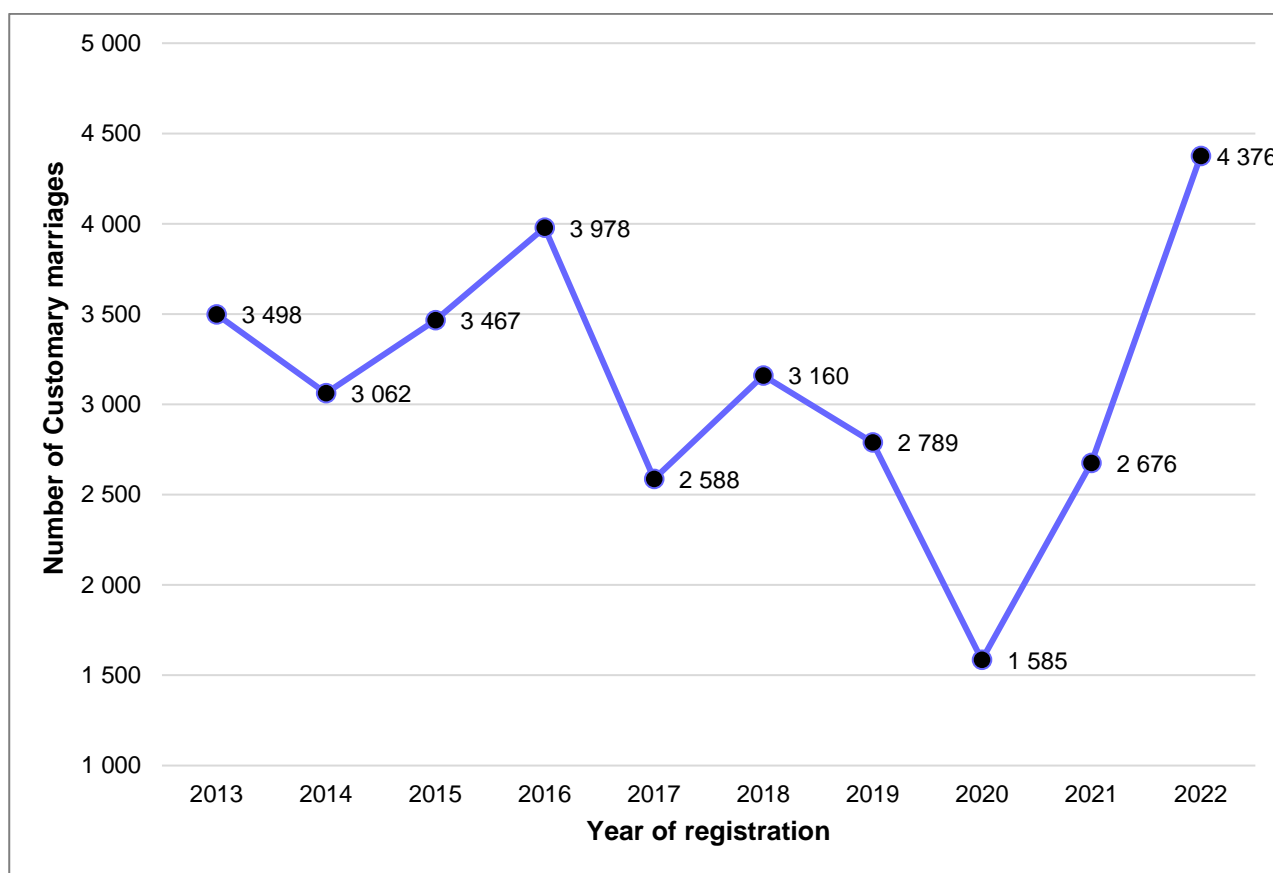


Figure 8: Percentage distribution of customary marriages by year of registration and occurrence, 2018–2022

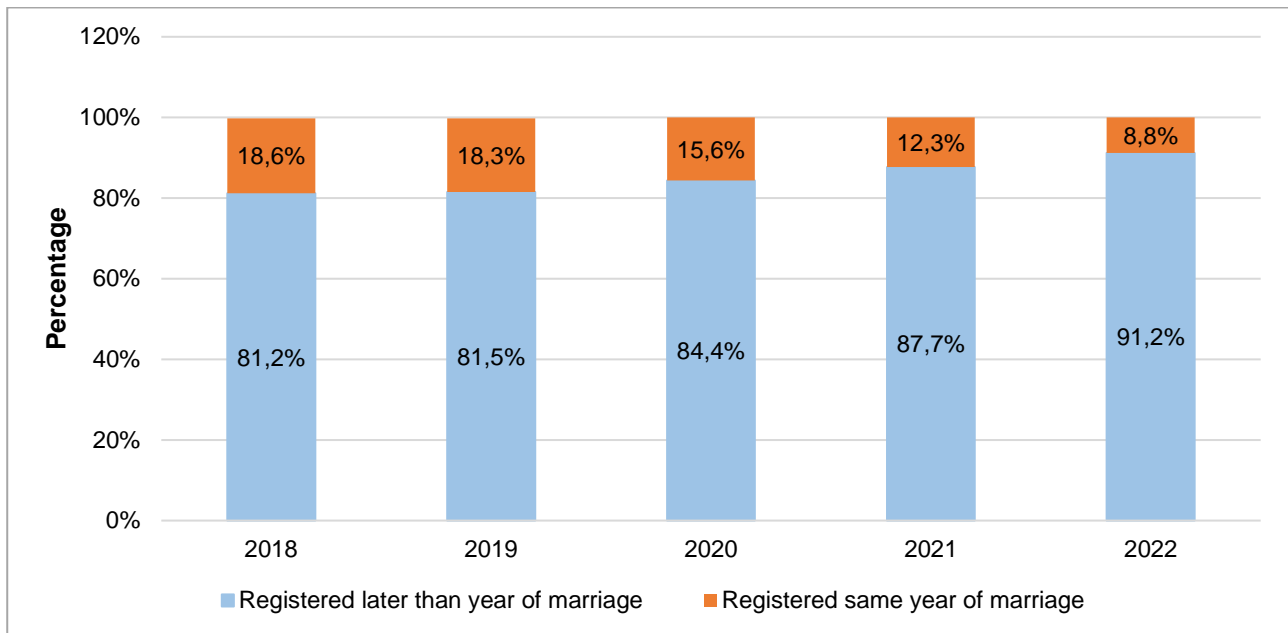
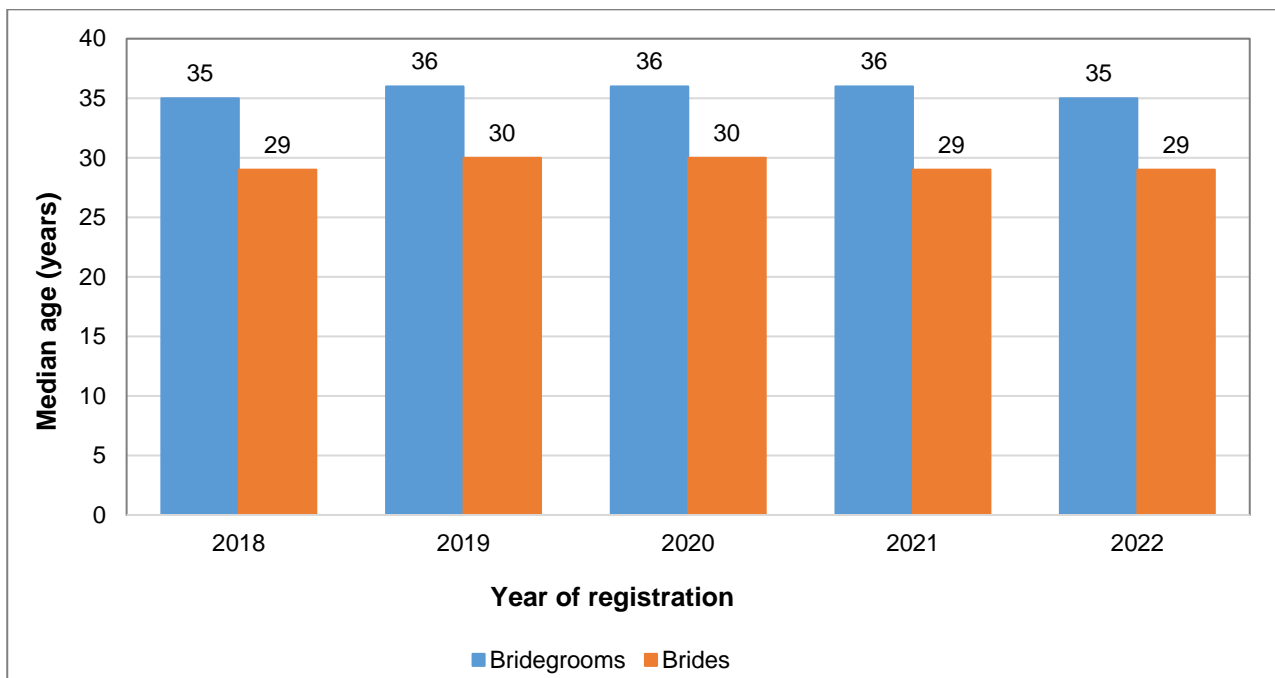


Figure 8 above shows that majority of customary marriages were registered later than the year of marriage. In 2022, about 8,8% of marriages were registered the same year it took place. Unlike with civil marriages, couples marrying under customary marriages turn to register their marriages years after the event has occurred.

2.2.2 Age at the time of customary marriage

Figure 9: Median age of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, 2018–2022



The median ages at the time of customary marriage are presented in Figure 9 above. Similar to civil marriages, bridegrooms were generally older than brides, with an age difference of about six to seven years for customary marriages registered between 2018 and 2022. The median age of bridegrooms ranged between 35 years and 36 years whereas that of bride ranged between 29 years and 30 years.

Figure 10: Proportion of customary marriages registered by age group and sex, 2022

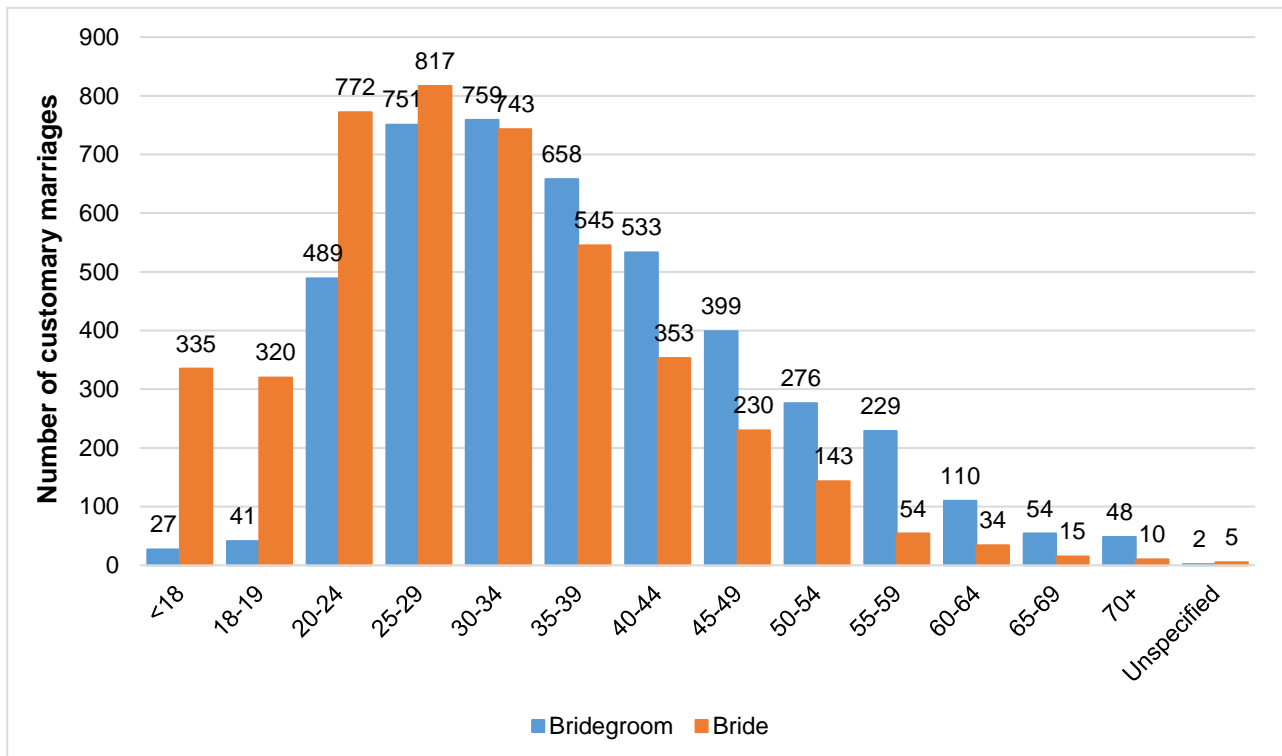


Figure 10 above shows that more bridegrooms were aged 30–34 years 759 (17,3%) and those of brides were aged 25–29 years 817 (18,7%). Marriages for children aged less than 18 years were more likely for brides 335 (7,7%) than bridegrooms 27 (0,6%). Detailed information on age distributions of bridegrooms and brides by year of marriage occurrences is shown on Annexures C and D on pages 35 and 36, respectively.

Table 4: Number and percentage distribution of customary marriages by province of marriage registration and age difference, 2022

Province of registration	Number					%				
	Total	Bridegroom older	Bridegroom younger	Same age	Unspecified	Total	Bridegroom older	Bridegroom younger	Same age	Unspecified
Total	4 376	3 815	341	213	7	100,0	87,2	7,8	4,9	0,2
Western Cape	35	31	2	2	-	100,0	88,6	5,7	5,7	0,0
Eastern Cape	845	747	62	34	2	100,0	88,4	7,3	4,0	0,2
Northern Cape	11	9	2	-	-	100,0	81,8	18,2	0,0	0,0
Free State	88	75	8	5	-	100,0	85,2	9,1	5,7	0,0
KwaZulu-Natal	881	767	65	46	3	100,0	87,1	7,4	5,2	0,3
North West	139	120	12	7	-	100,0	86,3	8,6	5,0	0,0
Gauteng	417	346	43	28	-	100,0	83,0	10,3	6,7	0,0
Mpumalanga	633	550	55	27	1	100,0	86,9	8,7	4,3	0,2
Limpopo	1 252	1 109	84	58	1	100,0	88,6	6,7	4,6	0,1
Outside RSA	13	13	-	-	-	100,0	100,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Unknown	24	22	1	1	-	100,0	91,7	4,2	4,2	0,0
Unspecified	38	26	7	5	-	100,0	68,4	18,4	13,2	0,0

The results presented in Table 4 above show that in 2022, about 1 252 (28,6%) of the registered customary marriages were from Limpopo followed by KwaZulu-Natal with 881 (20,1%), Eastern Cape 845 (19,3%) and Mpumalanga 633 (14,5%). The other remaining five (5) provinces had less than 10% each.

2.2.3 Age at the time of customary marriage

Since the Customary Marriages Act of 1998 recognises polygyny, a husband who has registered his marriage under the Act is permitted to register additional marriages under the Act provided he adheres to the regulations under the Act regarding his property. That is, at his own cost, the husband has to get an order from a competent court that will regulate his future matrimonial property system. 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, the information is not available at the DHA.

2.3 Civil unions

2.3.1 Trends in the registration of civil unions (2013–2022)

Figure 11 below shows that in 2022, 2 461 civil unions were registered. The number of civil unions registered in South Africa increased between 2013 and 2022 except a decrease in 2020. Civil unions registered increased by 9,9% from 2 240 in 2021 to 2 461 in 2022.

Figure 11: Number of registered civil unions in South Africa, 2013–2022

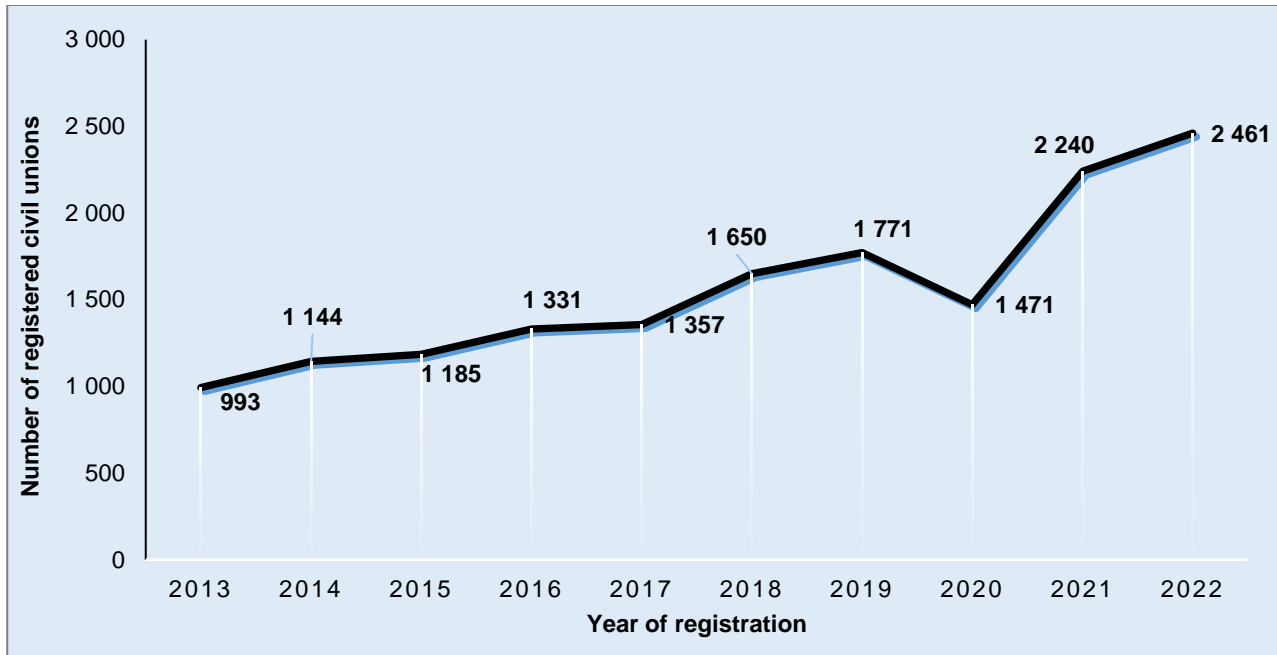


Figure 12 below indicates that most unions were registered the same year the event occurred, thus 90% of unions that took place in 2022 were registered that year.

Figure 12: Percentage distribution of civil unions by year of registration and occurrence, 2018–2022

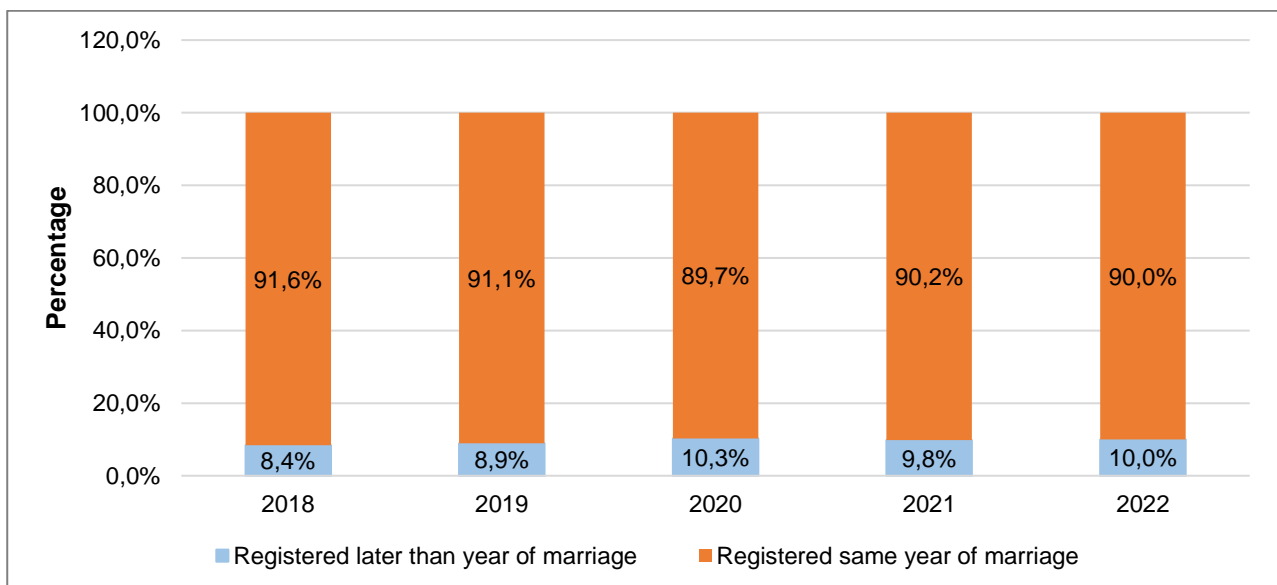


Table 5: Number and percentage distribution of civil unions registered by province of registration, 2018–2022

Province of registration	Number					%				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Grand Total	1 650	1 771	1 471	2 240	2 461	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Western Cape	465	443	434	553	721	28,2	25,0	29,5	24,7	29,3
Eastern Cape	58	64	48	53	90	3,5	3,6	3,3	2,4	3,7
Northern Cape	20	18	6	20	23	1,2	1,0	0,4	0,9	0,9
Free State	46	48	32	50	52	2,8	2,7	2,2	2,2	2,1
KwaZulu-Natal	298	216	168	209	378	18,1	12,2	11,4	9,3	15,4
North West	40	41	22	44	37	2,4	2,3	1,5	2,0	1,5
Gauteng	632	779	659	1 193	1 032	38,3	44,0	44,8	53,3	41,9
Mpumalanga	31	28	23	26	32	1,9	1,6	1,6	1,2	1,3
Limpopo	13	23	5	16	29	0,8	1,3	0,3	0,7	1,2
Outside RSA	2	6	-	4	3	0,1	0,3	-	0,2	0,1
Unspecified	45	105	74	72	64	2,7	5,9	5,0	3,2	2,6

Table 5 above shows that provincial distribution of civil unions registered in 2022 indicates that Gauteng 1 032 (41,9%) and Western Cape 721 (29,3%) were the provinces with the highest number of registrations of civil unions. In total, 71,2% of civil unions in 2022 were registered in these two provinces. The lowest number of registered civil unions was recorded in Northern Cape 23 (0,9%).

2.3.2 Age at the time of civil union

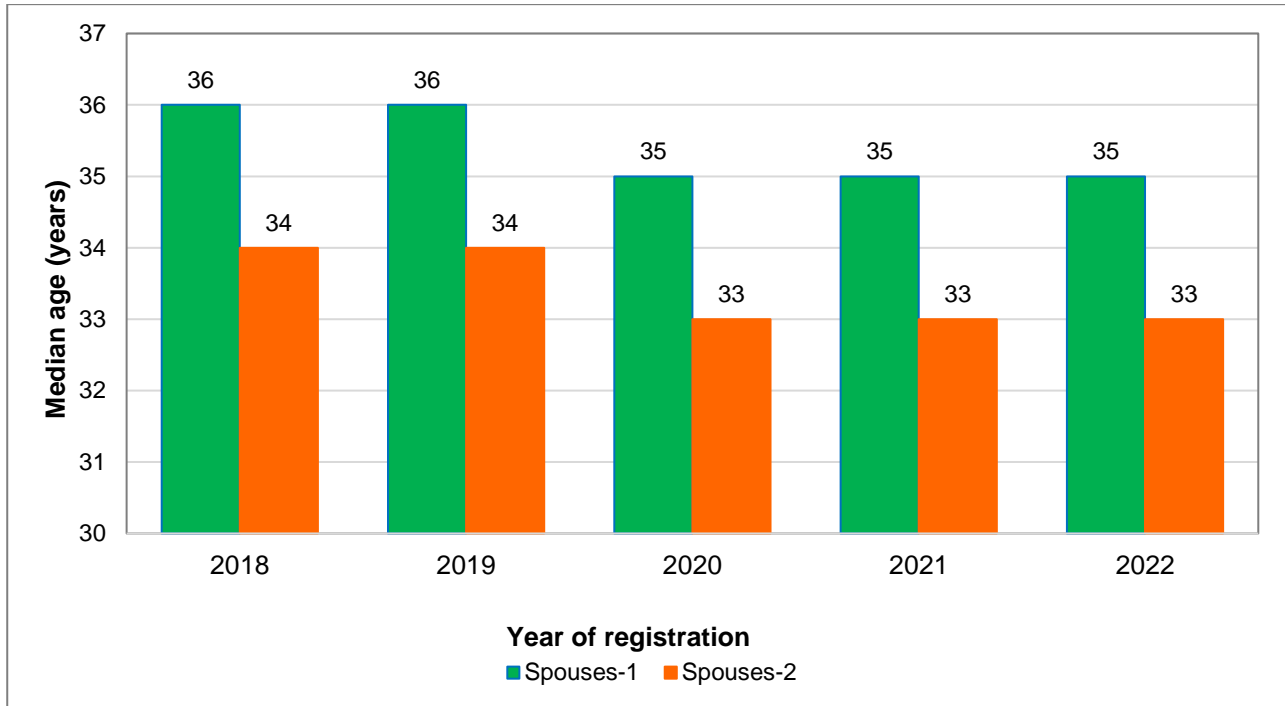
Table 6: Number of civil unions by age group of spouses, 2022

Age	Spouse-1	%	Spouse-2	%
Total	2 461	100,0	2 461	100,0
18–19	2	0,1	5	0,2
20–24	55	2,2	124	5,0
25–29	439	17,8	548	22,3
30–34	648	26,3	685	27,8
35–39	452	18,4	422	17,1
40–44	307	12,5	260	10,6
45–49	204	8,3	165	6,7
50–54	156	6,3	124	5,0
55–59	95	3,9	64	2,6
60–64	51	2,1	36	1,5
65–69	30	1,2	17	0,7
70+	22	0,9	11	0,4

The number of civil unions classified by the ages of spouse-1 and spouse-2 at the time of the solemnisation of civil union is presented on Table 6 above. 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 highest number of spouses-1 and spouses-2 were aged 30–34 with [648 (26,3%)] and [685 (27,8%)] respectively. Detailed information on age distribution is on Annexure E on page 37.

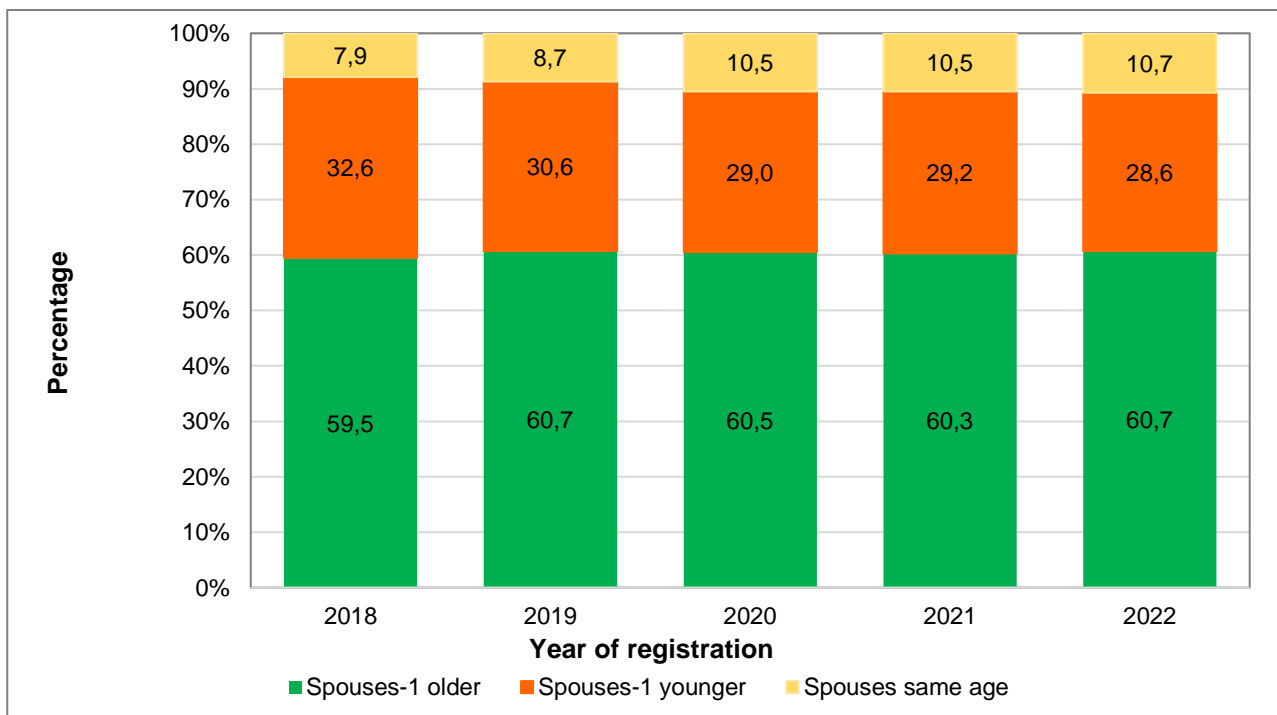
As observed in Figure 13 below, the median ages of spouses-1 were higher than those of spouses-2. The median ages of spouses-1 decreased from 36 years in 2018 to 35 years in 2022 and the median ages of spouses-2 decreased from 34 years to 33 years during the same period. Over the five-year period, the yearly differences in the median ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 was two years.

Figure 13: Median age of spouses in civil unions, 2018–2022



Information in Figure 14 below shows that in 2022, 60,7% of spouses-1 were older than their spouses, whilst 28,6% were younger than their spouses and 10,7% were of the same age as their spouses.

Figure 14: Percentage distribution of civil unions by age differences between spouses at the time of union, 2018–2022



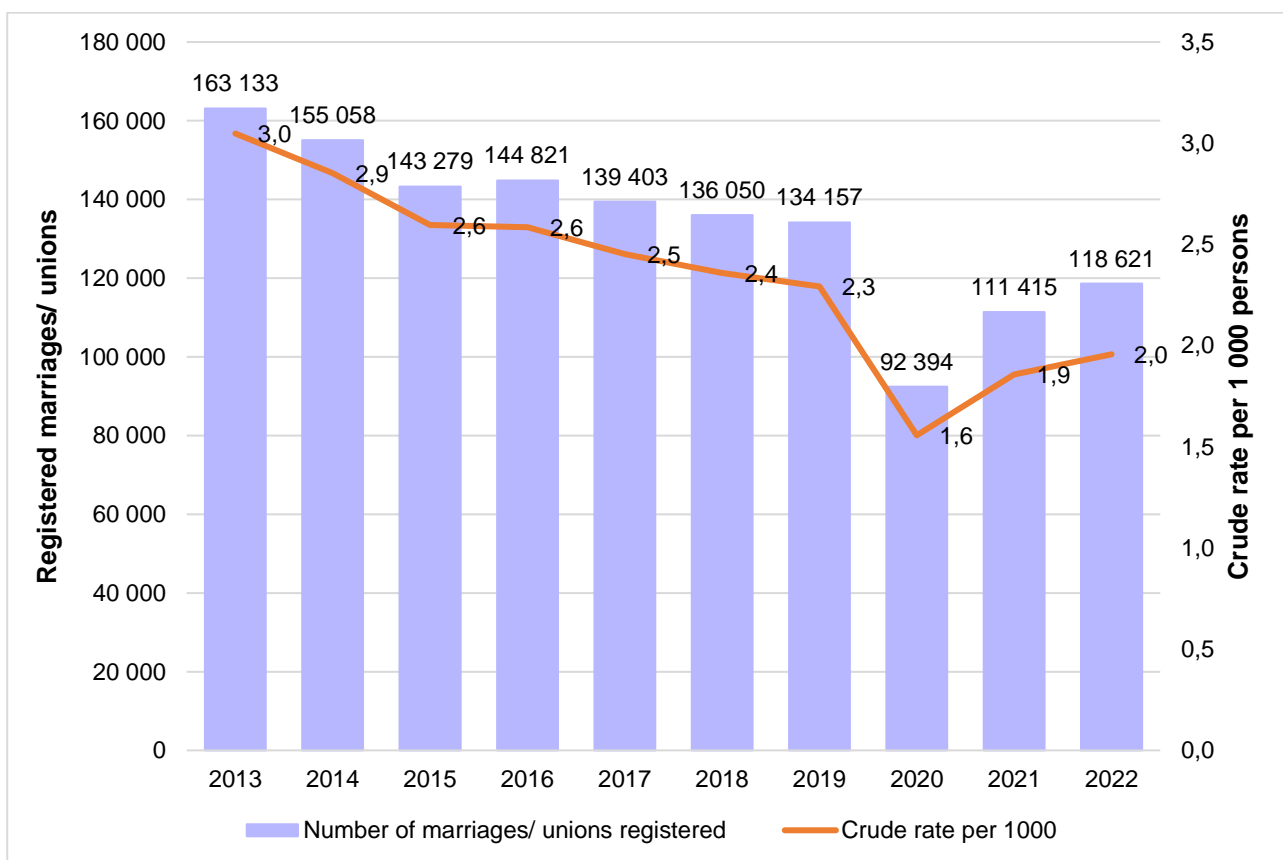
2.3.3 Marital status at the time of civil union

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 in which they were in. However, this information is not available at the DHA.

2.4 All marriages and unions

Figure 15 below shows that 118 621 marriages and unions were registered in 2022, a decrease of 44 512 (27,3%) from marriages registered in 2013. Restrictions put in place during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic had a direct impact on registration of marriages whereby the lowest crude rate was discovered in 2020 with 1,6 per thousand population. The crude marriage rate was 2,0 per thousand populations in 2022, which fell by 1,0 per thousand populations from the one in 2013.

Figure 15: Number of marriages and crude marriage rate, 2013–2022



3. Divorces

3.1 Trends in divorces (2013–2022)

Table 7: Number of published divorces in South Africa by population group, 2013–2022

Year	Total	Numbers						%						
		Black African	Coloured	India/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified	Total	Black African	Coloured	India/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
2013	23 885	8 656	3 888	1 425	7 561	24	2 331	100,0	36,2	16,3	6,0	31,7	0,1	9,8
2014	24 689	9 167	4 994	1 522	6 970	842	1 194	100,0	37,1	20,2	6,2	28,2	3,4	4,8
2015	25 260	10 841	4 213	1 566	6 588	837	1 215	100,0	42,9	16,7	6,2	26,1	3,3	4,8
2016	25 326	10 641	4 711	1 529	6 293	841	1 311	100,0	42,0	18,6	6,0	24,8	3,3	5,2
2017	25 390	11 309	4 517	1 401	6 048	833	1 282	100,0	44,5	17,8	5,5	23,8	3,3	5,0
2018	25 284	11 721	4 540	1 214	5 780	779	1 250	100,0	46,4	18,0	4,8	22,9	3,1	4,9
2019	23 710	10 677	4 502	1 299	5 268	816	1 148	100,0	45,0	19,0	5,5	22,2	3,4	4,8
2020	16 097	7 566	2 459	983	3 855	484	750	100,0	47,0	15,3	6,1	23,9	3,0	4,7
2021	18 208	9 175	3 202	881	3 652	499	799	100,0	50,4	17,6	4,8	20,1	2,7	4,4
2022	20 196	11 048	3 179	867	3 912	554	636	100,0	54,7	15,7	4,3	19,4	2,7	3,1

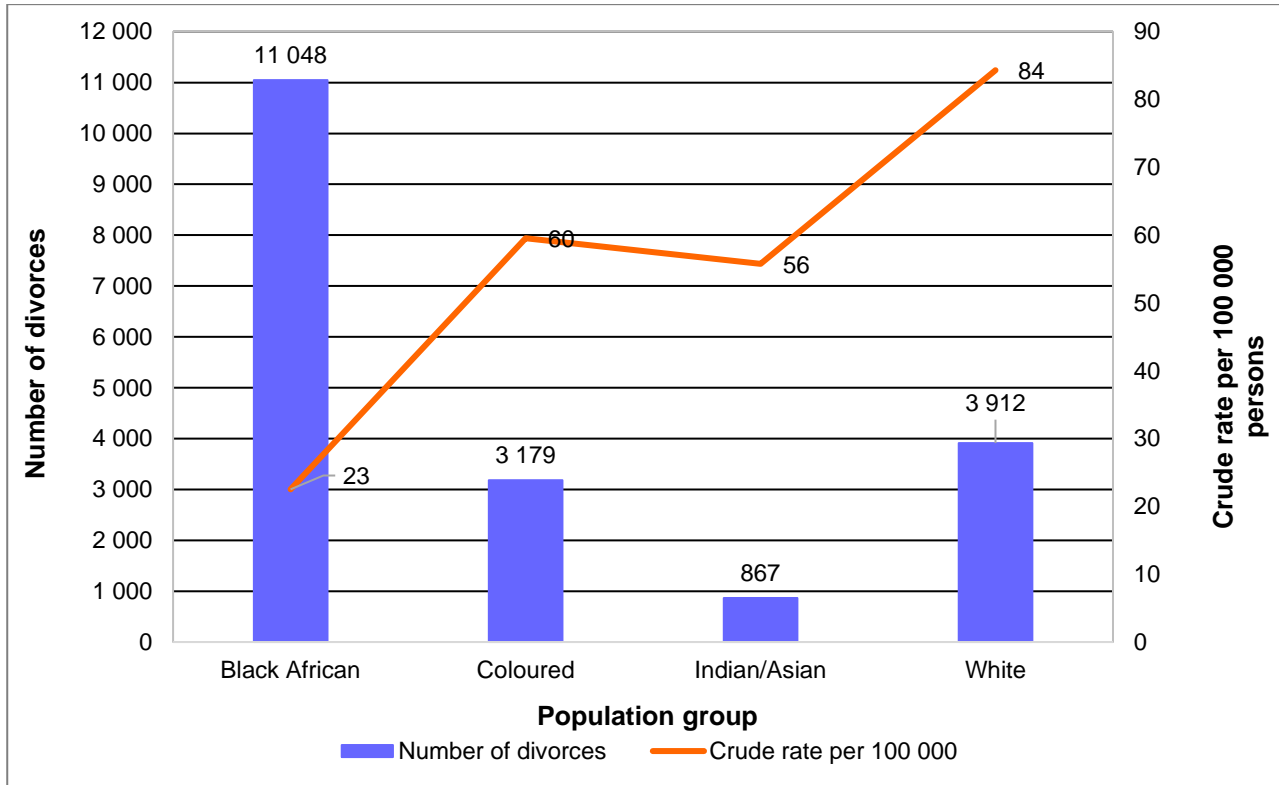
The 2022 divorce data reported in this statistical release is based on 20 196 completed divorce forms that Stats SA received and processed. The number (20 196) indicates an increase of 1 988 (10,9%) divorces from the 18 208 cases processed in 2021, see Table 7 above. The table shows that the total number of divorces increased between 2013 and 2017; and decreased between 2018 and 2020. In 2022, about 193 divorces were granted for same-sex couples. The observed crude divorce rate was 33 divorces per 100 000 estimated resident population in 2022¹.

Table 7 above also provides data on divorces classified by population group and the year in which the divorce was granted. In 2022, black African couples had the highest number of divorces compared to other population groups; this pattern has been the same for the ten-year period (2013 to 2022). About 11 048 (54,7%) of the 20 196 divorces granted in 2022 were from black African population group followed by white 3 912 (19,4%), coloured 3 179 (15,7%), India/Asian 867 (4,3%) and divorces from different population groups (mixed) 554 (2,7%). The population group of 636 (3,1%) couples was not specified.

¹ The crude divorce rate refers to the number of divorces per 100 000 persons in the population

Figure 16 below demonstrates the number of divorces and crude divorce rate by population group. The crude divorce rates by population groups show that the white population group had the highest rate of 84 per 100 000 estimated resident population followed by the coloured and Indian/Asian population groups with 60 and 56 per 100 000 respectively. The black African population had 23 per 100 000 estimated resident population.

Figure 16: Number of divorces and crude divorce rates by population group, 2022



3.2 Characteristics of plaintiffs

The 2022 data presented in Table 8 below show that more wives than husbands, 11 277 (55,8%) women compared to 6 700 (33,2%) men initiated divorce proceedings and 1 100 (5,4%) divorces were initiated by both husband and wife. The sex of the plaintiff was not specified in 1 119 (5,5%) cases. The provincial distribution indicates that Gauteng (5 778), Western Cape (3 591), KwaZulu-Natal (3 074) were the provinces with the highest number of divorces granted. Together the three provinces contributed 61,6% of the divorces granted in 2022. However, this could also be due to the fact that these provinces have the largest populations.

Table 8: Number and percentage distribution of divorces by province of divorce registration and plaintiff, 2022

Province of divorce registration	Number					%				
	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified
Grand Total	20 196	6 700	11 277	1 100	1 119	100,0	33,2	55,8	5,4	5,5
Western Cape	3 591	1 202	2 168	116	105	100,0	33,5	60,4	3,2	2,9
Eastern Cape	1 942	567	1 070	222	83	100,0	29,2	55,1	11,4	4,3
Northern Cape	299	102	188	5	4	100,0	34,1	62,9	1,7	1,3
Free State	1 684	667	927	20	70	100,0	39,6	55,0	1,2	4,2
KwaZulu-Natal	3 074	1 044	1 646	162	222	100,0	34,0	53,5	5,3	7,2
North West	1 216	433	605	65	113	100,0	35,6	49,8	5,3	9,3
Gauteng	5 778	1 832	3 183	369	394	100,0	31,7	55,1	6,4	6,8
Mpumalanga	933	274	552	53	54	100,0	29,4	59,2	5,7	5,8
Limpopo	1 679	579	938	88	74	100,0	34,5	55,9	5,2	4,4

Table 9: Number and percentage distribution of divorces by population group and plaintiff, 2022

Population group	Number					%				
	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified
Grand Total	20 196	6 700	11 277	1 100	1 119	100,0	33,2	55,8	5,4	5,5
Black African	11 048	3 767	5 800	799	682	100,0	34,1	52,5	7,2	6,2
Coloured	3 179	925	2 010	117	127	100,0	29,1	63,2	3,7	4,0
Indian/Asian	867	282	509	31	45	100,0	32,5	58,7	3,6	5,2
White	3 912	1 353	2 302	99	158	100,0	34,6	58,8	2,5	4,0
Mixed	554	173	312	34	35	100,0	31,2	56,3	6,1	6,3
Unspecified	636	200	344	20	72	100,0	31,4	54,1	3,1	11,3

Table 9 above shows that the coloured population group had the highest proportion of women plaintiffs with 63,2%. The proportion of women plaintiffs for white, Indian/Asian and black African population groups were 58,8%; 58,7% and 52,5% respectively. The plaintiffs for the mixed/ interracial couples show that 56,3% of the divorces were filed by wives. Among black African divorcees, divorce initiated by both partners constituted about 7,2%.

Table 10: Number and percentage distribution of divorces by type of occupation at the time of divorce, 2022

Occupation	Number		%	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Grand total	20 196	20 196	100,0	100,0
Professional, semi-professionals and technical occupations	3 074	3 397	15,2	16,8
Managers and administrators	1 839	1 539	9,1	7,6
Clerical and sales occupations	711	1 560	3,5	7,7
Transport delivery and communications	678	87	3,4	0,4
Services occupations	2 687	1 874	13,3	9,3
Farming and related occupations	140	29	0,7	0,1
Artisans apprentice and related occupations	828	117	4,1	0,6
Production foreman mine and quarry worker	519	167	2,6	0,8
Not economically active / Unemployed	3 284	4 367	16,3	21,6
Unspecified	6 436	7 059	31,9	35,0

Table 10 indicates information on the occupation of husbands and wives at the time of divorce. It is noted that a high proportion of husbands (31,9%) and wives (35,0%) did not specify the type of occupation they were engaged in at the time of divorce. In addition, 16,3% and 21,6% of husbands and wives respectively were not economically active / unemployed at the time of divorce. Both male and female divorcees were largely employed in professional, semi-professional and technical occupations with 3 074 (15,2%) and 3 397 (16,8%) respectively.

3.3 Number of divorces by way of solemnisation of marriage

Table 11: Number and percentage distribution of divorces by population group and way of solemnisation of the marriage, 2022

Population group	Number				%			
	Total	Religious	DHA	Unspecified	Total	Religious	DHA	Unspecified
Total	20 196	8 234	10 306	1 656	100,0	40,8	51,0	8,2
Black African	11 048	2 784	7 661	603	100,0	25,2	69,3	5,5
Coloured	3 179	2 057	857	265	100,0	64,7	27,0	8,3
Indian/Asian	867	349	421	97	100,0	40,3	48,6	11,2
White	3 912	2 612	759	541	100,0	66,8	19,4	13,8
Mixed	554	213	292	49	100,0	38,4	52,7	8,8
Unspecified	636	219	316	101	100,0	39,5	57,0	18,2

Information presented in Table 11 above shows that 10 306 (51,0%) of the 2022 divorce cases were from marriages that were solemnised by civil rites (DHA) and 8 234 (40,8%) by religious rites. About 66,8% of divorces from the white population group and 64,7% of divorces from the coloured population group were from marriages that were solemnised by religious rites. Most divorces from the black African and Indian/Asian population groups were from marriages that were solemnised by civil rites, 69,3% and 48,6% respectively.

3.4 Number of times married

Table 12: Number and percentage distribution of divorces by number of times married at the time of divorce, 2022

Number of times married	Number		%	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Total	20 196	20 196	100,0	100,0
Once	17 624	17 798	87,3	88,1
Twice	1 810	1 562	9,0	7,7
Three or more	239	181	1,2	0,9
Unspecified	523	655	2,6	3,2

Results presented in Table 12 above show that the 2022 divorce cases for both men and women were mainly from individuals who had married once. More than 80,0% of divorces for men and women were from first-time marriages compared to 9,0% of men and 7,7% of women from second-time marriages. Less than 2% of men and women were getting divorced for at least three times.

3.5 Age at the time of divorce

The median age at the time of divorce in 2022 were 46 years for males and 42 years for females, indicating that generally, divorced males were older than divorced females, with a difference of about four years (see Figure 17 below). The pattern of median ages in 2022 by population group showed that black African and white males had the highest median age of 46 years each, while coloured and Indian/Asian population groups recorded the median ages of 44 years and 43 years respectively. The difference in the median ages at the time of divorce between males and females was greater in the black African population group (five years) compared to the white population with four years, coloured population with three years and Indian/Asian population groups with two years.

Figure 17: Median age of divorcees by sex and population group, 2022

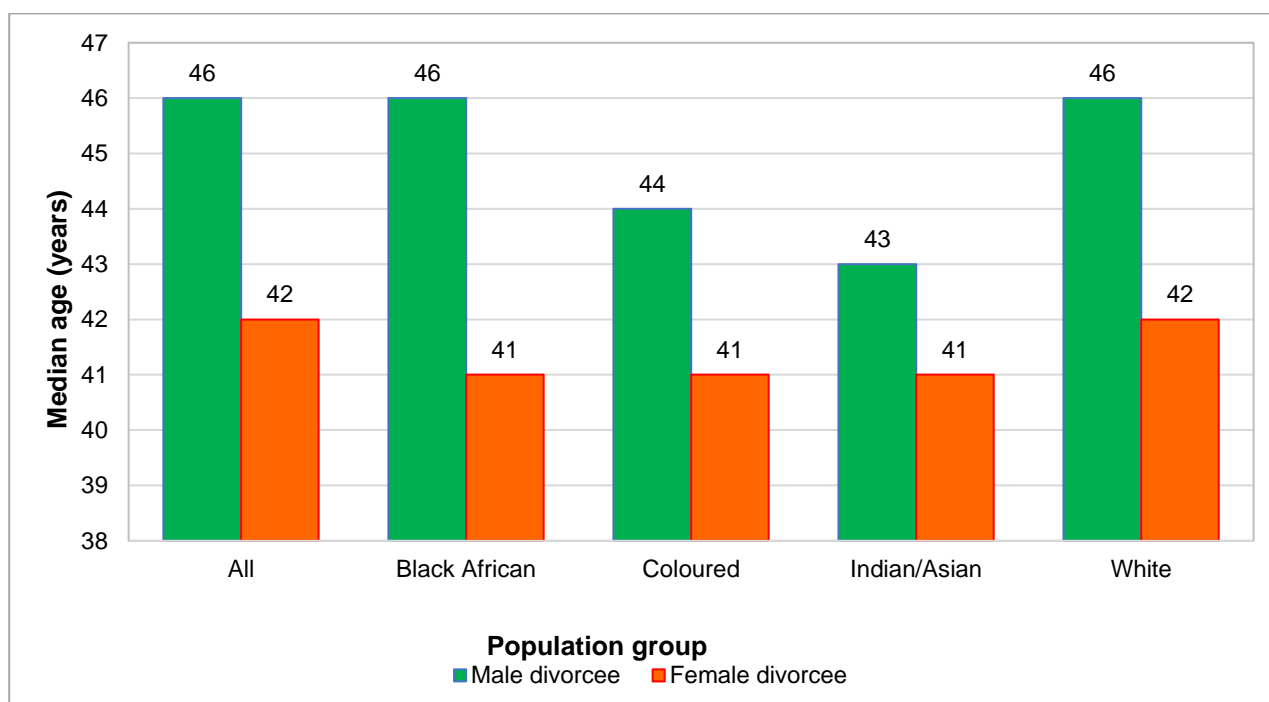


Figure 18: The proportions of divorces by age group and population group (males), 2022

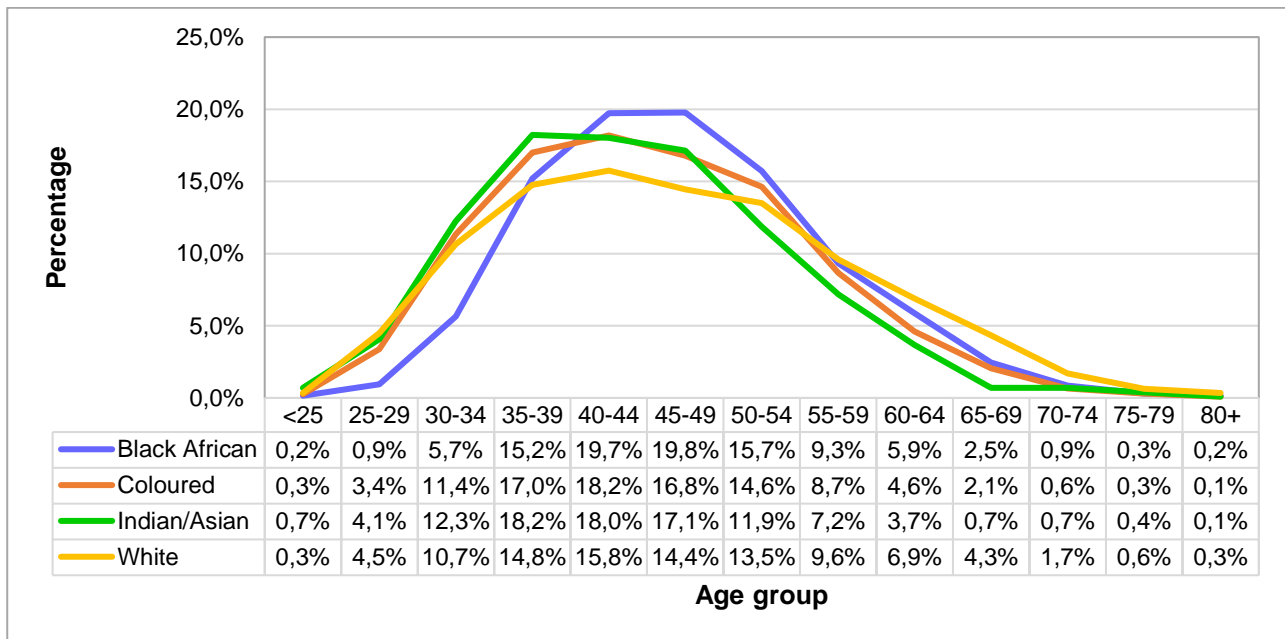
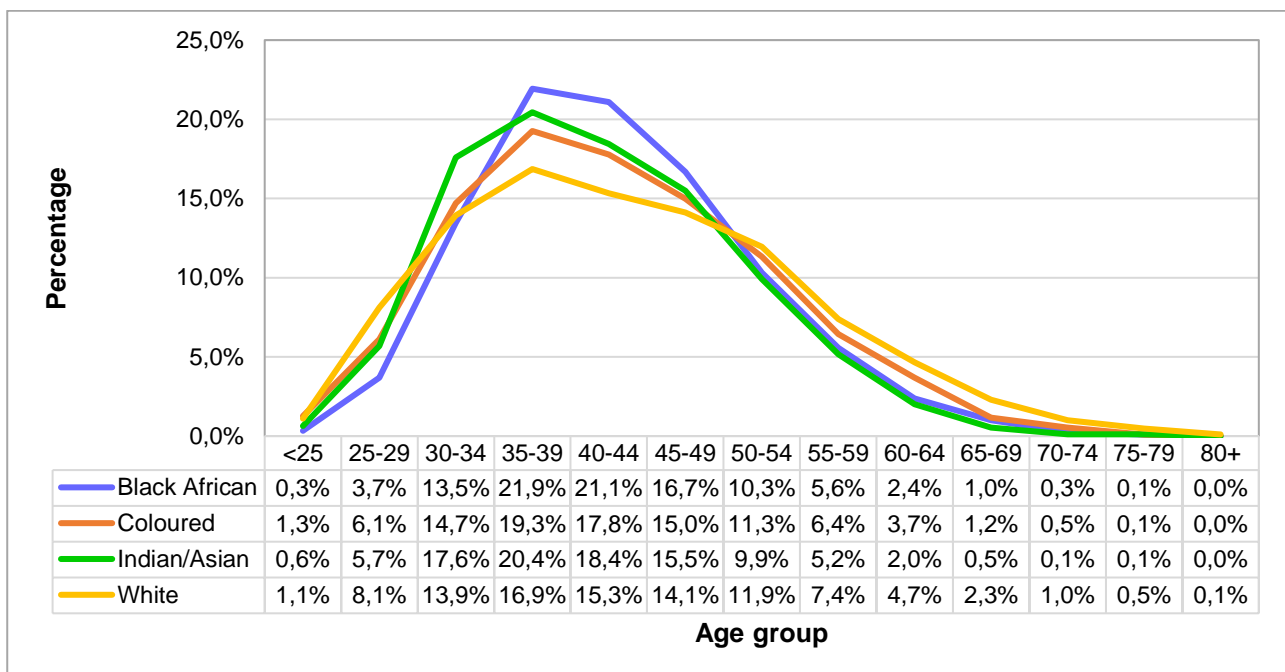


Figure 19: The proportions of divorces by age group and population group (females), 2022



Detailed information on the age and population groups of divorcees is presented in Figure 18 for males and Figure 19 for females above. Although there were differences in the ages at which most men and women from the various population groups divorced, the age patterns were quite similar. There were fewer divorces among the younger (less than 25 years old) and the older (65 years and older) divorcees. For males, the peak age group for black African was for those aged between 45 and 49 years (19,8%) followed by those aged 40 to 44 years (19,7%). The peak age group for coloured and white population groups was between 40 and 44 years with 18,2% and 15,8% respectively. The peak for Indian/Asian population group is on those aged 35 to 39 years with 18,2%. In the case of females, the peak age group at divorce was 35 to 39 years for all population groups (see Figure 19 above). Actual values on divorce by age group and population group is on Annexure F and Annexure G for males and females respectively on pages 40 and 41, respectively.

3.6 Duration of marriage of divorcing couples and population group

Statistics from the annual divorce data do not give a comprehensive picture of the number of marriages ending in divorce. However, there is data on the duration of marriages for divorces granted in 2022. Table 13 and Table 14 below show that the largest number [5 379 (26,6%)] of divorces were for marriages that lasted between five and nine years. This group is followed by marriages that lasted between 10 and 14 years [4 379 (21,7%)] and marriages that lasted for less than five years [3 149 (15,6%)]. Results showed that four in ten divorces 8 528 (42,2%) of the 20 196 in 2022 were from marriages that lasted for less than 10 years.

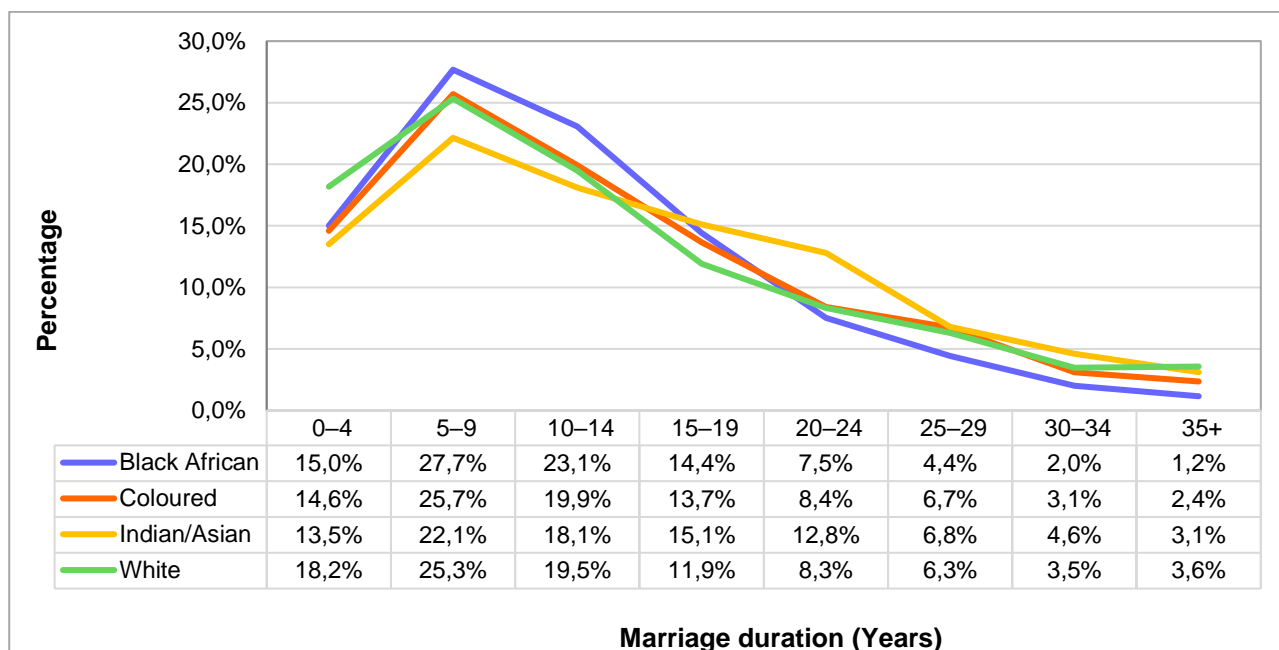
Table 13: Number of divorces by age group and duration of marriage (male divorcees), 2022

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	20 196	3 149	5 379	4 379	2 780	1 631	1 041	513	388	936
<25	49	25	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
25-29	447	297	124	5	-	-	-	-	-	21
30-34	1 601	589	782	146	6	1	-	-	-	77
35-39	3 152	688	1 440	788	113	6	-	-	-	117
40-44	3 736	511	1 133	1 239	592	81	4	-	-	176
45-49	3 625	383	789	910	864	434	109	1	1	134
50-54	3 000	261	422	567	592	560	375	81	2	140
55-59	1 851	126	238	270	284	301	291	205	53	83
60-64	1 156	93	133	145	139	134	150	150	146	66
65-69	539	49	63	76	62	44	53	55	104	33
70-74	198	15	33	28	16	14	25	10	46	11
75-79	75	10	11	9	4	7	9	2	17	6
80+	41	5	6	8	4	7	5	1	5	-
Unspecified	726	97	197	188	104	42	20	8	14	56

Table 14: Number of divorces by age group and duration of marriage (female divorcees), 2022

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	20 196	3 149	5 379	4 379	2 780	1 631	1 041	513	388	936
<25	132	105	18	1	-	-	-	-	-	8
25-29	1 028	518	432	28	-	-	-	-	-	50
30-34	2 811	760	1 415	497	28	2	-	-	-	109
35-39	4 098	649	1 426	1 431	391	29	-	-	-	172
40-44	3 858	408	871	1 153	949	292	21	-	-	164
45-49	3 193	284	507	609	733	603	286	22	1	148
50-54	2 186	158	280	285	333	429	407	166	18	110
55-59	1 226	79	146	166	149	152	177	188	95	74
60-64	617	48	54	66	64	44	89	84	140	28
65-69	256	20	23	24	27	19	20	31	76	16
70-74	91	8	4	11	8	5	10	7	31	7
75-79	33	3	6	5	3	4	3	2	7	-
80+	6	-	3	-	2	1	-	-	-	-
Unspecified	661	109	194	103	93	51	28	13	20	50

Figure 20: The proportion of divorces by duration of marriage and population group, 2022



Population group variations showed that 27,7% of divorces from the black African; 25,7% from coloured, 25,3% from white and 22,1% from Indian/Asian population groups were from marriages that lasted between five and nine years as indicated on Figure 20 above. The white population had the highest proportion (18,2%) of divorces that occurred in the first four years. The proportion of divorces in all population groups declined as the duration of marriage increased, with a significant decline being observed after fourteen years of marriage. The proportion of divorces from the Indian/Asian population group is higher (15,1%) than the other population groups for marriages that did not last for 15 years and more.

3.7 Divorces involving couples with children less than 18 years

In 2022, 11 164 (55,3%) of the 20 196 divorces had children younger than 18 years whereas 9 032 (44,7%) divorces had no children, see Table 15 below. The profile of white divorcees showed that more than half of the recorded divorces were without children (55,8%). Looking at the black African and coloured divorcees, divorces involving couples with children constituted about 59,3% and 57,3% respectively. Table 16 on page 28 shows that 59,7% of children affected by divorce were from the black African population group; 16,7% from the coloured population group; 14,7% from the white population group and 3,7% from the Indian/Asian population group.

Table 15: Number and percentage distribution of divorces by population group and divorces with and without children (aged below 18 years), 2022

Population group	Total	Divorces with children	Divorces without children	Total	Divorces with children	Divorces without children
Total	20 196	11 164	9 032	100,0	55,3	44,7
Black African	11 048	6 548	4 500	100,0	59,3	40,7
Coloured	3 179	1 822	1 357	100,0	57,3	42,7
Indian/Asian	867	460	407	100,0	53,1	46,9
White	3 912	1 729	2 183	100,0	44,2	55,8
Mixed	554	278	276	100,0	50,2	49,8
Unspecified	636	327	309	100,0	51,4	48,6

Table 16: Number and percentage distribution of population group by children (aged below 18 years) affected by divorces, 2022

Population group	Total number of children involved	%
Total	18 850	100,0
Black African	11 254	59,7
Coloured	3 146	16,7
Indian/Asian	695	3,7
White	2 762	14,7
Mixed	454	2,4
Unspecified	539	2,9

4. Summary and concluding remarks

This statistical release provides information on civil and customary marriages, civil unions and divorces for 2022, based on data from the South African national marriage registration systems of the DHA and data of divorces granted by the DoJ&CD and OCJ.

In total, 111 784 civil marriages were registered in South Africa in 2022, with more than half 63 539 (56,8%) being solemnised by DHA marriage officers. The highest number of civil marriages was registered in Gauteng (29 096), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (18 349) and Western Cape (16 312), and the lowest was registered in Northern Cape (3 334). The majority of civil marriages in 2022 for both bridegrooms (89 624) and brides (95 452) were first time marriages, with women generally entering into marriage at younger ages than men do.

The number of registered customary marriages was 4 376 in 2022, which increased by 63,5% from a total of 2 676 recorded in 2021. The majority of bridegrooms [3 815 (87,2%)] were older than their brides, with the gap in median ages at registration of customary marriage much wider than for other types of marriages. The number of registered civil unions in South Africa in 2022 was 2 461, most of which were registered in Gauteng (1 032) and Western Cape (721), and lowest in Limpopo (29) and Northern Cape (23).

With regard to divorces, the data showed that 20 196 divorces were granted in 2022. Divorces were mainly from people who had married for the first time. There were more wives than husbands who filed the divorce, with husbands generally getting divorced at a later age than wives. The provincial distribution shows that Gauteng (5 778), Western Cape (3 591), KwaZulu-Natal (3 074) were the provinces with the highest number of divorces granted. In 2022, about 18 850 children aged less than 18 years were affected by divorces that took place.

Overall, the information provided in this release showed an increasing trend in the number of registered civil marriages, fluctuations on customary marriages and an increasing trend on civil unions except in 2020. The number of divorces granted showed an increase from 2013 to 2017 then decreased till 2020 and increase in 2021 and 2022. 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 the divorcees.

ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Number of marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides and marital status at the time of marriage, 2022

	Bridegroom					Bride				
	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Grand Total	111 784	89 624	4 734	596	16 830	111 784	95 452	2 938	367	13 027
<18	3	3	-	-	-	40	33	-	6	1
18	9	9	-	-	-	110	101	2	6	1
19	40	38	-	1	1	266	254	2	10	-
18–19	49	47	-	1	1	376	355	4	16	1
20	102	98	-	3	1	524	517	3	4	-
21	278	277	-	1	-	953	937	2	10	4
22	564	558	-	4	2	1 505	1 475	3	23	4
23	882	877	-	4	1	2 242	2 219	5	8	10
24	1 522	1 500	-	18	4	3 134	3 105	1	14	14
20–24	3 348	3 310	-	30	8	8 358	8 253	14	59	32
25	2 202	2 191	-	6	5	3 980	3 926	2	22	30
26	2 772	2 738	-	18	16	4 596	4 534	6	18	38
27	3 207	3 175	1	13	18	4 889	4 807	6	12	64
28	3 624	3 566	2	11	45	5 281	5 150	11	13	107
29	3 913	3 845	4	12	52	5 385	5 243	13	8	121
25–29	15 718	15 515	7	60	136	24 131	23 660	38	73	360
30	4 374	4 273	4	11	86	5 467	5 250	13	6	198
31	4 477	4 364	6	8	99	5 347	5 081	17	5	244
32	4 400	4 232	2	9	157	5 288	4 993	21	7	267
33	4 400	4 178	16	5	201	4 953	4 562	24	6	361
34	4 239	4 003	9	6	221	4 555	4 150	30	2	373
30–34	21 890	21 050	37	39	764	25 610	24 036	105	26	1 443

Annexure A: Number of marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides and marital status at the time of marriage, 2022 (continued)

	Bridegroom					Bride				
	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Grand Total	111 784	89 624	4 734	596	16 830	111 784	95 452	2 938	367	13 027
35	4 104	3 832	13	3	256	4 294	3 851	47	4	392
36	4 265	3 889	18	1	357	4 306	3 799	48	2	457
37	4 363	3 894	36	4	429	4 138	3 575	48	3	512
38	3 995	3 513	35	5	442	3 778	3 204	55	2	517
39	3 968	3 431	46	1	490	3 626	3 029	59	-	538
35-39	20 695	18 559	148	14	1 974	20 142	17 458	257	11	2 416
40	3 933	3 316	46		571	3 280	2 653	65	4	558
41	3 390	2 792	51	2	545	2 737	2 196	68	3	470
42	3 351	2 754	52	3	542	2 545	1 995	78	2	470
43	3 054	2 395	59	2	598	2 297	1 760	57	-	480
44	2 672	2 029	70	2	571	2 074	1 498	80	-	496
40-44	16 400	13 286	278	9	2 827	12 933	10 102	348	9	2 474
45	2 722	2 093	72	-	557	1 950	1 424	65	-	461
46	2 558	1 847	96	2	613	1 825	1 264	94	-	467
47	2 442	1 690	109	-	643	1 857	1 248	98	1	510
48	2 272	1 501	120	1	650	1 581	1 023	103	1	454
49	2 080	1 296	125	-	659	1 482	926	89	-	467
45-49	12 074	8 427	522	3	3 122	8 695	5 885	449	2	2 359
50	2 191	1 308	144	-	739	1 455	869	103	-	483
51	1 727	936	128	-	663	1 101	601	94	-	406
52	1 803	1 009	153	1	640	1 165	648	113	-	404
53	1 464	736	152	6	570	979	503	108	3	365
54	1 479	723	168	12	576	878	480	96	3	299
50-54	8 664	4 712	745	19	3 188	5 578	3 101	514	6	1 957

Annexure A: Number of marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides and marital status at the time of marriage, 2022 (concluded)

	Bridegroom					Bride				
	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Grand Total	111 784	89 624	4 734	596	16 830	111 784	95 452	2 938	367	13 027
55	1 253	541	159	16	537	664	314	78	3	269
56	1 205	496	167	21	521	635	304	89	6	236
57	1 122	498	179	21	424	639	337	95	7	200
58	985	379	159	33	414	533	242	77	9	205
59	965	382	177	18	388	437	211	70	13	143
55–59	5 530	2 296	841	109	2 284	2 908	1 408	409	38	1 053
60	955	356	176	35	388	469	234	81	21	133
61	783	277	169	37	300	331	140	64	14	113
62	782	292	171	23	296	333	147	56	11	119
63	622	208	122	43	249	300	110	67	14	109
64	603	215	148	30	210	223	88	55	15	65
60–64	3 745	1 348	786	168	1 443	1 656	719	323	75	539
65	482	165	109	27	181	200	72	58	4	66
66	446	129	144	23	150	191	64	51	11	65
67	364	110	114	12	128	153	52	45	8	48
68	352	105	112	10	125	134	38	45	3	48
69	291	81	101	9	100	128	45	50	3	30
65–69	1 935	590	580	81	684	806	271	249	29	257
70+	1 732	480	790	63	399	551	171	228	17	135
Unspecified	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Annexure B: Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2022

Age	Bridegroom	Bride
Total	4 376	4 376
<18	27	335
18	10	166
19	31	154
18–19	41	320
20	67	169
21	74	149
22	99	159
23	111	148
24	138	147
20–24	489	772
25	121	153
26	140	157
27	180	166
28	161	161
29	149	180
25–29	751	817
30	168	142
31	147	164
32	158	175
33	139	131
34	147	131
30–34	759	743

Annexure B: Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2022 (continued)

Age	Bridegroom	Bride
35	164	146
36	122	105
37	128	104
38	134	94
39	110	96
35–39	658	545
40	127	90
41	100	83
42	106	68
43	109	43
44	91	69
40–44	533	353
45	112	52
46	76	48
47	82	45
48	66	40
49	63	45
45–49	399	230
50	70	34
51	49	38
52	59	24
53	48	19
54	50	28
50–54	276	143

Annexure B: Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2022 (concluded)

Age	Bridegroom	Bride
55	66	8
56	47	15
57	44	16
58	49	8
59	23	7
55–59	229	54
60	30	13
61	28	8
62	18	7
63	17	3
64	17	3
60–64	110	34
65	12	2
66	15	5
67	14	5
68	6	2
69	7	1
65–69	54	15
70+	48	10
Unspecified	2	5

Annexure C: Distribution of bridegrooms/ men of customary marriages by birth age group and year of marriage occurrence age group

Age group	Year of marriage occurrence								Grand Total
	1945–1954	1955–1964	1965–1974	1975–1984	1985–1994	1995–2004	2005–2014	2015–2022	
<18	3	1	11	8	2	1	1	-	27
18–19	-	3	9	18	9	-	2	-	41
20–24	3	18	90	208	110	32	23	5	489
25–29	1	21	87	174	198	81	110	79	751
30–34	2	9	55	67	129	123	177	197	759
35–39	-	5	21	35	63	96	164	274	658
40–44	-	2	12	21	33	59	147	259	533
45–49	-	2	2	8	25	34	129	199	399
50–54	-	-	4	3	7	16	69	177	276
55–59	-	-	-	2	13	11	43	160	229
60–64	-	-	-	-	1	6	8	95	110
65–69	-	-	-	-	1	2	10	41	54
70+	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	36	48
Unspecified	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2
Grand Total	9	61	291	545	591	465	891	1 523	4 376

Annexure D: Distribution of brides/ women of customary marriages by birth age group and year of marriage occurrence age group

Age group	Year of marriage occurrence								Grand Total
	1945–1954	1955–1964	1965–1974	1975–1984	1985–1994	1995–2004	2005–2014	2015–2022	
<18	5	7	75	152	75	16	4	1	335
18–19	1	12	62	109	88	21	22	5	320
20–24	1	26	89	171	194	99	120	72	772
25–29	1	11	35	61	134	133	201	241	817
30–34	-	4	22	30	59	101	199	328	743
35–39	-	1	7	12	22	56	150	297	545
40–44	-	-	-	7	11	24	109	202	353
45–49	-	-	1	1	7	9	56	156	230
50–54	-	-	-	2	1	3	18	119	143
55–59	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	48	54
60–64	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	29	34
65–69	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	13	15
70+	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	8	10
Unspecified	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5
Grand Total	9	61	291	545	591	465	891	1 523	4 376

Annexure E: Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2022

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
Total	2 461	2 461
18	-	1
19	2	4
18-19	2	5
20	1	9
21	0	12
22	9	29
23	18	28
24	27	46
20-24	55	124
25	62	75
26	62	115
27	86	114
28	106	112
29	123	132
25-29	439	548
30	143	158
31	126	136
32	139	129
33	124	148
34	116	114
30-34	648	685

Annexure E: Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2022 (continued)

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
35	105	116
36	98	90
37	81	79
38	81	76
39	87	61
35-39	452	422
40	83	63
41	62	64
42	64	42
43	57	54
44	41	37
40-44	307	260
45	59	38
46	44	32
47	36	42
48	30	30
49	35	23
45-49	204	165
50	38	29
51	42	28
52	22	19
53	29	32
54	25	16
50-54	156	124

Annexure E: Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2022 (concluded)

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
55	29	16
56	19	15
57	19	14
58	15	10
59	13	9
55-59	95	64
60	9	11
61	14	5
62	13	10
63	6	6
64	9	4
60-64	51	36
65	2	2
66	14	4
67	4	2
68	3	3
69	7	6
65-69	30	17
70+	22	11

Annexure F: Number of divorces by age and population group (male divorcees), 2022

Age group	Population group						
	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Other	Unspecified
Total	20 196	11 307	3 392	1 004	4 050	53	390
<25	49	18	9	7	14	1	-
25–29	447	106	115	41	182	-	3
30–34	1 601	639	385	123	432	1	21
35–39	3 152	1 720	577	183	598	5	69
40–44	3 736	2 232	617	181	638	8	60
45–49	3 625	2 236	569	172	585	3	60
50–54	3 000	1 778	496	119	547	10	50
55–59	1 851	1 055	294	72	389	2	39
60–64	1 156	664	156	37	279	-	20
65–69	539	278	70	7	176	-	8
70–74	198	97	22	7	69	-	3
75–79	75	34	10	4	26	-	1
80+	41	20	3	1	14	-	3
Unspecified	726	430	69	50	101	23	53

Annexure G: Number of divorces by age group and population group (female divorcees), 2022

Age group	Population group						
	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Other	Unspecified
Total	20 196	11 299	3 437	949	4 010	7	494
<25	132	38	43	6	44	-	1
25–29	1 028	416	210	54	325	-	23
30–34	2 811	1 522	505	167	559	-	58
35–39	4 098	2 478	662	194	676	-	88
40–44	3 858	2 382	611	175	615	-	75
45–49	3 193	1 884	515	147	566	4	77
50–54	2 186	1 165	389	94	479	1	58
55–59	1 226	630	221	49	296	-	30
60–64	617	267	127	19	187	1	16
65–69	256	113	40	5	92	-	6
70–74	91	30	18	1	40	-	2
75–79	33	9	3	1	19	-	1
80+	6	1	-	-	4	-	1
Unspecified	661	364	93	37	108	1	58

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. Purpose of the statistical release

The purpose of this statistical release is to provide information on marriages, unions and divorces recorded in South Africa in 2022. The data on marriages and unions was gathered from the DHA while information for divorces came from the DoJ&CD and OCJ through divorce courts, based on the number of divorce forms that had reached Stats SA.

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 registered marriages and unions that had been granted; and forms on them received by Stats SA. Undocumented cases of abandonment or divorces that had been granted by religious or traditional authorities are not reported in the release.

3. Data sources

Stats SA obtains data on civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions directly from the DHA head office. Data on divorces are collected from divorce courts using a standard structured questionnaire (Divorce Forms) prepared by Stats SA. The 2022 data came from both the old and the revised Divorce Forms since some of the courts have not switched to the revised form. The questionnaires are regularly completed by the courts as divorce decrees are granted. In 2022, Stats SA received and processed 20 196 divorce forms.

4. Limitations

Due to the few variables collected on married couples and divorcees, background information on couples and divorcees is limited. Therefore, the release focuses on presenting the demographic characteristics of the married and divorced persons.

5. Definitions of terms

Civil marriages: these are marriages registered according to the Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No. 25 of 1961). In the release, the term 'civil' is used to differentiate marriages that were solemnised by licensed DHA marriage officers from marriages 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 exists 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). Spouse-1 and Spouse-2 are used because the data does not specify the sex of the spouse.

Crude Marriage Rate: the crude marriage rate indicates the ratio of the number of marriages in a specific year to the mid-year population in that year. It is expressed as marriages per 1 000 population.

Crude Divorce Rate: the crude divorce rate indicates the ratio of the number of divorces in a specific year to the mid-year population in that year. It is expressed as divorces per 100 000 population.

Mixed population group: refers to couples with different population groups.

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

Plaintiff: spouse(s) who filed the divorce case.

Unknown province of registration: the information about the name of placename is not known, as the province is derived from the provided placename.

Unspecified province of registration: the information about the name of the placename is not specified (missing), as the province is derived from the provided placename.

6. Symbols

- = Nil
- < = Less than
- ≥ = Equal to and greater than

7. References

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GENERAL INFORMATION

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(012) 310 8692 (technical enquiries)
(012) 310 8251 (orders)

Email: TshwaroG@statssa.gov.za (technical enquiries)
info@statssa.gov.za (user information services)

Postal address: Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

Produced by Stats SA