

1.5 million work days  
"BY THE NUMBERS"

# Separation and Divorce in Canada

DECEMBER 2013



BY NATHAN BATTAMS

**19%** Proportion of Canadians surveyed in 2011 who reported that their parents had separated or divorced<sup>1</sup>

**11.5% & 5.1%** Proportion of Canadians aged 15 and older who had separated or divorced in their lifetime in 2011 and 1981, respectively<sup>2</sup>

**13.7 years** Average duration of marriage for Canadians who finalized a divorce in 2008<sup>3,4</sup>

**19% & 16%** Proportion of divorces finalized in 2008 for marriages that had lasted for less than five years and 25 years or more, respectively<sup>5,6</sup>

**2.1 per 1,000** Crude divorce rate in Canada in 2008<sup>7,8</sup>

**70% & 15%** Proportion of separated or divorced mothers and fathers, respectively, who reported in 2011 that their household was the primary residence of their children (time was divided equally for 9% of respondents<sup>9</sup>)<sup>10</sup>

**41%** Estimated proportion of marriages in Canada that will end by the 30th year of marriage (2008 estimate)<sup>11</sup>

**85% & 15%** Proportion of separated or divorced mothers and fathers, respectively, surveyed in 2011 who said they were the primary decision maker regarding their child's health, religion and/or education<sup>12,13</sup>

**66%** Proportion of divorced Canadians surveyed in 2011 who said they did *not* have remarriage intentions (23% said they were uncertain)<sup>14</sup>

**8%** Decline in the number of initiated divorce cases between 2006-07 and 2010-11 in reporting provinces and territories<sup>15,16</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, "Distribution of the Population by Breakup of Parents' Union, by Age Group and Province, 2011 and 2001" (Table 17), 2011 General Social Survey: Overview of Families in Canada, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 89-650-X, accessed October 30, 2013, <http://bit.ly/12stLLf>.

<sup>2</sup> Anne Milan, "Marital Status: Overview, 2011," *Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada*, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 91-209-X (July 2013), accessed October 31, 2013, <http://bit.ly/16mSXS1>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> This is the most recent statistic available because Statistics Canada stopped tracking national divorce rates in 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Milan.

<sup>6</sup> This is the most recent statistic available because Statistics Canada stopped tracking national divorce rates in 2008.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, *Divorces and Crude Divorce Rates by Urban/Rural Residence: 2007-2011* (2011), accessed October 3, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1c5gUVQ>.

<sup>8</sup> This is the most recent statistic available because Statistics Canada stopped tracking national divorce rates in 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Percentages may not add to 100%. Totals include the "don't know" and "refused" categories.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, "Distribution of Separated or Divorced Parents, by Primary Residence of Their Children, Canada, 2011" (Table 18), 2011 General Social Survey: Overview of Families in Canada, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 89-650-X, accessed October 30, 2013, <http://bit.ly/17vVieg>.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Bess Kelly, "Divorce Cases in Civil Court, 2010/2011," *Juristat*, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X (March 2012), accessed October 31 2013, <http://bit.ly/18tCSOo>.

<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada, "Distribution of Separated or Divorced Parents by Major Decision Making Role About the Health, Religion and/or Education of Their Children, Canada, 2011" (Table 19), 2011 General Social Survey: Overview of Families in Canada, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 89-650-X, accessed October 30, 2013, <http://bit.ly/ZC1Swf>.

<sup>13</sup> This is among separated or divorced couples in which only one parent was a primary decision maker. These decisions were made together or alternatively by 35% of survey respondents.

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada, "Distribution of People Who Intend to Marry or Remarry by De Facto Marital Status and Region of Residence, Canada, 2011" (Table 1), 2011 General Social Survey: Overview of Families in Canada, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 89-650-X, accessed October 30, 2013, <http://bit.ly/117oVAI>.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Bess Kelly, "Initiated Divorce Cases, Selected Provinces and Territories, 2006/2007 to 2010/2011" (Table 3), *Divorce Cases in Civil Court, 2010/2011*, Statistics Canada catalogue no. 85-002-X (March 2012), accessed October 31, 2013, <http://bit.ly/X8i72S>.

<sup>16</sup> "Reporting provinces and territories" included Nova Scotia, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

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1.262 children  
793/75  
537,717 Canadian caregivers  
6 years  
3 in 10 women  
12  
1.3 million Canadian