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Preface

This statistical release presents information on civil marriages that were registered by the Department of Home Affairs in 2008. In addition for the first time presents information on customary marriages registered between 2003 and 2008 and civil unions registered between 2007 and 2008. The release also reports on the 2008 divorces that were granted by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development through its divorce courts that had reached Stats SA at the time of publication.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P J Lehohla', with a stylized flourish at the end.

P J Lehohla
Statistician-General

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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, data collection is based on continuous recording of events (marriages and divorces) as they take place.

The *Marriages and divorces statistical release (P0307)* publishes annual marriage and divorce data that are collected through administrative records / registration systems and not through censuses / surveys. Until 2007, the published data in the annual release covered only civil marriages. Civil marriage is administered by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) through the Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No. 25 of 1961). Starting with the 2008 annual release, Stats SA will be publishing data on registered customary marriages and civil unions / partnerships. The recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No. 120 of 1998) came into operation on 15th November 2000. Data on registered customary marriages are available from DHA from 2003. The solemnisation and registration of a civil union, either by way of a civil marriage or a civil union partnership is governed by the Civil Union Act, 2006 (Act No 17 of 2006). The Civil Union Act came into operation on 30th November 2006. Data on registered civil unions are available from DHA from 2007. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) is mandated through the Divorce Act, 1979 (Act No. 70 of 1979) to handle matters of dissolution of civil marriages. Data on granted divorces (from civil marriages) are obtained from DoJ&CD, through its divorce courts.

The current information in the release is based on civil marriages registered in 2008 and divorces from civil marriages that were granted in 2008; customary marriages registered from 2003 to 2008; and civil unions that were registered in 2007 and 2008. The findings of the data are presented in two separate sections: marriages and divorces. It is important to note that: first, although both the data on civil marriages and divorces were collected in the same year, they are not linked to each other. Marriages reported here are civil marriages that were registered in 2008 and customary marriages registered between 2003 and 2008. Divorces are the divorce cases whose application for divorce was granted in 2008. Publication of statistics on divorces from registered customary marriages and civil unions will be available when sufficient data become available.

2. Marriages

2.1 Civil marriages

2.1.1 Trends in marriages (1999-2008)

In 2008, 186 522 marriages were registered. This number includes 959 marriages of South African citizens solemnised outside the borders of South Africa but were registered in South Africa. Information provided in Table 1 shows that the number of registered marriages has generally been increasing over the last ten years (1999–2008). In 1999, 140 458 marriages were registered. This number had increased to 186 522 in 2008 showing an annual increase of 2,9% since 1999. However, there were observed annual fluctuations particularly the sudden declines in 2001 and 2004 as well as the sharp increase in 2002. The 2008 figure of 186 522 shows an increase of 3 492 (1,9%) from 183 030 marriages recorded in 2007.

As shown in Figure 1, the summer months, beginning from September and peaking in December, continue to be the most popular months for marriages. In 2008, the highest number of marriages 30 044 (16,1%), took place in December compared to June that recorded the lowest, 12 307 (6,6%).

2.1.2 Solemnisation of marriages

Only licensed marriage officers are required by the Marriage Act to solemnise civil marriages. Civil marriages are generally solemnised at the offices of the DHA and at chapels 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 2008 data show that 95 898 (51,4%) of the 186 522 marriages were solemnised by civil rites and 63 866 (34,2%) by religious rites. The type of solemnisation rite was not specified in 26 758 (14,4%) 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 2008, the highest number of marriages solemnised by civil rites were registered in Gauteng and the lowest in Northern Cape. The highest number of marriages solemnised by religious rites were recorded in KwaZulu-Natal and the lowest in Limpopo.

2.1.3 Marital status at the time of marriage

Data presented in Table 3 indicate that most of the marriages in 2008 were first time marriages. Overall, 152 951 (82,0%) men and 159 060 (85,3%) women had never been married. Among those who were remarrying, there were 5 772 (3,1%) male divorcees and 3 758 (2,0%) widowers. For the brides, there were 4 151 (2,2%) divorcees and 3 167 (1,7%) widows. The marital status of 24 041 (12,9%) bridegrooms and 20 144 brides (10,8%) was not recorded. However (60,6%), of the 9 530 remarrying men were divorcees but the proportion of divorcees among the 7 589 women who were remarrying was slightly above half (4 151 or 56,7%). Irrespective of their marital status men married partners who had never been married (see Tables 4). Thus, 92,0%, 53,9% and 81,0% 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 Act that puts restrictions on marriage (with respect to civil marriages) involving minors (persons under 21 years old). These minors unless (provided they have married before) require parental or guardian consent before entering into a civil marriage. Furthermore, boys under 18 and girls under 15 years of age, in addition to the consent of the parents or guardians, require the consent of the Minister of Home Affairs before marriage. In 2008, marriages of 930 men and 6 774 women aged less than 21 years were registered. As expected, there were insignificantly low numbers of registered marriages of men (15) younger than 18 years and women (5) younger than 15 years.

Women enter marriage for the first time at younger ages than men. In 2008, the median age for grooms was 34 years compared to 29 years for brides. Major differences however, are observed when the marital status at the time of current marriage is considered (see Figures 2, 3a, 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. The age at first marriage for both men and women has remained the same as 2006. For remarriages, the median age of divorced men was 52 years compared to 46 years for their female counterparts yielding an age gap of six years. Similarly, the median ages for widowers and widows were 45 years and 29 years respectively resulting in a 16 years' gap. Despite the fact that men tend to marry younger women, in 2008 14,6% of bridegroom were younger than their brides whilst 7,1% were of the same age (see Tables 4, Figures 4a, 4b, and 4c).

2.2 Customary marriages

2.2.1 Trends in the registration of customary marriages (2003-2008)

In 2003, 17 283 customary marriages were registered. As presented in Table 6, the number of registered marriages has been fluctuating since 2003. The lowest recorded number (14 039) was in 2006 whilst the highest 20 301 was in 2004. The number dropped to 16 003 in 2008. Since the registration of customary marriages is relatively new, it is of interest to examine the proportion of customary marriages registered in the year they occurred. It is observed from data in Figure 5 that this proportion has never reached 10,0%. It ranged between 4,7% and 8,5%. The proportion for 2008 is 7,2%.

2.2.2 Marital status at the time of customary marriage

In the absence of data on marital status at the time of the registration of customary marriage, it is not possible to distinguish between first time spouses and those who have married before (i.e. spouse in polygamous marriages, divorcees, widows and widowers).

2.2.3 Age at the time of customary marriage

Table 7, shows the age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage. The proportion of customary marriages with bridegrooms aged less than 18 years varied from 0,4% in 2003 to 0,8 in 2008. Whilst the proportion of brides aged less than 18 years varied from 4,0% in 2003 to 8,3% in 2008.

As observed from Figure 6, the bridegrooms are generally older than the brides. In 2008, the median age of bridegrooms was 31 years and that of brides was 25 years. The median age ranges from 30 years to 32 years for bridegrooms and for brides from 24 years to 27 years for brides between 2003 and 2008 respectively. Figure 7 further shows that generally about 85,0% of bridegrooms are older than their brides whilst around 10,0% and 5,0% are younger and of the same age respectively.

2.3 Civil unions

According to the Civil Union Act (2006), a civil union means “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 this Act”.

2.3.1 Trends in the registration of civil unions (2007-2008)

In 2007, 80 civil unions were registered. A year later, the number of registrations had increased to 732. The provincial distribution of registered civil unions indicates (see Table 8) that most of the civil unions were registered in Gauteng and Western Cape. In 2007, 61,3% of all registered civil unions took place in Gauteng. The proportion dropped to 49,0% in 2008. Western Cape registered 20,0% and 26,1% in 2007 and 2008 respectively. Although no civil unions were registered in Eastern Cape and Limpopo in 2007, they recorded 41 and 15 registrations respectively in 2008.

2.3.2 Age at the time of civil union

The average difference in ages between spouses was 7,7 years in 2007, and 7,3 years in 2008. Data from both 2007 and 2008 registration shows that spouses 1 are older than spouses 2 (see Figure 8 and Table 9). In 2007 the median age for spouses 1 was 40 years and that of spouses 2 was 36 years. For those who registered in 2008, the median ages for spouses 1 and spouses 2 have dropped to 38 years and 35 years respectively. Figure 9 further indicates that in 2007, 56,2% of first spouses were older than their spouses. The proportion of those younger than or of the same age as their spouses were 33,8% and 10,0% respectively. A year later, the proportion of first spouses older than their spouses had increase to 63,5% whilst those younger than or of the same age has dropped to 30,1% and 6,4% respectively.

3. Divorces

3.1 Trends in divorces (1999-2008)

The published data on divorces presented in Table 10 indicate that the number of granted cases has been fluctuating between 37 098 and 28 924 per annum in the past decade (1999-2008). The distribution of couples divorcing by population group shows that there were more divorces among the African population group compared to the other groups. Despite the general fluctuations, the proportions of divorces from the mixed and the African groups have been increasing whilst that of the White group has been declining in the past ten years. In 1999 the African, Indian/Asian, White and mixed groups made up 18,4%; 5,3%; 39,9% and 1,0% of the number of divorces respectively. However, in 2008 the contribution of the African, Indian/Asian and mixed groups increased to 35,0%; 6,2% and 3,1% respectively whilst that of the White group declined to 32,8%.

3.2 Plaintiff

The 2008 data reveal that there were more female (50,6%) than male (37,8%) plaintiffs (see Table 11). However, there were significant differences among population groups. Among African plaintiffs, more husbands (43,5%) than wives (41,1%) initiated the divorce. This is in sharp contrast to the other population groups, particularly among the White (58,0%) and the Coloured (57,9%) whereby most divorces were initiated by women.

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

(19,8%) were in clerical and sales occupations whereas husbands (14,9%) 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 49,7% of all the divorce cases were from marriages that were solemnised by religious rites and 42,9% by civil rites. A similar pattern was also found among all population groups except among the White population group whereby only 18,9% of divorces were those of marriages solemnised by civil rites.

3.4 Number of times married

The 2008 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 (76,4%) husbands were from first marriages compared to 77,1% 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 2008 was 41 for men and 38 for women. Figure 10 shows that African men had the highest median age (43) at divorce. Women from the mixed and India/Asian group had the lowest median age (36 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

The median duration of marriage in 2008 was 9 years. 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 (7 859 or 27,2%) lasted five to nine years. This group is followed by marriages that lasted less than five years (6 143 or 21,2%). Thus, almost half (48,4%) of the 28 924 divorces in 2008 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 2008, there were 26 947 children (younger than 18 years old) involved in divorce. It is observed from Table 19, that 16 370 (56,6%) of the 28 924 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, 2008

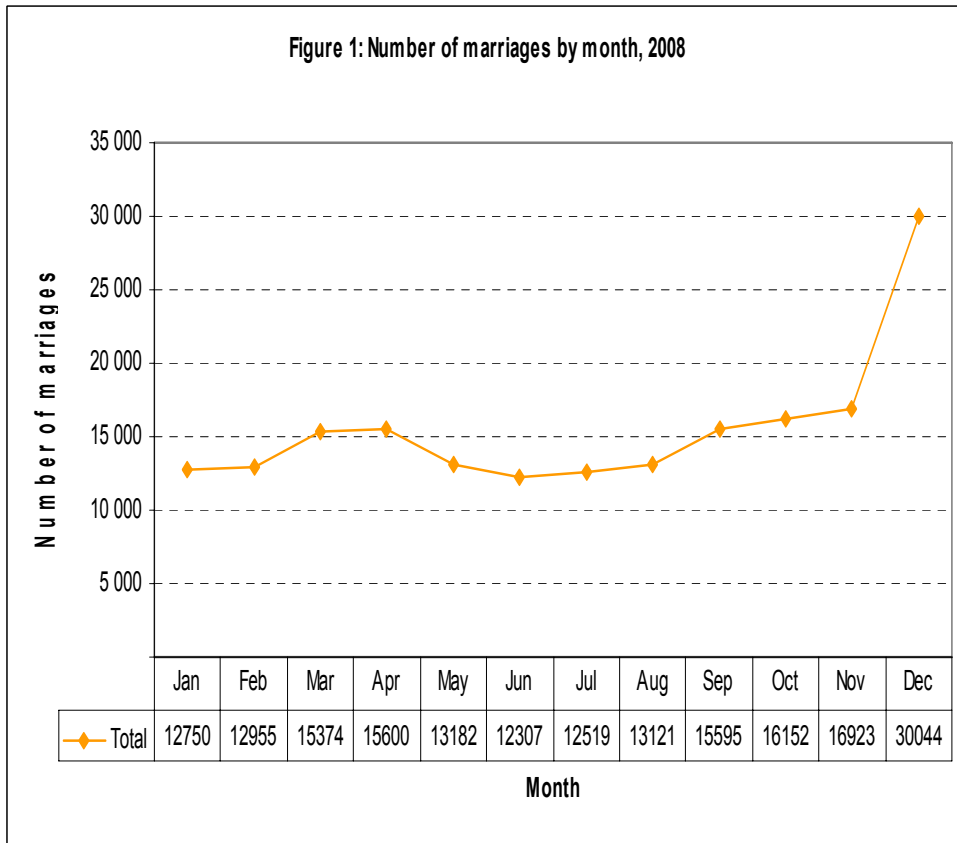
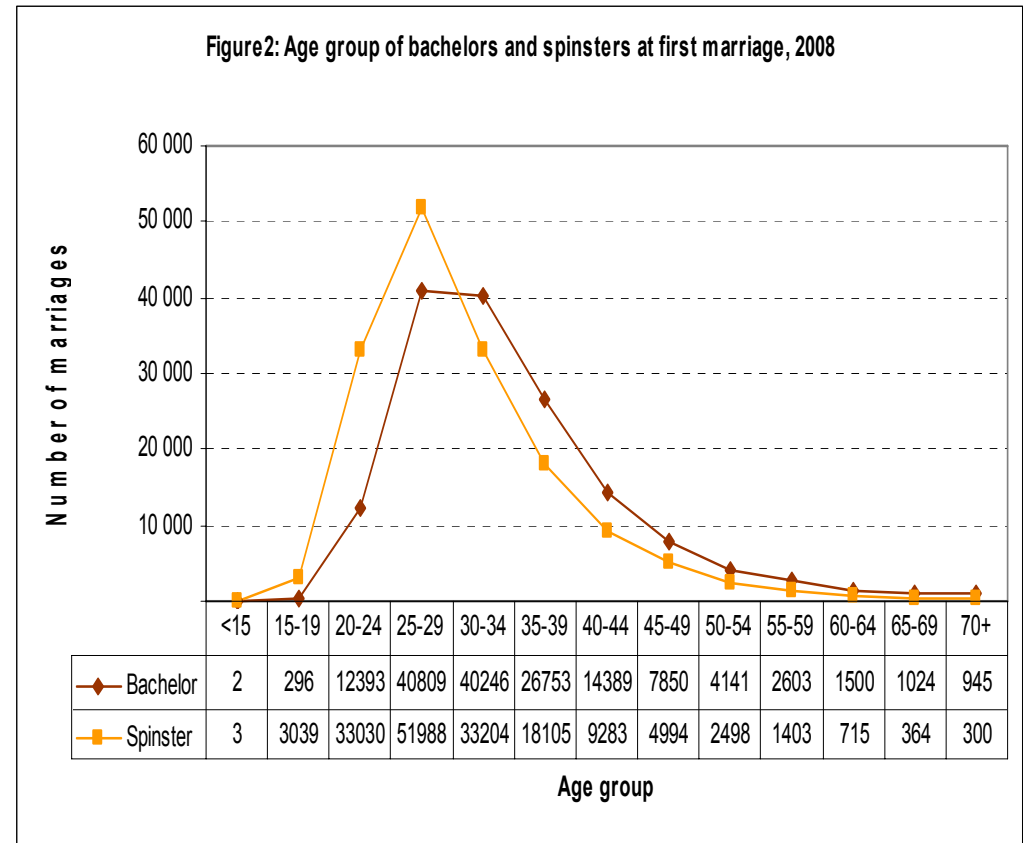


Figure 2: Age group of bachelors and spinsters at first marriage, 2008



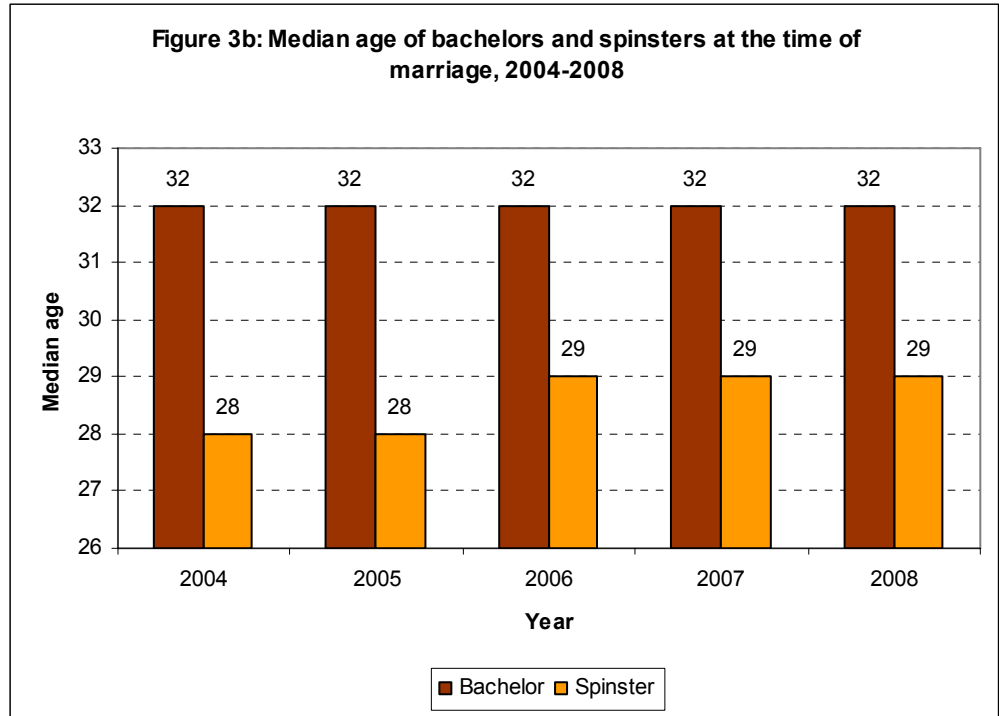
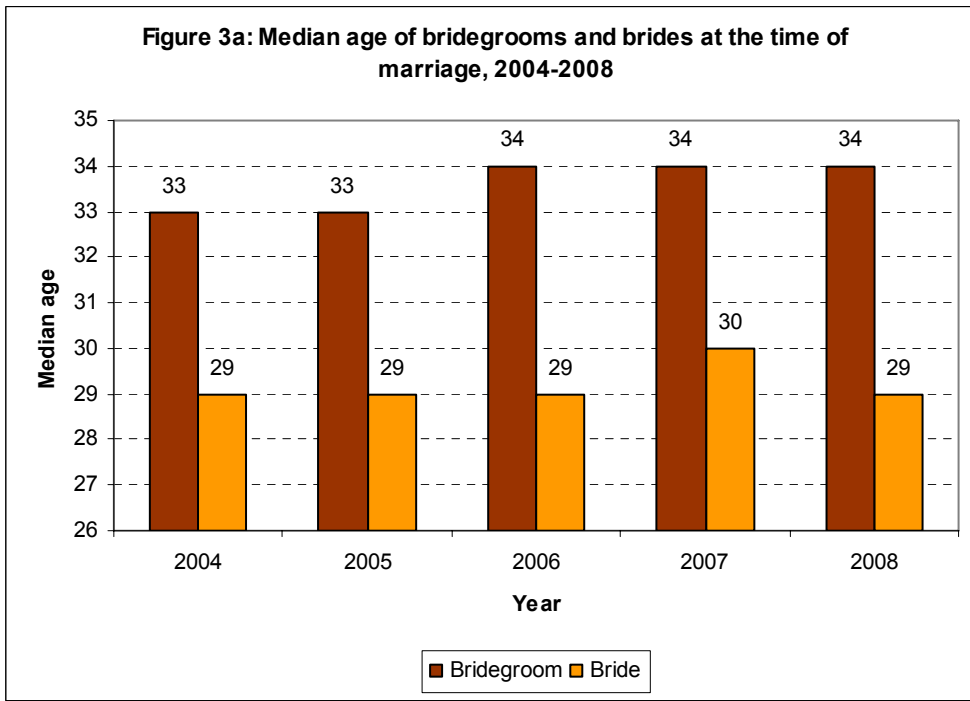


Figure 3c: Median age of widowers and widows at the time of marriage, 2004-2008

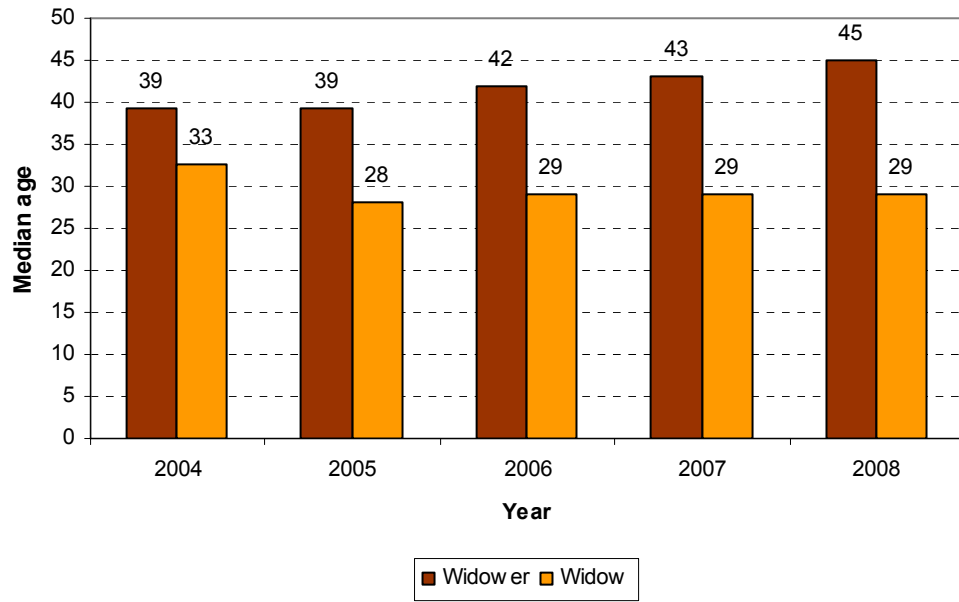


Figure 3d: Median age of male and female divorcees at the time of marriage, 2004-2008

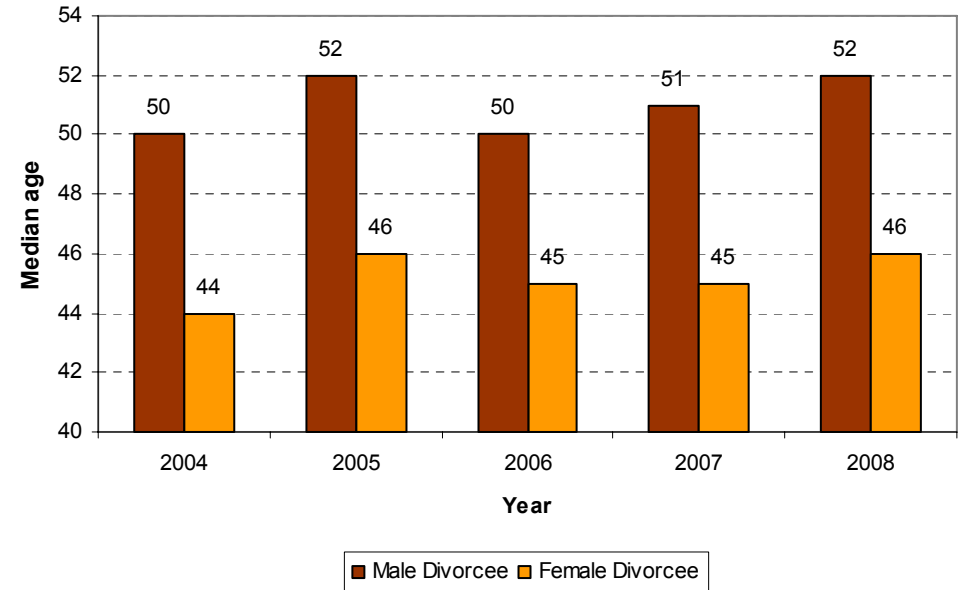
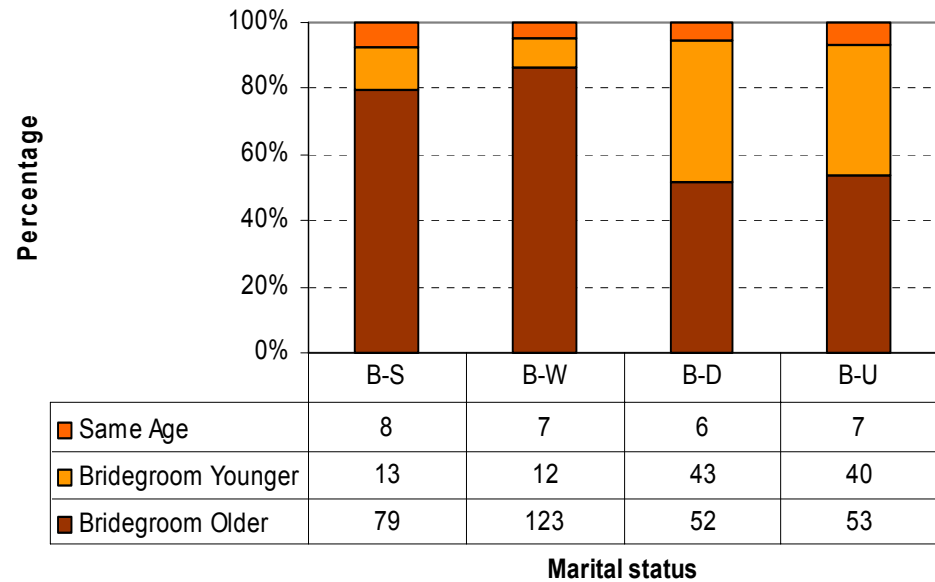
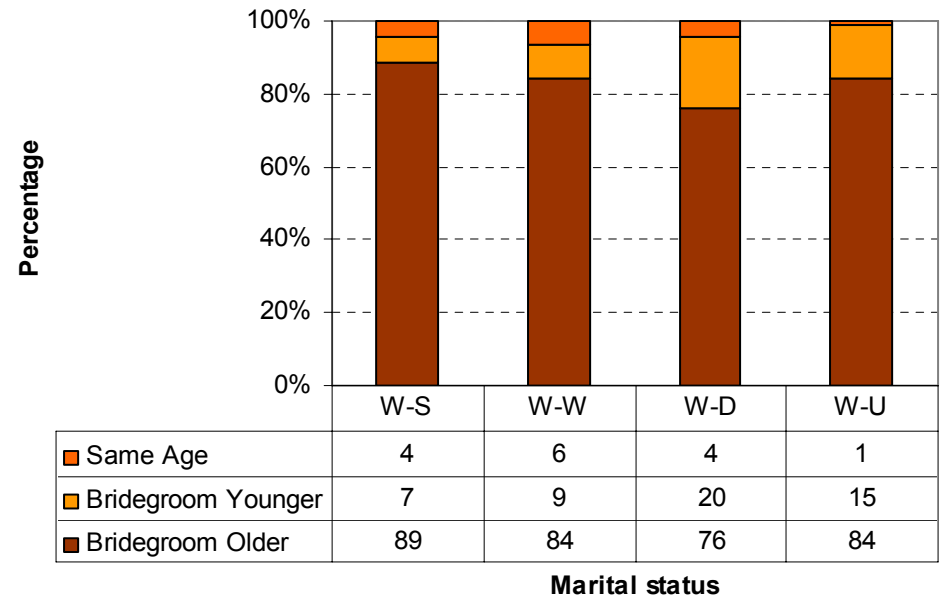


Figure 4a: Age difference among bachelors and their brides at the time of marriage, 2008



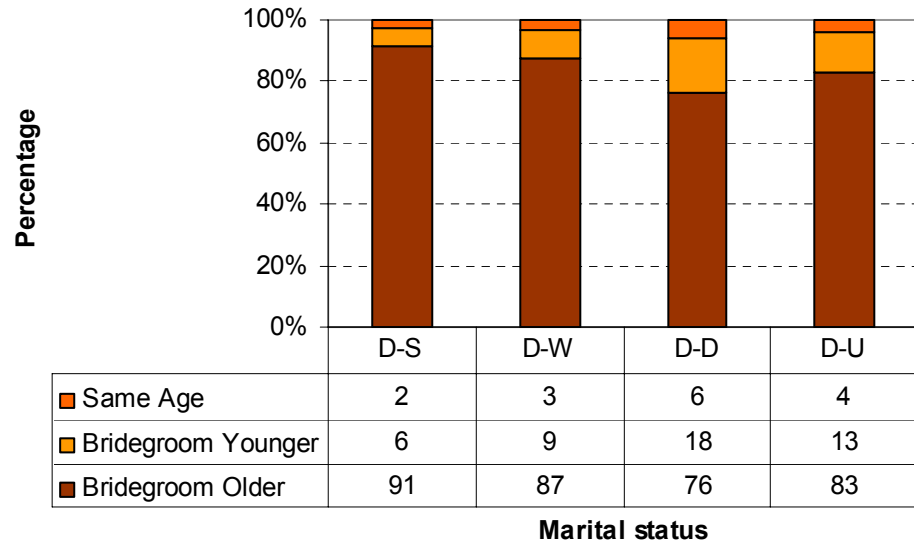
B – S = Bachelor to spinster B – W = Bachelor to widow
 B – D = Bachelor to divorcee B – U = Bachelor to unspecified

Figure 4b: Age difference among widowers and their brides at the time of their latest registered marriage, 2008



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 their latest registered marriage, 2008



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 marriages that were registered in the same year they took place, 2003-2004

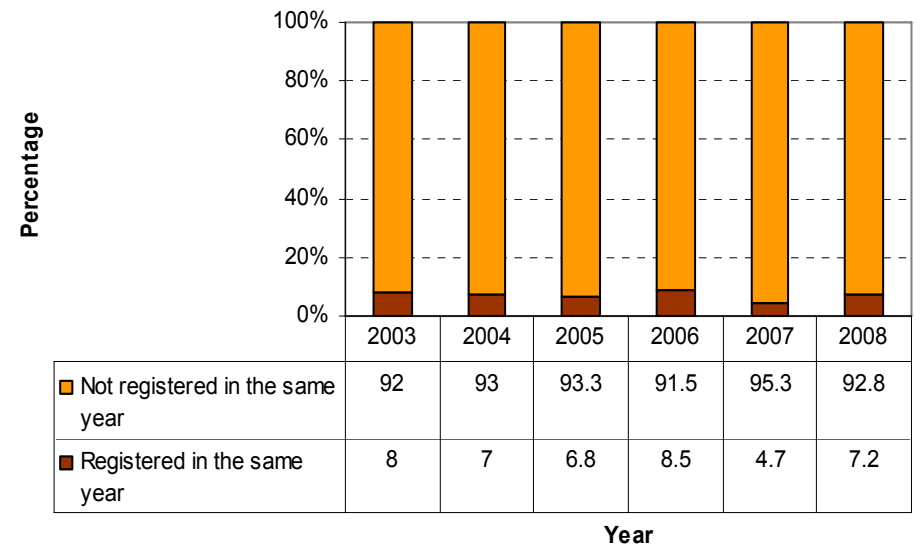


Figure 6. Median age of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriages, 2003-2008

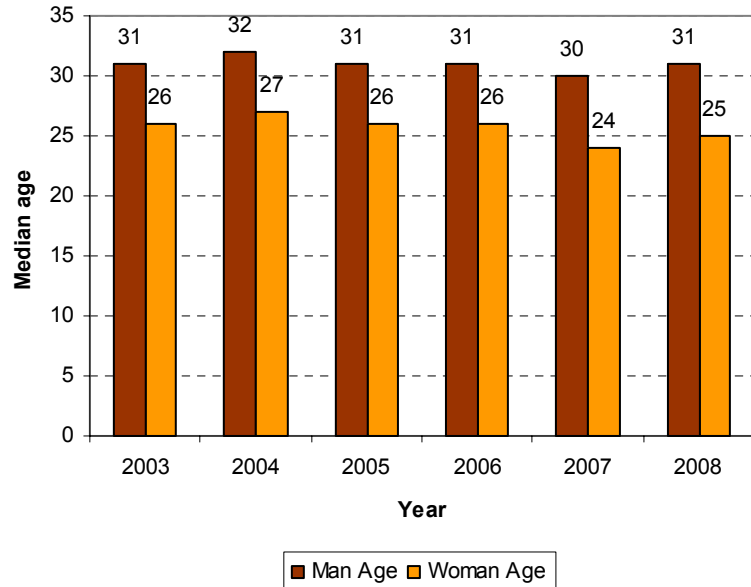


Figure 7. Age difference between bridegroom and brides at the time of customary marriage, 2003-2008

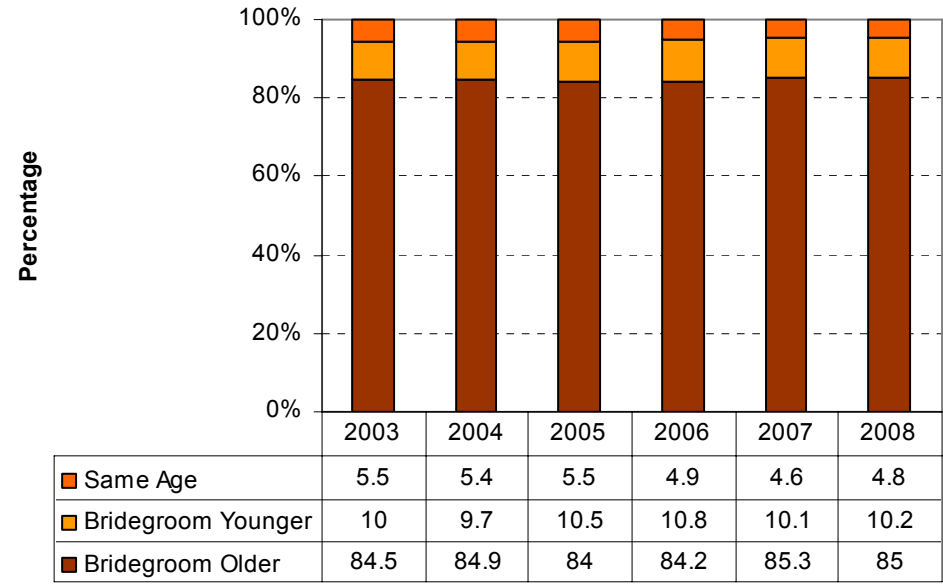


Figure 8. Median age for spouses in civil unions, 2007-2008



Figure 9. Age difference between spouses at the time of thier civil union, 2007-2008

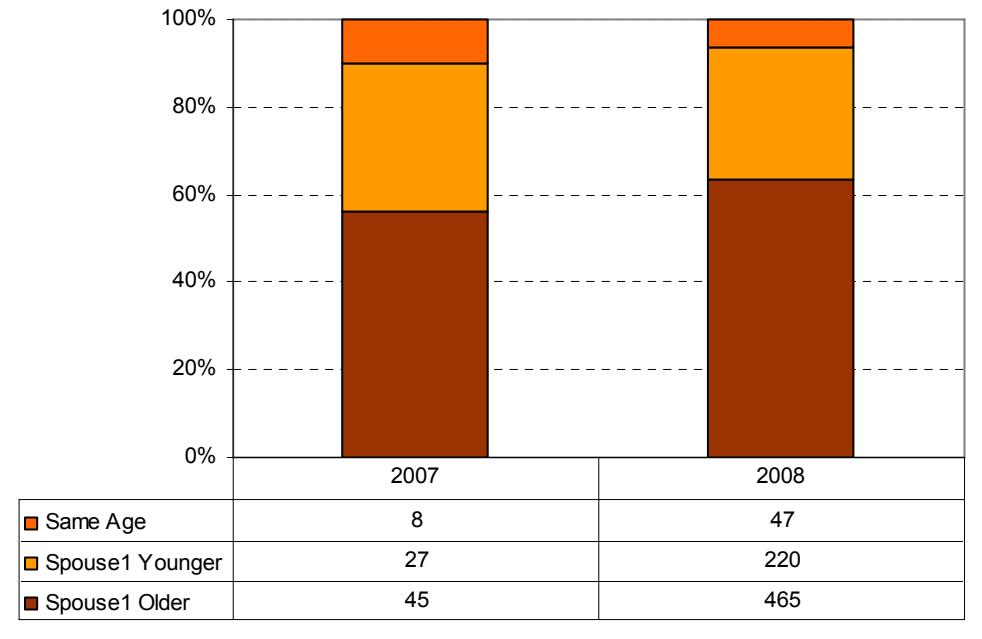


Figure 10: Median age of divorcees by population group and gender, 2008

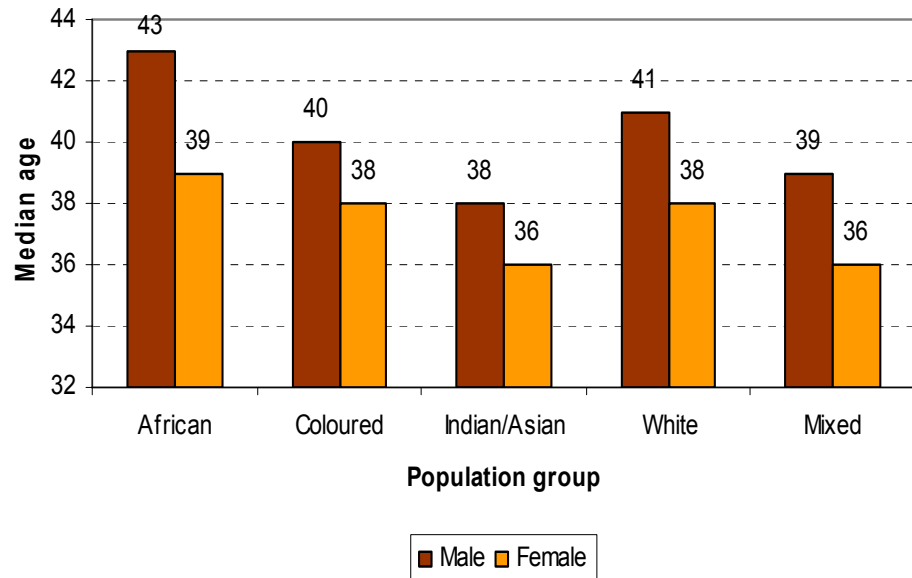


Figure 11: Divorce by age group and population group (males), 2008

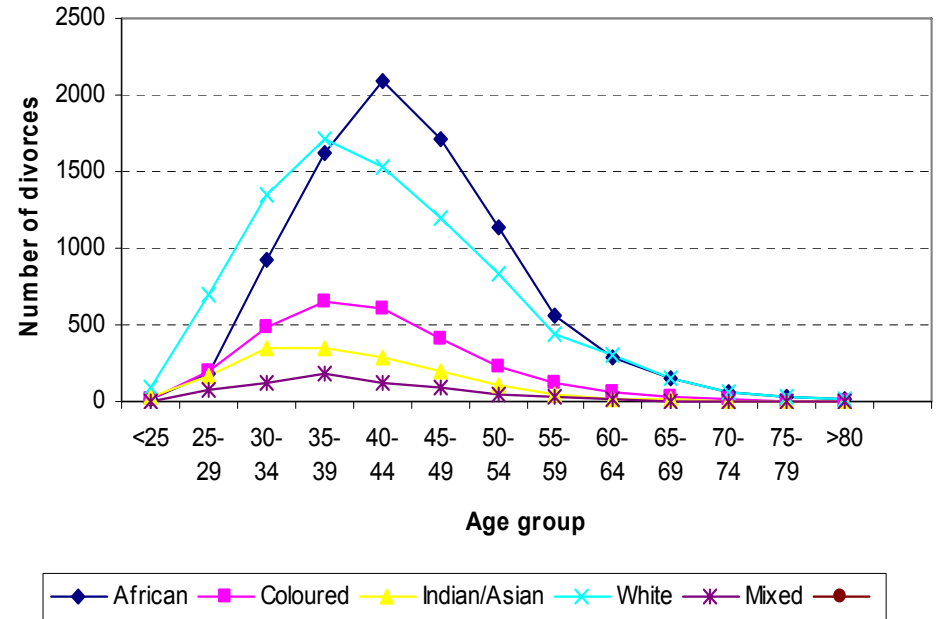


Figure 12: Divorce by age group and population group (females), 2008

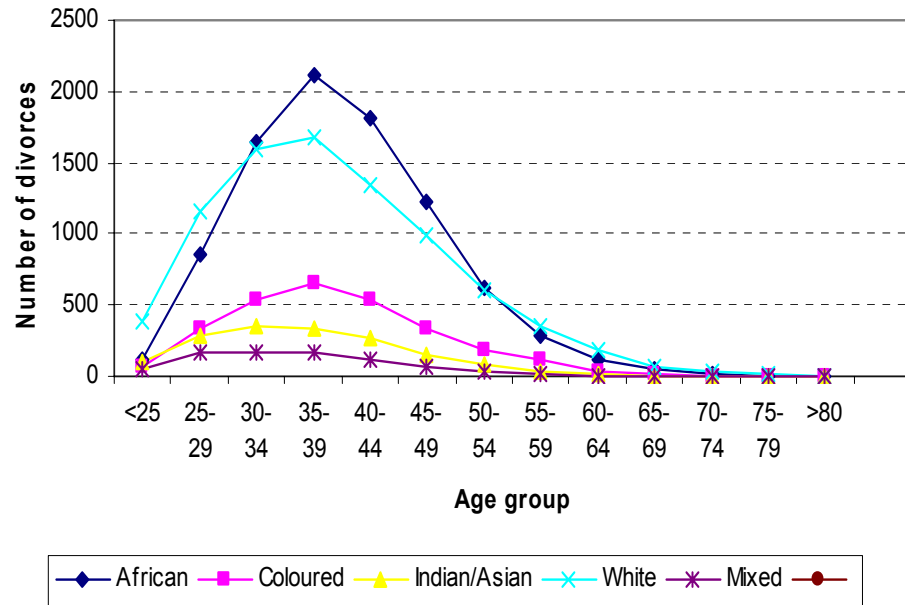


Figure 13: Divorces by duration of marriage at the time of divorce and population group, 2008

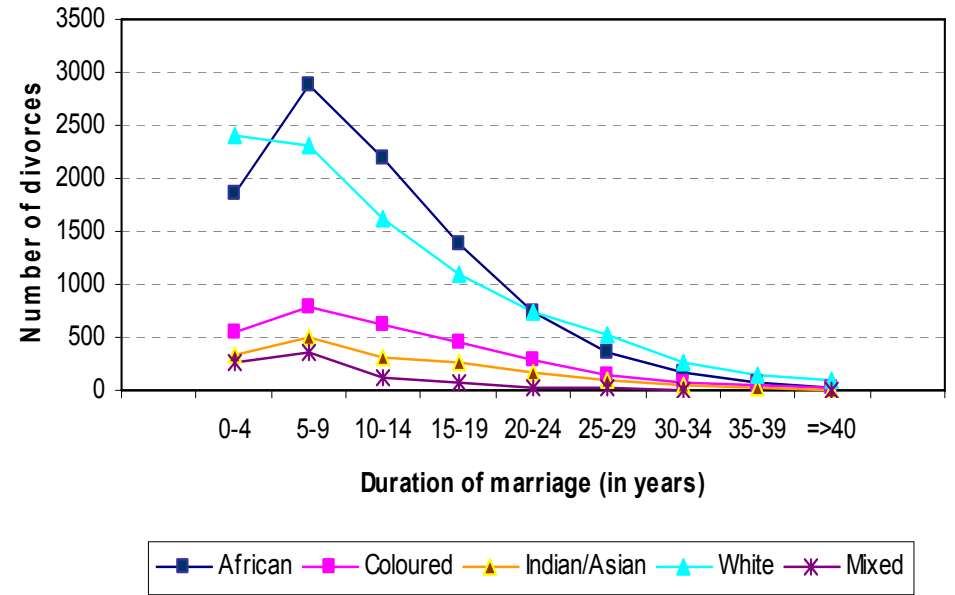


Table 1. Number of registered civil marriages in South Africa, (1999-2008)	
Year	Registered marriages
1999	140 458
2000	143 391
2001	134 581
2002	177 202
2003	178 689
2004	176 521
2005	180 657
2006	184 860
2007	183 030
2008	186 522

Table 2. Number of marriages by way of solemnisation and province				
Province	Grand Total	Solemnisation		
		Religious	Civil	Unspecified
Grand Total	186 522	63 866	95 898	26 758
Western Cape	30 523	15 997	12 693	1 833
Eastern Cape	21 164	5 705	12 099	3 360
Northern Cape	4 843	1 605	1 604	1 634
Free State	13 593	4 562	8 543	488
KwaZulu-Natal	29 361	16 760	8 031	4 570
North West	13 916	3 011	9 627	1 278
Gauteng	46 226	12 333	26 378	7 515
Mpumalanga	9 713	1 840	3 954	3 919
Limpopo	10 581	1 221	7 862	1 498
Unspecified	5 643	808	4 185	650
Outside RSA	959	24	922	13

Table 3. Number of marriages by marital status and province										
Province	Marital status at the time of marriage									
	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Total	186 522	152 951	5 772	3 758	24 041	186 522	159 060	4 151	3 167	20 144
Western Cape	30 523	24 457	993	116	4 957	30 523	25 582	859	83	3 999
Eastern Cape	21 164	17 995	624	421	2 124	21 164	18 819	394	286	1 665
Northern Cape	4 843	3 988	234	57	564	4 843	4 148	186	59	450
Free State	13 593	11 464	481	301	1 347	13 593	11 876	325	392	1 000
KwaZulu-Natal	29 361	25 123	832	711	2 695	29 361	25 976	521	568	2 296
North West	13 916	11 596	463	226	1 631	13 916	12 199	282	177	1 258
Gauteng	46 226	36 167	1 378	1 008	7 673	46 226	37 435	1 102	933	6 756
Mpumalanga	9 713	7 971	344	258	1 140	9 713	8 348	228	215	922
Limpopo	10 581	9 012	227	463	879	10 581	9 575	110	281	615
Unspecified	5 643	4 464	186	196	797	5 643	4 397	132	170	944
Marriages Outside SA	959	714	10	1	234	959	705	12	3	239

Table 4. Age difference of bridegrooms and brides by marital status at the time of marriage									
Age difference	Grand Total	Bachelor to				Divorcee to			
		Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Grand Total	186 522	140 673	1 308	2 383	8 587	3 108	1 120	86	1 458
Bridegroom Older	146 107	111 529	678	1 931	4 593	2 834	853	75	1 212
Bridegroom Younger	27 185	18 276	557	295	3 393	202	201	8	187
Same Age	13 230	10 868	73	157	601	72	66	3	59

Table 4. Age difference of bridegrooms and brides by marital status at the time of marriage (concluded)								
Age difference	Widower to				Unspecified to			
	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified	Spinster	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
Grand Total	3 045	46	592	75	12 234	1 677	106	10 024
Bridegroom Older	2 696	35	499	63	10 843	1 089	86	7 091
Bridegroom Younger	214	9	55	11	976	494	15	2 292
Same Age	135	2	38	1	415	94	5	641

Table 5. Marital status at the time of marriage by ages of bridegrooms and brides										
Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Widower	Divorcee	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Widow	Divorcee	Unspecified
Total	186 522	152 951	3 758	5 772	24 041	186 522	159 060	3 167	4 151	20 144
<15	2	2	-	-	-	5	3	1	-	1
15	2	1	1	-	-	25	24	-	-	1
16	3	3	-	-	-	120	110	7	-	3
17	8	7	-	-	1	359	316	19	2	22
18	73	69	1	-	3	1 017	917	37	8	55
19	232	216	5	2	9	1 958	1 806	64	9	79
20	610	568	16	3	23	3 290	3 054	97	13	126
21	1 270	1 209	21	1	39	5 101	4 747	159	11	184
22	2 200	2 100	30	4	66	7 194	6 741	186	18	249
23	3 642	3 510	50	6	76	8 980	8 504	182	11	283
24	5 185	5 006	83	8	88	10 506	9 984	179	21	322
25	6 973	6 715	89	12	157	11 776	11 199	161	21	395
26	8 171	7 880	115	7	169	12 021	11 393	156	19	453
27	8 816	8 459	121	9	227	11 310	10 629	143	31	507
28	9 417	9 008	117	16	276	10 534	9 851	113	39	531
29	9 191	8 747	99	26	319	9 646	8 916	101	48	581
30	9 221	8 662	100	21	438	8 823	8 020	99	47	657
31	9 049	8 457	86	30	476	8 060	7 221	75	61	703
32	8 946	8 226	74	45	601	7 492	6 592	70	83	747
33	8 492	7 711	59	54	668	6 983	6 050	67	79	787
34	8 062	7 190	65	59	748	6 284	5 321	33	105	825
35	7 458	6 478	50	82	848	5 581	4 634	35	102	810
36	7 363	6 341	35	113	874	5 231	4 260	33	126	812
37	5 929	4 873	39	100	917	4 211	3 246	21	108	836
38	6 147	4 984	40	121	1 002	4 213	3 284	19	118	792
39	5 215	4 077	55	121	962	3 630	2 681	30	110	809
40	5 288	3 988	64	163	1 073	3 465	2 523	37	131	774

Table 5. Marital status at the time of marriage by ages of bridegrooms and brides (concluded)										
Age	Bridegrooms					Brides				
	Total	Bachelor	Widower	Divorcee	Unspecified	Total	Spinster	Widow	Divorcee	Unspecified
41	4 315	3 079	74	144	1 018	2 753	1 898	34	142	679
42	3 909	2 661	112	187	949	2 598	1 746	44	120	688
43	3 659	2 468	115	179	897	2 413	1 657	44	112	600
44	3 434	2 193	121	185	935	2 246	1 459	60	122	605
45	3 362	2 072	145	201	944	2 106	1 310	54	140	602
46	3 020	1 843	149	169	859	1 914	1 178	73	125	538
47	2 396	1 336	116	133	811	1 551	877	70	105	499
48	2 558	1 423	161	155	819	1 587	919	65	133	470
49	2 215	1 176	126	165	748	1 303	710	65	121	407
50	2 160	1 114	138	173	735	1 303	695	79	114	415
51	1 775	890	128	152	605	1 011	521	52	111	327
52	1 654	816	84	177	577	914	472	54	109	279
53	1 406	677	89	149	491	820	438	39	88	255
54	1 330	644	96	141	449	709	372	49	101	187
55	1 263	658	73	135	397	689	378	35	98	178
56	1 220	603	92	158	367	622	340	37	88	157
57	960	460	52	127	321	448	214	23	84	127
58	992	487	75	133	297	462	265	29	55	113
59	786	395	48	109	234	398	206	24	62	106
60	828	394	54	130	250	460	248	28	73	111
61	709	346	41	119	203	305	152	18	59	76
62	594	258	43	124	169	258	118	14	59	67
63	561	250	41	116	154	259	106	17	75	61
64	475	252	26	90	107	200	91	10	55	44
65	542	303	39	96	104	174	85	6	50	33
66	469	240	35	93	101	184	90	2	48	44
67	361	157	22	112	70	131	49	3	55	24
68	374	191	14	112	57	158	86	1	48	23
69	264	133	9	67	55	126	54	4	49	19
70+	1 966	945	25	738	258	605	300	10	229	66

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

Table 7. Age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage (2003-2008)						
Year	2003		2004		2005	
Age	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides
Total	17 283	17 283	20 301	20 301	19 252	19 252
<18	61	699	64	628	107	935
18	50	556	54	592	82	650
19	123	825	133	765	176	905
18-19	173	1 381	187	1 357	258	1 555
20	287	927	249	1 008	258	1 043
21	400	1 002	383	1 084	409	1 214
22	542	1 038	482	1 164	618	1 186
23	648	1 039	698	1 166	712	1 155
24	767	1 044	795	1 160	864	1 196
20-24	2 644	5 050	2 607	5 582	2 861	5 794
25	810	950	909	1 143	934	1 096
26	911	909	946	1 197	1 035	1 036
27	874	851	1 048	1 038	1 056	998
28	846	801	969	1 026	978	898
29	908	682	1 048	934	996	820
25-29	4 349	4 193	4 920	5 338	4 999	4 848
30	783	665	983	832	920	704
31	761	605	937	729	929	648
32	703	566	883	698	846	581
33	683	504	832	618	715	526
34	641	410	804	545	704	466
30-34	3 571	2 750	4 439	3 422	4 114	2 925

Table 7. Age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, (2003-2008) (continued)						
Year	2003		2004		2005	
Age	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides
35	592	407	758	504	643	415
36	497	337	627	471	581	339
37	511	300	591	408	573	312
38	454	266	562	347	499	281
39	403	268	520	324	425	238
35-39	2 457	1 578	3 058	2 054	2 721	1 585
40	379	219	509	247	408	206
41	387	177	462	253	365	199
42	294	164	421	190	383	180
43	273	134	373	182	320	132
44	276	121	328	135	289	114
40-44	1 609	815	2 093	1 007	1 765	831
45	227	112	296	127	233	95
46	236	80	284	124	224	78
47	199	73	240	92	193	93
48	176	86	201	83	184	58
49	154	63	201	67	161	60
45-49	992	414	1 222	493	995	384
50	137	42	172	58	142	54
51	134	54	154	58	131	46
52	117	35	151	41	130	38
53	119	33	138	37	110	26
54	106	34	119	28	96	30
50-54	613	198	734	222	609	194

Table 7. Age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, (2003-2008) (continued)						
Year	2003		2004		2005	
Age	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides
55	78	23	116	24	90	16
56	88	27	97	22	78	14
57	78	18	81	19	62	21
58	75	17	66	17	65	23
59	44	13	71	17	54	14
55-59	363	98	431	99	349	88
60	38	12	68	15	51	14
61	60	12	57	11	40	10
62	40	13	47	11	45	4
63	31	4	44	7	34	7
64	29	11	45	4	30	11
60-64	198	52	261	48	200	46
65	30	7	33	7	25	10
66	26	2	24	5	38	5
67	29	4	32	3	29	3
68	24	3	22	3	17	3
69	11	4	24	2	16	5
65-69	120	20	135	20	125	26
70+	127	28	140	22	138	34
Unspecified	6	7	10	9	11	7

Table 7. Age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, (2003-2008) (continued)						
Year	2006		2007		2008	
Age	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides
Total	14 039	14 039	20 259	20 259	16 003	16 003
<18	89	910	266	2 346	127	1 333
18	72	544	160	1 149	97	751
19	114	662	287	1 157	153	855
18-19	186	1 206	447	2 306	250	1 606
20	226	824	447	1 221	299	957
21	353	790	564	1 152	471	932
22	434	847	811	1 161	577	882
23	537	764	921	1 055	660	928
24	612	777	973	1 056	784	863
20-24	2 162	4 002	3 716	5 645	2 791	4 562
25	738	720	1 032	979	838	863
26	696	714	1 066	898	824	741
27	704	675	968	869	788	707
28	712	605	962	780	819	660
29	641	582	952	777	711	633
25-29	3 491	3 296	4 980	4 303	3 980	3 604
30	600	512	925	669	759	556
31	570	452	872	601	685	522
32	587	385	842	501	661	466
33	514	369	756	469	650	396
34	508	359	682	409	585	365
30-34	2 779	2 077	4 077	2 649	3 340	2 305

Table 7. Age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, (2003-2008) (continued)						
Year	2006		2007		2008	
Age	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides
35	438	295	695	374	562	339
36	449	266	587	347	461	281
37	406	234	527	328	443	215
38	396	224	468	257	416	256
39	353	190	413	220	387	211
35-39	2 042	1 209	2 690	1 526	2 269	1 302
40	312	151	373	189	306	184
41	265	156	385	159	302	148
42	235	131	361	157	254	117
43	248	123	317	139	276	104
44	225	116	286	130	243	102
40-44	1 285	677	1 722	774	1 381	655
45	176	71	237	106	194	78
46	169	76	224	96	176	76
47	165	50	203	66	155	62
48	152	59	198	56	166	52
49	139	48	189	53	105	43
45-49	801	304	1 051	377	796	311
50	117	34	140	37	122	44
51	115	43	103	39	95	36
52	98	35	112	29	87	25
53	105	27	98	21	84	24
54	86	19	102	22	95	19
50-54	521	158	555	148	483	148

Table 7. Age distribution of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, (2003-2008) (concluded)						
Year	2006		2007		2008	
Age	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides	Bridegrooms	Brides
55	57	25	92	25	63	20
56	81	22	81	22	51	23
57	64	18	66	12	48	21
58	44	26	60	18	35	19
59	52	11	39	14	41	12
55-59	298	102	338	91	238	95
60	41	9	42	10	44	15
61	48	8	43	7	45	11
62	33	7	32	7	31	6
63	27	8	29	7	33	2
64	29	7	29	6	20	4
60-64	178	39	175	37	173	38
65	23	6	25	4	17	3
66	24	1	32	5	18	2
67	21	3	24	4	18	4
68	12	4	15	1	20	2
69	15	4	15	4	11	3
65-69	95	18	111	18	84	14
70+	105	40	116	34	87	29
Unspecified	7	1	15	5	4	1

Table 8. Number of registered civil unions in South Africa by province , (2007-2008)		
Province	2007	2008
Total	80	732
Eastern Cape	0	41
Free State	1	23
Gauteng	49	362
KwaZulu-Natal	8	74
Limpopo	0	15
Mpumalanga	3	7
North West	2	6
Northern Cape	1	11
Western Cape	16	191
Outside SA	0	2

Table 9. Age distribution of spouse 1 and spouse 2 at the time of civil union, (2007-2008)				
Year	2007		2008	
Age	Spouse1	Spouse2	Spouse1	Spouse2
Total	80	80	732	732
18	-	1	-	5
19	-	3	1	3
18-19	-	4	1	8
20	1	1	3	13
21	-	1	1	10
22	-	2	9	10
23	-	-	10	14
24	1	-	9	20
20-24	2	4	32	67
25	3	3	23	17
26	3	2	19	30
27	2	2	25	38
28	3	4	20	31
29		3	23	32
25-29	11	14	110	148
30	5	3	31	34
31	1	1	23	22
32	3	5	21	28
33	5	3	22	19
34	2	4	24	20
30-34	16	16	121	123

Table 9. Age distribution of spouse 1 and spouse 2 at the time of civil union, (2007-2008) (continued)				
Year	2007		2008	
Age	Spouse1	Spouse2	Spouse1	Spouse2
35	3	-	37	31
36	3	8	24	22
37	2	2	34	28
38	1	1	25	31
39	1	2	31	27
35-39	10	13	151	139
40	3	2	29	26
41	3	-	24	12
42	3	2	21	18
43	3	-	18	13
44	4	1	13	27
40-44	16	5	105	96
45	3	3	25	17
46	2	4	17	16
47	6	1	17	13
48	1	5	21	11
49	-	1	13	7
45-49	12	14	93	64
50	2	-	16	12
51	-	1	8	5
52	-	2	7	4
53	-	-	9	9
54	3	1	5	6
50-54	5	4	45	36
55	1	-	9	4
56	2	1	6	7
57	3	-	6	4
58	1	1	4	8
59	-	-	7	2
55-59	7	2	32	25

Table 9. Age distribution of spouse 1 and spouse 2 at the time of civil union, (2007-2008) (concluded)				
Year	2007		2008	
Age	Spouse1	Spouse2	Spouse1	Spouse2
60	-	-	5	2
61	-	-	8	1
62	-	-	3	6
63	-	-	7	4
64	-	1	-	4
60-64	-	1	23	17
65	-	-	3	1
66	-	1	2	1
67	-	1	2	-
68	-	-	-	3
69	-	-	2	2
65-69	-	2	9	7
70+	1	1	10	2

Table 10. Number of published divorces in South Africa, (1999- 2008)													
Year	Total	Numbers						Percentages					
		African	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified	African	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
1999	37 098	6 823	3 938	1 976	14 785	357	9 219	18,4	10,6	5,3	39,9	1,0	24,8
2000	34 145	7 623	3 365	1 746	15 211	444	5 756	22,3	9,9	5,1	44,5	1,3	18,2
2001	34 045	7 860	3 872	1 672	14 718	470	5 453	23,1	11,4	4,9	43,2	1,4	16,0
2002	31 370	7 050	3 581	1 525	14 171	365	4 678	22,5	11,4	4,9	45,2	1,2	14,8
2003	31 566	7 657	3 911	1 508	12 639	532	5 319	24,3	12,4	4,8	40,0	1,7	17,2
2004	31 768	8 965	3 300	1 648	12 437	594	4 824	28,2	10,4	5,2	39,1	1,9	15,2
2005	32 484	8 672	3 568	1 635	11 582	538	6 489	26,7	11,0	5,0	35,7	1,7	19,9
2006	31 270	9 113	3 451	1 676	11 079	613	5 338	29,1	11,0	5,4	35,4	2,0	17,1
2007	29 639	9 055	3 558	1 715	9 935	865	4 511	30,6	12,0	5,8	33,5	2,9	15,0
2008	28 924	10 110	3 057	1 802	9 481	902	3 572	35,0	10,6	6,2	32,8	3,1	12,3

Table 11. Number of divorces by gender and population group of the plaintiff				
Population group	Total	Husband	Wife	Unspecified
Total	28 924	10 931	14 639	3 354
African	10 110	4 397	4 153	1 560
Coloured	3 057	978	1 770	309
Indian/Asian	1 802	598	986	218
White	9 481	3 224	5 495	762
Mixed	902	341	450	111
Unspecified	3 572	1 393	1 785	394

Table 12. Number of divorces by gender and type of occupation of the plaintiff				
Type of occupation	Total	Husband	Wife	Unspecified
Total	28 924	10 931	14 639	3 354
Professional, Semi Professional and Tech Occupations	2 337	820	1 517	-
Managers and Administrators	2 957	1 631	1 326	-
Clerical and Sale Occupations	3 742	841	2 901	-
Transport, Delivery and Communications	537	502	35	-
Service Occupations	85	68	17	-
Farming and Related Occupations	1 117	932	185	-
Artisans, Apprentice and Related Occupations	962	718	244	-
Production Foreman, Mine and Quarry Worker	2 305	1 104	1 201	-
Not Economically Active	4 073	1 296	2 777	-
Unspecified	10 809	3 019	4 436	3 354

Population group	Total	Way of solemnisation		
		Religious	Civil	Unspecified
Total	28 924	14 361	12 410	2 153
African	10 110	3 072	6 511	527
Coloured	3 057	2 024	925	108
Indian/Asian	1 802	645	1 016	141
White	9 481	7 027	1 794	660
Mixed	902	307	556	39
Unspecified	3 572	1 286	1 608	678

Number of times married	Husband	Wife
Total	28 924	28 924
1	22 091	22 288
2	2 882	2 567
3 and above	459	445
Unspecified	3 492	3 624

Table 15. Number of divorces by age group and population group (husband)							
Age group	Population group						
	Total	African	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
Total	28 924	10 110	3 057	1 802	9 481	902	3 572
<25	171	16	22	25	92	2	14
25-29	1 409	185	196	162	698	69	99
30-34	3 513	925	484	343	1 346	125	290
35-39	4 948	1 615	653	356	1 719	182	423
40-44	5 037	2 094	603	293	1 529	115	403
45-49	3 973	1 718	416	203	1 196	90	350
50-54	2 607	1 140	233	109	833	51	241
55-59	1 317	561	124	51	434	28	119
60-64	766	293	59	20	302	17	75
65-69	375	146	27	9	155	6	32
70-74	146	60	9	1	60	4	12
75-79	73	35	2	-	31	1	4
>80	45	20	3	1	16	-	5
Unspecified	4 544	1 302	226	229	1 070	212	1 505

Table 16. Number of divorces by age group and population group (wife)							
Age group	Population group						
	Total	African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
Total divorces	28 924	10 110	3 057	1 802	9 481	902	3 572
<25	758	116	70	99	386	43	44
325-29	3 050	861	328	284	1 156	160	261
30-34	4 708	1 639	543	352	1 589	174	411
35-39	5 432	2 121	654	336	1 676	160	485
40-44	4 458	1 820	540	265	1 348	116	369
45-49	3 092	1 225	331	159	993	75	309
50-54	1 707	625	189	77	610	34	172
55-59	884	287	116	26	353	20	82
60-64	386	116	34	11	183	6	36
65-69	144	43	15	2	68	1	15
70-74	54	15	7	2	27	-	3
75-79	16	4	2	-	9	-	1
>80	10	1	-	-	7	-	2
Unspecified	4 225	1 237	228	189	1 076	113	1 382

Table 17. Duration of marriage by age group of husband											
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
Total	28 924	6 143	7 859	5 540	3 686	2 220	1 266	634	291	159	1 126
<25	171	153	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
25-29	1 409	954	405	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	47
30-34	3 513	1 357	1 637	380	11	1	-	-	-	-	127
35-39	4 948	1 051	1 912	1 386	439	6	-	-	-	-	154
40-44	5 037	671	1 240	1 369	1 167	393	16	-	-	-	181
45-49	3 973	431	637	809	837	785	305	8	1	-	160
50-54	2 607	286	357	405	393	416	451	190	5	-	104
55-59	1 317	130	161	199	159	145	188	209	66	2	58
60-64	766	85	126	102	78	57	71	68	103	36	40
65-69	375	48	64	54	45	31	27	26	25	36	19
70-74	146	22	24	23	14	11	12	3	3	32	2
75-79	73	11	13	13	6	5	6	6	4	7	2
>80	45	7	11	5	8	4	1	1	1	2	5
Unspecified	4 544	937	1 269	792	529	366	189	123	83	44	212

Table 18. Duration of marriage by age group of wife											
Duration of marriage											
Wife Age Group	Total	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	=>40	Unspecified
Grand Total	28 924	6 143	7 859	5 540	3 686	2 220	1 266	634	291	159	1 126
<25	758	618	106	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
25-29	3 050	1 628	1 220	87	-	-	-	-	-	-	115
30-34	4 708	1 261	2 165	994	114	2	-	-	-	-	172
35-39	5 432	794	1 629	1 732	976	112	2	-	-	-	187
40-44	4 458	480	794	1 057	1 131	731	119	-	-	-	146
45-49	3 092	322	431	476	562	641	472	66	-	-	122
50-54	1 707	165	203	233	201	222	323	259	26	-	75
55-59	884	75	119	101	85	88	96	139	128	13	40
60-64	386	42	49	44	46	32	31	25	48	49	20
65-69	144	13	17	15	10	9	15	10	8	39	8
70-74	54	6	7	4	7	6	3	5	3	11	2
75-79	16	1	5	2	1	-	3	3	-	1	-
>80	10	5	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-
Unspecified	4 225	733	1 112	795	553	377	201	126	78	45	205

Table 19. Divorces with and without children by population group and number of children involved					
Population group	Total divorces	Divorces without children	Divorces with children	Unspecified	Total children involved
Total	28 924	12 513	16 370	41	26 947
African	10 110	4 058	6 043	9	10 001
Coloured	3 057	996	2 052	9	3 522
Indian/Asian	1 802	734	1 066	2	1 709
White	9 481	4 514	4 958	9	8 058
Mixed	902	517	384	1	607
Unspecified	3 572	1 694	1 867	11	3 050

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 2008 civil marriages that were registered by the Department of Home Affairs. The release also reports on the 2007 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 civil marriages and customary marriages in South Africa. Data on customary marriages and same-sex unions is not currently available. The divorce data covers only cases where application for divorce has been granted. Undocumented cases of abandonment do not appear in this statistics or divorces that have been granted by religious or traditional authorities outside the civil courts.

3. Data

Stats SA downloads the data on civil marriages and customary marriages from the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). The data are then processed and analysed for publication.

Data on divorces are collected from the divorce courts of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ & CD) using a standard structured questionnaire prepared by Stats SA. The questionnaires are completed by the courts and posted regularly to Stats SA where they are sorted and the data captured and analysed.

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; and annulment, which is another way in which a marriage contract is dissolved.

The marriages and divorce data can not be correlated, since we report on current marriages and divorces (i.e. marriages that were registered in a particular year and the divorces that were granted in the same year).

5. Glossary of terms

Civil marriage: the term broadly covers marriages solemnised by marriage officers. In this release it is also used in the tabulations to distinguish between 'religious marriages' and 'civil marriages' i.e. marriages solemnised by religious and lay marriage officers respectively.

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 extensively, not only locally but also by international economic and social-scientific communities, Stats SA releases are published in English.

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