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PREFACE

This statistical release presents information on civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions that were registered in 2015 in the South African national marriage registration systems 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 2015 by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DOJ&CD). 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 minor children.

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KEY FINDINGS

1. Introduction

There are three main sources of marriage and divorce statistics in South Africa; namely, those compiled from population censuses; household sample surveys and administrative data (i.e. those compiled from civil registration systems and other administrative records). The data from 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 provides cross-sectional data on individuals' marital status (never married, married, divorced, widowed, etc). However, not all types of marriages and divorces are registered. Therefore, marriages and divorces in this context cover different types of marriages and associated divorces that took place at different periods in people's lives.

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 marriages in South Africa, as some are not recognised by law. The three types of marriages that are recognised by law are civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions. The management of registered marriages and unions is the responsibility of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) under the following legislations:

- Civil marriages are administered through the Marriages 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 act accommodates persons who cannot enter into a valid 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 DHA. Before 2008, the data in the annual release *Marriages and divorces* (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) is 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 are obtained from various regional 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 the same year. 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 (2003 – 2015)

Information provided in Table 1 on page 19 shows that a total of 138 627 civil marriages of South African citizens and permanent residents were registered at the Department of Home Affairs in 2015. This number includes 460 (0,3%) 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 2003 and 2008, after which there was a consistent decline. During the period 2003 to 2015, the highest number of marriages was recorded in 2008 (186 522) and the lowest number in 2015 (138 627). The 2015 figure of 138 627 civil marriages shows a decrease of 8,1% from the 150 852 marriages recorded in 2014. In 2015, the observed crude civil marriage rate was 2,5 per 1 000 estimated resident population¹, which compares favourably with the 2014 rate of 2,8 per 1 000 estimated resident population.

The seasonal monthly variation in the registration of civil marriages is observed in Figure 1 on page 9. Generally, the warmer months (beginning from September and peaking in December) are the most popular months for solemnising marriages. The results also show that solemnisation of marriages tends to peak in either March or April depending on the month of the Easter holiday for that particular year. In 2015, the highest number of marriages [18 343 (13,2%)] took place in December and the lowest number of marriages, [8 696 (6,3%)] occurred in June. In comparison with December 2014, the number of recorded marriages decreased rapidly in 2015 in the same month.

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 the offices of the DHA 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 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 2 on page 20 shows the distribution of civil marriages registered in 2015 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, 80 020 (57,7%) of the 138 627 marriages were solemnised by DHA marriage officers and 42 523 (30,7%) by 'Religious' rites. The type of solemnisation rite was not specified in 16 084 (11,6%) marriages.

The table also provides information on the province of 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 2015, the highest number of marriages was registered in Gauteng [37 180 (26,8%)] and the lowest in Northern Cape [4 107 (3,0%)]. Looking at ways of marriage solemnisation, North West had the highest proportion of marriages, 82,3% (9 302) solemnised by civil marriage officers whereas Western Cape recorded the highest proportion, 50,3% (22 311) of marriages solemnised by religious marriage officers. Wide differences of 'unspecified' way of solemnisation by province were noted. For example, 27,9% (2 107) of marriages in Mpumalanga had 'unspecified' method of solemnisation compared with 1,7% (161) in North West.

¹ The crude civil marriage rate refers to the number of civil marriages per 1 000 persons in the population

2.1.3 Marital status at the time of civil marriage

Table 3 on page 21 shows the number of civil marriages for bridegrooms and brides by marital status at the time of marriages and province of registration. The table indicate that a majority of the marriages in 2015 for both bridegrooms and brides were first-time marriages. For bridegrooms, there were 113 891 (82,2%) bachelors, 5 034 (3,6%) divorcees and 1 439 (1,0%) widowers. For the brides, 120 274 (86,8%) were spinsters whilst 3 317 (2,4%) were divorcees and 1 173 (0,8%) were widows. The marital status of 18 263 (13,2%) bridegrooms and 13 863 (10,0%) brides were unspecified. A high proportion of marriages between bridegrooms and brides marrying for the first time was observed in all provinces, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo where 89,6% and 92,8% of brides were spinsters at the time of marriage respectively.

The number of marriages by marital status of husband and age differences between spouses are shown on Table 4 on page 22. It is observed that irrespective of their marital status, men generally married women who had never been married (spinsters). Thus 106 970 (93,9%) of bachelors married spinsters, 1 241 (1,1%) married divorcees and 856 (0,8%) married widows. In addition, irrespective of the fact that more divorcees and widowers married spinsters, the proportion of male divorcees who married female divorcees 816 (16,2%) was higher than the proportion that married widows 43 (0,9%). Similarly, the proportion of widowers who married widows 223 (15,5%) was higher than the proportion that married female divorcees 24 (1,7%).

The age differences between spouses as indicated in Table 4 show that, despite the fact that men tend to marry younger women. Data in Table 4 indicate that in 2015, 21 607 (15,6%) bridegrooms were younger than their brides whilst 10 751 (7,8%) 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, 45,5% of bachelors who married divorcees were younger than their brides (see Figure 4a) and 11,6% of male divorcees who married widowed women were also younger than their brides (see Figure 4c). A relatively smaller percentage (6,0%) was observed for male divorcees marrying spinsters who were older than them (see Figure 4c).

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. 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 2015, of the 138 627 bridegrooms married, only 6 were below the age of 18, while 77 brides were below this age. All of the 6 bridegrooms were bachelors and 72 brides were spinsters (see Table 5 on page 23). Figure 2 on page 10 indicates that the highest number of bachelors [30 417 (26,7%)] were aged 30–34 years whereas the highest number of spinsters [36 303 (30,2%)] 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).

Figure 3a on page 11 shows the median ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage. Median ages of bridegrooms increased from 34 years in 2011 to 36 years in 2015 and those for brides increased from 30 years to 31 years during the same period. Figure 3a to Figure 3d on pages 11 and 12 further show that women

generally entered marriage at younger ages than men. 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.

The median ages of brides remained at 30 years throughout the three-year period between 2011 and 2013, and increased by one year (31 years) in 2014 and 2015, while for bridegrooms the median ages increased by two years from 34 years in 2011 to 36 years in 2015. For first time marriages, the median ages for bachelors and spinsters were 34 years and 30 years respectively in 2015, giving an age difference of four years (see Figure 3b). For remarriages, the median ages for widowers and widows in 2015 (Figure 3c) were 52 years and 32 years respectively, resulting in a 20-year age gap. The median ages for widowers consistently increased every year from 48 years in 2011 to 52 years in 2015, with the exception of 2014 where it decreased by a year from the 2013 median age, to 49. The median ages for widows increased by two years during the five year period, from 30 years in 2011 to 32 years in 2015. As with the median age trend for widowers, there was a slight decrease of one year to 29 years between 2013 and 2014.

The median ages at marriage for divorcees are shown in Figure 3d. It is observed that the median ages for male divorcees increased gradually over time. The median ages of male divorcees increased from 52 years in 2011 to 55 years in 2015. In comparison, the median age of female divorcee showed only one year increase from 47 years in 2011 to 48 years in 2015. There was a seven-year age difference in the median ages between male and female divorcees in 2015.

2.2 Customary marriages

2.2.1 Trends in the registration of customary marriages (2003–2015)

In 2015, 3 467 customary marriages were registered at the Department of Home Affairs, indicating an increase of 13,2% from 3 062 customary marriages registered in 2014. It is observed from Table 6 on page 26 that the number of registered customary marriages fluctuated between 2003 and 2007 after which there was a consistent decline from 2008 to 2014 then an increase in 2015. The highest number of registered customary marriages was recorded in 2004 (20 301) whilst the least number was recorded in 2014 (3 062). The observed crude customary marriage rate was 0,1 per 1 000 estimated resident population in 2015².

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 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 on page 14 shows that the majority of customary marriages were registered later than the year of marriage. During the period from 2011 to 2015, the proportion of marriages that were registered in the same year they took place, ranged from 14,2% in 2011 to 20,2% in 2015.

2.2.2 Marital status 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).

² The crude customary marriage rate refers to the number of customary marriages per 1 000 persons in the population

2.2.3 Age at the time of customary marriage

The results presented in Table 7 on page 27 show that in 2015, the highest number of customary marriages were registered in KwaZulu-Natal [1 686 (48,6%)], followed by Limpopo [603 (17,4%)] and Mpumalanga [388 (11,2%)]. The lowest number of customary marriages was recorded in North West [37 (1,1%)]. Limpopo recorded the highest proportion of bridegrooms older than their brides [89,6% (540)].

The age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage is presented on Table 8 on page 28. In 2015, there were 5 (0,1%) bridegrooms and 120 (3,5%) brides who were younger than 18 years. The median ages at the time of customary marriage are presented in Figure 6 on page 15. 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 2011 and 2015.

The median age of bridegrooms increased from 32 years in 2011 to 34 years in 2015 and that of brides increased from 27 years to 29 years between 2011 and 2014; then decreased by one year to 28 years in 2015. A further comparison of the ages of bridegrooms and brides (see Figure 7 on page 15) shows that in 2015, 84,8% of bridegrooms were older than their brides whilst 9,7% were younger than their brides, and 5,5% were of the same age as their brides.

2.3 Civil unions

2.3.1 Trends in the registration of civil unions (2011–2015)

Data in Table 9 on page 31 show that in 2015, 1 185 civil unions were registered (including the registration of four civil unions of South African citizens and permanent residents living outside South Africa). In 2015, the crude civil union rate was 0,02 per 1 000 estimated resident population³. In general, the number of civil unions registered in South Africa increased over the five-year period. Civil unions registered increased by 3,6% from 1 144 in 2014 to 1 185 in 2015. The provincial distribution of civil unions registered in 2015 indicates that Gauteng (443) and Western Cape (346) were the provinces with the highest number of registrations of civil unions. In total, 66,6% of civil unions in 2015 were registered in these two provinces. The lowest number of registered civil unions was recorded in North West from 2011 to 2012, Limpopo in 2013, Mpumalanga in 2014 and Northern Cape recorded the lowest in 2015, with 10 civil unions registered.

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

2.3.3 Age at the time of civil union

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 in Table 10 on page 32. Spouses are distinguished as spouse-1 and spouse-2, based on the information completed by the spouses at the time of civil union registration. It is observed that there were two spouses-1 and six spouses-2 that were teenagers (18 and 19 years).

As observed in Figure 8 on page 16, the median ages of spouses-1 remained at 36 years throughout the five-year period whilst the median ages of spouses-2 was fluctuating between 33 years and 34 years in 2011 to 2015. Furthermore, the median ages of spouses-1 were higher 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 three

³ The crude civil union rate refers to the number of civil unions per 1 000 persons in the population

years. Data in Figure 9 on page 16 further show that spouses-1 were generally older than spouses-2. In 2015, 60,8% of spouses-1 were older than their spouses, whilst 31,5% were younger than their spouses and 7,7% were of the same age as their spouses.

3. Divorces

3.1 Trends in divorces (2003 – 2015)

The 2015 divorce data reported in this statistical release are based on 25 260 completed divorce forms that Stats SA received and processed by the end of December 2016. The observed crude divorce rate was 0,5 divorces per 1 000 estimated resident population in 2015⁴. The number (25 260) indicates an increase of 571 (2,3%) divorces from the 24 689 cases processed in 2014 (see Table 11 on page 35). The table shows that the total number of divorces generally fluctuated over the period 2003 to 2010 then increased from 2011 to 2015, with the highest number observed in 2005 (32 484) and the lowest in 2011 (20 980).

Table 11 also provides data on divorces classified by population group and the year in which the divorce was granted. In 2015, 1 215 couples did not specify their population group. Couples from the white population group dominated the number of divorces from 2003 to 2007; thereafter, black African couples had the highest number of divorces up until 2015. In 2003, 40,0% of the divorcees were from the white population group whereas 24,3% came from the black African population group. By 2015, 42,9% of the divorcees were from the black African population group and 26,1% from the white population group. The proportions of the divorcees from the coloured and the Indian/Asian population groups were quite invariable during the thirteen-year period.

Table 12 on page 36 indicates information on the occupation of husbands and wives at the time of divorce. It is noted that a high proportion of husbands (30,5%) and wives (33,8%) did not specify the type of occupation they were engaged in at the time of divorce. In addition, 16,8% and 24,6% of husbands and wives respectively were not economically active at the time of divorce. Most male divorcees were managers and administrators 3 405 (13,5%) and 2 580 (10,2%) were professionals, semi-professionals and technical occupations while female divorcees were largely in professionals, semi-professionals and technical occupations 3 121 (12,4%) and clerical and sales occupations 3 087 (12,2%).

3.2 Characteristics of plaintiffs

The 2015 data presented in Table 13 on page 37 show that more wives than husbands, 13 038 (51,6%) women compared to 8 538 (33,8%) initiated divorce and 2 171 (8,6%) divorces were initiated by both husband and wife. The sex of the plaintiff was not specified in 1 513 (6,0%) cases. With the exception of women from the black African population who had a lower proportion of plaintiffs (45,3%), the proportion of women plaintiffs from the other population groups was above 50,0%. The proportion of women plaintiffs for the white population group, Indian/Asian population group and coloured population group were 58,8%, 55,7% and 54,1% respectively. The black African population group had the highest proportion of divorces with an unspecified sex for the plaintiff (6,2%).

Table 14 on page 37 provides information on the province and sex of the plaintiff. The provincial distribution indicates that Gauteng (6 544), Western Cape (4 854) and KwaZulu-Natal (4 140) were the provinces with the highest number of divorces granted. In total, 61,5% of divorces granted in 2015 were from these three provinces. Gauteng (12,3%) and Western Cape (10,2%) show higher proportions of both male and female divorcees as plaintiffs.

⁴ The crude divorce rate refers to the number of divorces per 1 000 persons in the population

3.3 Number of divorces by way of solemnisation of marriage

Data presented in Table 15 on page 38 show that 12 016 (47,6%) of the 2015 divorce cases were from marriages that were solemnised by religious rites and 11 077 (43,9%) by civil rites. Almost three quarters (72,0%) of divorces from the white population group and 67,7% 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, 65,3% and 56,1% respectively.

3.4 Number of times married

Results presented in Table 16 on page 38 show that the 2015 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 12,0% of men and 10,2% of women from second-time marriages. Almost 2,0% of men and women were getting divorced for at least the third time.

3.5 Age at the time of divorce

The median ages at the time of divorce in 2015 were 44 years for males and 40 years for females, indicating that generally, divorced males were older than divorced females, with a difference of about four years (see Figure 10 on page 17). The pattern of median ages in 2015 by population group shows that the highest median age of 44 years occurred among black African and white males, while the lowest median ages occurred among females from the Indian/Asian and 'other' population groups, at 39 and 36 years respectively. The difference in the median ages at the time of divorce between males and females was greater in the 'other' population group (six years) compared to the black African, coloured, Indian/Asian and white population groups.

Detailed information on the age and population group of divorcees is presented in Figure 11 on page 17 for males and in Figure 12 on page 18 for females, as well as in Tables 17 and 18 on pages 39 and 40 respectively. 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. The data reveal that 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 at divorce was 40 to 44 for all population groups (Figure 11), except for the coloured population group where the highest peak was from the age group 45 to 49 years. In the case of females, the peak age group for coloured and white population groups was 40 to 44 years and the peak for black African and Indian/Asian population groups was 35 to 39 years (Figure 12).

3.6 Duration of marriage of divorcing couples

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 the divorces granted in 2015 as shown in Table 19 on page 41 for men and Table 20 on page 42 for women.

Table 19 on page 41 shows that the largest number [6 977 (27,6%)] of divorces among males were for marriages that lasted between five and nine years. This group is followed by marriages that lasted between ten and fourteen years [4 743 (18,8%)] and marriages that lasted for less than five years [4 487 (17,8%)]. Thus 45,4% of the 25 260 divorces in 2015 were marriages that lasted for less than 10 years.

According to results given in Figure 13 on page 18, irrespective of the population group, the highest proportion of divorces occurred to couples who had been married for five to nine years. Thus 32,3% of divorces from the black African; 26,1% from white; 24,9% from coloured and 23,7% from Indian/Asian population groups were marriages that lasted between five and nine years. The white population had the highest proportion (23,6%) of

divorces that occurred in the first five years. The proportion of divorces in all population groups declined as the duration of marriage increased, with a significant decline being observed after nine years of marriage.

3.7 Divorces involving couples with minor children

In 2015, 14 045 (55,6%) of the 25 260 divorces had children younger than 18 years (see Table 21 on page 43). The coloured and the white population groups had the highest and lowest proportion of divorces involving couples with children with (63,1%) and the (47,2%) respectively. Table 22 on page 43 shows that 45,6% of children affected by divorce were from the black African population group; 21,6% from the white population group; 20,1% from the coloured population group and 5,9% from the Indian/Asian population group.

4. Summary and concluding remarks

This statistical release provided information on civil and customary marriages, civil unions and divorces for 2015, 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, 138 627 civil marriages were registered in South Africa in 2015, most of which were solemnised by DHA marriage officers. The highest number of civil marriages was registered in Gauteng, followed by Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, and the lowest was registered in Northern Cape. The majority of civil marriages in 2015 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 3 467 in 2015, which increased by 13,2% from a total of 3 062 recorded in 2014. The majority of bridegrooms were older than their brides, with the gap in median ages at registration of customary marriage much wider for customary marriages than other types of marriages. The number of registered civil unions in South Africa in 2015 was 1 185, most of which were registered in Gauteng and Western Cape, and lowest in Northern Cape. Spouses recorded as spouse-1 were usually older than those recorded as spouse-2.

With regard to divorces, the data from the 56 out of the 62 courts that deal with divorce showed that 25 260 divorces were granted in South Africa in 2015. Generally, there was an increase in the proportion of divorces for black Africans and decline for white population group from 2003 to 2015. Divorces were mainly from people who had married for the first time. There were more wife than husband plaintiffs, with husbands generally getting divorced at a later age than wives. The provincial distribution shows that Gauteng (6 544), Western Cape (4 854) and KwaZulu-Natal (4 140) were the provinces with the highest number of divorces granted. About 22 966 children aged less than 18 years were affected by divorces that took place in 2015.

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 the divorcees. 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, 2011–2015

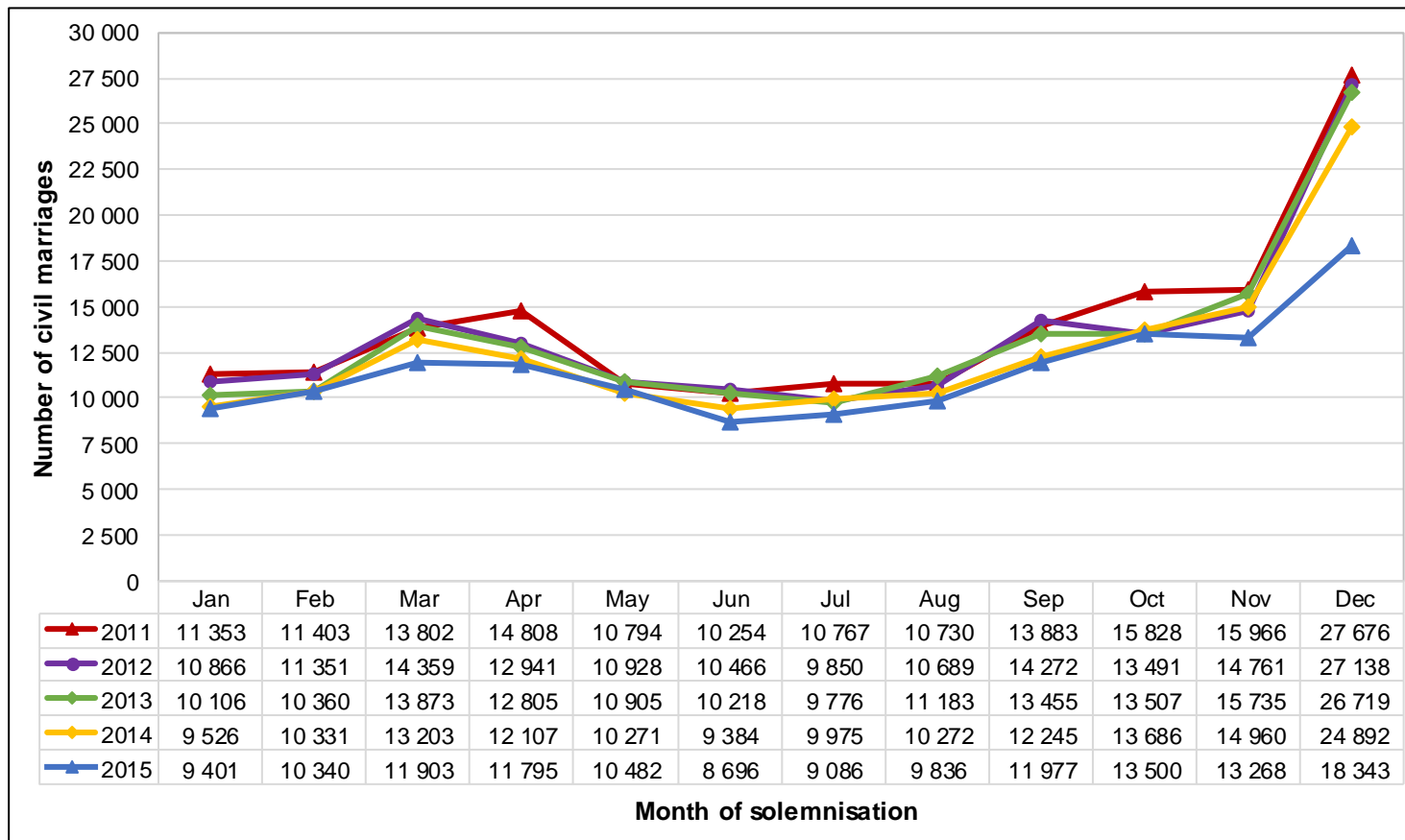
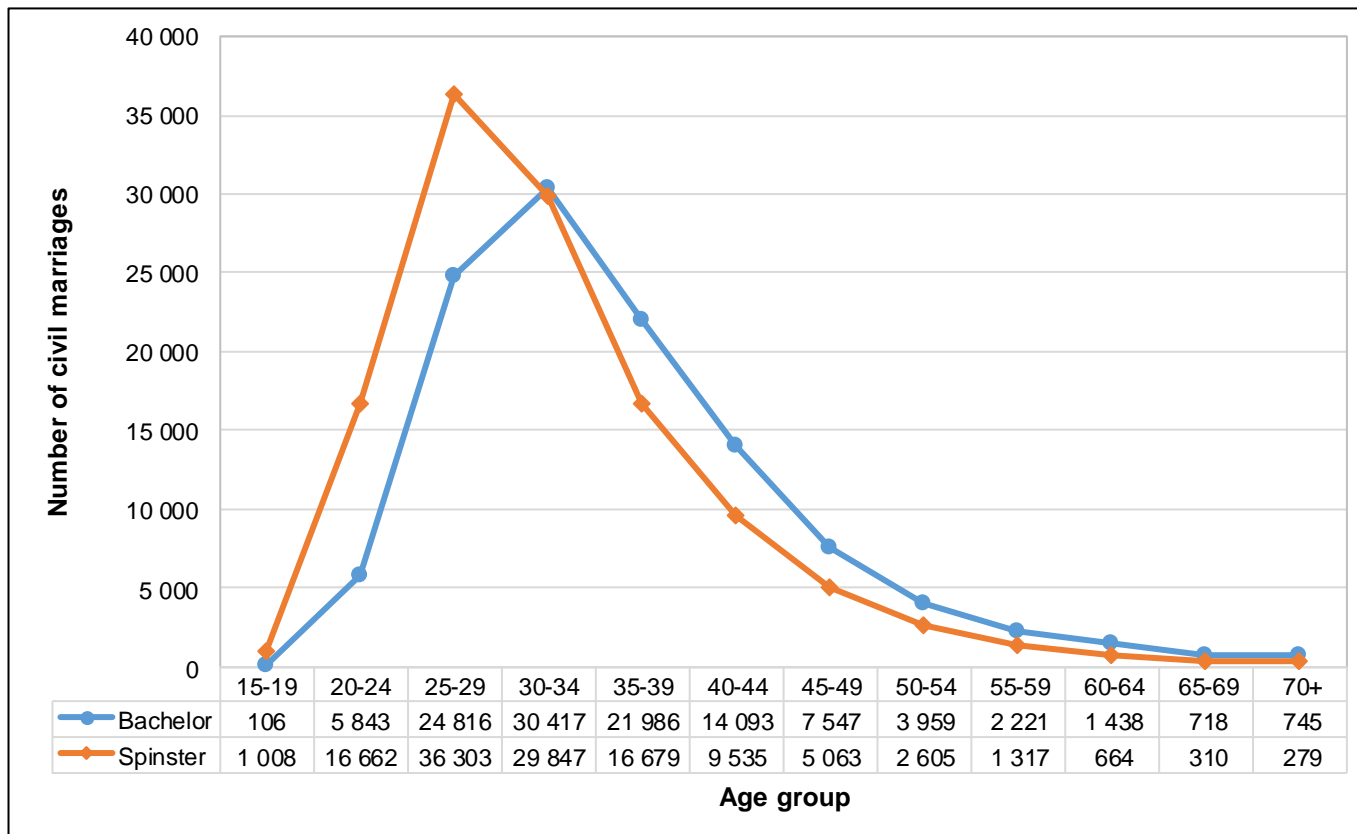


Figure 2 – Number of civil marriages for bachelors and spinsters by age group, 2015



Excluding two cases with unspecified bachelors age and two cases with unspecified spinsters age

Figure 3a – Median ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of civil marriage, 2011–2015

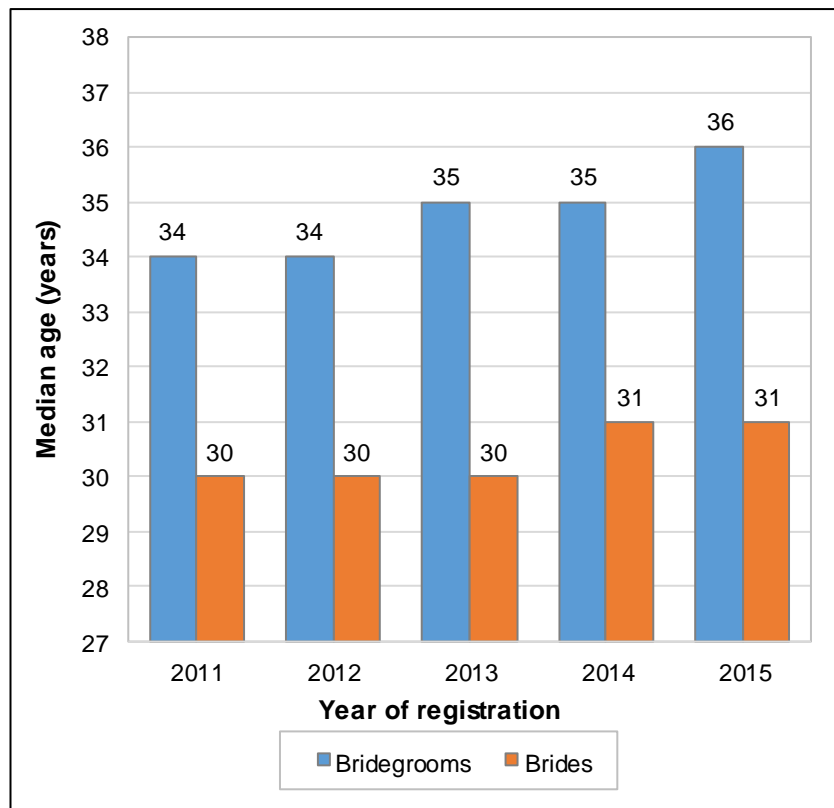


Figure 3b – Median ages of bachelors and spinsters at the time of civil marriage, 2011–2015

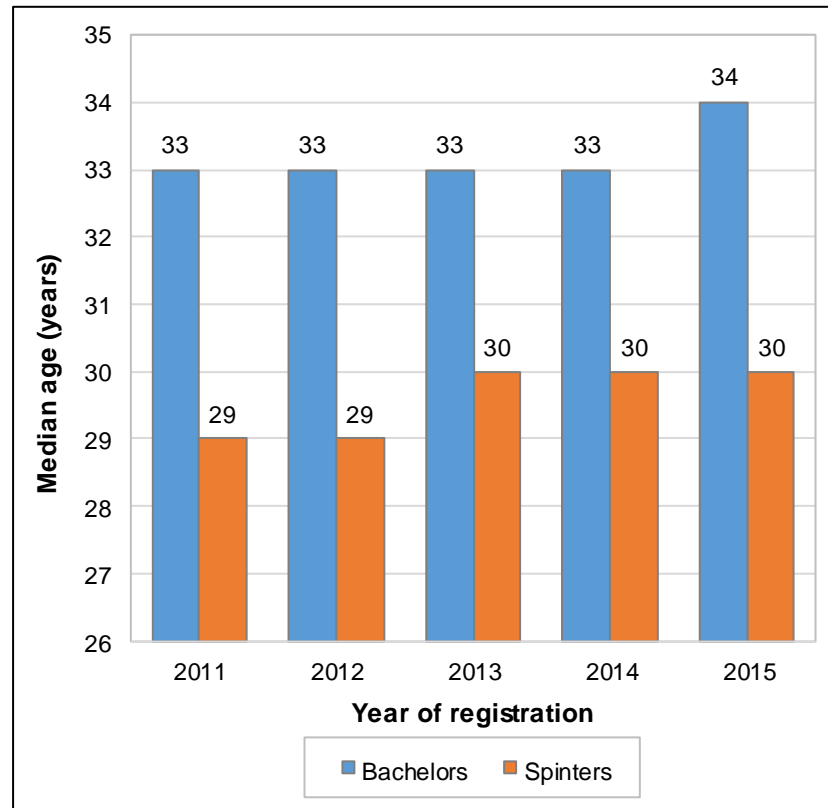


Figure 3c – Median ages of widowers and widows at the time of civil marriage, 2011–2015

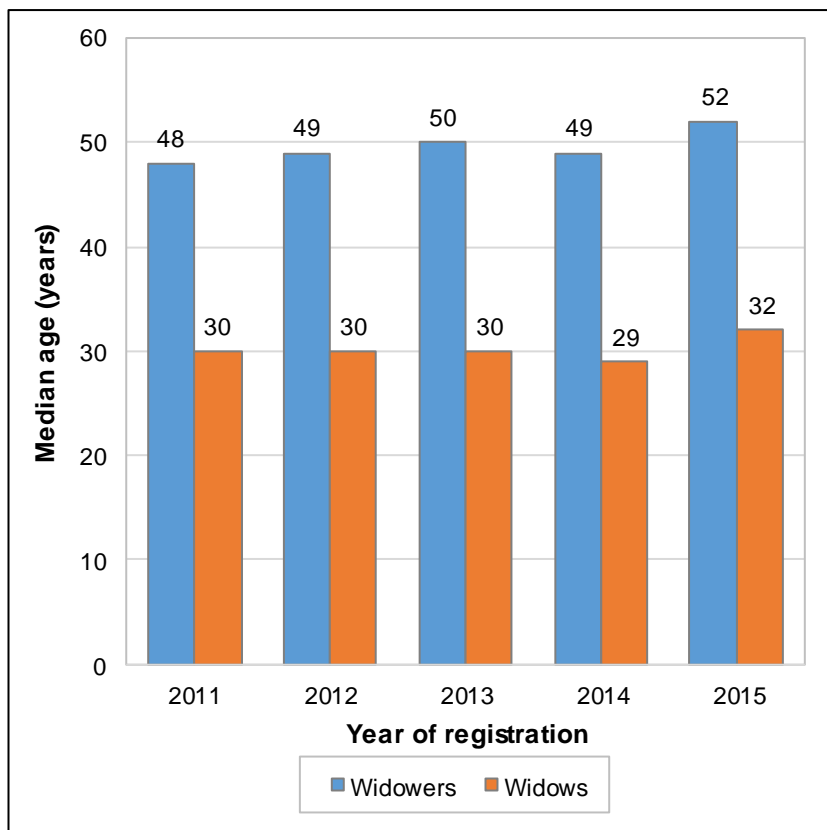


Figure 3d – Median ages of male and female divorcees at the time of civil marriage, 2011–2015

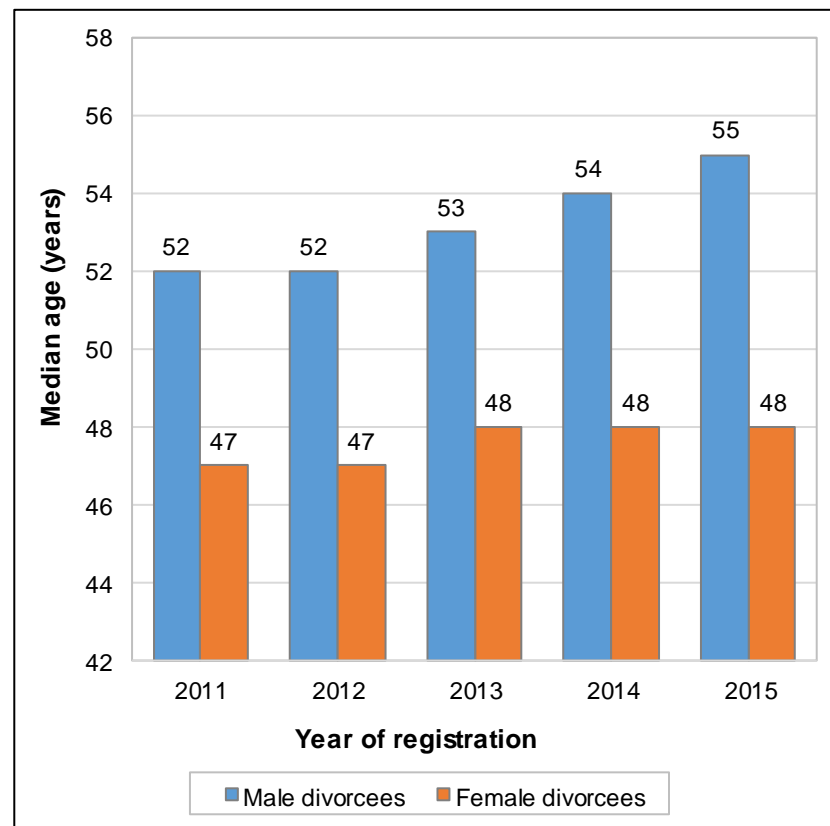
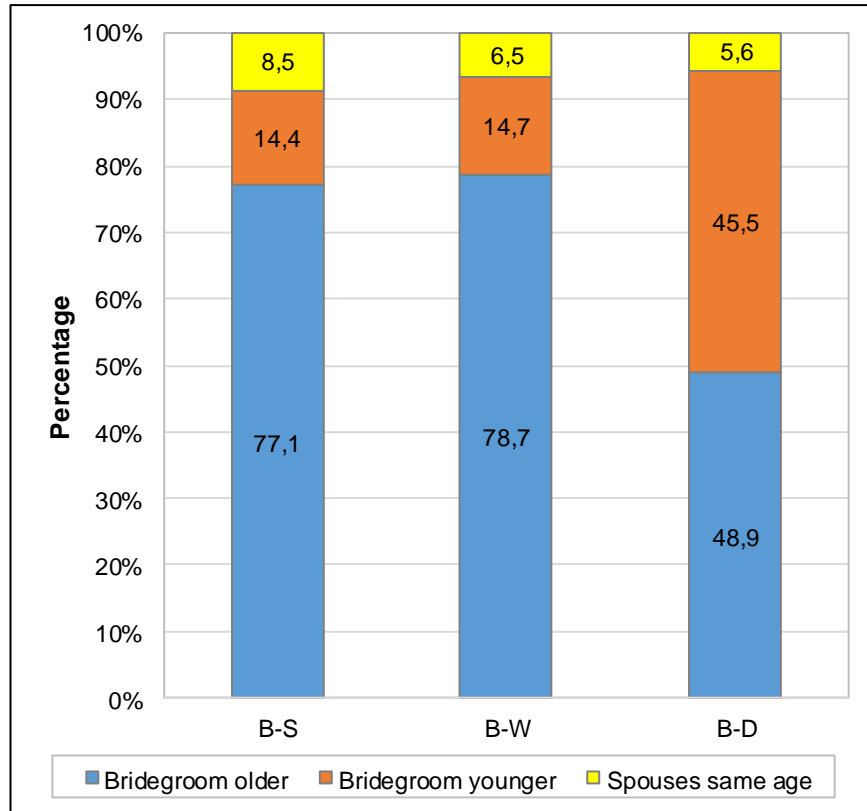


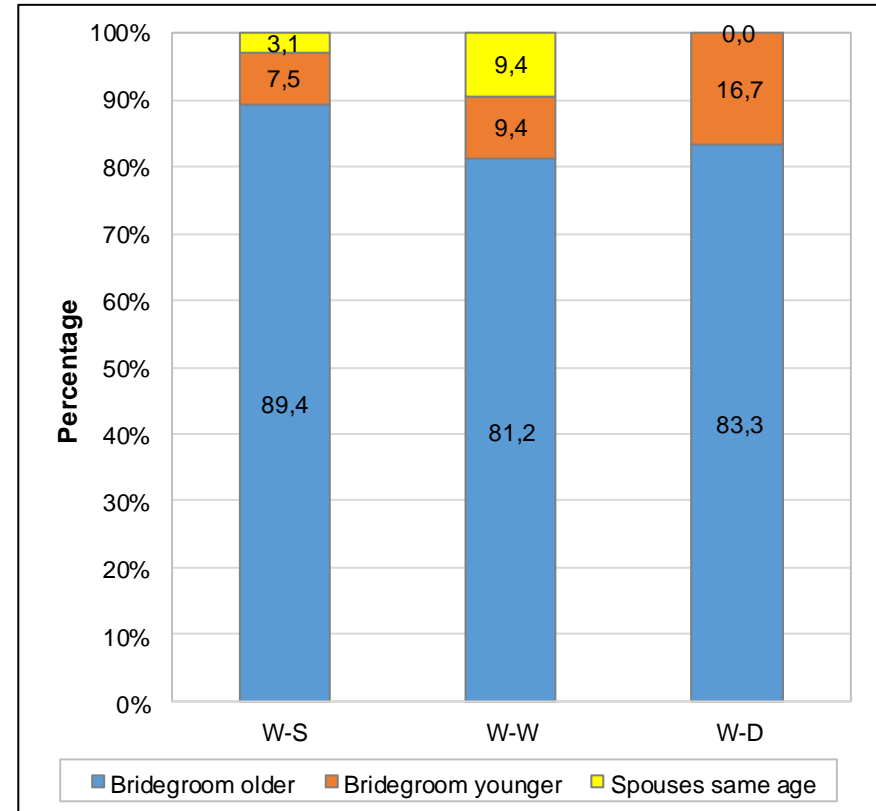
Figure 4a – Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage (bachelors), 2015



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

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

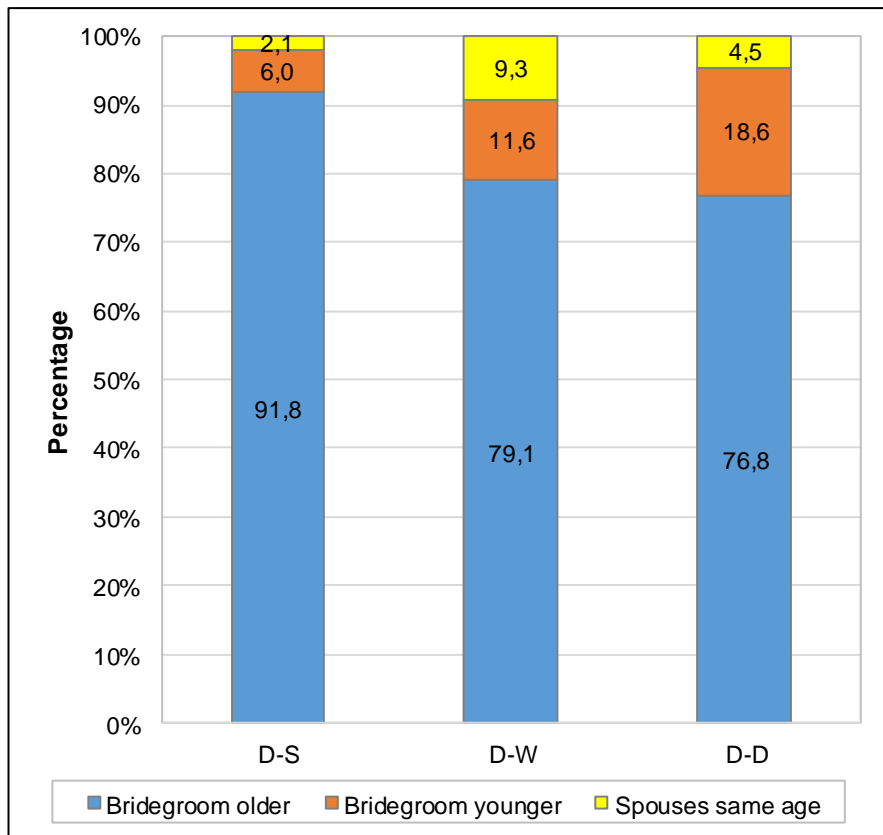
Figure 4b – Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage (widowers), 2015



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

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

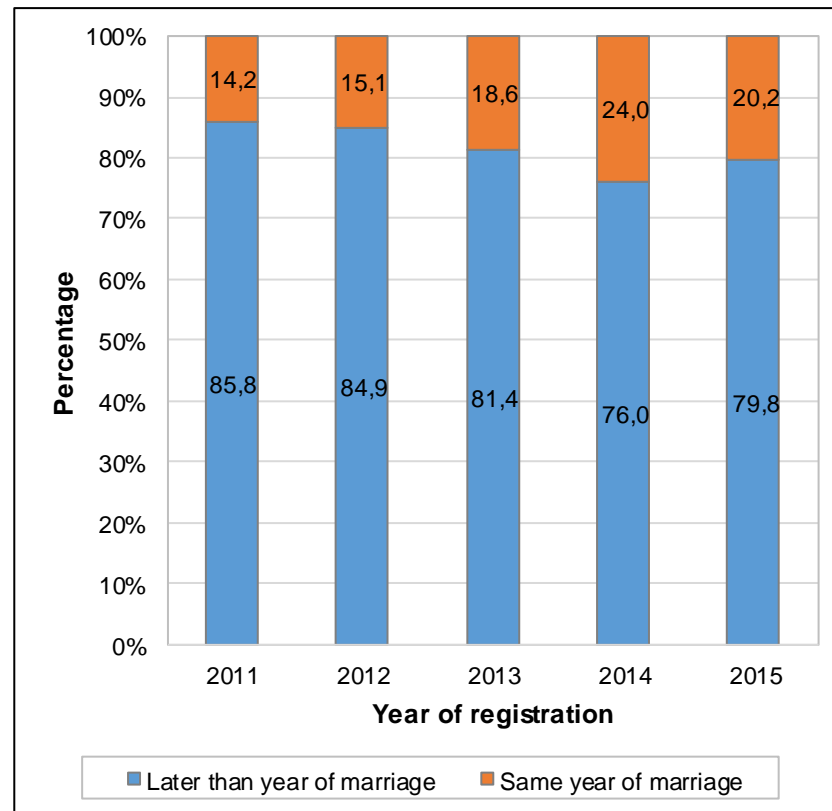
Figure 4c – Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage (male divorcees), 2015



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

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

Figure 5 – Percentage distribution of customary marriages by year of marriage and time it took to register the marriage, 2011–2015



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

Figure 6 – Median ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, 2011–2015

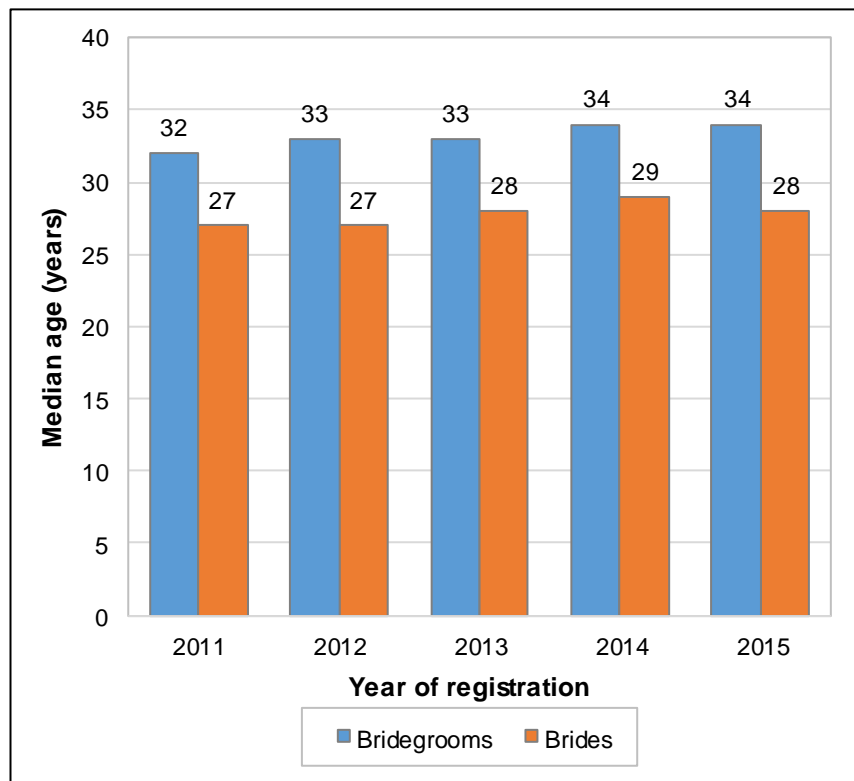
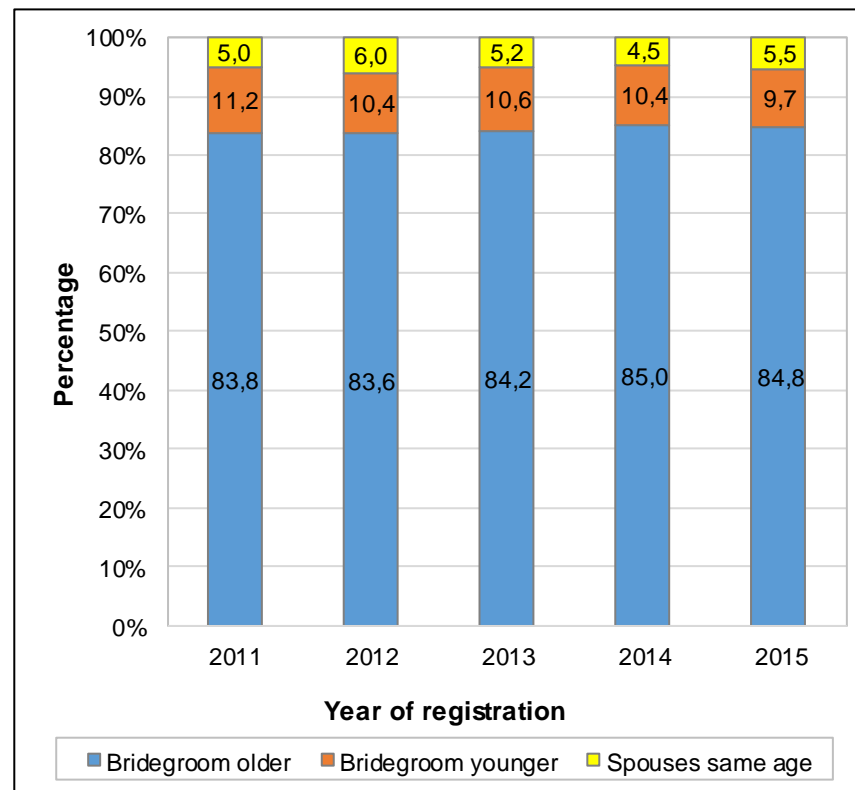


Figure 7 – Percentage distribution of customary marriages by age differences between spouses at the time of marriage, 2011–2015



Excluding 0,1% of unspecified age difference in 2014

Figure 8 – Median ages of spouses in civil unions, 2011–2015

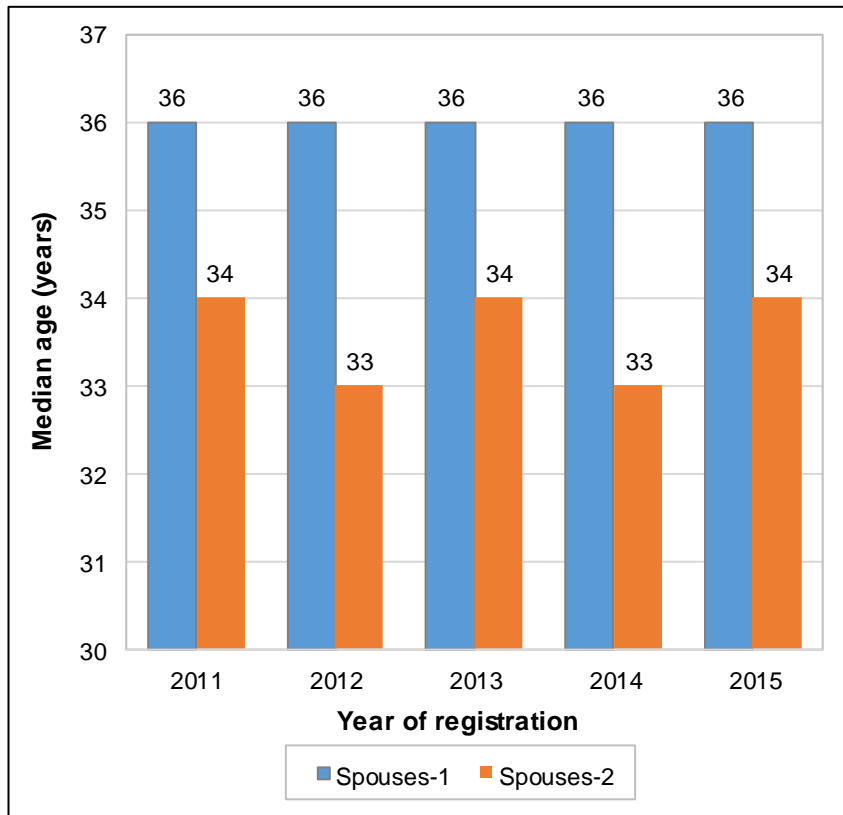
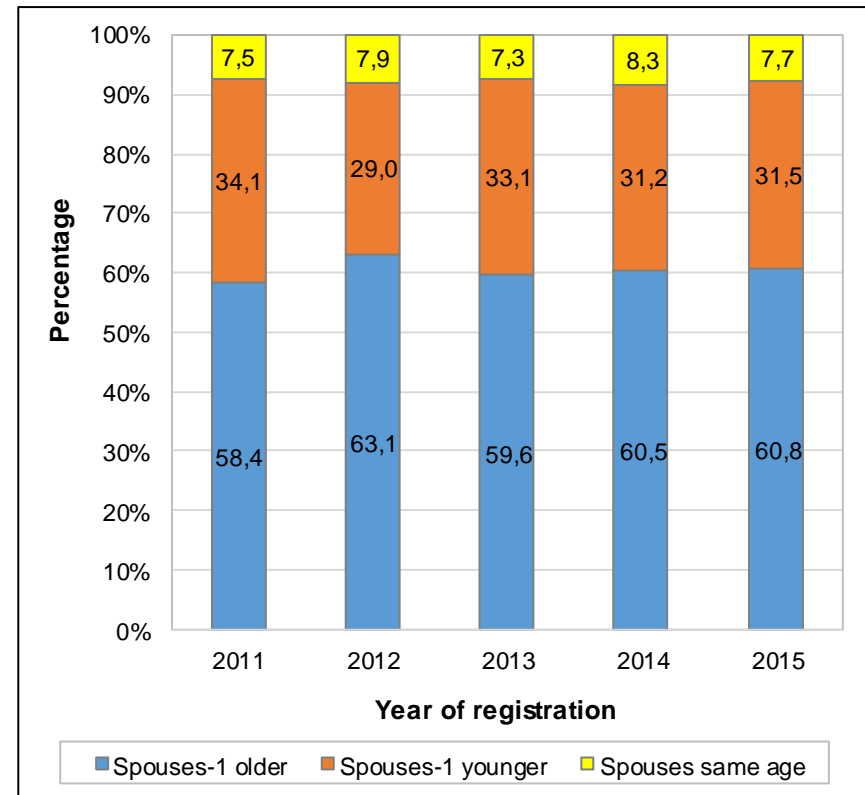


Figure 9 – Percentage distribution of civil unions by age differences between spouses at the time of union, 2011–2015



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

Figure 10 – Median ages of divorcees by sex and population group, 2015

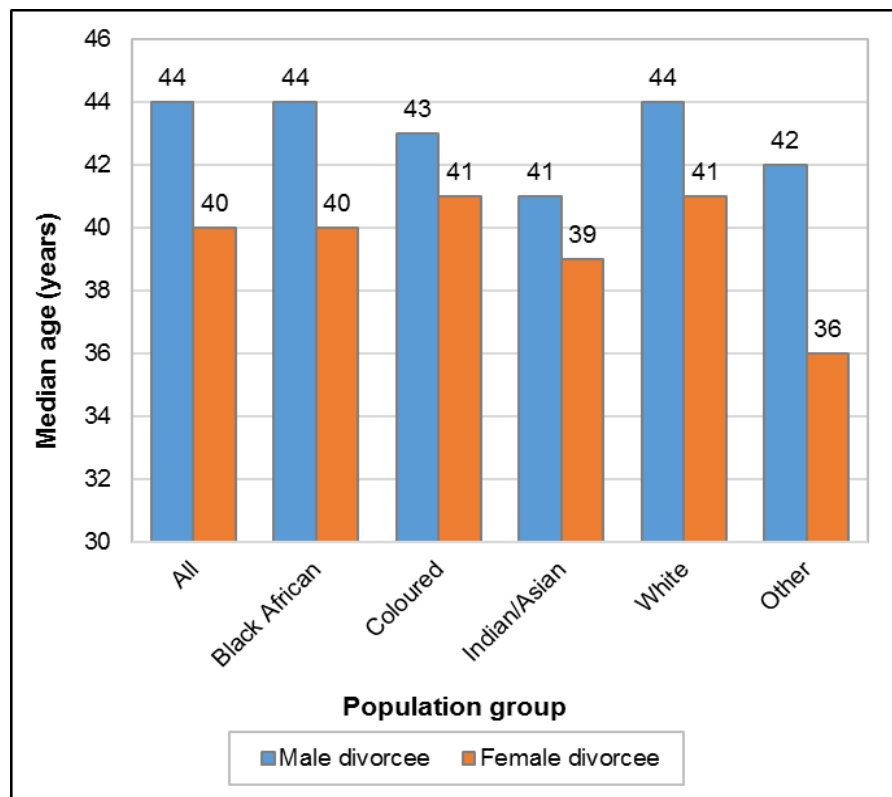


Figure 11 – The proportions of divorces by age and population group (males), 2015

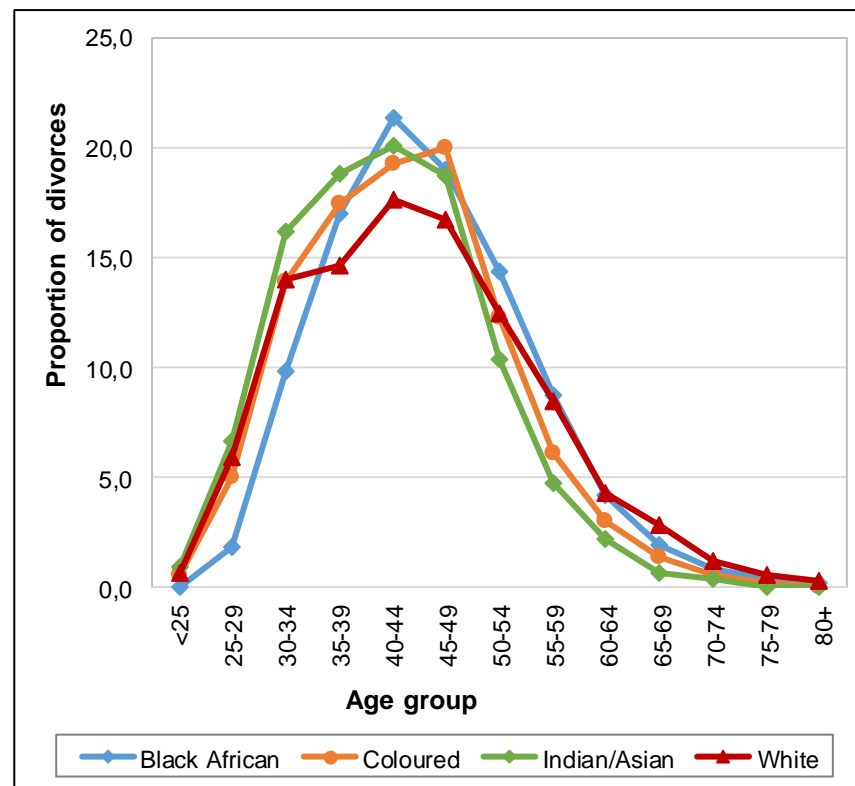


Figure 12 – The proportions of divorces by age group and population group (females), 2015

Figure 13 – The proportions of divorces by duration of marriage and population group, 2015

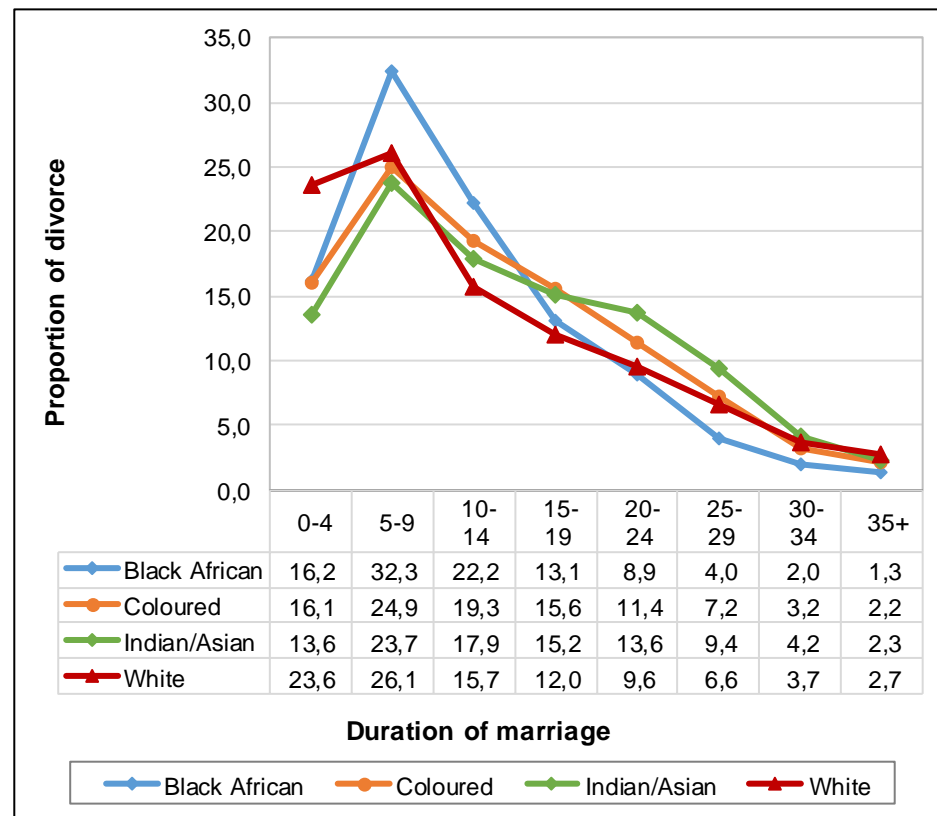
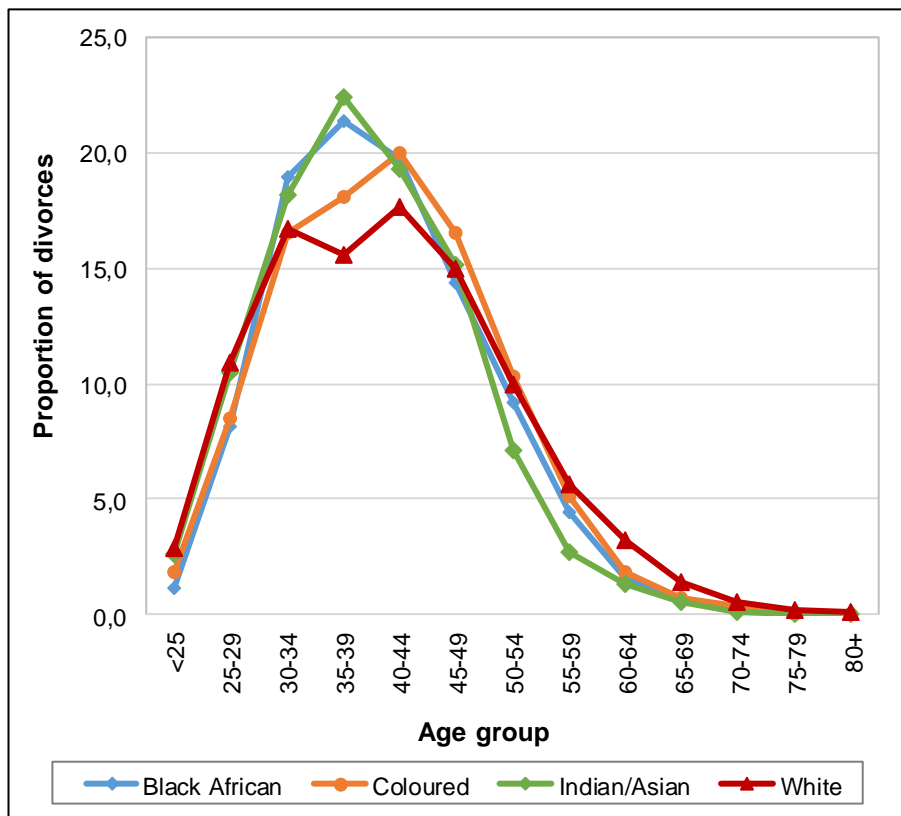


Table 1 – Number of registered civil marriages in South Africa, 2003 – 2015

Year of registration	Number of civil marriages
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
2012	161 112
2013	158 642
2014	150 852
2015	138 627

Table 2 – Number of civil marriages by way of solemnisation and province of marriage registration, 2015

Province of registration	Way of solemnisation				%			
	Total	DHA	Religious	Unspecified	Total	DHA	Religious	Unspecified
Total	138 627	80 020	42 523	16 084	100,0	57,7	30,7	11,6
Western Cape	22 311	9 597	11 228	1 486	100,0	43,0	50,3	6,7
Eastern Cape	15 279	7 850	5 484	1 945	100,0	51,4	35,9	12,7
Northern Cape	4 107	1 908	1 166	1 033	100,0	46,5	28,4	25,2
Free State	8 707	6 748	1 804	155	100,0	77,5	20,7	1,8
KwaZulu-Natal	21 097	11 888	6 474	2 735	100,0	56,3	30,7	13,0
North West	9 302	7 653	1 488	161	100,0	82,3	16,0	1,7
Gauteng	37 180	21 581	10 804	4 795	100,0	58,0	29,1	12,9
Mpumalanga	7 550	3 778	1 665	2 107	100,0	50,0	22,1	27,9
Limpopo	9 165	6 862	895	1 408	100,0	74,9	9,8	15,4
Outside RSA	460	422	29	9	100,0	91,7	6,3	2,0
Unknown	466	247	169	50	100,0	53,0	36,3	10,7
Unspecified	3 003	1 486	1 317	200	100,0	49,5	43,9	6,7

Table 3 – Number of civil marriages for bridegrooms and brides by marital status at time of marriage and province of marriage registration, 2015

Province of registration	Bridegroom					Bride				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Total	138 627	113 891	5 034	1 439	18 263	138 627	120 274	3 317	1 173	13 863
Western Cape	22 311	17 676	822	24	3 789	22 311	18 589	676	26	3 020
Eastern Cape	15 279	12 679	654	133	1 813	15 279	13 575	335	108	1 261
Northern Cape	4 107	3 360	209	33	505	4 107	3 602	134	30	341
Free State	8 707	7 128	374	101	1 104	8 707	7 469	266	142	830
KwaZulu-Natal	21 097	17 926	731	275	2 165	21 097	18 912	401	188	1 596
North West	9 302	7 832	349	66	1 055	9 302	8 278	241	66	717
Gauteng	37 180	29 749	1 235	418	5 778	37 180	31 213	916	356	4 695
Mpumalanga	7 550	6 236	278	148	888	7 550	6 660	170	89	631
Limpopo	9 165	7 965	283	178	739	9 165	8 506	105	117	437
Outside RSA	460	402	7	-	51	460	419	4	1	36
Unknown	466	401	7	7	51	466	410	6	6	44
Unspecified	3 003	2 537	85	56	325	3 003	2 641	63	44	255

Table 4 – Number of civil marriages by marital status of husband and age differences between spouses at the time of marriage, 2015

		Bachelor to					Divorcee to				
Age difference	Grand total	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Total	138 627	113 891	106 970	1 241	856	4 824	5 034	3 024	816	43	1 151
Bridegroom Older	106 264	86 011	82 450	607	674	2 280	4 382	2 777	627	34	944
Bridegroom Younger	21 607	18 245	15 392	565	126	2 162	498	182	152	5	159
Same Age	10 751	9 631	9 124	69	56	382	153	64	37	4	48
Unspecified	5	4	4	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-

	Widower to					Unspecified to				
Age difference	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Total	1 439	1 145	24	223	47	18 263	9 135	1 236	51	7 841
Bridegroom Older	1 264	1 024	20	181	39	14 607	8 153	794	40	5 620
Bridegroom Younger	115	86	4	21	4	2 749	691	352	7	1 699
Same Age	60	35	-	21	4	907	291	90	4	522
Unspecified	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 5 – Number of marriages by marital status at the time of marriage and ages of bridegrooms and brides, 2015

Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Total	138 627	113 891	5 034	1 439	18 263	138 627	120 274	3 317	1 173	13 863
<18	6	6	-	-	-	77	72	2	3	-
18	29	28	-	1	-	271	257	1	13	-
19	72	72	-	-	-	708	679	3	23	3
18-19	101	100	-	1	-	979	936	4	36	3
20	199	197	-	2	-	1 317	1 272	3	40	2
21	473	459	1	12	1	2 111	2 045	4	56	6
22	1 022	997	-	23	2	3 215	3 140	6	52	17
23	1 624	1 604	1	12	7	4 595	4 490	6	63	36
24	2 622	2 586	1	25	10	5 814	5 715	4	55	40
20-24	5 940	5 843	3	74	20	17 052	16 662	23	266	101
25	3 705	3 641	3	38	23	6 787	6 653	13	48	73
26	4 498	4 424	1	42	31	7 495	7 327	7	59	102
27	5 234	5 132	3	43	56	7 625	7 416	17	46	146
28	5 622	5 486	3	34	99	7 783	7 545	21	37	180
29	6 286	6 133	4	28	121	7 665	7 362	19	30	254
25-29	25 345	24 816	14	185	330	37 355	36 303	77	220	755
30	6 741	6 539	7	27	168	7 684	7 300	34	33	317
31	6 441	6 190	5	20	226	6 951	6 500	44	28	379
32	6 504	6 185	15	20	284	6 449	5 912	39	28	470
33	6 503	6 138	20	14	331	6 107	5 534	59	26	488
34	5 832	5 365	37	24	406	5 199	4 601	62	12	524
30-34	32 021	30 417	84	105	1 415	32 390	29 847	238	127	2 178

Table 5 – Number of marriages by marital status at the time of marriage and ages of bridegrooms and brides, 2015 (continued)

Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
35	5 635	5 106	32	21	476	4 790	4 218	57	8	507
36	5 372	4 774	53	12	533	4 351	3 749	84	7	511
37	4 879	4 292	49	14	524	3 722	3 115	79	8	520
38	4 609	3 972	51	9	577	3 553	2 968	80	6	499
39	4 532	3 842	69	7	614	3 286	2 629	94	3	560
35-39	25 027	21 986	254	63	2 724	19 702	16 679	394	32	2 597
40	4 393	3 617	88	7	681	3 158	2 484	111	3	560
41	3 928	3 127	105	6	690	2 782	2 128	99	2	553
42	3 567	2 716	111	5	735	2 549	1 888	111	8	542
43	3 500	2 611	134	9	746	2 399	1 749	121	1	528
44	2 900	2 022	119	-	759	1 956	1 286	99	1	570
40-44	18 288	14 093	557	27	3 611	12 844	9 535	541	15	2 753
45	2 905	2 033	148	4	720	1 967	1 340	104	1	522
46	2 511	1 644	159	8	700	1 737	1 116	108	2	511
47	2 429	1 537	153	19	720	1 674	1 041	119	7	507
48	2 089	1 214	164	26	685	1 364	823	98	14	429
49	1 983	1 119	139	47	678	1 306	743	107	16	440
45-49	11 917	7 547	763	104	3 503	8 048	5 063	536	40	2 409
50	1 861	1 002	177	43	639	1 256	729	119	20	388
51	1 716	885	164	52	615	1 022	542	84	24	372
52	1 699	860	169	69	601	1 005	558	99	29	319
53	1 462	679	163	55	565	855	437	80	28	310
54	1 238	533	165	57	483	716	339	96	24	257
50-54	7 976	3 959	838	276	2 903	4 854	2 605	478	125	1 646

Table 5 – Number of marriages by marital status at the time of marriage and ages of bridegrooms and brides, 2015 (concluded)

Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
55	1 284	589	155	64	476	653	343	71	37	202
56	1 112	464	161	58	429	596	279	78	32	207
57	1 027	432	147	41	407	557	292	75	34	156
58	908	400	150	49	309	431	213	70	20	128
59	802	336	142	30	294	390	190	67	27	106
55-59	5 133	2 221	755	242	1 915	2 627	1 317	361	150	799
60	817	351	142	48	276	394	192	69	29	104
61	757	322	158	43	234	323	158	60	19	86
62	689	301	150	33	205	256	124	45	13	74
63	612	296	106	37	173	277	115	71	23	68
64	474	168	115	34	157	171	75	37	11	48
60-64	3 349	1 438	671	195	1 045	1 421	664	282	95	380
65	541	225	118	37	161	196	110	35	11	40
66	413	164	122	29	98	149	63	43	8	35
67	324	121	98	22	83	154	64	50	9	31
68	313	128	97	20	68	122	44	39	7	32
69	240	80	81	10	69	87	29	34	9	15
65-69	1 831	718	516	118	479	708	310	201	44	153
70+	1690	745	578	49	318	568	279	180	20	89
Unspecified	3	2	1	-	-	2	2	-	-	-

Table 6 – Number of registered customary marriages in South Africa, 2003–2015

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
2012	4 555
2013	3 498
2014	3 062
2015	3 467

Table 7 – Number of customary marriages by age difference and province of marriage registration, 2015

Province of registration	Total	Bridegroom Older	Bridegroom Younger	Spouses same age	Unspecified	Total	Bridegroom Older	Bridegroom Younger	Spouses same age	Unspecified
Total	3 467	2 940	335	189	3	100,0	84,8	9,7	5,5	0,1
Western Cape	63	47	11	5	-	100,0	74,6	17,5	7,9	0,0
Eastern Cape	269	225	35	9	-	100,0	83,6	13,0	3,4	0,0
Northern Cape	82	63	9	10	-	100,0	76,8	11,0	12,2	0,0
Free State	49	40	5	4	-	100,0	81,6	10,2	8,2	0,0
KwaZulu-Natal	1 686	1 408	175	102	1	100,0	83,5	10,4	6,1	0,1
North West	37	32	3	2	-	100,0	86,5	8,1	5,4	0,0
Gauteng	212	177	25	10	-	100,0	83,5	11,8	4,7	0,0
Mpumalanga	388	337	33	17	1	100,0	86,9	8,5	4,4	0,3
Limpopo	603	540	35	27	1	100,0	89,6	5,8	4,5	0,2
Unknown	71	66	2	3	-	100,0	93,0	2,8	4,2	0,0
Unspecified	7	5	2	-	-	100,0	71,4	28,6	0,0	0,0

Table 8 – Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2015

Age	Bridegrooms	Brides
Total	3 467	3 467
<18	5	120
18	8	92
19	30	137
18-19	38	229
20	45	173
21	74	151
22	89	172
23	97	174
24	120	152
20-24	425	822
25	131	187
26	129	137
27	140	177
28	159	135
29	147	159
25-29	706	795
30	145	138
31	121	135
32	158	119
33	120	110
34	107	92
30-34	651	594

Table 8 – Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2015 (continued)

Age	Bridegrooms	Brides
35	109	95
36	132	86
37	90	76
38	112	77
39	122	58
35-39	565	392
40	81	61
41	66	52
42	90	42
43	82	37
44	58	28
40-44	377	220
45	66	43
46	56	24
47	53	24
48	52	22
49	42	27
45-49	269	140
50	38	13
51	39	17
52	40	18
53	38	15
54	31	7
50-54	186	70

Table 8 – Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2015 (concluded)

Age	Bridegrooms	Brides
55	20	11
56	29	6
57	19	12
58	26	6
59	10	3
55-59	104	38
60	10	5
61	14	7
62	11	7
63	17	5
64	10	5
60-64	62	29
65	15	0
66	8	3
67	6	1
68	7	2
69	5	1
65-69	41	7
70+	35	9
Unspecified	3	2

Table 9 – Number of civil unions registered in South Africa by province of registration, 2011–2015

Province of registration	Number					%				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Grand Total	867	987	993	1 144	1 185	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Western Cape	238	253	320	314	346	27,5	25,6	32,2	27,5	29,2
Eastern Cape	29	38	37	54	49	3,3	3,9	3,7	4,7	4,1
Northern Cape	93	106	87	81	10	10,7	10,7	8,8	7,1	0,8
Free State	28	27	21	32	41	3,2	2,7	2,1	2,8	3,5
KwaZulu-Natal	63	91	81	161	220	7,3	9,2	8,2	14,1	18,6
North West	3	11	10	28	25	0,3	1,1	1	2,5	2,1
Gauteng	381	425	411	452	443	43,9	43,1	41,4	39,5	37,4
Mpumalanga	16	12	16	9	24	1,8	1,2	1,6	0,8	2,0
Limpopo	7	13	6	10	16	0,8	1,3	0,6	0,9	1,4
Outside South Africa	9	11	4	3	4	1,0	1,1	0,4	0,3	0,3
Unspecified	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	0,6

Table 10 – Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2015

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
Total	1 185	1 185
18	-	3
19	2	3
18-19	2	6
20	4	9
21	7	10
22	2	17
23	12	26
24	19	33
20-24	44	95
25	27	33
26	42	61
27	40	54
28	50	60
29	54	69
25-29	213	277
30	54	52
31	57	62
32	50	37
33	55	51
34	57	45
30-34	273	247

Table 10 – Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2015 (continued)

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
35	45	40
36	45	40
37	48	50
38	41	25
39	43	42
35-39	222	197
40	35	40
41	36	31
42	28	32
43	30	20
44	22	28
40-44	151	151
45	24	15
46	17	24
47	33	17
48	20	17
49	31	16
45-49	125	89
50	13	19
51	7	13
52	10	12
53	17	7
54	8	8
50-54	55	59

Table 10 – Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2015 (concluded)

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
55	13	9
56	12	5
57	8	5
58	13	5
59	9	5
55-59	55	29
60	8	6
61	3	5
62	2	4
63	3	4
64	5	3
60-64	21	22
65	2	4
66	2	1
67	4	1
68	4	1
69	-	-
65-69	12	7
70+	12	6

Table 11 – Number of published divorces in South Africa by population group, 2003 – 2015

Year	Total	Numbers						%						
		Black African	Coloured	India/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified	Total	Black African	Coloured	India/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
2003	31 566	7 657	3 911	1 508	12 639	532	5 319	100,0	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	100,0	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	100,0	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	100,0	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	100,0	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	100,0	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	100,0	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	100,0	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	100,0	35,8	16,6	6,5	32,1	0,0	9,1
2012	21 998	7 311	3 967	1 036	7 238	22	2 424	100,0	33,2	18,0	4,7	32,9	0,1	11,0
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

Table 12 – Number of divorces by sex and type of occupation of the divorcees, 2015

Occupation	Number		%	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Total	25 260	25 260	100,0	100,0
Professionals, semi-professionals and technical occupations	2 580	3 121	10,2	12,4
Managers and administrators	3 405	1 814	13,5	7,2
Clerical and sales occupations	1 470	3 087	5,8	12,2
Transport delivery and communications	905	56	3,6	0,2
Services occupations	2 161	1 891	8,6	7,5
Farming and related occupations	106	19	0,4	0,1
Artisans apprentice and related occupations	1 646	173	6,5	0,7
Production foreman mine and quarry worker	1 034	349	4,1	1,4
Not economically active	4 255	6 207	16,8	24,6
Unspecified	7 698	8 543	30,5	33,8

Table 13 – Number of divorces by sex and population group of the plaintiff, 2015

Population group	Number					%				
	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified
Total	25 260	8 538	13 038	2 171	1 513	100,0	33,8	51,6	8,6	6,0
Black African	10 841	4 068	4 915	1 183	675	100,0	37,5	45,3	10,9	6,2
Coloured	4 213	1 246	2 280	428	259	100,0	29,6	54,1	10,2	6,1
Indian/Asian	1 566	522	872	86	86	100,0	33,3	55,7	5,5	5,5
White	6 588	2 102	3 877	334	275	100,0	31,9	58,8	5,1	4,2
Mixed	837	211	486	99	41	100,0	25,2	58,1	11,8	4,9
Unspecified	1 215	389	608	41	177	100,0	32,0	50,0	3,4	14,6

Table 14 – Number of divorces granted by province and sex of plaintiff, 2015

Province of divorce registration	Number					%				
	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified
	25 260	8 538	13 038	2 171	1 513	100,0	33,8	51,6	8,6	6,0
Western Cape	4 854	1 440	2 626	493	295	100,0	29,7	54,1	10,2	6,1
Eastern Cape	3 398	1 245	1 781	250	122	100,0	36,6	52,4	7,4	3,6
Northern Cape	589	208	319	14	48	100,0	35,3	54,2	2,4	8,1
Free State	2 187	904	1 152	48	83	100,0	41,3	52,7	2,2	3,8
KwaZulu-Natal	4 140	1 458	2 049	300	333	100,0	35,2	49,5	7,2	8,0
North West	665	260	338	34	33	100,0	39,1	50,8	5,1	5,0
Gauteng	6 544	1 953	3 335	807	449	100,0	29,8	51,0	12,3	6,9
Mpumalanga	1 747	634	901	133	79	100,0	36,3	51,6	7,6	4,5
Limpopo	1 136	436	537	92	71	100,0	38,4	47,3	8,1	6,3

Table 15 – Number of divorces by population group and way of solemnisation of the marriage, 2015

Population group	Number				%			
	Total	Religious	DHA	Unspecified	Total	Religious	DHA	Unspecified
Total	25 260	12 016	11 077	2 167	100,0	47,6	43,9	8,6
Black African	10 841	3 134	7 076	631	100,0	28,9	65,3	5,8
Coloured	4 213	2 854	1 075	284	100,0	67,7	25,5	6,7
Indian/Asian	1 566	483	878	205	100,0	30,8	56,1	13,1
White	6 588	4 745	1 256	587	100,0	72,0	19,1	8,9
Mixed	837	320	454	63	100,0	38,2	54,2	7,5
Unspecified	1 215	480	338	397	100,0	39,5	27,8	32,7

Table 16 – Number of divorces by number of times married at the time of divorce, 2015

Number of times married	Number		%	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Total	25 260	25 260	100,0	100,0
Once	20 823	21 204	82,4	83,9
Twice	3 028	2 575	12,0	10,2
Three or more	488	405	1,9	1,6
Unspecified	921	1 076	3,6	4,3

Table 17 – Number of divorces by age and population group (male divorcees), 2015

Age group	Population group						
	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Other	Unspecified
Total	25 260	11 170	4 430	1 774	6 749	131	1 006
<25	99	7	25	15	46	-	6
25-29	950	200	220	107	389	2	32
30-34	2 943	1 050	606	261	915	8	103
35-39	3 998	1 815	757	304	959	16	147
40-44	4 781	2 280	837	324	1 154	22	164
45-49	4 472	2 035	868	302	1 091	12	164
50-54	3 174	1 540	535	168	816	8	107
55-59	1 923	938	265	77	552	4	87
60-64	936	453	130	36	278	4	35
65-69	489	211	61	11	187	-	19
70-74	206	90	24	6	81	-	5
75-79	88	41	10	-	36	-	1
80+	49	22	2	1	20	-	4
Unspecified	1 152	488	90	162	225	55	132

Table 18 – Number of divorces by age group and population group (female divorcees), 2015

Age group	Population						
	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Other	Unspecified
Total	25 260	11 131	4 611	1 682	6 708	25	1 103
<25	444	120	81	42	189	-	12
25-29	2 208	874	383	167	709	2	73
30-34	4 325	2 033	743	290	1 081	6	172
35-39	4 648	2 301	814	357	1 010	6	160
40-44	4 653	2 125	896	308	1 144	3	177
45-49	3 658	1 542	743	241	967	3	162
50-54	2 305	987	465	114	647	0	92
55-59	1 180	479	229	43	366	1	62
60-64	512	172	84	21	207	-	28
65-69	222	73	34	8	91	-	16
70-74	91	30	16	2	37	-	6
75-79	26	8	1	-	15	-	2
80+	7	1	-	-	6	-	-
Unspecified	981	386	122	89	239	4	141

Table 19 – Number of divorces by duration of marriage and age group (male divorcees), 2015

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	25 260	4 487	6 977	4 743	3 242	2 371	1 349	680	469	942
<25	99	90	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
25-29	950	622	292	4	-	-	2	1	-	29
30-34	2 943	1 151	1 441	251	8	-	1	4	-	87
35-39	3 998	824	1 802	1 005	229	4	2	4	4	124
40-44	4 781	562	1 366	1 456	934	271	10	-	6	176
45-49	4 472	448	766	939	992	897	261	5	16	148
50-54	3 174	264	413	479	508	634	544	179	12	141
55-59	1 923	154	252	211	226	280	324	301	97	78
60-64	936	76	124	96	132	119	105	96	143	45
65-69	489	50	70	53	54	52	42	36	109	23
70-74	206	19	28	31	28	21	19	9	36	15
75-79	88	8	14	15	12	14	3	7	12	3
80+	49	6	9	7	6	5	2	5	9	-
Unspecified	1 152	213	396	196	113	74	34	33	25	68

Table 20 – Number of divorces by duration of marriage and age group (female divorcees), 2015

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	25 260	4 487	6 977	4 743	3 242	2 371	1 349	680	469	942
<25	444	361	64	1	-	1	-	-	-	17
25-29	2 208	1 142	932	40	1	-	7	1	-	85
30-34	4 325	1 123	2 180	807	69	2	1	8	1	134
35-39	4 648	618	1 613	1 563	632	60	3	1	11	147
40-44	4 653	438	913	1 170	1 168	714	66	-	10	174
45-49	3 658	310	473	559	737	871	518	55	7	128
50-54	2 305	170	268	261	309	396	480	283	39	99
55-59	1 180	80	135	113	120	159	165	229	133	46
60-64	512	39	52	44	66	51	38	53	138	31
65-69	222	19	22	17	21	19	26	13	68	17
70-74	91	9	11	13	8	9	4	5	25	7
75-79	26	1	6	3	2	3	2	2	7	-
80+	7	2	-	2	-	1	-	-	2	-
Unspecified	981	175	308	150	109	85	39	30	28	57

Table 21 – Number of divorces with and without children (aged below 18 years) by population group, 2015

Population group	Total	Divorces with children	Divorces without children	Total	Divorces with children	Divorces without children
Total	25 260	14 045	11 215	100,0	55,6	44,4
Black African	10 841	6 446	4 395	100,0	59,5	40,5
Coloured	4 213	2 658	1 555	100,0	63,1	36,9
Indian/Asian	1 566	868	698	100,0	55,4	44,6
White	6 588	3 112	3 476	100,0	47,2	52,8
Mixed	837	403	434	100,0	48,1	51,9
Unspecified	1 215	558	657	100,0	45,9	54,1

Table 22 – Number and percentage distribution of children (aged below 18 years) affected by divorces, 2015

Population group	Total number of children involved	%
Total	22 966	100,0
Black African	10 468	45,6
Coloured	4 609	20,1
Indian/Asian	1 366	5,9
White	4 970	21,6
Mixed	649	2,8
Unspecified	904	3,9

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 2015. 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 end of December, 2016.

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

Stats SA obtains data on civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions directly from the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) head office. Data on divorces are collected from divorce courts using a standard structured questionnaire (Divorce Forms) prepared by Stats SA. The 2015 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.

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 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). Spouse-1 and Spouse-2 are used because the data do not specify the sex of the spouse.

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

Marriages and divorces, 2015

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