



**Statistics  
South Africa**

Preferred supplier of quality statistics



# Statistical release

## P0307

### Marriages and divorces

2006

**Embargoed until:  
19 December 2007  
09:30**

#### **Enquiries:**

User Information Services  
012 310 8600 / 4892 / 8390

#### **Forthcoming issue:**

Statistical release 2007

#### **Expected release date**

December 2008

Statistics South Africa • Mbalo-mbalo ya Afrika Tshipembe • Tihlayo-tiko ta Afrika-Dzonga • Dipalopalo tsa Aforika Borwa • Ezezibalo zaseNingizimu Afrika  
Dipalopalo tša Afrika Borwa • Dpalopalo tsa Afrika Borwa • Ubalo lwaseMzantsi Afrika • Telubalo eNingizimu Afrika • iNanimbalo leSewula Afrika • Statistiek Suid-Afrika

---

## **Preface**

This statistical release presents information on the 2006 civil marriages that were registered by the Department of Home Affairs. The release also reports on the 2006 divorces that were granted by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development through divorce courts, that had reached Stats SA at the time of publication.

**P J Lehohla**  
**Statistician-General**

CONTENTS	PAGE
<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	
1. Introduction	1
2. Marriages	1
2.1 Trends in marriages (1997-2006)	1
2.2 Solemnisation of marriages	2
2.3 Marital status at the time of marriage	2
2.4 Age at marriage	
3. Divorces	2
3.1 Trends in divorces	2
3.2 Plaintiff	3
3.3 Solemnisation	3
3.4 Number of times married	3
3.5 Age at the time of divorce	3
3.6 Duration of marriage of those divorcing	3
3.7 Divorces involving couples with children	3
<b>GRAPHS</b>	
Figure 1: Marriage by month, 2006	4
Figure 2: Age at first marriage of bachelors and spinsters, 2006	4
Figure 3a: Median age of bridegrooms and brides, 2002 - 2006	5
Figure 3b: Median age of bachelors and spinsters, 2002 - 2006	5
Figure 3c: Median age of widowers and widows, 2002 - 2006	6
Figure 3d: Median age of male and female divorcees, 2002 - 2006	6
Figure 4a: Age difference among bachelors and their brides at the time of marriage, 2006	7
Figure 4b: Age difference among widowers and their brides at the time of marriage, 2006	7
Figure 4c: Age difference among divorcees and their brides at the time of marriage, 2006	8
Figure 5: Median age of divorcees by population group and gender	8
Figure 6: Divorce by age group and population group (males), 2006	9
Figure 7: Divorce by age group and population group (females), 2006	9
Figure 8: Divorces by duration of marriage, at the time of divorce and population group, 2006	10
<b>TABLES</b>	
Table 1. Number of registered marriages in South Africa, 1997 - 2006	11
Table 2. Number of marriages by way of solemnisation and province	12
Table 3. Number of marriages by marital status and province	13
Table 4. Age difference of bridegrooms and brides by marital status at the time of marriage	14
Table 5. Marital status at the time of marriage by ages of bridegrooms and brides	16
Table 6. Number of published divorces in South Africa, 1997 - 2006	18
Table 7. Number of divorces by gender and population group of the plaintiff	19
Table 8. Number of divorces by gender and type of occupation of the plaintiff	20
Table 9. Number of divorces by population group and way of solemnization	21
Table 10. Number of times married at the time of divorce	22
Table 11. Divorces by age group and population group (males)	23
Table 12. Divorces by age group and population group (females)	24
Table 13. Duration of marriage by age group of husband	25
Table 14. Duration of marriage by age group of wife	26
Table 15. Divorces with and without children by population and number of children involved	27
<b>EXPLANATORY NOTES</b>	28
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>	29

## 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, registration systems do not cover all types of marriages and divorces. Rather, 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. The marriage data currently cover civil marriages that are administrated by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) through the Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No. 25 of 1961). The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) is mandated through the Divorce Act, 1979 (Act No. 70 of 1979) to deal with 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 is based on the 2006 marriages and divorces data. The findings of the data are presented in two separate sections. It is important to note that although both the marriage and divorce data were collected in the same year, they are not linked to each other. Marriages are civil marriages that were recorded in 2006. Divorces are the divorce cases whose application for divorce was granted in 2006.

### 2. Marriages

#### 2.1 Trends in marriages (1997- 2006)

The number of registered marriages has generally been increasing over the last ten years (1997–2006). Information provided in Table 1 shows that 146 729 marriages were registered in 1997. This number had increased to 184 860 in 2006, showing an increase of 38 128 or 26,0%. However, this increase has not been consistent during the ten-year period. There were observed annual increases or declines particularly the sudden declines in 1999 and 2001 as well as the sharp increase in 2002. The 2006 figure of 184 860 indicates an increase of 4 203 or 2,3% from 180 657 marriages recorded in 2005.

As shown in Figure 1, the summer months continue to be the most popular months for marriages, beginning from September and peaking in December. Hence, 29 978 or 16,2% of the 2006 marriages took place in December compared to 12 259 or 6,6% recorded in August.

#### 2.2 Solemnisation of marriages

Only licensed marriage officers (lay persons or priests) 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. After the solemnisation ceremony, the marriage officer must issue the couple with a marriage certificate (BI-27) free of charge and submit the marriage register to the nearest DHA office for the recording of the marriage particulars in the National Population Register. Therefore the place (e.g. municipality or province) of registration of the marriage is not necessarily the place of usual residence of the couples.

In 2006, (93 530 or 50,6%) of the 184 860 marriages were solemnised by civil rites and 61 230 (33,1%) by religious rites (see Table 2). The type of solemnisation rite was not specified in 30 100 or 16,3% marriages. The highest number of marriages solemnised by civil rites were recorded in Gauteng and the lowest in Northern Cape. Similarly, the highest number of marriages solemnised by religious rites were recorded in KwaZulu-Natal and the lowest in Limpopo.

## 2.3 Marital status at the time of marriage

Marital status of some of the couples (22 328 bridegrooms and 18 147 brides) at the time of the current marriage was not recorded, results given in Table 3 show that most of the marriages were first time marriages.

Overall, in 2006 152 317 (82,4%) men and 158 430 (85,7%) women had never been married before. Among those who were remarrying, there were 5 213 (2,8%) male divorcees and 5 002 (2,7%) widowers. For the brides, there were 3 904 (2,1%) divorcees and 4 379 (2,4%) widows. Thus relatively few registered marriages were remarriages. Half (50,1%), of the 10 215 males were divorcees but the proportion of divorcees among the 8 283 females who were remarrying was slightly below half (3 904 or 47,1%). Irrespective of their marital status, men tend to marry women who have never been married before. However, bachelors and widowers married either spinsters or widows while divorcees showed preference for spinsters or divorcees (see Table 4).

## 2.4 Age at the time of marriage

Demographers are interested in the first age at marriage or union because of its theoretical link to first exposure to the risk of pregnancy, childbearing and ultimately to fertility. This link tends to be weakened in populations where pre-marital fertility is quite 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 restricts marriage (with respect to civil marriages) involving minors (persons under 21 years old). These minors (provided they have married before) require parental or guardian consent before entering into a 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.

As observed from Figure 2, women continue to enter the marriage at younger ages than men. The majority of them get married before 29 years of age. At 29 years men are only starting to enter into marriage therefore more old men than women marry for the first time.

Figure 3a shows that in 2006, the median age for grooms was 34 years compared to 29 years for brides. However, major differences are observed when the marital status at the time of current marriage is considered.

For first time marriages (see Figure 3b), the median age for bachelors was 32 years and that of spinsters was 29 years giving a difference of three years. The age gap between bachelors and spinsters decreased from four years in 2005 where the median age for bachelors was also 32 years but that of spinsters was 28 years.

For individuals remarriages (see Figures 3a, 3b and 3c), the average age of divorced men was 50 years compared to their female counterparts, whose median age was 45 years, yielding an age gap of five years. Similarly, the median ages for widowers and widows were 42 years and 29 years respectively resulting in a 13 years' gap. It is also observed from Figures 4a, 4b and 4c as well as Table 4 that younger men tend to marry older women. For example, although 79,7% of bachelors married spinsters who were younger than themselves, 7,5% and 12,8% had brides of the same age or older than themselves. Furthermore, whereas 50,9% of bachelors married younger divorcees, 5,9% and 43,2% married divorcees of the same age or older than themselves respectively.

## 3. Divorces

### 3.1 Trend in divorces

The published data on divorces presented in Table 6 indicate that the number of granted cases has been fluctuating between 37 098 and 31 270 per annum in the past decade (1997-2006). The distribution of couples divorcing by population groups shows that there were more divorces among the white population group compared to the other groups. This finding does not necessarily indicate high divorce among that population. Rather, a possible reflection that the divorce data are based on divorces from civil marriages and not other types of marriages. 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. Thus in 1997 the mixed, African and white groups made up 0,5%; 20,9% and 44,6% of the number of divorces respectively. However, the current data indicate that the contribution of the mixed and the African groups have increased to 2,0% and 29,1% respectively whilst that of the white group has declined to 35,4%.

### 3.2 Plaintiff

The 2006 data reveal that there were more female than male plaintiffs (see Table 7). As many wives as husbands from the African group initiated the divorce. This is in sharp contrast to the other population groups, particularly coloured and white whereby most divorces were initiated by women.

Table 8 provides information on the occupation of the plaintiffs. Proportionally, the highest percentage (14,0%) of women plaintiffs, that is, 2501 out of 17 921, were in professional, semi-professional and technical occupations. The lowest percentage (0,7%) of women were in farming and related occupations.

### 3.3 Solemnisation

It is observed from Table 9 that 81,6% of all the divorce cases were from marriages that were solemnised by civil rites and 12,7% by religious rites. The same was also observed for all population groups. But almost a quarter (24,2%) of divorces from the white population group were solemnised by religious rites.

### 3.4 Number of times married

Most of the 2006 divorce cases were from first marriages. The pattern of remarriages among husbands was quite similar to that of the wives (see Table 10). Slightly fewer (77,2%) husbands were from first marriages compared to 78,7% of 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 was 43 for men and 40 for women. Figure 6 and Table 11 show the distribution of divorced males by population groups. The number of divorces among whites rises sharply after age 25-29 until it reaches a peak at ages 35-39 with 18,1% of the divorces and begins to decline gradually until the old ages. Among African males the number of divorces gradually increases from less than 20 years to 25-29 years then rises sharply until it peaks at 40-44 years with 19,9% of the divorces and then starts to decline. The data for coloured males tend not to exhibit sharp rises and declines with 20,4% of the divorce cases is aged 35-39 years. The number of divorces among Indian/Asian males rises sharply from 25-29 years peaking at 30-34 (22,8%) years and sharply declines. The number of divorce among the males who were in mixed marriages rises steadily from 25-29 years and peak at ages 30-34 (20,4%) and declines gradually. Figure 7 and Table 12 show the age distribution of registered divorces for females by population groups. Unlike their male counterparts, the pattern of the age distribution of divorce was quite similar. Thus the largest number of divorces from the white, Indian/Asian and mixed couples was from the 30-34 age group. For the African and coloured women, the largest number came from the 35-39 age group.

### 3.6 Duration of marriage of those divorcing

Irrespective of the population group (see Figure 8), the distribution of divorces continues to be skewed towards earlier ages of marriage, with the highest number of divorces being observed for people who had been married for 5 to 9 years (27,3%). In 2006, 67,8% of all the divorce cases were marriages that lasted less than 15 years. The number of divorces decreased as the duration of marriages increased for all population groups. Divorces were particularly fewer among those who had been married for at least 35 years or more.

### 3.7 Divorces involving couples with children

Among the major issues that are addressed in a divorce data collected for Stats SA is the whether the couple had any children younger aged less than 18 years. The 2006 data indicate that more than half (60,6%) of divorces involved couples with children younger than 18 years old. As shown in Table 15, the total number of these children was 30 242. Overall, 44,0% (8 193) of the divorces with children had only one child, 2,4% had at least four children at the time of the divorce. On the average, there were between one and two (1,6) children per divorced couple. The average for the coloured population group was slightly more than that of the other population groups.

Figure 1: Marriage by month, 2006

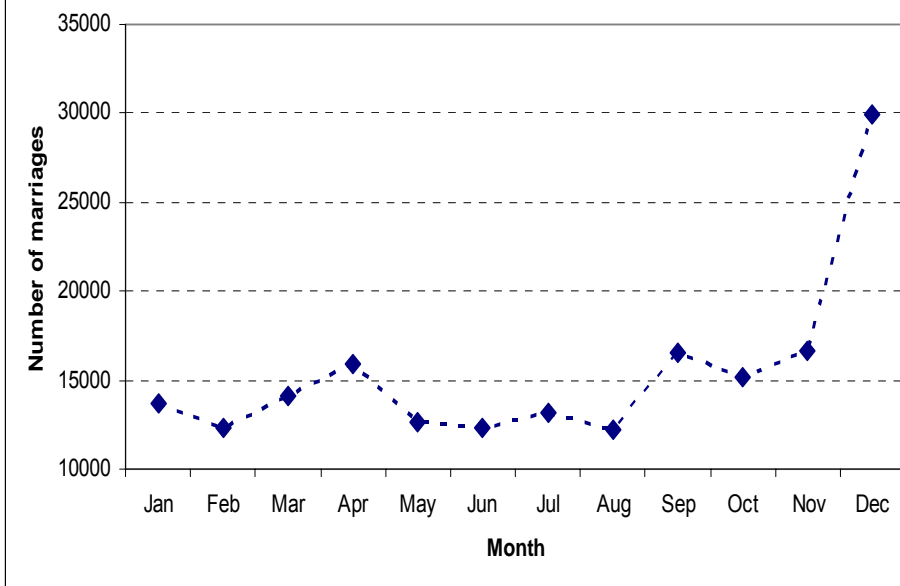


Figure 2: Age at first marriage for bachelors and spinsters, 2006

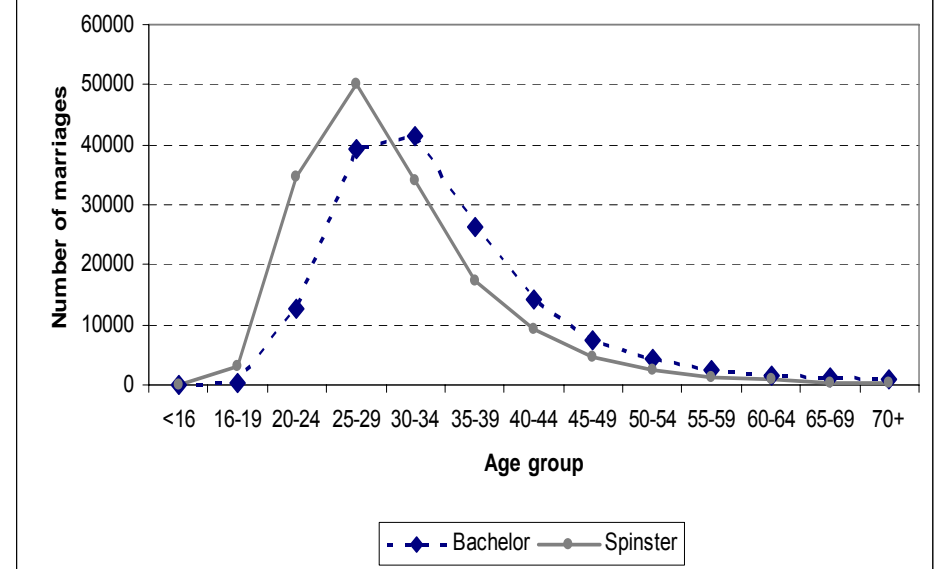


Figure 3a: Median age of bridegrooms and brides, 2002 - 2006

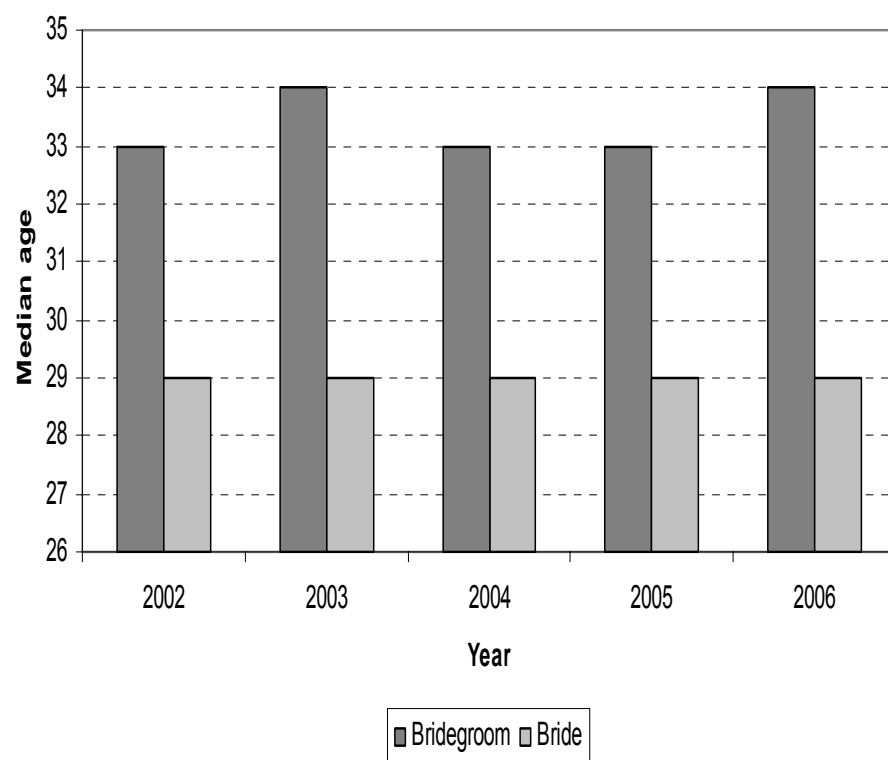


Figure 3b: Median age of bachelors and spinsters, 2002 - 2006

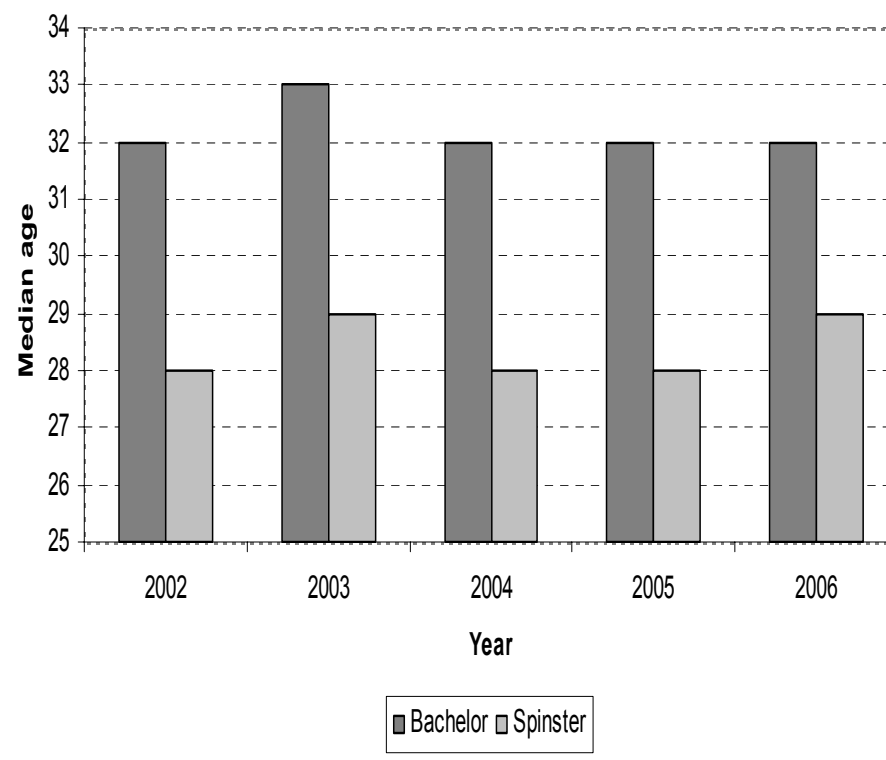




Figure 3c: Median age of widowers and widows, 2002 - 2006

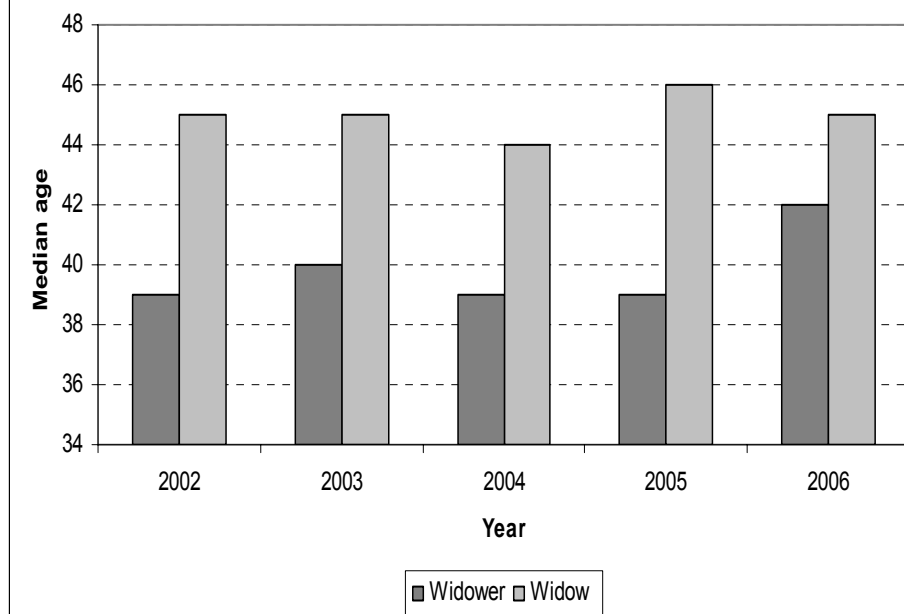
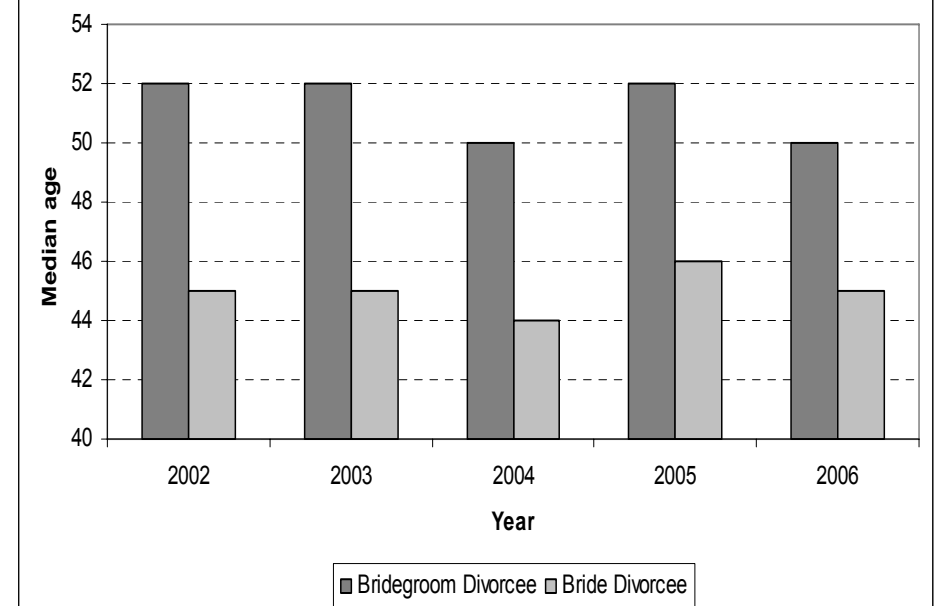
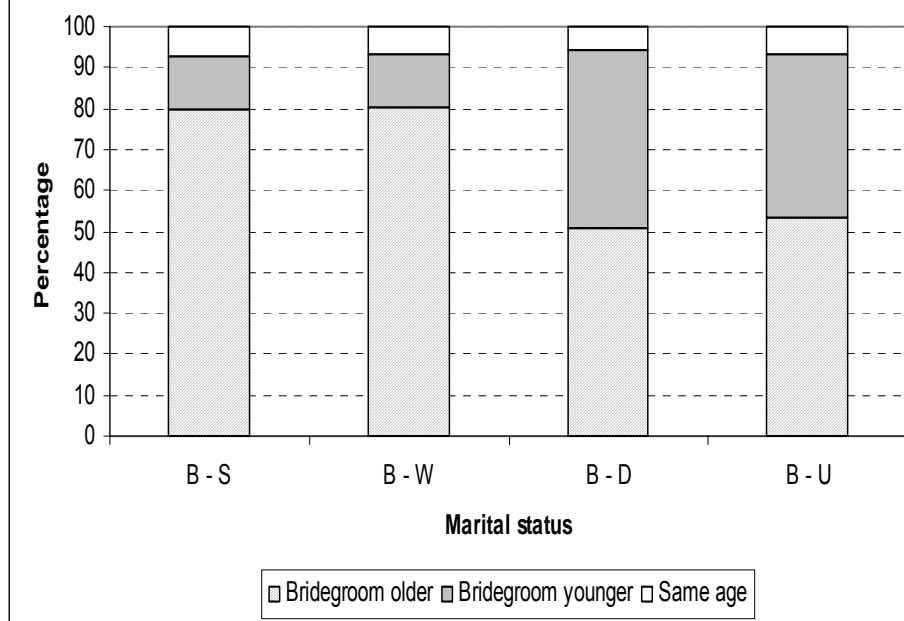


Figure 3d: Median age of male and female divorcees, 2002 - 2006

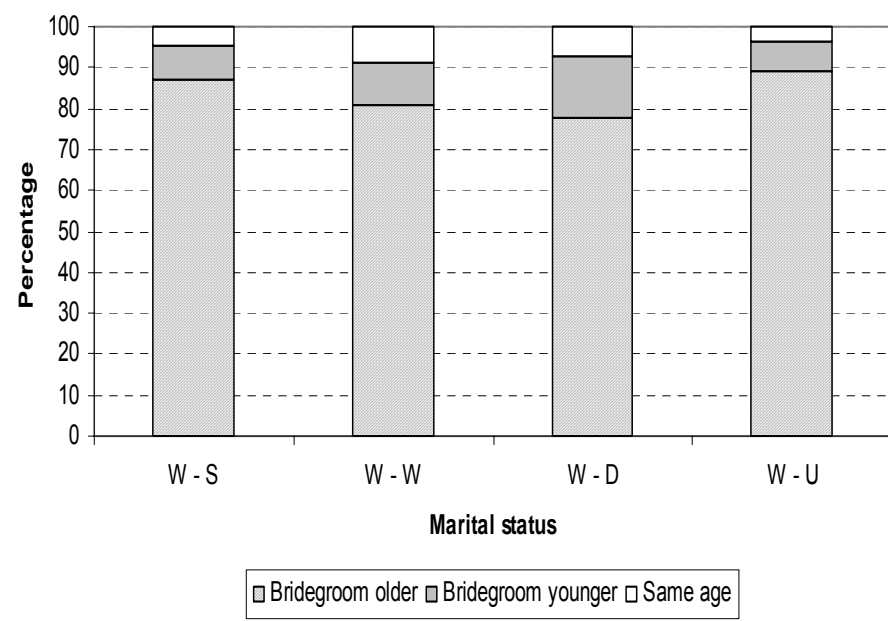


**Figure 4a: Age difference among bachelors and their brides at the time of marriage, 2006**



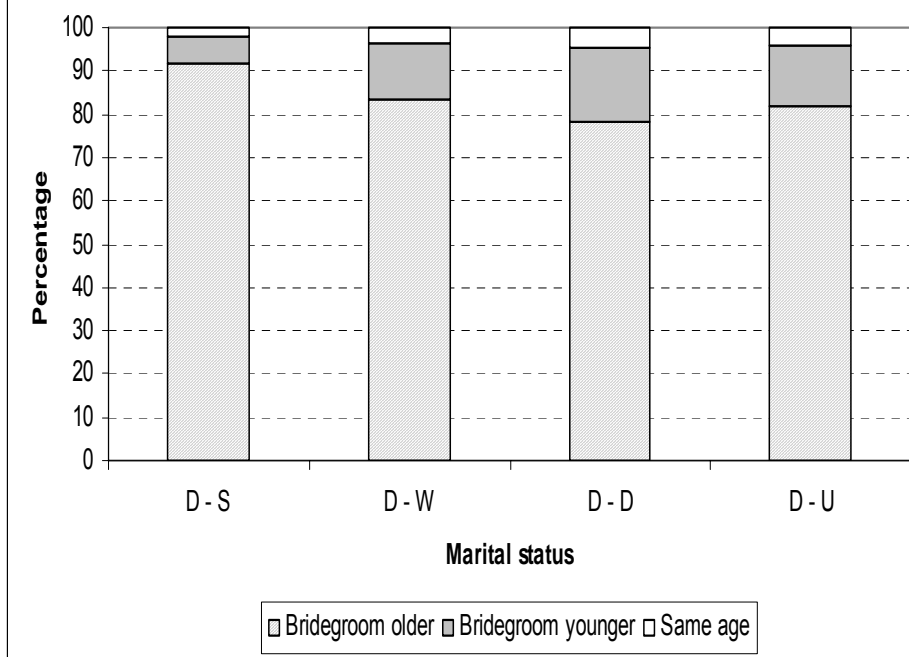
B - S = Bachelor to spinster B - W = Bachelor to widow  
 B - D = Bachelor to divorcee B - U = Bachelor to unspecified

**Figure 4b: Age difference among widowers and their brides at the time of their latest registered marriage, 2006**



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, 2006**



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

**Figure 5: Median age of divorcees by population group and gender, 2006**

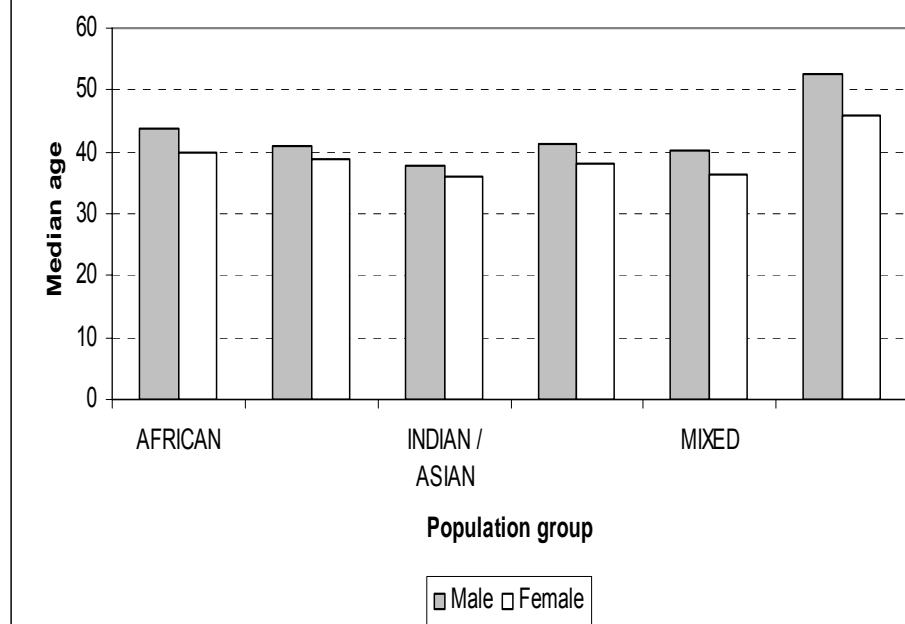


Figure 6: Divorce by age group and population group (males), 2006

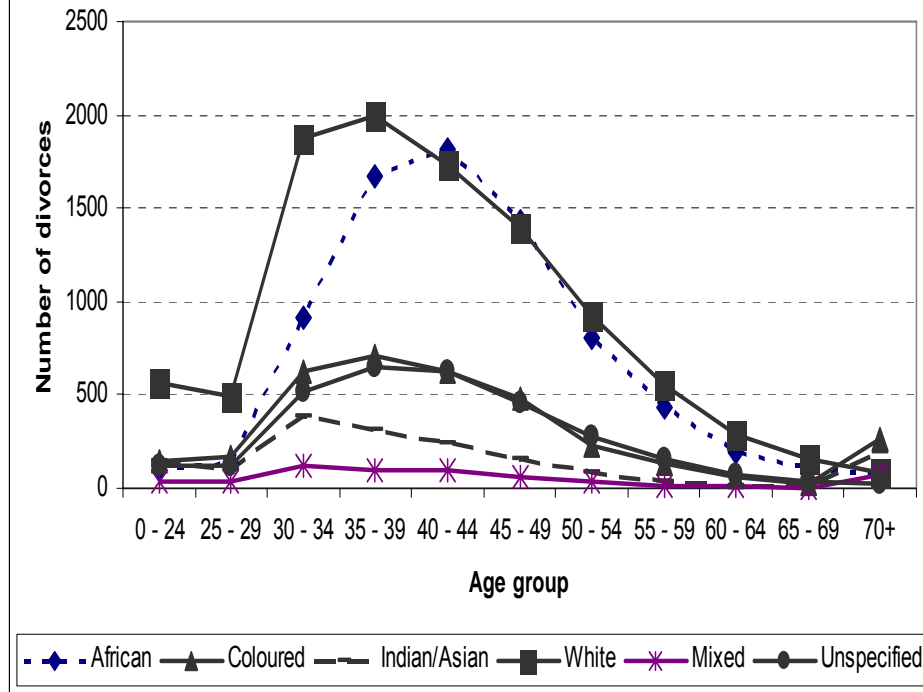
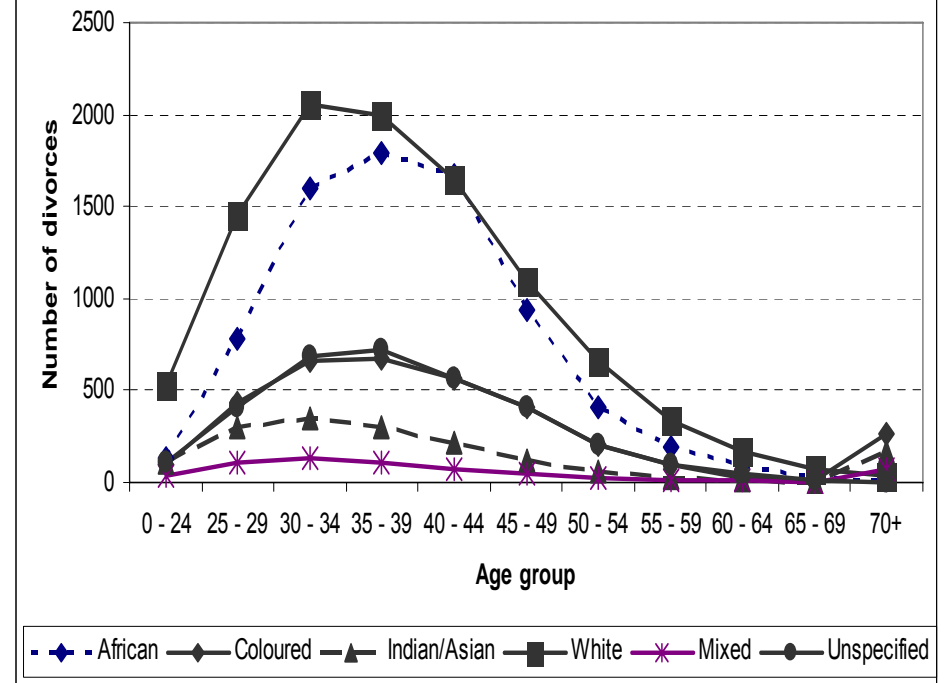
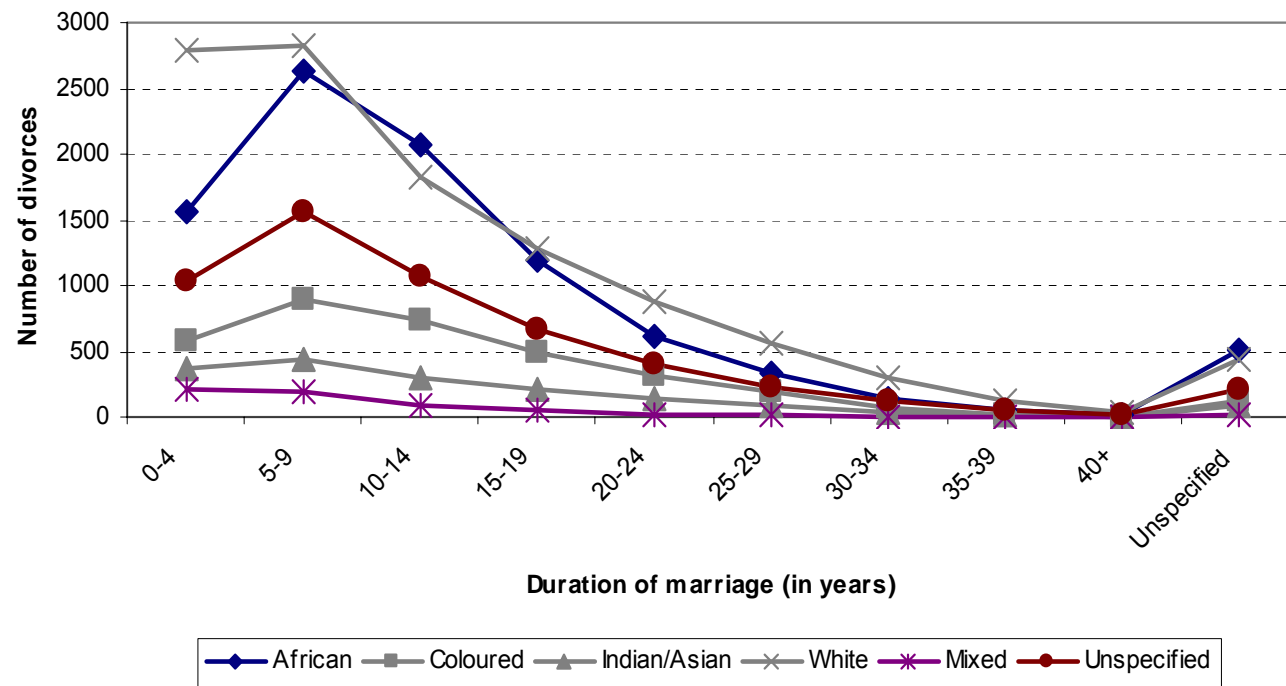


Figure 7: Divorce by age group and population group (females), 2006



**Figure 8: Divorces by duration of marriage, at the time of divorce by population group, 2006**



**Table 1. Number of registered marriages in South Africa, 1997- 2006**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Registered marriages</b>
1997	146 729
1998	146 741
1999	140 458
2000	143 391
2001	134 581
2002	177 202
2003	178 689
2004	176 521
2005	180 657
2006	184 860

**Table 2. Number of marriages by way solemnisation and province**

Province	Total	Way of solemnisation		
		Religious	Civil	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>184 860</b>	<b>61 230</b>	<b>93 530</b>	<b>30 100</b>
WESTERN CAPE	29 612	15 374	11 923	2 315
EASTERN CAPE	22 775	6 915	11 890	3 970
NORTHERN CAPE	4 641	1 398	1 655	1 588
FREE STATE	13 466	3 933	9 137	396
KWAZULU-NATAL	30 239	14 943	9 541	5 755
NORTH WEST	13 758	3 135	9 342	1 281
GAUTENG	46 995	12 581	26 453	7 961
MPUMALANGA	9 556	1 811	3 721	4 024
LIMPOPO	10 131	882	6 882	2 367
UNSPECIFIED	3 217	231	2 578	408
MARRIAGES OUTSIDE SA	470	27	408	35

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>184 860</b>	<b>152 317</b>	<b>5 213</b>	<b>5 002</b>	<b>22 328</b>	<b>184 860</b>	<b>158 430</b>	<b>3 904</b>	<b>4 379</b>	<b>18 147</b>
<b>Median age</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>37</b>
WESTERN CAPE	29 612	23 954	938	162	4 558	29 612	24 944	784	132	3 752
EASTERN CAPE	22 775	19 728	573	536	1 938	22 775	20 555	376	379	1 465
NORTHERN CAPE	4 641	3 834	195	100	512	4 641	4 053	143	100	345
FREE STATE	13 466	11 336	474	387	1 269	13 466	11 713	280	473	1 000
KWAZULU-NATAL	30 239	25 797	770	1 052	2 620	30 239	26 725	443	870	2 201
NORTH WEST	13 758	11 540	371	341	1 506	13 758	12 082	252	235	1 189
GAUTENG	46 995	36 974	1 291	1 413	7 317	46 995	38 599	1 035	1 360	6 001
MPUMALANGA	9 556	7 798	293	341	1 124	9 556	8 157	209	281	909
LIMPOPO	10 131	8 638	193	494	806	10 131	9 036	123	370	602
UNSPECIFIED	3 217	2 374	107	173	563	3 217	2 246	249	178	544
MARRIAGES OUTSIDE SA	470	344	8	3	115	470	320	10	1	139



<b>Table 4. Age difference of bridegrooms and brides by marital status at the time of marriage</b>									
<b>Age difference</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Bachelor to</b>				<b>Widower to</b>			
		<b>Spinster</b>	<b>Widow</b>	<b>Divorcee</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>	<b>Spinster</b>	<b>Widow</b>	<b>Divorcee</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>184 860</b>	<b>140 599</b>	<b>3 341</b>	<b>1 213</b>	<b>7 164</b>	<b>4 060</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>81</b>
BRIDEGROOM OLDER	<b>145 928</b>	112 061	2 683	618	3 836	3 544	664	31	72
BRIDEGROOM YOUNGER	<b>26 153</b>	17 997	434	524	2 834	331	84	6	6
SAME AGE	<b>12 779</b>	10 541	224	71	494	185	73	3	3

<b>Table 4. Age difference of bridegrooms and brides by marital status at the time of marriage (concluded)</b>									
<b>Age difference</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Divorcee to</b>				<b>Unspecified to</b>			
		<b>Spinster</b>	<b>Widow</b>	<b>Divorcee</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>	<b>Spinster</b>	<b>Widow</b>	<b>Divorcee</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>184 860</b>	<b>2 852</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>1 328</b>	<b>10 919</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>1 702</b>	<b>9 574</b>
BRIDEGROOM OLDER	<b>145 928</b>	2 613	70	741	1 086	9 798	102	1 121	6 888
BRIDEGROOM YOUNGER	<b>26 153</b>	178	11	166	187	797	23	493	2 082
SAME AGE	<b>12 779</b>	61	3	42	55	324	8	88	604

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>184 860</b>	<b>152 317</b>	<b>5 002</b>	<b>5 213</b>	<b>22 328</b>	<b>184 860</b>	<b>158 430</b>	<b>4 379</b>	<b>3 904</b>	<b>18 147</b>
<16	5	5	-	-	-	48	43	1	1	3
16	6	4	-	1	1	117	102	4	4	7
17	13	13	-	-	-	390	340	23	7	20
18	68	59	4	1	4	964	874	43	7	40
19	220	210	3	1	6	1 876	1 729	86	11	50
20	532	501	11	2	18	3 155	2 892	133	24	106
21	1 260	1 189	24	2	45	5 578	5 243	191	16	128
22	2 269	2 180	39	4	46	7 534	7 060	261	20	193
23	3 661	3 518	74	3	66	9 447	8 992	248	24	183
24	5 424	5 212	121	3	88	11 004	10 424	268	38	274
25	6 567	6 327	132	11	97	11 247	10 680	222	36	309
26	7 918	7 578	173	14	153	11 456	10 826	240	42	348
27	8 617	8 247	156	19	195	11 059	10 368	204	38	449
28	8 981	8 556	191	15	219	9 989	9 210	194	63	522
29	9 206	8 698	160	25	323	9 756	8 980	150	58	568
30	9 670	9 062	163	21	424	9 216	8 389	145	63	619
31	9 671	8 978	126	42	525	8 463	7 588	118	78	679
32	9 174	8 384	124	56	610	7 784	6 849	88	90	757
33	8 491	7 628	121	61	681	6 807	5 879	85	90	753
34	8 497	7 534	80	92	791	6 422	5 456	63	104	799
35	7 053	6 027	78	81	867	5 074	4 102	69	93	810
36	7 479	6 355	67	117	940	5 224	4 256	48	100	820
37	6 292	5 175	84	129	904	4 420	3 452	39	102	827
38	6 036	4 818	128	107	983	4 138	3 194	56	126	762
39	5 113	3 892	111	168	942	3 288	2 440	44	108	696
40	4 769	3 487	154	143	985	3 159	2 308	65	108	678

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	4 404	3 125	166	158	955	2 900	2 057	79	109	655
42	4 001	2 742	169	155	935	2 648	1 816	66	102	664
43	3 830	2 541	190	154	945	2 499	1 705	98	109	587
44	3 448	2 216	187	152	893	2 078	1 336	92	120	530
45	2 891	1 764	172	163	792	1 773	1 071	72	102	528
46	2 901	1 759	180	155	807	1 845	1 154	95	109	487
47	2 399	1 376	153	139	731	1 462	866	77	107	412
48	2 465	1 460	148	148	709	1 416	847	98	95	376
49	2 021	1 126	145	145	605	1 180	657	63	123	337
50	1 886	1 013	131	126	616	1 100	625	81	89	305
51	1 611	871	112	148	480	996	536	75	103	282
52	1 581	898	109	123	451	845	469	61	90	225
53	1 418	770	73	141	434	765	452	38	86	189
54	1 352	774	81	113	384	675	390	40	82	163
55	1 047	526	83	91	347	497	267	31	75	124
56	1 185	634	92	119	340	574	338	35	67	134
57	944	504	71	116	253	471	242	43	64	122
58	940	495	75	118	252	467	268	26	74	99
59	780	415	47	97	221	323	163	25	54	81
60	706	342	52	109	203	406	236	25	75	70
61	630	326	42	97	165	320	168	21	69	62
62	575	282	33	114	146	267	148	16	54	49
63	460	239	32	90	99	219	115	6	60	38
64	497	295	29	70	103	223	126	7	45	45
65	534	329	30	84	91	155	75	4	35	41
66	515	305	38	86	86	202	124	5	41	32
67	332	185	7	97	43	144	79		47	18
68	309	158	9	88	54	114	62	6	35	11
69	298	173	4	72	49	91	39		39	13
70+	1 908	1 037	18	627	226	590	323	6	193	68

**Table 6. Number of published divorces in south africa, 1997- 2006**

Year	Total	Numbers					Percentages				
		African	Coloured	Indian/asian	White	Mixed	African	Coloured	Indian/asian	White	Mixed
1997	<b>34 321</b>	7 174	4 634	1 685	15 295	184	20,9	13,5	4,9	44,6	0,5
1998	<b>35 792</b>	6 673	3 760	1 753	14 443	250	18,6	10,5	4,9	40,4	0,7
1999	<b>37 098</b>	6 823	3 938	1 976	14 785	357	18,4	10,6	5,3	39,9	1,0
2000	<b>34 145</b>	7 623	3 365	1 746	15 211	444	22,3	9,9	5,1	44,5	1,3
2001	<b>34 045</b>	7 860	3 872	1 672	14 718	470	23,1	11,4	4,9	43,2	1,4
2002	<b>31 370</b>	7 050	3 581	1 525	14 171	365	22,5	11,4	4,9	45,2	1,2
2003	<b>31 566</b>	7 657	3 911	1 508	12 639	532	24,3	12,4	4,8	40,0	1,7
2004	<b>31 768</b>	8 965	3 300	1 648	12 437	594	28,2	10,4	5,2	39,1	1,9
2005	<b>32 484</b>	8 672	3 568	1 635	11 582	538	26,7	11,0	5,0	35,7	1,7
2006	<b>31 270</b>	9 113	3 451	1 676	11 079	613	29,1	11,0	5,4	35,4	2,0

<b>Table 7: Number of divorces by gender 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>31 270</b>	<b>12 555</b>	<b>17 921</b>	<b>794</b>
AFRICAN	9 113	4 213	4 582	318
COLOURED	3 451	1 166	2 219	66
INDIAN / ASIAN	1 676	604	1 056	16
WHITE	11 079	4 103	6 784	192
MIXED	613	243	349	21
UNSPECIFIED	5 338	2 226	2 931	181

<b>Table 8: Number of divorces by gender and type of occupation of the plaintiff</b>				
<b>Type of occupation</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Husband</b>	<b>Wife</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31 270</b>	<b>12 555</b>	<b>17 921</b>	<b>794</b>
PROFESSIONAL, SEMI PROFESSIONAL AND TECH OCCUPATIONS	2 015	928	1 029	58
MANAGERS AND ADMINISTRATORS	4 477	1 917	2 501	59
CLERICAL AND SALE OCCUPATIONS	2 802	1 274	1 484	44
TRANSPORT, DELIVERY AND COMMUNICATIONS	1 223	571	625	27
SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	2 780	1 375	1 330	75
FARMING AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	216	90	119	7
ARTISANS, APPRENTICE AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	2 662	1 144	1 468	50
PRODUCTION FOREMAN, MINE AND QUARRY WORKER	1 575	764	770	41
UNSPECIFIED	9 834	3 053	6 471	310
NOT ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE	3 686	1 439	2 124	123

<b>Table 9. Number of divorces by population group and way of solemnisation</b>				
<b>Population group</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Way of solemnisation</b>		
		<b>Religious</b>	<b>Civil</b>	<b>Unspecified</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31 270</b>	<b>3 986</b>	<b>25 520</b>	<b>1 764</b>
AFRICAN	9 113	413	8 141	559
COLOURED	3 451	132	3 207	112
INDIAN / ASIAN	1 676	81	1 546	49
WHITE	11 079	2 686	7 995	398
MIXED	613	43	544	26
UNSPECIFIED	5 338	631	4 087	620



**Table 10. Number of times married at the time of divorce**

Number of times married	Husband	Wife
Total	31 270	31 270
1	24 139	24 596
2	3 723	3 467
3+	528	571
UNSPECIFIED	2 880	2 636

**Table 11. Divorces by age group and population group (males)**

Age group	Population group						
	Total	African	Coloured	Indian / asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
Total divorces	31 270	9 113	3 451	1 676	11 079	613	5 338
< 25	1 113	101	142	149	565	39	117
25 – 29	1 045	132	173	94	494	35	117
30 – 34	4 433	917	620	383	1 871	125	517
35 – 39	5 450	1 675	705	316	2 000	102	652
40 – 44	5 131	1 811	630	239	1 728	101	622
45 – 49	3 976	1 431	481	154	1 391	65	454
50 – 54	2 355	805	234	85	924	31	276
55 – 59	1 324	428	127	37	553	18	161
60 – 64	644	197	55	17	284	18	73
65 – 69	333	105	23	9	153	6	37
70 – 74	145	56	12	5	59		13
75 – 79	61	21	5	1	25	3	6
≥ 80	5 260	1 434	244	187	1 032	70	2 293

Table 12. Divorces by age group and population group (females)							
Age group	Population group						
	Total	African	Coloured	Indian / asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
<b>Total divorces</b>	<b>31 270</b>	<b>9 113</b>	<b>3 451</b>	<b>1 676</b>	<b>11 079</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>5 338</b>
< 25	1 017	138	95	111	527	35	111
25 - 29	3 483	780	436	302	1 455	105	405
30 - 34	5 480	1 598	658	354	2 054	129	687
35 - 39	5 584	1 789	671	296	1 995	111	722
40 - 44	4 737	1 667	570	216	1 649	75	560
45 - 49	3 016	933	414	122	1 096	45	406
50 - 54	1 572	411	205	63	663	25	205
55 - 59	762	193	92	28	342	10	97
60 - 64	365	91	30	13	174	8	49
65 - 69	120	21	14	1	67	1	16
70 - 74	51	11	1	3	33		3
75 - 79	15	3	4		6	1	1
≥ 80	5 068	1 478	261	167	1 018	68	2 076

**Table 13. Duration of marriage by age group of husband**

Husband age group	Total	Duration of marriage in years								
		0 - 4	5 - 9	10- 14	15 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	=>40
<b>Total</b>	<b>31 270</b>	<b>6 556</b>	<b>8 536</b>	<b>6 085</b>	<b>3 923</b>	<b>2 371</b>	<b>1 410</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>1 461</b>
< 25	1 113	899	214	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25 – 29	1 045	565	464	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
30 – 34	4 433	1 520	2 128	757	28	-	-	-	-	-
35 – 39	5 450	1 031	1 936	1 774	691	18	-	-	-	-
40 – 44	5 131	706	1 165	1 374	1 319	554	13	-	-	-
45 – 49	3 976	431	692	742	813	854	434	10	-	-
50 – 54	2 355	253	346	334	312	371	497	242	-	-
55 – 59	1 324	176	200	181	146	145	179	223	74	-
60 – 64	644	79	105	96	58	64	57	68	92	25
65 – 69	333	46	69	33	33	36	25	21	42	28
70 – 74	145	34	26	12	14	16	14	9	10	10
75 – 79	61	12	18	6	7	9	6	-	1	2
≥ 80	5 260	804	1 173	760	502	304	185	98	38	1 396

**Table 14. Duration of marriage by age group of wife**

Husband age group	Total	Duration of marriage in years								
		0 - 4	5-9	10-14	15 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39	=>40
<b>Total</b>	<b>31 270</b>	<b>6 556</b>	<b>8 536</b>	<b>6 085</b>	<b>3 923</b>	<b>2 371</b>	<b>1 410</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>1 461</b>
< 25	1 017	834	183	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25 - 29	3 483	1 676	1 624	183	-	-	-	-	-	-
30 - 34	5 480	1 302	2 436	1 498	244	-	-	-	-	-
35 - 39	5 584	801	1 533	1 820	1 236	191	3	-	-	-
40 - 44	4 737	542	889	1 048	1 212	894	152	-	-	-
45 - 49	3 016	311	427	457	455	672	588	106	-	-
50 - 54	1 572	167	195	176	194	207	343	290	-	-
55 - 59	762	68	91	97	58	77	101	130	140	-
60 - 64	365	45	45	27	41	30	25	43	63	46
65 - 69	120	21	27	10	15	11	8	7	12	9
70 - 74	51	12	10	5	5	6	5	3	1	4
75 - 79	15	2	8	-	1	-	2	-	2	-
≥ 80	5 068	775	1 068	764	462	283	183	92	39	1 402

<b>Table 15. Divorces with and without children by population and number of children involved</b>				
<b>Population group</b>	<b>Total divorces</b>	<b>Divorces without children</b>	<b>Divorces with children</b>	<b>Total children involved</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31 270</b>	<b>12 640</b>	<b>18 630</b>	<b>30 242</b>
AFRICAN	9 113	3 243	5 870	9 812
COLOURED	3 451	1 070	2 381	4 120
INDIAN / ASIAN	1 676	655	1 021	1 602
WHITE	11 079	5 056	6 023	9 358
MIXED	613	330	283	441
UNSPECIFIED	5 338	2 286	3 052	4 909

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### 1. Purpose of the statistical release

The purpose of the statistical release is to documents trends in civil marriages and divorces granted in a particular year by civil courts. This statistical release presents information on the 2006 civil marriages that were registered by the Department of Home Affairs. The release also reports on the 2006 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 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 nor divorces that have been granted by religious or traditional authorities outside the civil courts.

### 3. Data

Stats SA downloads the data on civil 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 Affairs (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.

The data assumes that marriage is an event as opposed to a process. When the marriages become processes extending over a period of time, they cannot be described as events that took place at certain dates.

### 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 courts either by a magistrate or designated marriage officer.

**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.

Stats SA copy right 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.

### Advance release calendar

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

### Stats SA products

A complete set of Stats SA publications is available at the Stats SA Library and the following libraries:

National Library of South Africa, Pretoria Division  
National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Division  
Natal Society Library, Pietermaritzburg  
Library of Parliament, Cape Town  
Bloemfontein Public Library  
Johannesburg Public Library  
Eastern Cape Library Services, King William's Town  
Central Regional Library, Polokwane  
Central Reference Library, Nelspruit  
Central Reference Collection, Kimberley  
Central Reference Library, Mafikeng

Stats SA also provides a subscription service.

### Electronic services

A large range of data are available via on-line services, diskette 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)

### Enquiries

Telephone: (012) 310 8600/ 8390/ 8351/ 4892/ 8496/ 8095 (user information services)  
(012) 310 8546 (technical enquiries)  
(012) 310 8161 (orders)

Fax: (012) 310 4883/4885/8018 (library)  
(012) 310 8500/ 8495 (user information services)  
(012) 310 6937 (technical enquiries)

Email: [robertk@statssa.gov.za](mailto:robertk@statssa.gov.za) (technical enquiries)  
[info@statssa.gov.za](mailto:info@statssa.gov.za) (user information services)  
[distribution@statssa.gov.za](mailto:distribution@statssa.gov.za) (orders)

Postal address: Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001