

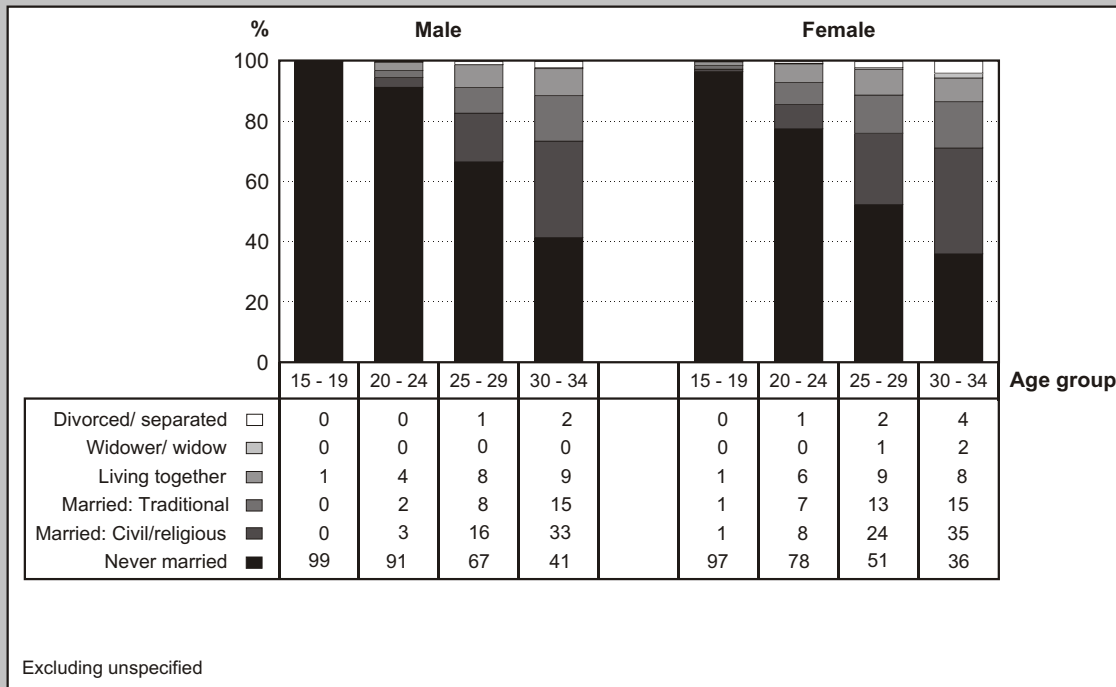
Marital status and childbearing

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Marital status

South African women tend to marry earlier than men. For example, Figure 3.1 below indicates that in the 20-24 year age group 7% of women had entered traditional marriages and 8% civil/religious marriages while married men in the same age bracket accounted for a smaller proportion: 2% in traditional marriages, and 3% in civil/religious marriages.

Figure 3.1: Marital status of youth by age and sex



In general, more female than male youth were married, according to civil, religious or traditional rites.

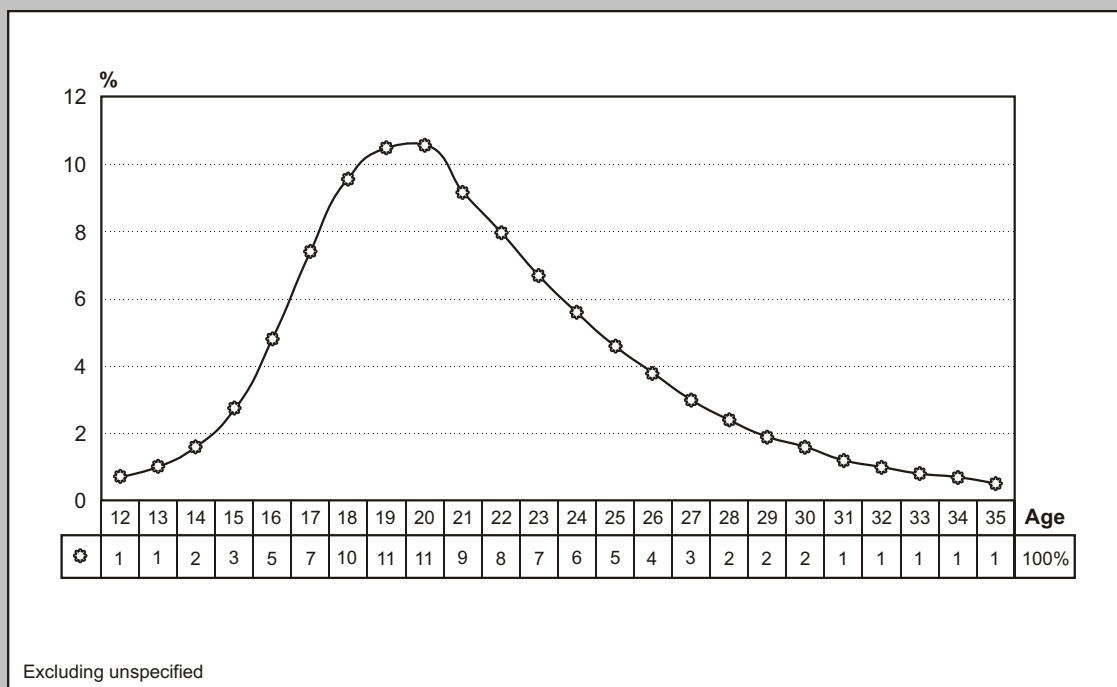
At 30-34 years of age, 15% females had entered traditional marriages and 35% civil/religious ones, while among males in the same age bracket the percentages were 15% and 33% respectively.

Similarly, proportionately more females than males in all age categories of youth (Figure 3.1) indicated that they had been divorced or separated from their spouses. For example, 2% of males aged 30-34 years indicated that they were divorced or separated compared with 4% of females in the same age bracket.

Age of mother at birth of first child

Findings from Census '96 (Figure 3.2) indicate that among all women aged 12-35 who had given birth to at least one child, 0,7% had given birth to their first child at the age of 12 years, and 1,0% at the age of 13 years.

Figure 3.2: Percentage of mothers in each age category at birth of first child



The graph shows that the largest percentage of women gave birth to their first child between the ages of 18 and 22.

Figure 3.3 below shows the percentages of young women who had ever given birth, by their age at time of birth of their first child, in each population group.