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#### **PREFACE**

This statistical brief presents information on civil marriages that were registered in 2021. The data used for analysis is obtained from the administrative data collected by The Department of Civil and National Registration (CNR) through registration service of vital events. Currently only marriages registered under common law are registering with CNR and analysed in this brief. Religious and cultural marriages are not included, as they are not yet registering with CNR.

This brief gives descriptive statistics of marriages that occurred in 2021 as well as trends in marriages for the past 10 years. It also presents trends in the number of marriages, demographics and other dynamics amongst marrying partners.

Dr Burton S. Mguni Statistician General November 2023

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## 1.0 Background

Marriage statistics provide insights into the formation of family units within Botswana. In most years changes in these statistics are minimal, highlighting gradual changes in the age at which people seek to marry for the first time, whether they would like to go through the normal process of publishing intent to marry or opt for special license, whether they would like to marry in church or at the administration office.

Marriage is an event which is regulated by statute (under marriage Act 2001) and about which information is collected for legal and statistical purposes. Marriage is an institution recognized in Botswana where two people of different sex are united. The union is normally solemnized at the district administration offices or at the church.

### 1.1. Marriage Processes

A couple desiring to marry will normally appear before the registration officer of any district together with their witnesses where the information to publish the Marriage Banns is submitted. Documents such as National Identity Card (Omang) or passport for foreign nationals, letter of consent from parents if under 18 years of age, Letter of confirmation from Kgosi that one is not married, or a letter of confirmation from country of origin that one is not married, for foreign nationals. Decree absolute or death certificates are required as proof for remarrying parties.

A form for marriage banns is completed indicating, names, age, status, occupation, ID and residential addresses of the applicants. The form is signed by the parties before two witnesses whereby the notice would be sent to districts where both parties reside and their places of origin. The same notice is sent to the church if the applicant's intention is to marry at the church.

The public notice or banns are publicised for 3 weeks to allow those who might object to show up before solemnization. If after three weeks there are no objection raised, the marriage will be solemnised by the District Officer, under the ministry of Local Government and Lands, or marriage officer.

Parties desiring to marry by special licence appear before the administrative officer who shall satisfy himself that there are no legal impediments to the marriage of such parties. The licence is issued on payment of a fee amounting to P190.00 while the marriage after banns requires a P40.00 fee

## 1.2. Source and Coverage

The Department of Civil and National Registration (CNR) is custodian of all records of marriages solemnized in Botswana. The records should include all types of marriages namely, civil, religious, cultural and any other. Currently only marriages registered under common law (civil) are registering with CNR, and analysed in this brief

## 2. Findings

### 2.1 Trends in Marriage (2011-2021)

Figure 1 depicts a steady increase in the number of marriages since 2018. The number of marriages increased by 17.1 percent from 2020 to 2021.

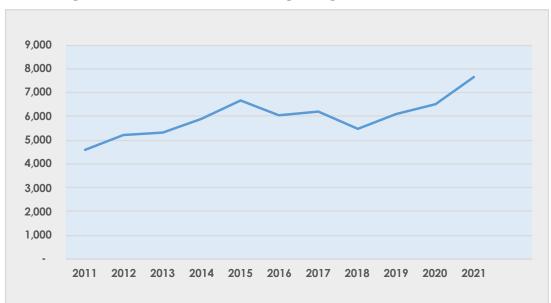
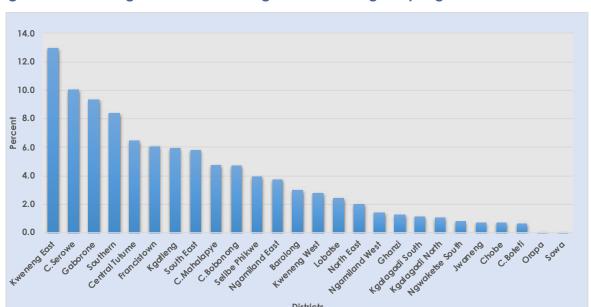


Figure 1: Total number of marriages registered - 2011-2021

# 2.2 District of Registration

The district of registration is not necessarily the place of usual residence but can be any place chosen by the marrying couple. Kweneng east recorded the highest proportions of marriages with 13.0 percent of all marriages solemnized in 2021. Sowa town registered the lowest number of marriages accounting for 0.1 percent of all marriages (Figure 2).



**Districts** 

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of registered marriages by registration district - 2021

### 2.2a District of usual residence of bride and groom – 2021

Figure 2a shows the distribution of marriages by district of usual living at the time of marriage. The figure shows that in most cases the persons intending to marry reside in the same district. The opposite is true for the three mining towns namely, Orapa, Jwaneng and Sowa, probably due to the population composition in the areas. More men than women are attracted to these towns because of the nature of jobs offered, with mines being the largest employer. However, Other districts (non-urban and non-mining) such as Ngwaketse west, Central Mahalapye, North East and Kgalagadi North, also had, more marrying couples residing in different district at time of marriage than those who are from the same district.

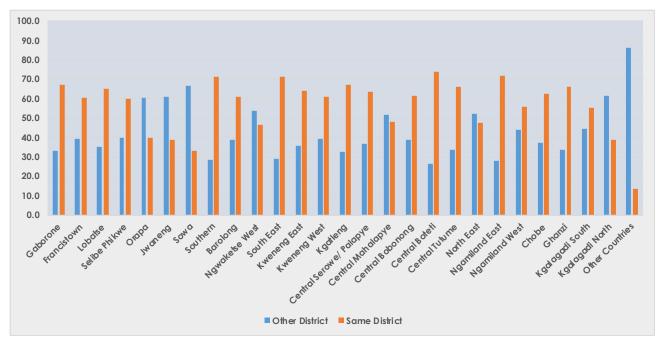


Figure 2a: Marriages by place of usual residence of bride and groom -2021

## 2.3 Month of Registration

Figure 3 shows that a peak season for marriages was realized around April and the last quarter of the year.



Figure 3: Percent distribution of marriages by month of registration 2021

## 2.4 Type of Marriage

The marriage process requires that a public notice of intention to marry be publicized for a period of at least three weeks before the solemnization and this is referred to as publishing of banns. The bans are meant to sanction anyone to raise any civil legal impediments to the marriage, to prevent marriages that are invalid. The alternative way would be to apply for special license, which allows one to marry without the public notice, anytime anywhere.

According to **Figure 4**, publishing of Banns prior to solemnization of marriages is the most commonly used of the two with 99.7 Percent of the registered marriages publicized in that way.

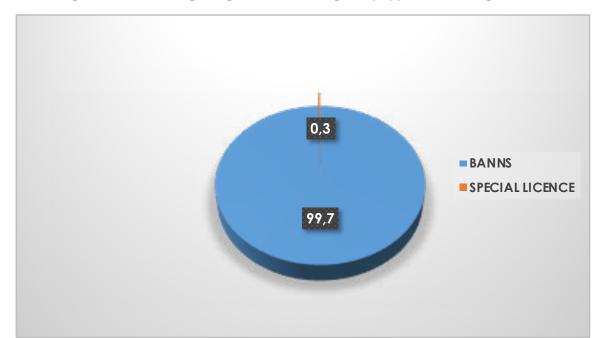


Figure 4: Percentage registered marriages by type of marriage - 2021

# 2.5 Age at the Time of Marriage

According to the Marriage Act (2001), No minor or person below the age of 21 years not being a widower or widow may marry without the consent in writing of his or her parents or guardians.

**Figure 5** shows that more women than men married at younger ages (under 35 years) and more men than women married at older ages (35years and over). About 70 percent of brides were aged below 40 years while the comparable figure for grooms was 47.2 percent.

65+ 60-64 55-59 50-54 45-49 40-44 13.7 35-39 30-34 25.2 25-29 18.4 20-24 15-19 .0 5.0 10.0 15.0 20.0 25.0 30.0 ■ Male ■ Female

Figure 5: Percentage of marriages by age of bride and groom - 2021

According to Table 2.1, there were twenty-nine marriages (0.4 percent) in which the bride was aged less than 21 years compared to only one (1) groom aged less than 21. The age group with the highest percentage of marriages is the 30-34 and 35-39 age group for females and males respectively (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Percent marriages by age of husband and wife at marriage-2021

	Male	Percent	Female	Percent
Age				
18	-	-	1	0.0
19	-	-	7	0.1
18-19	-	-	8	0.1
20	1	0.0	13	0.2
21	1	0.0	28	0.4
22	3	0.0	44	0.6
23	8	0.1	79	1.0
24	30	0.4	130	1.7
20-24	43	0.6	294	3.9
25	51	0.7	167	2.2
26	66	0.9	231	3.0
27	99	1.3	311	4.1
28	131	1.7	317	4.2
29	209	2.7	378	5.0
25-29	556	7.3	1,404	18.4
30	211	2.8	367	4.8
31	213	2.8	388	5.1
32	295	3.9	421	5.5
33	303	4.0	340	4.5
34	316	4.1	405	5.3
30-34	1,338	17.5	1,921	25.2
35	313	4.1	330	4.3
36	320	4.2	344	4.5
37	312	4.1	331	4.3
38	329	4.3	317	4.2
39	343	4.5	331	4.3
35-39	1,617	21.2	1,653	21.7
40	340	4.5	259	3.4
41	292	3.8	254	3.3
42	316	4.1	191	2.5
43	250	3.3	176	2.3
44	268	3.5	164	2.1
40-44	1,466	19.2	1,044	13.7

Table 2.1: Percent marriages by age of husband and wife at marriage-2021 (continued)

	Male	Percent	Female	Percent
Age				
45	244	3.2	157	2.1
46	221	2.9	165	2.2
47	194	2.5	118	1.5
48	175	2.3	115	1.5
49	158	2.1	97	1.3
45-49	992	13.0	652	8.5
50	151	2.0	67	0.9
51	170	2.2	72	0.9
52	120	1.6	64	0.8
53	107	1.4	54	0.7
54	117	1.5	47	0.6
50-54	665	8.7	304	4.0
55	73	1.0	35	0.5
56	96	1.3	36	0.5
57	79	1.0	36	0.5
58	68	0.9	31	0.4
59	72	0.9	26	0.3
55-59	388	5.1	164	2.1
60	56	0.7	22	0.3
61	66	0.9	29	0.4
62	49	0.6	24	0.3
63	49	0.6	17	0.2
64	54	0.7	17	0.2
60-64	274	3.6	109	1.4
65+	292	3.8	78	1.0
Total	7,631	100.0	7,631	100.0

Table 2.2 shows the mean and median age at first marriage for bachelors and spinsters from 2017 to 2021. The mean age at first marriage for Bachelors increased from 40 to 42 years between the years 2019 and 2021 and the comparable figure for Spinster was 35 to about 37 years. However, the median age at marriage from 2020 to 2021 for males and females remained the same at 40 and 35 years respectively. The mean is usually affected by outliers and in this case the mean at first marriage might be tipped upward by the "Re a nyalana program." This program encourages partners who have been living together without any formal documentation to formalize their union through common law marriage. Most of these partners are elderly people and hence the raised mean age at marriage. The suitable indicator to establish the marrying age given the 'Re a nyalana" scenario would be the median age, which unlike the mean is not affected by outliers in the data. (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Mean and median age at first marriage 2017-2021

	Mea	n	Median				
	Bachelor	Spinster	Bachelor	Spinster			
Year							
2021	42.1	36.6	40	35			
2020	41.7	36.2	40	35			
2019	40	35.4	38	34			
2018	41	35.4	38	33			
2017	40.9	35.9	38	34			

### 2.6 Age differentials

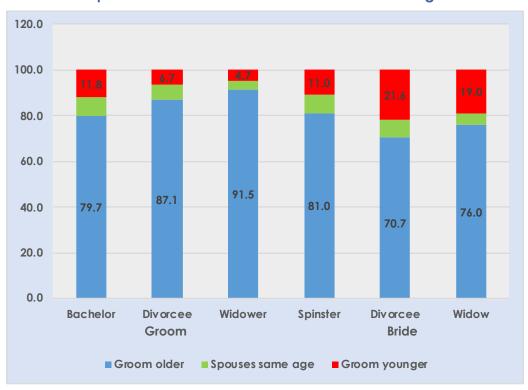
**Table 2.3** shows that, in the majority of marriages, the groom is older than the bride accounting for 80.5 percent of the marriages, 11.4 percent are those in which the groom is younger than the bride is and in only 8.2 percent of the unions, partners are of the same age.

Table 2.3 Age differrences between partners - 2021

	Age Difference	No. of Unions	Percent
Groom younger than Bride	1-4	685	9.0
	5-9	150	2.0
	10-14	27	0.4
	15+	7	0.1
Same Age	0	626	8.2
Groom older than Bride	1-4	2,312	30.3
	5-9	2,110	27.7
	10-14	1,058	13.9
	15-19	426	5.6
	20+	230	3.0
Total		7,631	100.0

**Figure 6** also suggests that men tend to marry younger women irrespective of the marital status of the bridegroom at the time of marriage. It is however interesting to note that, compared to spinsters, women who were previously married tend to marry men who are younger than they are. For example, 11.0 percent of grooms were younger than their brides whose marital status was spinster at the time of marriage. The comparable figure for brides whose marital status was divorcee and widow was 21.6 and 19.0 percent respectively.

Figure 6: Percent distribution of marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage – 2021



#### 2.7 Previous Marital Status

Males who were getting married for the first time (Bachelors) amounted to 91.8 percent and spinsters accounted for 97.0percent of all the marriages. More men than women tend to opt for remarriage after their first marriage as evidenced by a higher percentage of remarriages of divorced and widowed men compared to women (Figure 7).

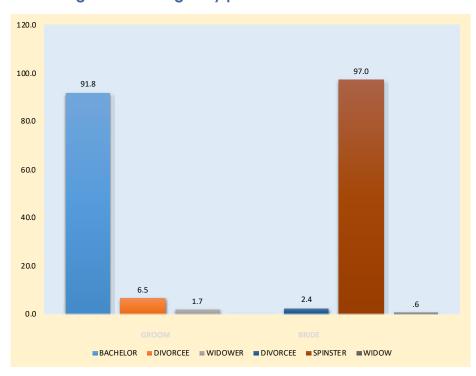


Figure 7: Marriages by previous marital status – 2021

#### 2.8 First Marriages and Re-marriages

Figure 8 shows that 90.3 percent of marriages were first time marriages for both bride and groom, while 8.3 percent were first marriages for one partner. Remarriages for both partners accounted for the remaining 1.4 percent.

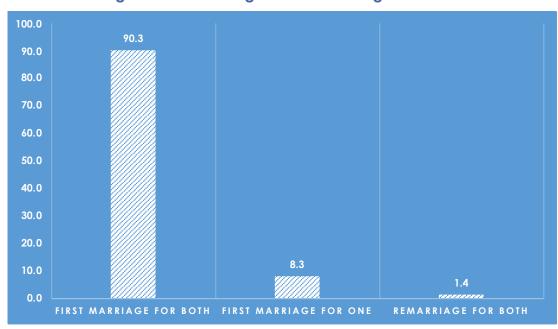


Figure 8: First marriages and re-marriages – 2021

# 2.9 Crude Marriage Rate

The crude marriage rate gives the number of persons marrying within a specified time per a 1,000 population of all ages. Table 5.3 shows that the crude marriage rate has been fluctuating around 5 for the past 10 years with a high of 6 registered in the year 2015. The second highest after the year 2015 is 5.9 recorded in 2021.

Table 2.4: Crude Marriage Rate by year of marriage 2012-2021

Year	Popoulation	Marriages	Married Persons	Marriage rate
2012	2,070,984	5,214	10,428	5.04
2013	2,128,597	5,333	10,666	5.01
2014	2,166,650	5,911	11,822	5.46
2015	2,185,903	6,677	13,354	6.11
2016	2,219,732	6,051	12,102	5.45
2017	2,254,021	6,203	12,406	5.50
2018	2,288,651	5,489	10,978	4.80
2019	2,323,493	6,097	12,194	5.25
2020	2,358,445	6,518	13,036	5.53
2021	2,588,423	7,631	15,262	5.90

Table M1: A Summary of Marriages-2012-2021

Year of marriage	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2107	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total marriages	5,214	5,333	5,591	6,677	6,051	6,203	5,489	6,097	6,518	7,631
Quarterly Totals										
Jan-March	515	563	491	603	608	1,042	652	597	652	1,053
Apr-June	878	846	1,004	1,292	1,186	1,229	1,094	1,299	600	1,843
July-Sept	1,568	1,654	1,810	2,216	1,560	1,919	1,568	1,774	1,942	1,514
Oct-Dec	2,253	2,270	2,286	2,566	2,697	2,013	2,175	2,427	3,324	3,221
Total	5,214	5,333	5,591	6,677	6,051	6,203	5,489	6,097	6,518	7,631
Previous Marital Status										
Males										
Bachelor	4,739	4,858	5,068	6,008	5,496	5,802	4,958	5,461	5,963	7,007
Divorced	354	347	401	482	395	299	428	493	425	495
Widowed	121	128	122	187	160	102	103	143	130	129
Total	5,214	5,333	5,591	6,677	6,051	6,203	5,489	6,097	6,518	7,631
Females										
Spinster	5,019	5,157	5,384	6,421	5,822	6,053	5,260	5,856	6,307	7,405
Divorced	142	128	165	186	173	114	183	191	170	184
Widowed	53	48	42	70	56	36	46	50	41	42
Total	5,214	5,333	5,591	6,677	6,051	6,203	5,489	6,097	6,518	7,631
Previous Marital Status			4.0.47	5.0.40	5040	5 (70		5.017	5.000	
First marriage for both	4,634	4,774	4,947	5,868	5,363	5,679	4,836	5,317	5,839	6,891
First marriage for one	490	466	558	693	592	497	546	683	592	630
Remarriage for both	90	93	86	116	96	27	107	97	87	110
Total	5,214	5,333	5,591	6,677	6,051	6,203	5,489	6,097	6,518	7,631
Type of marriage										
After Banns	5,093	5,278	5,479	6,546	5,969	6,190	5,454	6,026	6,482	7,610
Special License	121	55	112	131	82	13	35	71	36	21
Total	5,214	5,333	5,591	6,677	6,051	6,203	5,489	6,097	6,518	7,631

Table M2: Age in combination at marriage time-2021

						Bride's	Age					
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+	Total
Groom's Age												
20-24	-	28	5	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	43
25-29	1	126	353	70	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	556
30-34	4	94	519	608	92	18	2	-	-	1	-	1,338
35-39	-	22	333	637	526	76	18	5	-	-	-	1,617
40-44	2	14	138	367	537	334	63	11	-	-	-	1,466
45-49	-	4	38	145	289	286	192	33	4	1	-	992
50-54	-	4	15	53	130	181	194	77	9	1	1	665
55-59	-	2	2	19	51	76	119	61	48	7	3	388
60-64	-	-	1	8	15	52	41	68	52	32	5	274
65+	-	-	-	8	7	18	23	49	51	67	69	292
Total	7	294	1,404	1,921	1,654	1,044	652	304	164	109	78	7,631

Table M2.1: Age at the time of marriage by previous marital status and sex-2021

	Groom	n's Marital Status	i			Bride's Marite	al Status	Total
	BACHELOR	DIVORCED	WIDOWER	Total	SPINSTER	DIVORCEE	WIDOW	
Age Group		·						
15-19	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	7
20-24	43	-	-	43	294	-	-	294
25-29	556	-	-	556	1,399	5	-	1,404
30-34	1,326	11	1	1,338	1,902	17	2	1,921
35-39	1,580	33	4	1,617	1,619	33	2	1,654
40-44	1,378	81	7	1,466	991	49	4	1,044
45-49	875	99	18	992	591	47	14	652
50-54	541	108	16	665	272	21	11	304
55-59	287	76	25	388	156	6	2	164
60-64	215	40	19	274	103	2	4	109
65+	206	47	39	292	71	4	3	78
Total	7,007	495	129	7,631	7,405	184	42	7,631
Percent	91.8	6.5	1.7	100.0	97.0	2.4	0.6	100.0

Table M3: Distribution of Groom's by District of Residence at the time of Marriage and Age -2021

				C	Froom's Ag	je Group					
	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+	Total
District of Residence											
Gaborone	6	143	293	287	216	135	88	40	28	18	1,254
Francistown	5	48	95	99	70	46	44	12	6	4	429
Lobatse	1	5	15	27	28	16	9	5	4	4	114
Selibe Phikwe	2	9	26	39	33	22	15	2	2	3	153
Orapa	-	3	13	20	20	10	4	2	1	-	73
Jwaneng	-	8	31	38	35	15	6	5	3	1	142
Sowa	-	2	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	6
Ngwaketse South	2	18	35	79	79	86	49	43	35	41	467
Barolong	-	12	22	23	37	24	29	20	14	14	195
Ngwaketse South	-	-	4	6	10	7	5	3	3	3	41
South East	2	47	94	84	96	65	34	22	11	10	465
Kweneng East	8	85	247	302	248	171	107	55	44	46	1,313
Kweneng West	2	20	27	41	34	26	33	21	10	26	240
Kgatleng	1	32	71	85	80	54	37	28	18	12	418
Central Serowe	4	36	83	103	110	63	45	23	23	18	508
Central Mahalapye	2	10	41	47	56	37	32	22	16	17	280
Central Bobonong	-	6	12	24	24	16	9	7	6	10	114
Central Boteti	-	3	7	14	11	5	5	3	4	5	57
Central Tutume	2	8	45	70	71	56	25	19	15	28	339
North East	-	6	23	31	23	24	9	5	4	5	130
Ngamiland East	3	22	47	77	61	45	26	26	10	14	331
Ngamiland West	-	10	19	24	23	9	10	3	1	1	100
Chobe	-	5	16	13	26	11	9	2	1	3	86
Ghanzi	2	7	25	24	27	13	13	4	9	4	128
Kgalagadi South	-	4	16	29	23	15	13	7	5	2	114
Kgalagadi North	-	2	17	14	16	10	7	6	-	3	75
Other Countries	1	5	12	16	9	10	2	3	1	-	59
Total	43	556	1,338	1,617	1,466	992	665	388	274	292	7,631

Table M4: Groom's age by district of residence at the time of marriage - 2021

-					E	Bride's Age	Group					
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+	Total
District of usual resider	ice											
Gaborone	2	59	254	353	250	130	68	32	9	10	2	1,169
Francistown	-	24	94	115	114	47	21	9	6	3	2	435
Lobatse	-	3	21	28	32	18	6	8	4	1	2	123
Selibe Phikwe	-	6	28	39	39	28	14	4	-	1	-	159
Orapa	-	1	6	11	8	7	5	-	-	-	-	38
Jwaneng	-	-	21	20	19	8	7	4	1	1	-	81
Sowa	-	-	1	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	5
Ngwaketse South	1	14	63	111	114	81	69	35	25	11	11	535
Barolong	-	9	24	33	30	27	24	8	9	9	7	180
Ngwaketse South	-	-	6	7	14	11	5	1	-	1	-	45
South East	-	19	124	120	101	76	39	15	7	5	3	509
Kweneng East	-	41	224	307	249	160	98	41	31	16	11	1,178
Kweneng West	-	5	28	32	45	30	28	17	10	3	10	208
Kgatleng	-	17	78	107	101	62	39	23	8	4	5	444
Central Serowe	-	22	103	140	110	83	50	23	8	5	7	551
Central Mahalapye	-	8	39	61	51	25	16	15	10	3	5	233
Central Bobonong	-	8	21	32	33	25	15	7	8	2	3	154
Central Boteti	1	9	38	47	52	29	17	5	5	2	3	208
Central Tutume	1	21	58	94	78	54	36	23	8	13	3	389
North East	1	8	29	39	31	20	14	10	-	4	1	157
Ngamiland East	1	9	60	90	73	46	33	5	5	6	1	329
Ngamiland West	-	4	14	25	24	14	3	1	-	1	-	85
Chobe	-	1	13	19	21	15	8	1	-	2	-	80
Ghanzi	-	3	22	44	24	17	14	6	5	1	1	136
Kgalagadi South	-	-	18	21	22	21	13	5	2	3	1	106
Kgalagadi North	-	-	12	19	13	8	6	5	3	1	-	67
Other Countries		3	5	5	5	2	3	1	-	1	-	25
Total	7	294	1,404	1,921	1,654	1,044	652	304	164	109	78	7,631

Table M5: Previous marital status of person marrying-2013-2021

					Bride's Marital Status						
Year of	Grooms Marital Status	Takal	Percent	Cuinalar	Percent	Divorced	Percent	Widowod	Davaant		
Marriage	310105	Total	reiceili	Spinster	reiceili	Divoiced	reiceili	Widowed	Percent		
2013	Bachelor	4,858	91.1	4,775	89.5	51	39.8	32	66.7		
	Divorced	347	6.5	276	5.4	61	47.7	10	20.8		
	Widowed	128	2.4	106	2.1	16	12.5	6	12.5		
	Total	5,333	100	5,157	100	128	100	48	100		
2014	Bachelor	5,068	90.6	4,947	91.9	94	57	27	64.3		
	Divorced	401	7.2	331	6.1	62	37.6	8	19		
	Widowed	122	2.2	106	2	9	5.5	7	16.7		
	Total	5,591	100	5,384	100	165	100	42	100		
0015	D. de de de	4 000	00	5.040	01.4	101	540	20	55.7		
2015	Bachelor Divorced	6,008	90	5,868	91.4 6.2	101	54.3	39	55.7		
	Widowed	482 187	7.2 2.8	398 155	2.4	65 20	34.9 10.8	19 12	27.1 17.1		
	Total	6,677	100	6, <b>421</b>	100	186	10.0	70	100		
	Total	0,077	100	0,421	100	100	100	70	100		
2016	Bachelor	5,496	90.8	5,363	92.1	97	56.1	36	64.3		
	Divorced	395	6.5	322	5.5	62	35.8	11	19.6		
	Widowed	160	2.6	137	2.4	14	8.1	9	16.1		
	Total	6,051	100.0	5,822	100	173	100	56	100		
2017	Bachelor	5,802	93.5	5,679	93.8	90	78.9	33	91.7		
	Divorced	299	4.8	279	4.6	18	15.8	2	5.6		
	Widowed	102	1.6	95	1.6	6	5.3	1	2.8		
	Total	6,203	100.0	6,053	100.0	114	100.0	36	100.0		
2018	Bachelor	4,958	90.3	4,836	91.9	93	50.8	29	63.0		
2010	Divorced	428	7.8	349	6.6	69	37.7	10	21.7		
	Widowed	103	1.9	75	1.4	21	11.5	7	15.2		
	Total	5,489	100.0	5,260	100.0	183	100.0	46	100.0		
2019	Bachelor	5,461	89.6	5,317	90.8	114	59.7	30	60.0		
	Divorced	493	8.1	415	7.1	65	34.0	13	26.0		
	Widowed	143	2.3	124	2.1	12	6.3	7	14.0		
	Total	6,097	100.0	5,856	100.0	191	100.0	50	100.0		
2020	Bachelor	5,963	91.5	5,839	92.6	96	56.5	28	68.3		
2020	Divorced	425	6.5	358	5.7	61	35.9	6	14.6		
	Widowed	130	2.0	110	1.7	13	7.6	7	17.1		
	Total	6,518	100.0	6,307	100.0	170	100.0	41	100.0		
		-,		•••							
2021	Bachelor	7,007	91.8	6,891	93.1	98	53.3	18	42.9		
	Divorced	495	6.5	404	5.5	73	39.7	18	42.9		
	Widowed	129	1.7	110	1.5	13	7.1	6	14.3		
	Total	7,631	100.0	7,405	100.0	184	100.0	42	100.0		

