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# Statistical release

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## **Preface**

This statistical release presents information on registered civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions in South Africa from the national marriage registration systems of the Department of Home Affairs. The release also reports on information on divorces from civil marriages that were granted by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development through its divorce courts. The 2009 release reports on the trends and patterns of the types of marriages (civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions) and the divorces from civil marriages that were granted in 2009. In addition, the age differentials between spouses and the duration of marriages are highlighted in the release.

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## KEY FINDINGS

### 1. Introduction

There are two main sources of marriage and divorce statistics in South Africa namely those compiled from censuses and surveys and those compiled from vital registration and administrative records. The data from each of these sources give different aspects of information on marriages and divorces in a given population. Census and survey data are by nature, subjective individual information that provide cross-sectional data on individuals' marital status (single, married, divorced, widowed, etc). Therefore marriage and divorce in this context cover different types of marriages and associated divorces that took place at different periods in the people's lives. However, not all types of marriages and divorces are registered. The specific types of marriage and divorce that can be registered are stipulated and governed by legal frameworks. Unlike surveys, registered marriages and divorces data are based on continuous recording of events (marriages and divorces) as they take place. The management of registered marriages is the responsibility of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). Civil marriages are administered through the Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No. 25 of 1961) 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. Furthermore, the Civil Union Act, 2006 (Act No. 17 of 2006) that governs civil unions came into operation on 30 November 2006. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) is responsible for handling matters relating to the dissolution of registered marriages and civil unions. This responsibility of the department is mandated through the Divorce Act, 1979 (Act No.70 of 1979) and the Jurisdiction of Regional Courts Amendment Act, 2008 (Act No. 32 of 2008) which came into effect on 9 August 2010.

The *Marriages and divorces* statistical release (P0307) publishes marriage data that are collected through the civil registration systems of DHA. Before 2008, the data in the annual release covered only civil marriages. However in 2008, Stats SA started publishing available data on customary marriages and civil unions. The registration of customary marriages and civil unions began in 2003 and 2007 respectively. In addition to marriages and civil unions Stats SA publishes data on divorces from civil marriages. The divorces are successful applications for divorce that a decree has been issued. The divorce cases belong to civil marriages that were registered in different years but whose divorce decrees were granted in the same year. Both the marriages and the divorces data are based on the calendar year. It is important to note that although both the data on civil marriages and divorces are collected in the same year, the two data sets are not linked to each other. Hitherto, only divorce cases from civil marriages have been published. Publication of statistics on divorces from registered customary marriages and civil unions will be made available when sufficient data have been registered. The information in the current release is based on divorces from civil marriages that were granted in 2009.

### 2. Marriages

#### 2.1 Civil marriages

##### 2.1.1 Trends in marriages (2000-2009)

In 2009, 171 989 marriages were registered. This number includes 727 marriages of South African citizens solemnised outside the borders of South Africa but registered in South Africa. Information provided in Table 1 shows that the number of registered marriages has generally been fluctuating over the last ten years (2000–2009). In 2000, 143 391 marriages were registered. This number had increased to 171 989 in 2009. However, there were observed annual declines, particularly the sudden declines in 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2009. The 2009 figure of 171 989 shows a decrease of 14 533 (7,8%) from 186 522 marriages recorded in 2008.

As shown in Figure 1, the summer months, beginning from September and peaking in December, are generally the most popular months for marriages. In 2009, the highest number of marriages 28 264 (16,4%), took place in December compared to March that recorded the lowest, 10 436 (6,1%); June recorded the second lowest number of marriages 10 586 (6,2%).

##### 2.1.2 Solemnisation of marriages

Only licensed marriage officers are required by the Marriage Act, 1961 to solemnise civil marriages. Civil marriages are generally solemnised at the offices of the DHA and at chapels 1961 or religious buildings. In Table 2, these types of marriages are grouped under 'civil' i.e. marriages solemnised by lay persons and 'religious' marriages solemnised by priests/religious persons. The 2009 data show that 90 229 (52,5%) of the 171 989 marriages were solemnised by 'civil' rites and 81 650 (47,5%) by 'religious' rites. The type of solemnisation rite was not specified in 110 marriages.

After the solemnisation ceremony, the marriage officer issues the couple with an unabridged marriage certificate (BI-27) free of charge and submits the marriage register to the nearest DHA office for the recording of the marriage particulars in the National Population Register (NPR). Therefore the place (e.g. municipality or province) of registration of the marriage is not necessarily the place of usual residence of the couple. In 2009, the highest number of marriages solemnised by 'civil' and 'religious' rites were both registered in Gauteng whereas the lowest number of marriages by 'religious' rites was recorded in Limpopo and the lowest number of marriages by 'civil' rites was recorded in Northern Cape.

### 2.1.3 Marital status at the time of marriage

Data presented in Table 3 indicate that most of the marriages in 2009 were first time marriages. Overall, 141 657 (82,4%) men and 147 715 (85,9%) women had never been married. Among those who were remarrying, there were 5 501 (3,2%) male divorcees and 2 966 (1,7%) widowers. For the brides, there were 3 871 (2,3%) divorcees and 2 589 (1,5%) widows. The marital status of 21 865 (12,7%) bridegrooms and 17 814 (10,4%) brides was not recorded. However 5 501 (65,0%), of the 8 467 remarrying men were divorcees but the proportion of divorcees among the 6 460 women who were remarrying was 3 871 (59,9%). Irrespective of their marital status, men married partners who had never been married (see Table 4). Thus, 131 279 (92,7%), 3 035 (55,2%) and 2 398 (80,8%) never married men, divorcees and widowers respectively married women who had never married.

### 2.1.4 Age at the time of marriage

Demographers are interested in the age at first marriage or union because of its theoretical link to exposure to the risk of pregnancy, childbearing and ultimately to fertility. This link tends to be weakened in populations where pre-marital fertility is widespread. Nevertheless, age at first marriage or union continues to be a good proxy for measuring not only fertility but other health and socio-economic indicators relating particularly to the role and status of women in society. The importance of this indicator is 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 marriage. In 2009, marriages of 15 grooms and 422 brides aged less than 18 years were registered.

It is observed from Figure 2 and Figure 3a that women generally enter marriage at younger ages than men. The median age for all the 2009 grooms was 34 years compared with 30 years for brides. However, some age differences are observed when the marital status at the time of current marriage is considered (see Figures 3b, 3c and 3d). For first time marriages, the median age for bachelors was 32 years and that of spinsters was 29 years giving a difference of three years. As observed from Figure 3b, the ages of grooms and brides remained the same as observed in 2008. For remarriages, the median ages for widowers and widows (Figure 3c) were 46 years and 30 years respectively resulting in a sixteen years' age gap. The median age of divorced men was 52 years compared with 46 years for their female counterparts yielding an age gap of six years. A comparison of the 2009 and 2008 data indicates that the median age of widowers and widows increased by one year but there was no change in the ages of male and female divorcees. Despite the fact that men tend to marry younger women, in 2009 14,3% of bridegroom were younger than their brides whilst 7,3% were of the same age as their brides (see Tables 4, Figures 4a, 4b, and 4c). This observed age pattern is the same irrespective of the marital status of the bridegroom.

## 2.2 Customary marriages

### 2.2.1 Trends in the registration of customary marriages (2003-2009)

Data presented in Table 6 show that the number of registered marriages has been fluctuating since 2003. The highest number (20 301) of registrations was recorded in 2004 whilst the lowest number (13 506) was in 2009. Since the registration of customary marriages is relatively new, it is of interest to examine the proportion of marriages that were registered in the year they occurred. It is shown in Figure 5 that this proportion has never 10,0%. It ranged between 4,7% to 8,5%. The proportion for 2009 was 6,2%.

### 2.2.2 Marital status at the time of customary marriage

Since the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (Act No. 120 of 1998) does not prohibit a male person already in a customary marriage to enter into a civil marriage or another customary marriage, it would be of interest to distinguish between first time spouses and those who have married before (*i.e.* those in polygamous marriages, divorcees, widows and widowers). However, in the absence of data on marital status at the time of the registration of customary marriage, this distinction cannot be made.

### 2.2.3 Age at the time of customary marriage

The age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage is presented in Table 7. The proportion of bridegrooms and brides who were younger than 18 years in 2009 were 1,0% and 9,6% respectively. There were 243 (1,8%) brides who were younger than 15 years when they got married.

As observed from Figure 6, the bridegrooms are generally older than the brides. In 2009, the median age of bridegrooms was 31 years and that of brides was 25 years. These values were the same as in 2008. A further comparison of the ages of bridegroom and brides (see figure 7) shows that in 2009, 85,3% of bridegrooms were older than their brides whilst 10,1% were younger than their brides and 4,6% were of the same age.

## 2.3 Civil unions

### 2.3.1 Trends in the registration of civil unions (2007-2009)

In 2009, 760 civil unions were registered compared to 732 in 2008. The provincial distribution of registered civil unions indicates (see Table 8) that in 2009, the highest number of registrations was recorded in Gauteng, (324) and Western Cape (227). The lowest number of registrations was recorded in Limpopo (10) and North West (5).

### 2.3.2 Marital status at the time of civil union

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

### 2.3.3 Age at the time of civil union

The age distribution of the spouses at the time of civil union is presented in Table 9. None of the spouses was younger than 18 years old. As observed from Figure 8, in 2009, the median age for spouse 1 and spouse 2 were 38 years and 34 years respectively. A comparison between 2009 and 2008 data shows that the median age for spouse 1 remained the same whereas that of spouse 2 declined by one year. Data in Figure 9 show that in 2009, 63,7% of spouses 1 were older than their spouses, whilst 29,5% were younger than their spouses and 6,8% were of the same age.

## 3. Divorces

### 3.1 Trends in divorces (2000-2009)

In 2009, 30 763 divorces were recorded. The published data on divorces presented in Table 10 indicate that the number of granted cases has been fluctuating between 28 924 and 34 145 per annum in the past decade. The distribution of couples divorcing by population group shows that in 2000 44,5% of divorces came from the White population group, whereas 1,3% came from the Mixed population group. However in 2009, 34,2% of the divorces came from the African population group and 5,2% from the Indian/Asian population group.

### 3.2 Plaintiff

The 2009 data reveal that there were more female (49,8%) than male (35,9%) plaintiffs (see Table 11). However, there were significant differences among population groups. Among the white population group 55,8% of the wives filed for divorce compared to 41,3% of wives among the African population group.

Table 12 provides information on the occupation of the plaintiffs. Even though a high proportion of the plaintiffs did not indicate the type of occupation they were engaged in at the time of divorce, the highest percentage of wives (18,9%) were in clerical and sales occupations whereas husbands (15,3%) were in managerial and administrative occupations. Very few plaintiffs were in farming and related occupations.

### 3.3 Solemnisation of dissolving marriage

It is observed from Table 13 that 47,9% of all the divorce cases were from marriages that were solemnised by 'religious' rites and 45,2% by 'civil' rites. A similar pattern was also found among all population groups except among the White population group whereby only 15,5% of divorces were those of marriages solemnised by 'civil' rites.

### 3.4 Number of times married

The 2009 divorce cases were mainly from first marriages. The pattern of remarriages among husbands was quite similar to that of the wives (see Table 14). Slightly fewer (77,2%) husbands were from first marriages compared to 78,0% of wives. Approximately 9,0% were second time divorcees for both husbands and wives. About 2,0% of husbands and wives were getting divorced for at least the third time.

### 3.5 Age at the time of divorce

The median age at divorce in 2009 was 42 years for men and 38 years for women. Figure 10 shows that African men had the highest median age (44 years) at divorce. Women from the Indian/Asian group had the lowest median age (35 years). Detailed information on age by population groups are presented in Figures 11 and 12 as well as Tables 15 and 16.

### 3.6 Duration of marriage of those divorcing

Couples, who have married for 5-9 years, accounted for about a quarter of all divorces in 2009. Detailed information on the duration of marriages by age groups for husbands and wives are given in Table 17 and Table 18 respectively. The largest number of divorces 8 340 (27,1%) lasted five to nine years. This group is followed by marriages that lasted less than five years 6 543 (21,3%). Thus, almost half (48,4%) of the 30 763 divorces in 2009 were from marriages that lasted less than 10 years. As the duration of marriages increased the number of divorces decreased. Irrespective of the population group of the divorcees (see Figure 13), the distribution of divorces continues to be skewed towards earlier years of marriage.

### 3.7 Divorces involving couples with children

In 2009, there were 28 295 children (younger than 18 years old) involved in divorce. It is observed from Table 19, that 17 214 (56,0%) of the 30 763 divorces had children younger than 18 years indicating that, on the average, there was between one and two children per divorce.



Figure 1. Number of marriages by month, 2009

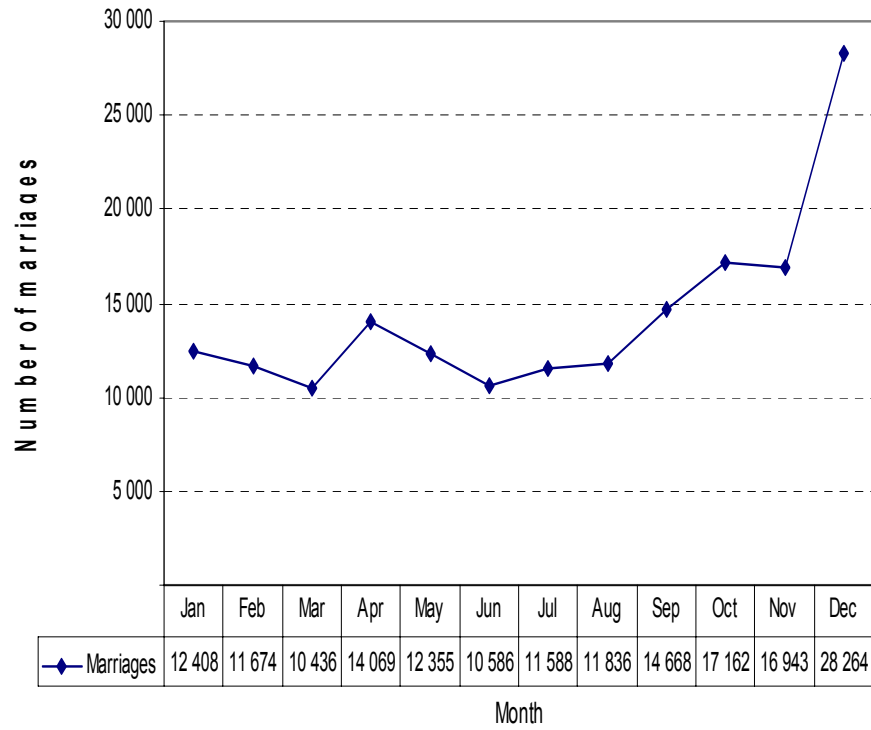
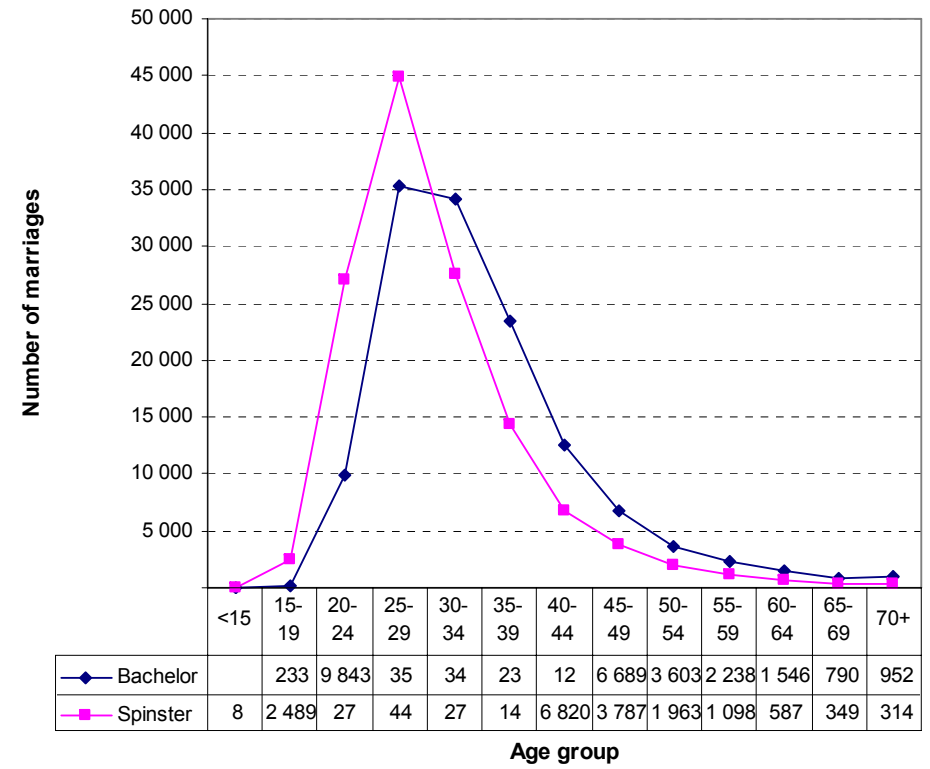
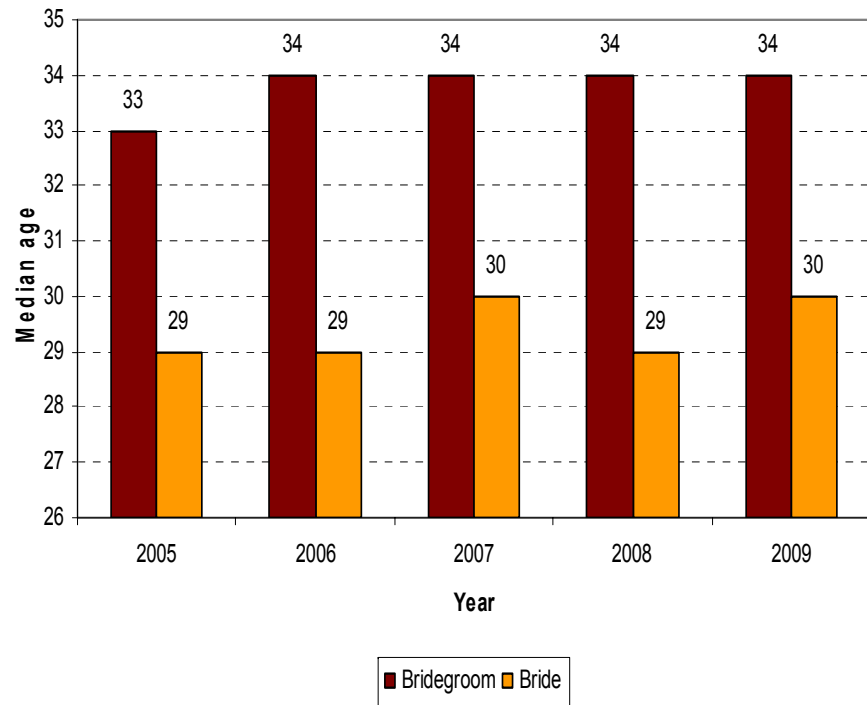


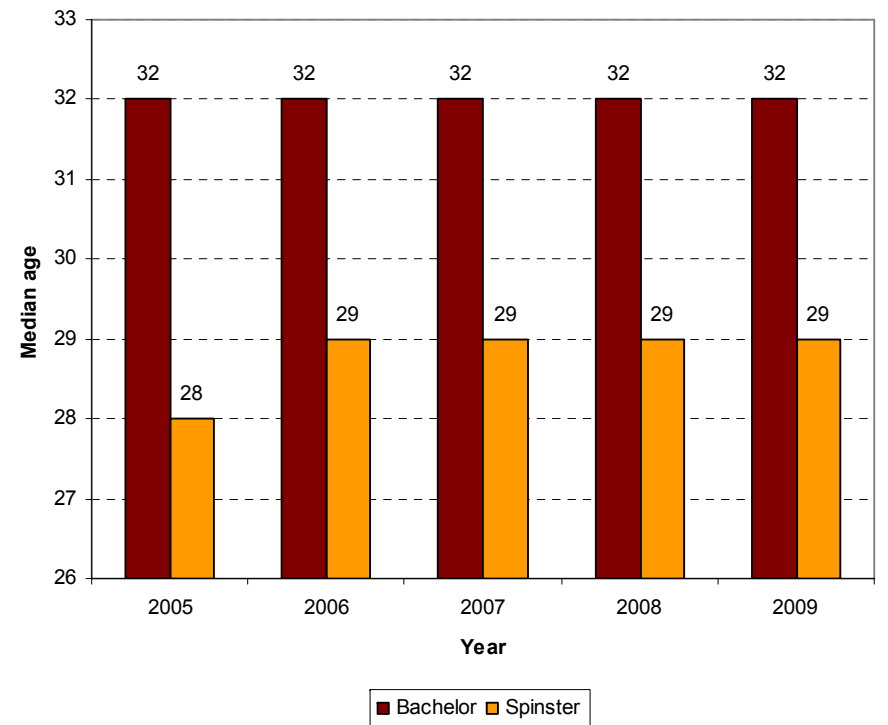
Figure 2. Age group of bachelors and spinsters at first marriage, 2009

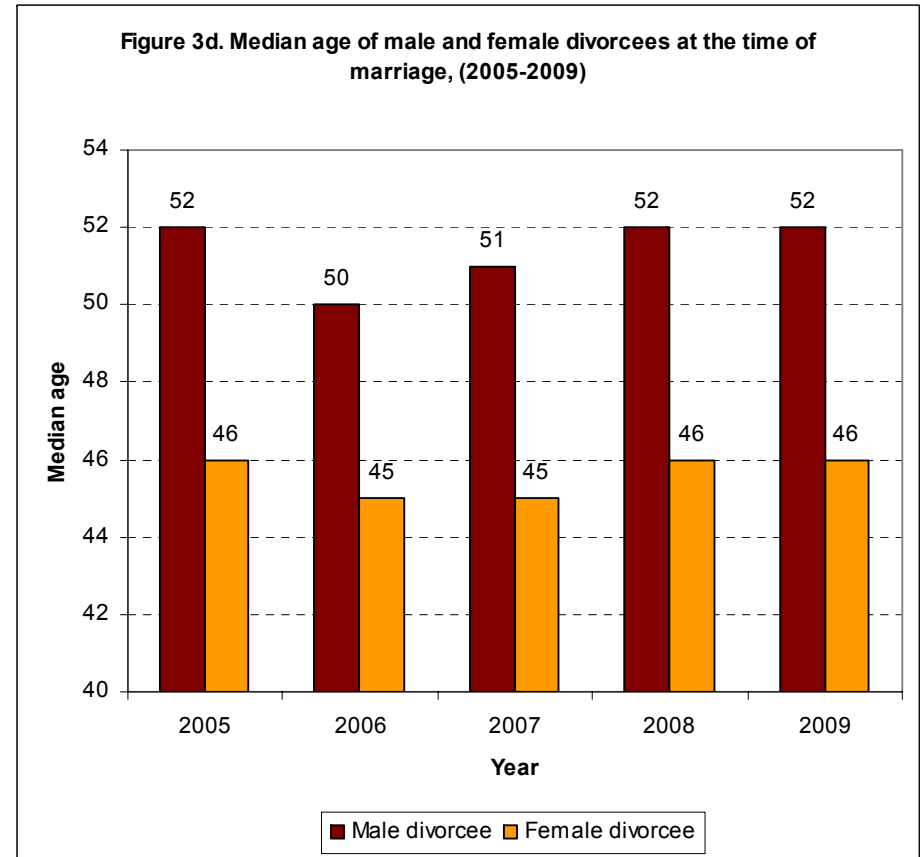
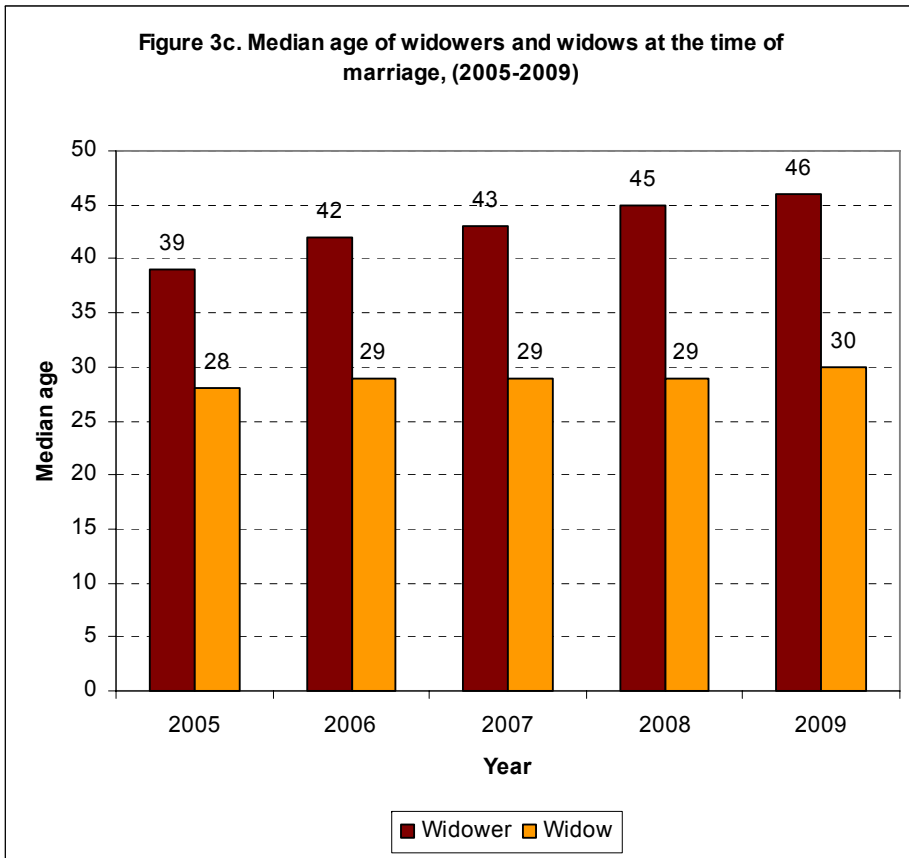


**Figure 3a. Median age of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, (2005-2009)**

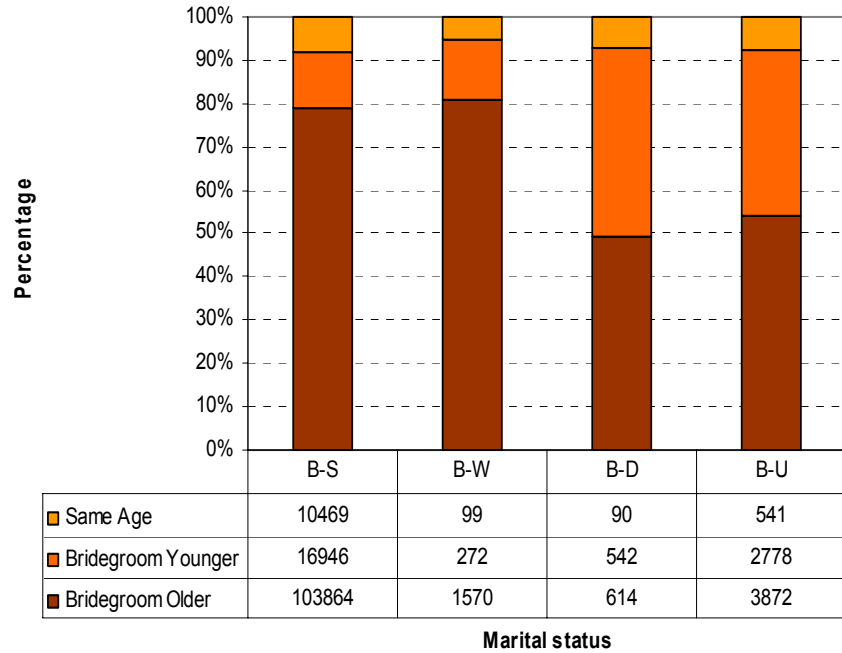


**Figure 3b. Median age of bachelors and spinsters at the time of marriage, (2005-2009)**



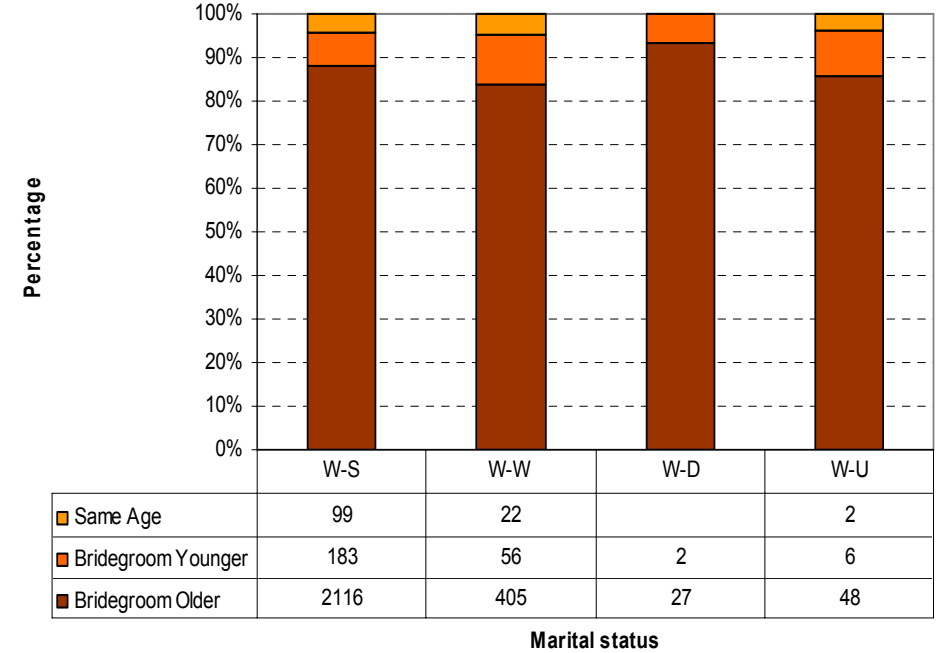


**Figure 4a. Age difference among bachelors and their brides at the time of marriage, 2009**



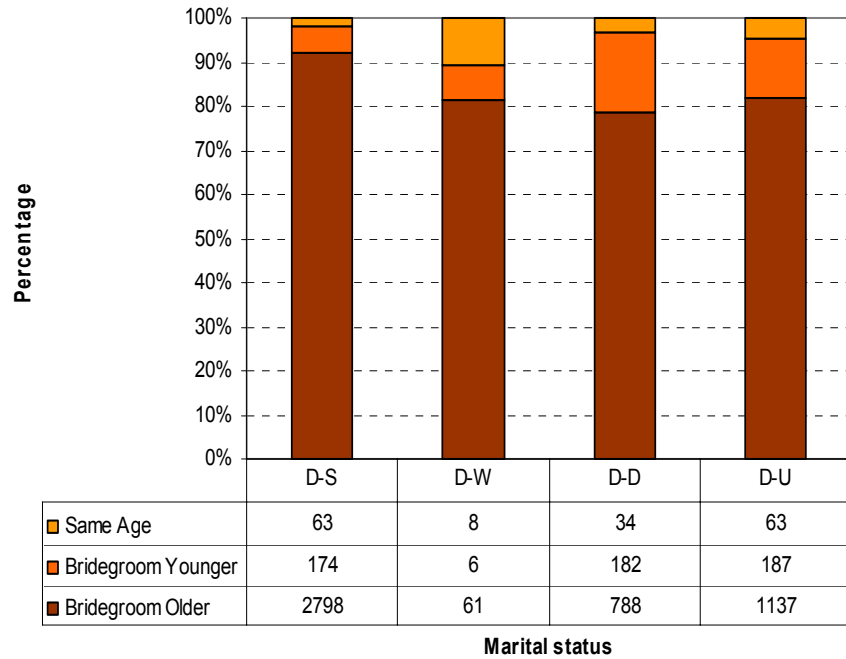
B – S = Bachelor to spinster    B – W = Bachelor to widow  
 B – D = Bachelor to divorcee    B – U = Bachelor to unspecified

**Figure 4b. Age difference among widowers and their brides at the time of marriage, 2009**



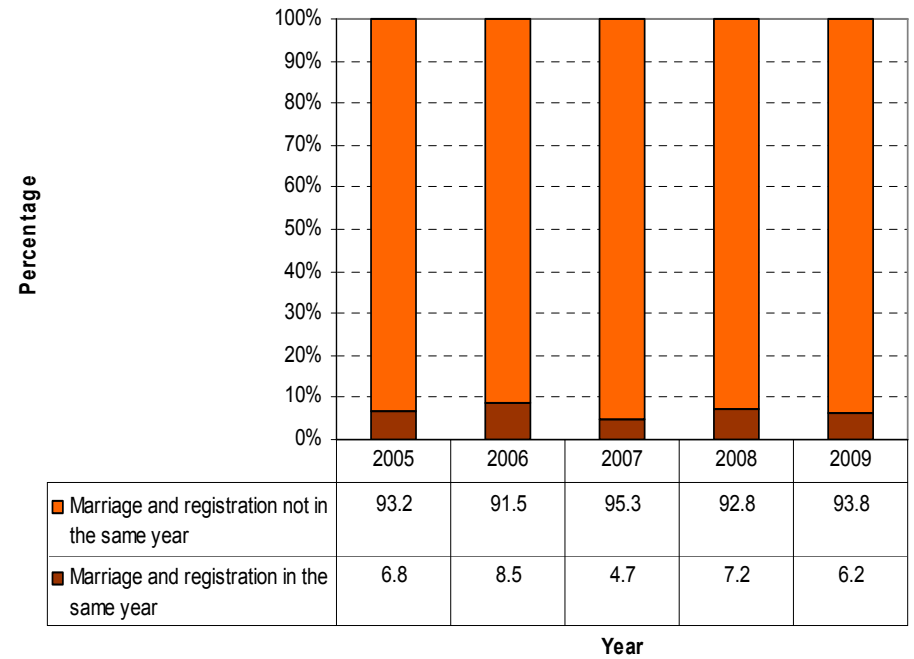
W – S = Widower to spinster    W – W = Widower to widow  
 W – D = Widower to divorcee    W – U = Widower to unspecified

**Figure 4c. Age difference among divorcees and their brides at the time of marriage, 2009**

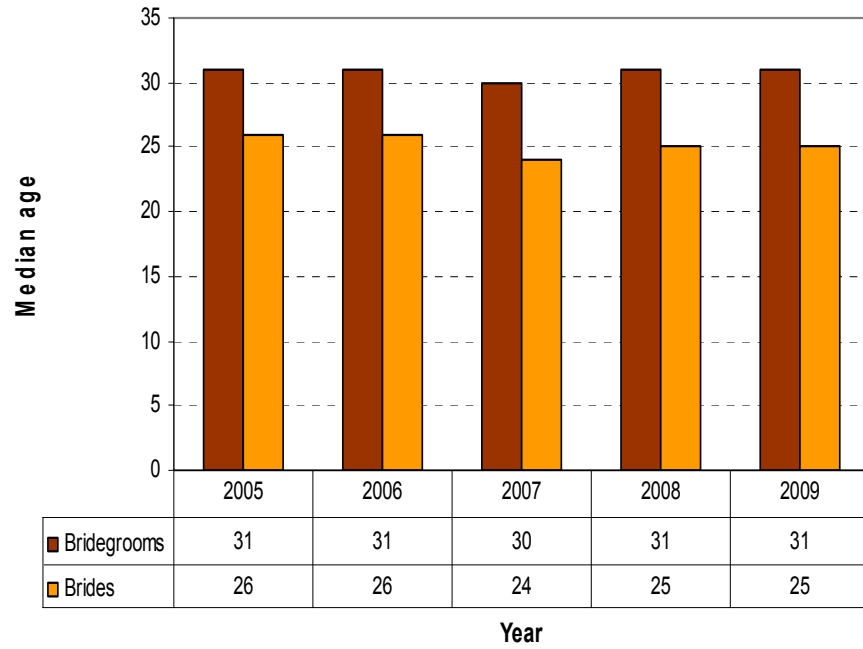


D – S = Divorcee to spinster  
 D – W = Divorcee to widow  
 D – D = Divorcee to divorcee  
 D – U = Divorcee to unspecified

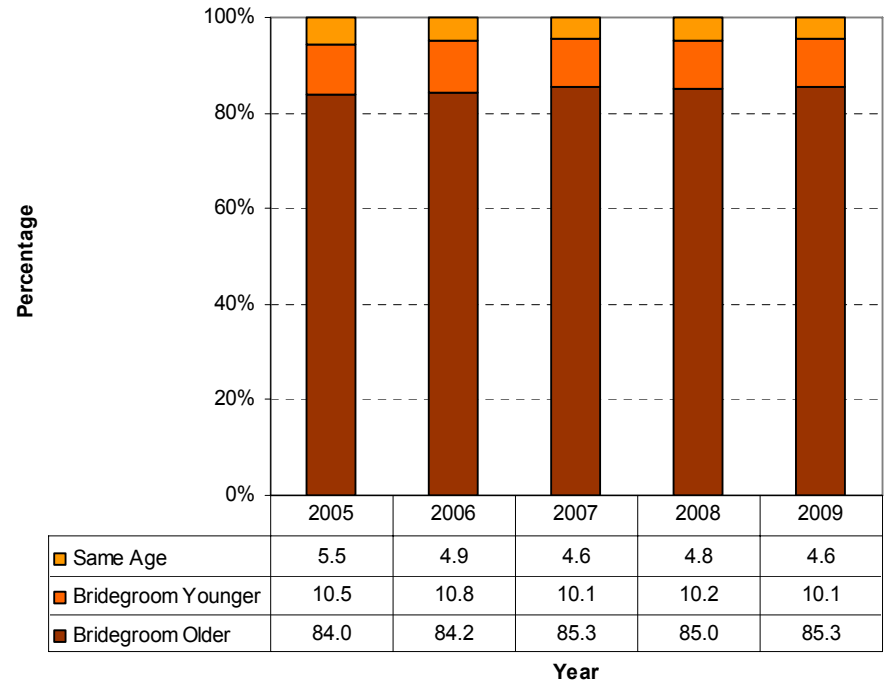
**Figure 5. The proportion of customary marriages that were registered in the same year they took place, 2005 to 2009**



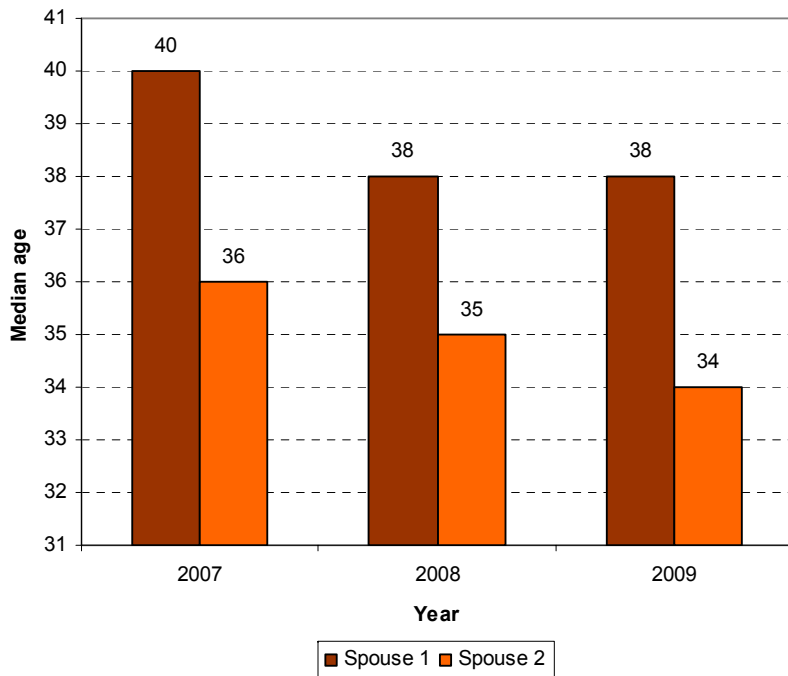
**Figure 6. Median age of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriages, (2005-2009)**



**Figure 7. Age difference between bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriages, (2005-2009)**



**Figure 8. Median age for spouses in civil unions, (2007-2009)**



**Figure 9. Age difference between spouses at the time of their civil union, (2007-2009)**

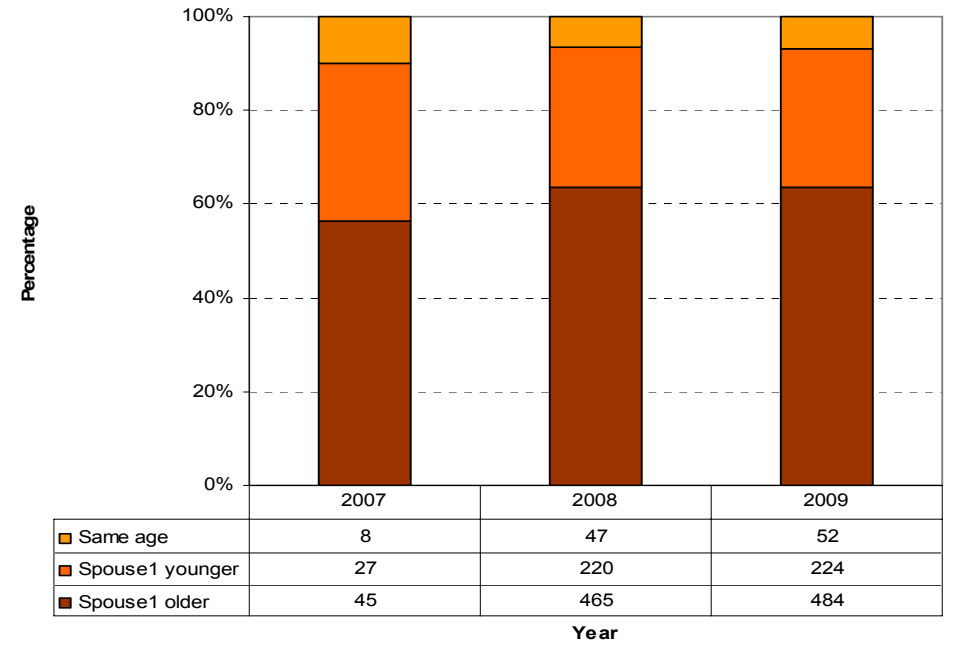


Figure 10: Median age of divorces by population group and sex, 2009

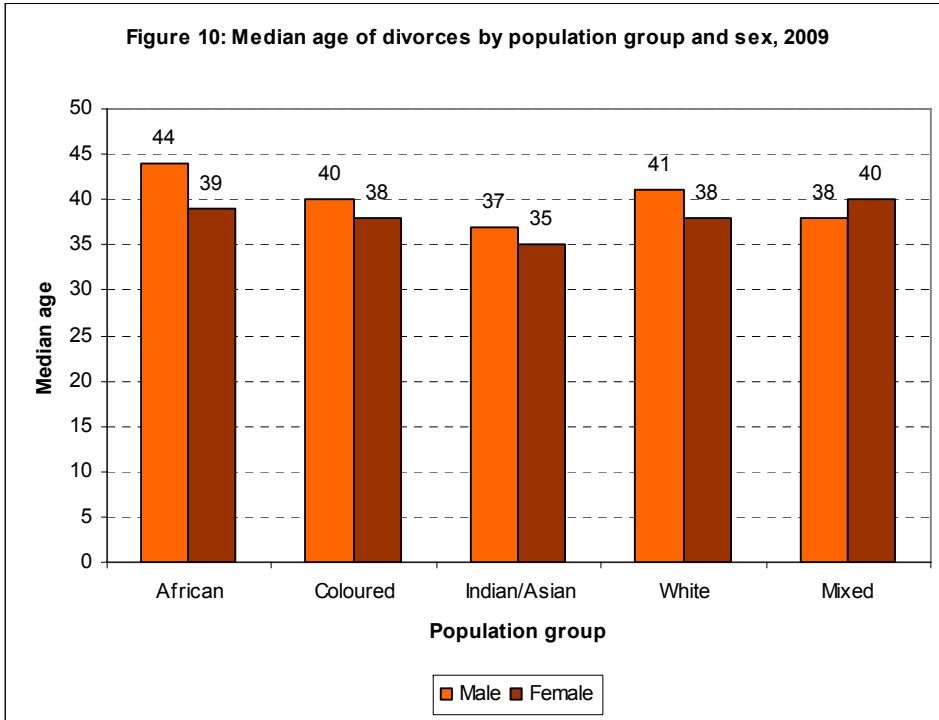
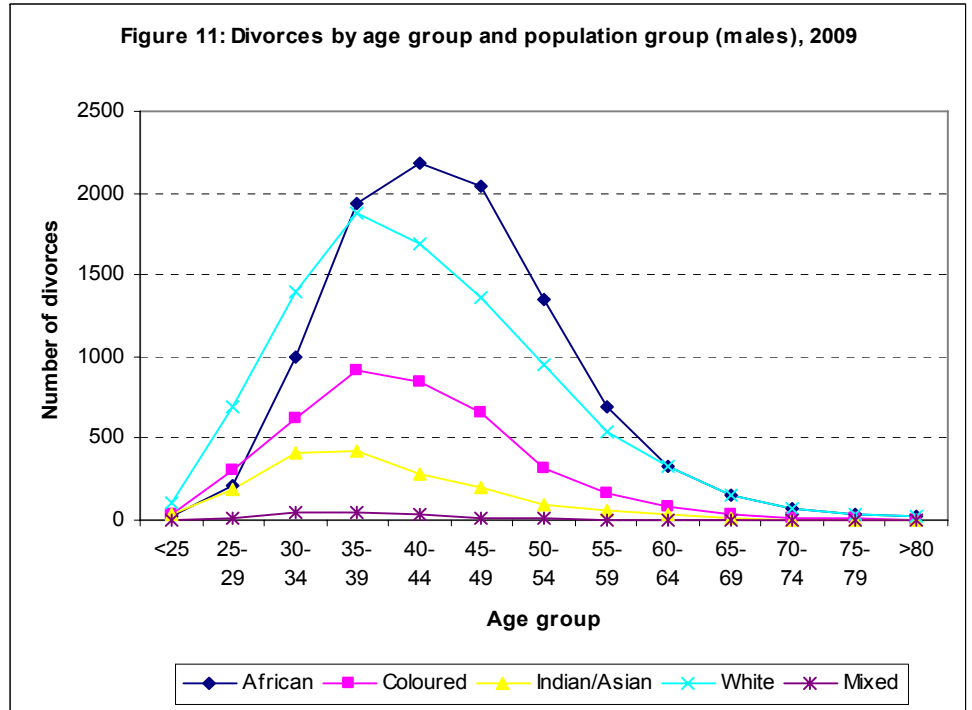
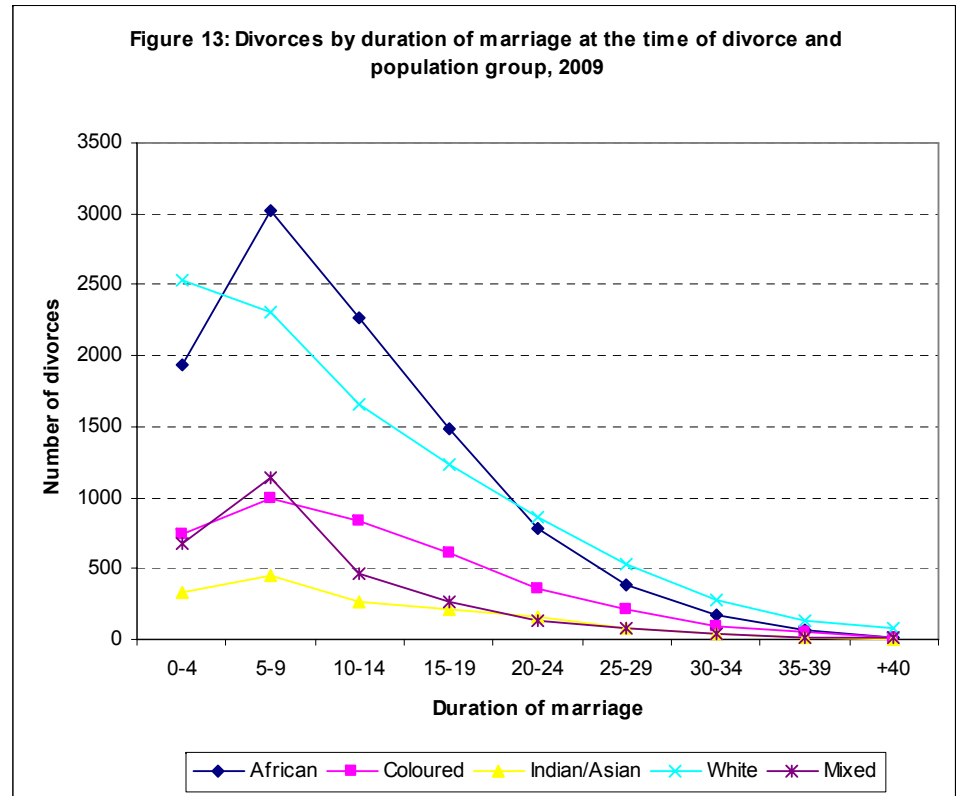
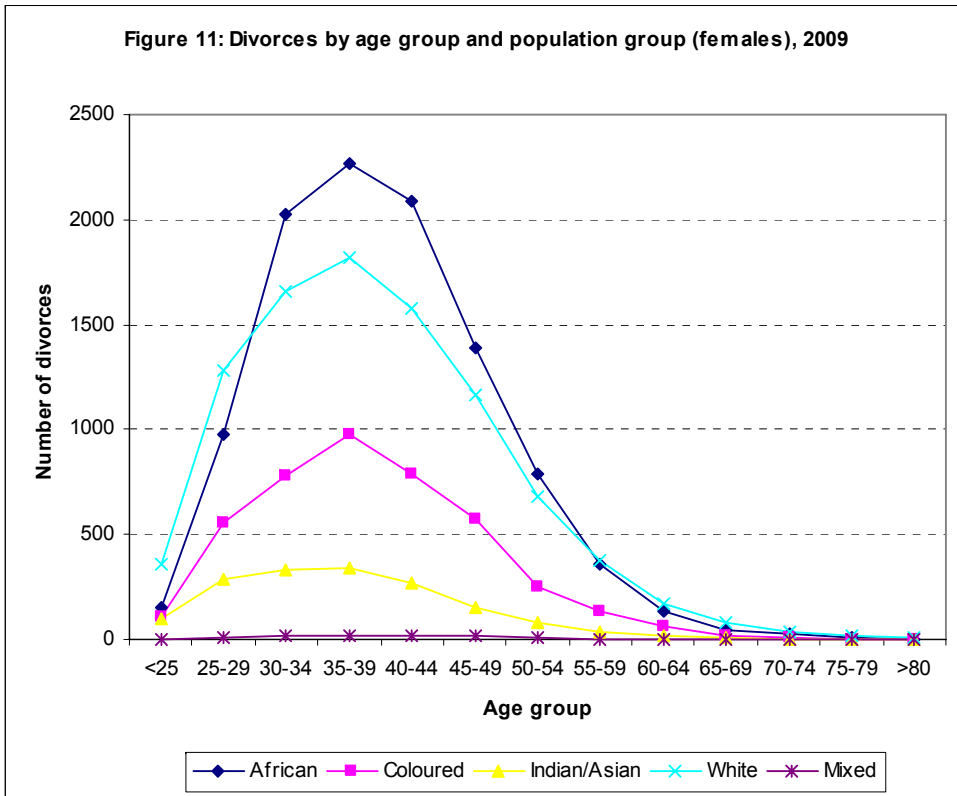


Figure 11: Divorces by age group and population group (males), 2009







<b>Year</b>	<b>Registered marriages</b>
2000	143 391
2001	134 581
2002	177 202
2003	178 689
2004	176 521
2005	180 657
2006	184 860
2007	183 030
2008	186 522
2009	171 989

<b>Province</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Solemnisation</b>		
		<b>Religious</b>	<b>Civil</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>171 989</b>	<b>81 650</b>	<b>90 229</b>	<b>110</b>
Western Cape	28 112	15 478	12 631	3
Eastern Cape	20 903	9 488	11 348	67
Northern Cape	4 217	2 857	1 360	-
Free State	11 908	4 571	7 335	2
KwaZulu-Natal	27 266	17 508	9 729	29
North West	12 585	3 937	8 648	-
Gauteng	41 817	18 991	22 820	6
Mpumalanga	9 095	5 072	4 021	2
Limpopo	9 930	2 393	7 537	-
Unspecified	5 429	1 325	4 103	1
Outside RSA	727	30	697	-

<b>Table 3. Number of marriages by marital status and province</b>										
<b>Province</b>	<b>Bridegrooms</b>					<b>Brides</b>				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Bachelor</b>	<b>Divorcee</b>	<b>Widower</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Spinster</b>	<b>Divorcee</b>	<b>Widow</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>171 989</b>	<b>141 657</b>	<b>5 501</b>	<b>2 966</b>	<b>21 865</b>	<b>171 989</b>	<b>147 715</b>	<b>3 871</b>	<b>2 589</b>	<b>17 814</b>
Western Cape	28 112	22 551	932	90	4 539	28 112	23 543	807	57	3 705
Eastern Cape	20 903	18 039	617	341	1 906	20 903	18 838	406	215	1 444
Northern Cape	4 217	3 514	183	37	483	4 217	3 668	133	41	375
Free State	11 908	9 966	419	221	1 302	11 908	10 420	280	282	926
KwaZulu-Natal	27 266	23 352	854	584	2 476	27 266	24 337	418	497	2 014
North West	12 585	10 556	379	199	1 451	12 585	11 103	250	164	1 068
Gauteng	41 817	32 810	1 325	787	6 895	41 817	34 068	987	787	5 975
Mpumalanga	9 095	7 504	327	235	1 029	9 095	7 910	210	151	824
Limpopo	9 930	8 532	235	331	832	9 930	9 026	113	249	542
Unspecified	5 429	4 310	220	139	760	5 429	4 263	257	145	764
Outside RSA	727	523	10	2	192	727	539	10	1	177

<b>Table 4. Age difference of bridegrooms and brides by marital status at the time of marriage</b>											
<b>Age difference</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>Bachelor to</b>					<b>Divorcee to</b>				
		<b>Total</b>	<b>Spinster</b>	<b>Divorcee</b>	<b>Widow</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Spinster</b>	<b>Divorcee</b>	<b>Widow</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>171 989</b>	<b>141 657</b>	<b>131 279</b>	<b>1 246</b>	<b>1 941</b>	<b>7 191</b>	<b>5 501</b>	<b>3 035</b>	<b>1 004</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>1 387</b>
Bridegroom older	<b>134 794</b>	<b>109 920</b>	103 864	614	1 570	3 872	<b>4 784</b>	2 798	788	61	1 137
Bridegroom younger	<b>24 622</b>	<b>20 538</b>	16 946	542	272	2 778	<b>549</b>	174	182	6	187
Same age	<b>12 573</b>	<b>11 199</b>	10 469	90	99	541	<b>168</b>	63	34	8	63

**Table 4. Age difference of bridegrooms and brides by marital status at the time of marriage (concluded)**

Age difference	Widower to					Unspecified to				
	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 966</b>	<b>2 398</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>21 865</b>	<b>11 003</b>	<b>1 592</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>9 180</b>
Bridegroom older	2 596	2 116	27	405	48	17 494	9 759	1 080	75	6 580
Bridegroom younger	247	183	2	56	6	3 288	863	411	11	2 003
Same age	123	99	-	22	2	1 083	381	101	4	597



Table 5. Marital status at the time of marriage by ages of bridegrooms and brides										
Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Divorcee	Spinster	Widow	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>171 989</b>	<b>141 657</b>	<b>5 501</b>	<b>2 966</b>	<b>21 865</b>	<b>171 982</b>	<b>3 871</b>	<b>147 708</b>	<b>2 589</b>	<b>17 814</b>
<b>&lt;18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>
18	68	64	-	1	3	840	8	757	25	50
19	190	181	1	4	4	1 726	10	1 584	56	76
<b>18-19</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2 566</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2 341</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>126</b>
20	507	477	2	10	18	2 697	16	2 500	87	94
21	1 016	957	5	17	37	4 386	17	4 107	110	152
22	1 863	1 786	4	27	46	6 083	20	5 724	143	196
23	3 026	2 906	8	41	71	7 806	21	7 427	135	223
24	4 659	4 506	9	65	79	9 485	24	9 032	144	285
<b>20-24</b>	<b>11 071</b>	<b>10 632</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>30 457</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>28 790</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>950</b>
25	6 062	5 885	5	65	107	10 290	30	9 847	121	292
26	7 370	7 133	13	93	131	11 203	34	10 683	136	350
27	8 365	8 034	14	94	223	11 010	49	10 438	122	401
28	8 520	8 201	18	90	211	9 644	44	9 033	88	479
29	8 759	8 362	21	83	293	9 214	42	8 604	81	487
<b>25-29</b>	<b>39 076</b>	<b>37 615</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>51 361</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>48 605</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>2 009</b>
30	8 420	8 024	21	75	300	8 329	63	7 655	88	523
31	8 047	7 532	30	60	425	7 425	59	6 729	63	574
32	8 000	7 384	38	67	511	6 941	88	6 168	57	628
33	7 730	7 087	43	44	556	6 243	83	5 478	38	644
34	7 433	6 672	53	44	664	5 941	98	5 043	41	759
<b>30-34</b>	<b>39 630</b>	<b>36 699</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>2 456</b>	<b>34 879</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>31 073</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>3 128</b>

Table 5. Marital status at the time of marriage by ages of bridegrooms and brides (continued)										
Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Divorcee	Spinster	Widow	Unspecified
35	6 953	6 125	78	42	708	5 375	96	4 502	33	744
36	6 484	5 538	89	46	811	4 651	104	3 784	27	736
37	6 328	5 263	105	32	928	4 533	103	3 668	17	745
38	5 268	4 214	114	16	924	3 501	107	2 636	13	745
39	5 210	4 116	138	28	928	3 516	123	2 669	15	709
<b>35-39</b>	<b>30 243</b>	<b>25 256</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>4 299</b>	<b>21 576</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>17 259</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>3 679</b>
40	4 530	3 461	128	40	901	3 105	120	2 268	20	697
41	4 373	3 230	173	45	925	2 909	115	2 132	20	642
42	3 569	2 440	168	79	882	2 392	117	1 594	22	659
43	3 501	2 344	157	67	933	2 188	107	1 463	39	579
44	3 155	2 067	162	86	840	2 107	122	1 410	45	530
<b>40-44</b>	<b>19 128</b>	<b>13 542</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>4 481</b>	<b>12 701</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>8 867</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>3 107</b>
45	2 986	1 865	171	117	833	1 905	110	1 244	48	503
46	2 772	1 727	154	108	783	1 777	111	1 151	55	460
47	2 558	1 500	173	113	772	1 639	113	1 018	63	445
48	1 958	1 038	149	92	679	1 387	104	792	41	450
49	2 241	1 243	152	116	730	1 354	109	781	67	397
<b>45-49</b>	<b>12 515</b>	<b>7 373</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>3 797</b>	<b>8 062</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>4 986</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>2 255</b>
50	1 784	922	137	92	633	1 173	100	613	64	396
51	1 823	984	148	94	597	1 073	111	623	55	284
52	1 551	799	154	95	503	893	90	498	47	258
53	1 431	733	145	78	475	821	90	468	47	216
54	1 213	580	127	83	423	717	89	408	41	179
<b>50-54</b>	<b>7 802</b>	<b>4 018</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>2 631</b>	<b>4 677</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>2 610</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>1 333</b>



Table 5. Marital status at the time of marriage by ages of bridegrooms and brides (concluded)										
Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Divorcee	Spinster	Widow	Unspecified
55	1 231	615	143	60	413	609	60	312	28	209
56	1 091	538	132	57	364	527	77	274	33	143
57	1 063	542	165	64	292	537	69	310	33	125
58	812	365	122	52	273	392	59	187	16	130
59	897	481	125	47	244	471	67	289	31	84
<b>55-59</b>	<b>5 094</b>	<b>2 541</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>1 586</b>	<b>2 536</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>1 372</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>691</b>
60	807	417	121	46	223	408	64	219	25	100
61	817	437	121	55	204	318	62	158	18	80
62	679	357	112	45	165	218	44	108	19	47
63	571	291	108	47	125	218	45	114	10	49
64	467	247	93	32	95	193	50	100	9	34
<b>60-64</b>	<b>3 341</b>	<b>1 749</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>1 355</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>310</b>
65	444	222	102	25	95	184	55	81	8	40
66	337	150	97	16	74	157	47	78	7	25
67	356	176	102	18	60	148	38	86	4	20
68	304	148	85	9	62	115	42	54	4	15
69	369	211	92	14	52	160	37	94	4	25
<b>65-69</b>	<b>1 810</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>≥70</b>	<b>2 006</b>	<b>1 069</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>72</b>

<b>Table 6. Number of registered customary marriages in South Africa, (2003 – 2009)</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Customary marriages</b>
2003	17 283
2004	20 301
2005	19 252
2006	14 039
2007	20 259
2008	16 003
2009	13 506

<b>Table 7. Age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, 2009</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>2009</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Bridegrooms</b>	<b>Brides</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13 506</b>	<b>13 506</b>
<b>&lt;18</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>1 292</b>
18	86	676
19	126	696
<b>18-19</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>1 372</b>
20	266	781
21	369	730
22	482	685
23	537	721
24	657	701
<b>20-24</b>	<b>2 311</b>	<b>3 618</b>
25	632	660
26	627	606
27	648	610
28	624	537
29	562	490
<b>25-29</b>	<b>3 093</b>	<b>2 903</b>
30	561	517
31	564	418
32	576	374
33	474	356
34	485	323
<b>30-34</b>	<b>2 660</b>	<b>1 988</b>

Table 7. Age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, 2009 (continued)		
Year	2009	
Age	Bridegrooms	Brides
35	483	290
36	407	236
37	378	178
38	342	203
39	344	180
<b>35-39</b>	<b>1 954</b>	<b>1 087</b>
40	290	170
41	285	151
42	229	105
43	236	113
44	232	97
<b>40-44</b>	<b>1 272</b>	<b>636</b>
45	176	80
46	191	69
47	156	47
48	161	53
49	111	55
<b>45-49</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>304</b>
50	124	37
51	113	31
52	81	22
53	70	26
54	72	16
<b>50-54</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>132</b>

Table 7. Age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, 2009 (concluded)		
Year	2009	
Age	Bridegrooms	Brides
55	70	15
56	51	19
57	71	11
58	45	10
59	46	12
<b>55-59</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>67</b>
60	37	19
61	38	14
62	33	8
63	33	5
64	27	5
<b>60-64</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>51</b>
65	22	2
66	12	3
67	20	5
68	18	2
69	11	6
<b>65-95</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>≥70</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Unspecified</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>Table 8. Number of registered civil unions in South Africa by province , (2007-2009)</b>			
<b>Province</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>760</b>
Eastern Cape	-	41	30
Free State	1	23	20
Gauteng	49	362	324
KwaZulu-Natal	8	74	87
Limpopo	-	15	10
Mpumalanga	3	7	11
North West	2	6	5
Northern Cape	1	11	43
Western Cape	16	191	227
Outside SA	-	2	3

<b>Table 9. Age distribution of spouse 1 and spouse 2 at the time of civil union, 2009</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>2009</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Spouse1</b>	<b>Spouse2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>760</b>
18	-	-
19	3	6
<b>18-19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
20	3	7
21	10	9
22	11	21
23	11	23
24	13	26
<b>20-24</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>86</b>
25	17	16
26	22	38
27	25	31
28	21	37
29	27	32
<b>25-29</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>154</b>
30	34	27
31	22	30
32	25	27
33	22	27
34	24	30
<b>30-34</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>141</b>

Table 9. Age distribution of spouse 1 and spouse 2 at the time of civil union, 2009 (continued)		
Year	2009	
Age	Spouse1	Spouse2
35	27	26
36	27	28
37	34	32
38	28	30
39	31	22
<b>35-39</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>138</b>
40	26	17
41	21	21
42	32	16
43	18	21
44	25	17
<b>40-44</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>92</b>
45	28	16
46	11	21
47	9	16
48	21	6
49	12	12
<b>45-49</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>71</b>
50	18	7
51	11	6
52	6	5
53	10	7
54	8	5
<b>50-54</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>30</b>



Table 9. Age distribution of spouse 1 and spouse 2 at the time of civil union, 2009 (concluded)		
Year	2009	
Age	Spouse1	Spouse2
55	8	4
56	6	4
57	5	2
58	2	4
59	5	2
<b>55-59</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>
60	6	3
61	2	4
62	1	1
63	2	2
64	3	
<b>60-64</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>
65	3	1
66	2	-
67	2	3
68	1	-
69	2	2
<b>65-69</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>≥70</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 10. Number of published divorces in South Africa, (2000- 2009)													
Year	Total	Numbers						Percentages					
		African	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified	African	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
2000	<b>34 145</b>	7 623	3 365	1 746	15 211	444	5 756	22,3	9,9	5,1	44,5	1,3	18,2
2001	<b>34 045</b>	7 860	3 872	1 672	14 718	470	5 453	23,1	11,4	4,9	43,2	1,4	16,0
2002	<b>31 370</b>	7 050	3 581	1 525	14 171	365	4 678	22,5	11,4	4,9	45,2	1,2	14,8
2003	<b>31 566</b>	7 657	3 911	1 508	12 639	532	5 319	24,3	12,4	4,8	40,0	1,7	17,2
2004	<b>31 768</b>	8 965	3 300	1 648	12 437	594	4 824	28,2	10,4	5,2	39,1	1,9	15,2
2005	<b>32 484</b>	8 672	3 568	1 635	11 582	538	6 489	26,7	11,0	5,0	35,7	1,7	19,9
2006	<b>31 270</b>	9 113	3 451	1 676	11 079	613	5 338	29,1	11,0	5,4	35,4	2,0	17,1
2007	<b>29 639</b>	9 055	3 558	1 715	9 935	865	4 511	30,6	12,0	5,8	33,5	2,9	15,0
2008	<b>28 924</b>	10 110	3 057	1 802	9 481	902	3 572	35,0	10,6	6,2	32,8	3,1	12,3
2009	<b>30 763</b>	10 528	4 016	1 610	9 981	2 912	1 716	34,2	13,1	5,2	32,4	9,5	5,6

<b>Table 11. Number of divorces by sex and population group of the plaintiff</b>				
<b>Population group</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Husband</b>	<b>Wife</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 763</b>	<b>11 051</b>	<b>15 324</b>	<b>4 388</b>
African	10 528	4 154	4 345	2 029
Coloured	4016	1 237	2 277	502
Indian/Asian	1 610	563	851	196
Mixed	2 912	1 162	1 419	331
White	9 981	3 311	5 572	1 098
Unspecified	1 716	624	860	232

<b>Table 12. Number of divorces by sex and type of occupation of the plaintiff</b>				
<b>Type of occupation</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 763</b>	<b>11 051</b>	<b>15 324</b>	<b>4 388</b>
Professional, Semi-Professional and Technical Occupations	2 307	788	1 519	-
Managers and Administrators	3 234	1 694	1 540	-
Clerical and Sale Occupations	3 716	824	2 892	-
Transport, Delivery and Communications	526	484	42	-
Service Occupations	2 401	1 124	1 277	-
Farming and Related Occupations	82	67	15	-
Artisans, Apprentice and Related Occupations	1 022	832	190	-
Production Foreman, Mine and Quarry Worker	940	674	266	-
Not Economically Active	4 297	1 330	2 967	-
Unspecified	12 238	3 234	4 616	4 388

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

Population group	Total	Way of solemnisation		
		Religious	Civil	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 763</b>	<b>14 726</b>	<b>13 904</b>	<b>2 133</b>
African	10 528	2 997	6 984	547
Coloured	4 016	2 586	1 305	125
Indian/Asian	1 610	450	1 048	112
White	9 981	7 155	2 156	670
Mixed	2 912	821	1 940	151
Unspecified	1 716	717	471	528

**Table 14. Number of times married at the time of divorce**

Number of times married	Husband	Wife
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 763</b>	<b>30 763</b>
1	23 738	23 985
2	3 151	2 886
3 and above	538	476
Unspecified	3 336	3 416

Table 15. Number of divorces by age group and population group of husband							
Age group	Population group						
	Total	African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 763</b>	<b>11 397</b>	<b>4 273</b>	<b>2 034</b>	<b>10 264</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>2 546</b>
<25	202	18	38	32	111		3
25-29	1 495	215	307	186	691	11	85
30-34	3 695	1 002	619	408	1 391	43	232
35-39	5 517	1 939	913	424	1 880	43	318
40-44	5 371	2 181	850	283	1 693	39	325
45-49	4 517	2 039	659	196	1 358	16	249
50-54	2 912	1 352	318	97	948	11	186
55-59	1 540	692	164	58	543	4	79
60-64	814	323	82	31	326	2	50
65-69	365	151	32	9	153	-	20
70-74	169	71	10	4	75	-	9
75-79	87	36	7	1	38	-	5
≥80	56	29	1	1	23	-	2
Unspecified	4 023	1 349	273	304	1 034	80	983

Table 16. Number of divorces by age group and population group of wife							
Wife age group	Total	Population group					
		African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 763</b>	<b>11 496</b>	<b>4 536</b>	<b>1 779</b>	<b>10 279</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2 570</b>
<25	739	152	104	96	355	1	31
25-29	3 294	974	559	289	1 282	10	180
30-34	5 159	2 023	783	328	1 654	18	353
35-39	5 812	2 264	977	340	1 817	17	397
40-44	5 049	2 089	785	266	1 576	16	317
45-49	3 530	1 392	576	148	1 167	17	230
50-54	1 936	789	248	81	684	9	125
55-59	972	354	138	37	376	1	66
60-64	417	134	63	18	172	2	28
65-69	157	49	14	5	80	1	8
70-74	72	24	5	1	38	-	4
75-79	22	5	2	-	15	-	-
≥80	6	-	-	-	5	-	1
Unspecified	3 598	1 247	282	170	1 058	11	830

Husband age group	Duration of marriage										
	Total	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	≥40	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 763</b>	<b>6 543</b>	<b>8 340</b>	<b>5 806</b>	<b>4 028</b>	<b>2 441</b>	<b>1 378</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>1 105</b>
<25	202	179	11	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
25-29	1 495	1 007	428	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	50
30-34	3 695	1 447	1 729	367	17	-	-	-	-	-	135
35-39	5 517	1 140	2 128	1 565	484	14	-	-	-	-	186
40-44	5 371	767	1 330	1 457	1 232	409	12	-	-	-	164
45-49	4 517	449	786	874	1 007	930	315	7	-	-	149
50-54	2 912	278	379	468	454	500	526	196	5	-	106
55-59	1 540	148	197	212	181	172	216	238	103	-	73
60-64	814	99	122	112	87	75	62	92	106	33	26
65-69	365	54	48	46	52	27	29	22	27	42	18
70-74	169	22	28	32	20	10	11	2	10	23	11
75-79	87	16	15	14	15	5	2	2	4	9	5
≥80	56	15	14	11	6	-	3	3	1	2	1
Unspecified	4 023	922	1 125	637	473	299	202	106	61	28	170



Wife age group	Duration of marriage										
	Total	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	≥40	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 763</b>	<b>6 543</b>	<b>8 340</b>	<b>5 806</b>	<b>4 028</b>	<b>2 441</b>	<b>1 378</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>1 105</b>
<25	739	630	76	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33
25-29	3 294	1 750	1 345	78	1	-	-	-	-	-	120
30-34	5 159	1 402	2 446	1 031	119	1	-	-	-	-	160
35-39	5 812	840	1 692	1 897	1 070	108	-	-	-	-	205
40-44	5 049	515	971	1 141	1 335	834	104	-	-	-	149
45-49	3 530	348	481	589	635	774	534	49	-	-	120
50-54	1 936	178	203	268	237	278	364	297	32	-	79
55-59	972	78	116	115	103	87	118	158	147	6	44
60-64	417	45	45	54	41	34	32	41	57	53	15
65-69	157	24	18	19	8	12	9	8	13	38	8
70-74	72	10	11	9	12	3	5	3	7	10	2
75-79	22	5	2	2	4	1	-	-	1	5	2
≥80	6	-	-	2	1	-	-	1	1	-	1
Unspecified	3 598	718	934	601	462	309	212	111	59	25	167

<b>Table 19. Divorces with and without children by population group and total number of children involved</b>					
<b>Population group</b>	<b>Total divorces</b>	<b>Divorces without children</b>	<b>Divorces with children</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>	<b>Total children involved</b>
Total	<b>30 763</b>	<b>13 510</b>	<b>17 214</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>28 295</b>
African	<b>10 528</b>	4 221	6 294	13	10 404
Coloured	<b>4 016</b>	1 268	2 747	1	4 736
Indian/Asian	<b>1 610</b>	687	918	5	1 415
White	<b>9 981</b>	4 906	5 063	12	8 163
Mixed	<b>2 912</b>	1 616	1 290	6	2 047
Unspecified	<b>1 716</b>	812	902	2	1 530

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### 1. Purpose of the statistical release

The purpose of the statistical release is to document trends in civil marriages and divorces granted in a particular year by civil courts. This statistical release presents information on the 2009 civil marriages, civil unions and customary marriages that were registered by the Department of Home Affairs. The release also reports on the 2009 divorces that were granted by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development through divorce courts, which had reached Stats SA at the time of publication.

### 2. Scope and coverage

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

### 3. Data

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

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

### 4. Limitations

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

The marriages and divorces data are not correlated. They are marriages and divorces registered in 2009. However, the divorces come from marriages that were registered in different years.

### 5. Definitions of terms

**Civil marriages:** these are marriages registered according to the Marriage Act, 1961. In the release the term 'civil' is used to differentiate marriages that were solemnised by licensed lay 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 (see Recognition of Customary Marriages act, 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.

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

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

## 6. Symbols

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

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Stats SA publishes approximately 300 different statistical releases each year. It is not economically viable to produce them in more than one of South of South Africa's official languages. Since the releases are used extensively, not only locally but also by international economic and social-scientific communities, Stats SA releases are published in English.

Stats SA has copyright on this publication. Users may apply the information as they wish, provided that they acknowledge Stats SA as a source of basic data wherever they process, apply, utilise, publish or distribute the data; and also that they specify that the relevant analysis (where applicable) result from their own processing of data.

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An advance release calendar is disseminated on [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za)

### Stats SA products

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Eastern Cape Library Services, King William's Town  
Central Regional Library, Polokwane  
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Stats SA also provides a subscription service.

### **Electronic services**

The marriages and divorce data are available on compact disc since 2006.

A large range of data are available via on-line services and computer printouts- For more details about our electronic data, contact user information services.

You can visit us on the Internet at: [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za)

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