



Kingdom of Lesotho



# Statistical Reports

NO.34 : 2018

## Vital Statistics Report (Divorces 2017)



Bureau of Statistics  
PO Box 455, Maseru 100, Lesotho  
Tel: +266 22 323 852 Fax: +266 310177  
E-mail: [itpd@bos.gov.ls](mailto:itpd@bos.gov.ls)  
Website: [www.bos.gov.ls](http://www.bos.gov.ls)

Mission: To coordinate the National Statistical System (NSS) and produce accurate, timely and reliable culturally relevant and internationally comparable statistical data for evidence based planning, decision making, research, policy, program formulation and monitoring and evaluation to satisfy the needs of data users and producers.

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## **BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Vital registration is one of the main sources of population statistics and is a process of (a) collecting information by civil registration or enumeration on the frequency of occurrence of specified and defined vital events, as well as relevant characteristics of the events themselves and of the person or persons concerned, and (b) compiling, processing, analyzing, evaluating, presenting and disseminating these data in statistical form. The vital events of interest include among others: births, deaths, marriages, divorces and separations. This report presents data related to reported divorces only.

There could be various factors that contribute to a couple's decision to dissolve marriage and they include the following: infidelity (adultery), lack of (or poor) communication, non-fulfillment of conjugal rights, emotional and physical abuse, hazardous levels of alcohol consumption, desertion, and perhaps incompatibility as primary grounds for divorce. Thus, the factors stated above contribute in one way or another in making life intolerable to the partner who is being subjected to them.

The general objective of this report is to present the demographic characteristics of the divorced persons and to show the changing divorce patterns over time. Also, the objective is to show the main causes of divorce. This report presents statistical information on divorces that were filed in 2017 only by the High Court of Lesotho. These data is collected by the Bureau of Statistics from the High Court, it then compiles, processes, analyzes and publishes the analytical report.

Data on divorce is classified by the following variables: age of plaintiff and defendant, sex of plaintiff and defendant, parties' place of residence, reasons for dissolution of marriage and duration of marriage. The plaintiff refers to the party who initiates a divorce suit in a court against the opposite party (defendant).

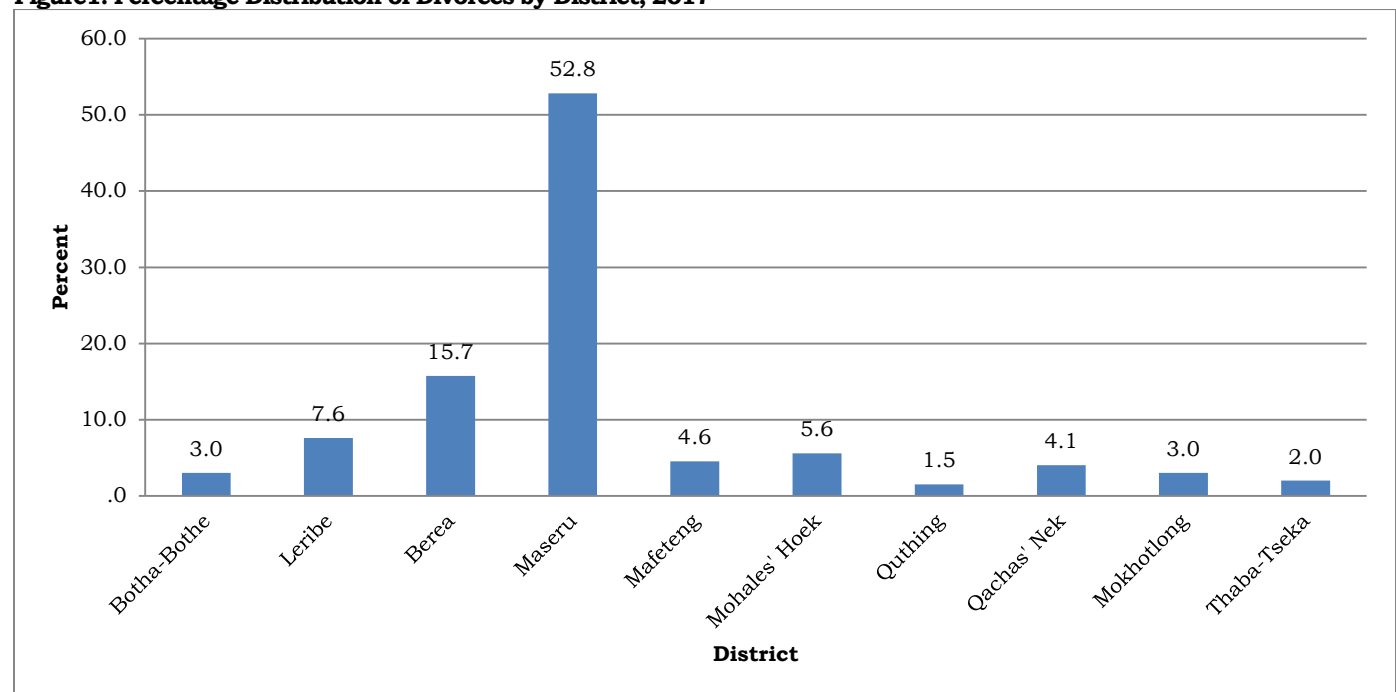
### **1.2 Data Limitations**

The data on divorce relates only to marriages that were solemnized by civil law and not by customary law as there are cases of customary marriages that go unreported. This suggests that, for such marriages, even the divorce is highly unlikely to be reported. The information does not cover other important issues such as the educational and employment status of the parties and the impact of divorce is also a crucial element but it is not included in this report because the primary data had initially been compiled for other administrative purposes. For the divorces to be granted there must be a marriage certificate but 60 of them were granted without marriage certificates. Therefore, the analysis of this report is based only on divorces that were granted with marriage certificates.

## 2.1 Divorces and Parties' Place of Residence

The compilation of 2017 divorce data indicated that 197 divorce applications were filed. Figure 1 presents incidences on divorces by place of residence that occurred in 2017. The figure shows the ten districts of Lesotho where the highest percentage share of divorces was noticed in Maseru with 52.8 percent. The least percent was observed in Quthing estimated at 1.5 followed by Thaba-Tseka with 2.0 percent. Mokhotlong and Botha-Bothe districts were at 3.0 percent each. All other districts recorded percentage share less than 10.0 except Berea district which had 15.7 percent.

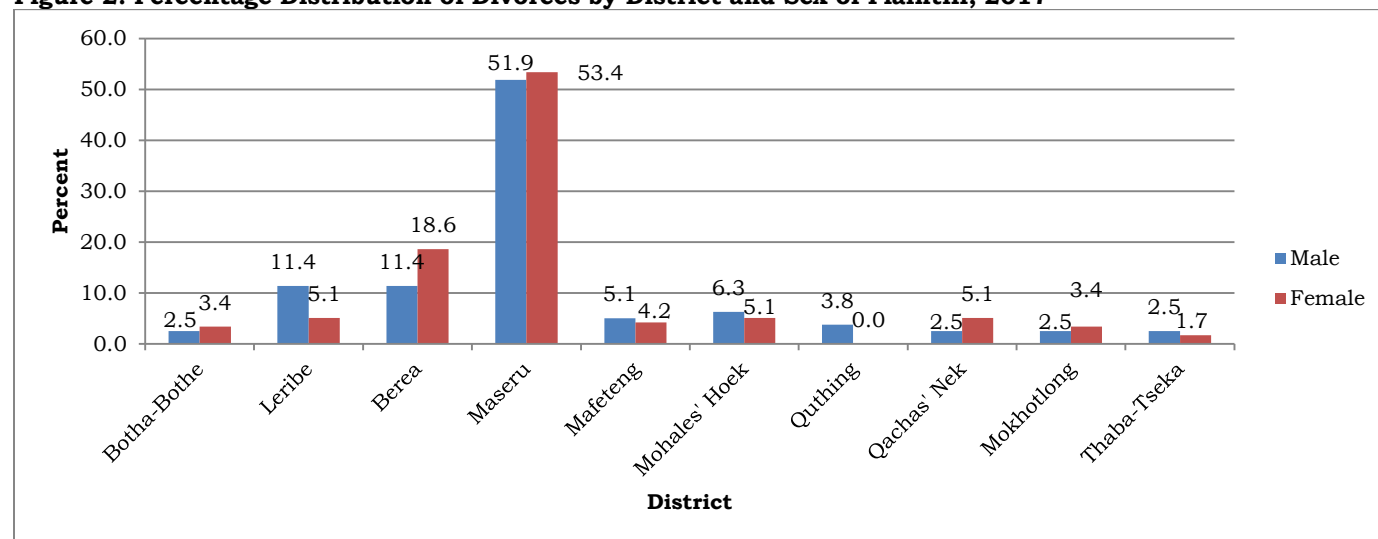
**Figure1: Percentage Distribution of Divorces by District, 2017**



## 2.2 Place of Residence

This sub-section shows the place of residence of the plaintiff. Figure 2 presents the percentage distribution of divorces by place of residence and sex of plaintiff. Data shows that Maseru, Berea, Qacha's Nek and Mokhotlong districts reflect more female plaintiffs than male plaintiffs. The graph presentation further illustrate that, Maseru had the highest proportion of plaintiffs for both male and female than any other district (53.4 and 51.9 percent respectively). Thaba-Tseka had the least proportion of female plaintiffs while Quthing district had none of the female plaintiffs indicating that the divorce suits were filed only by males accounting for 3.8 percent.

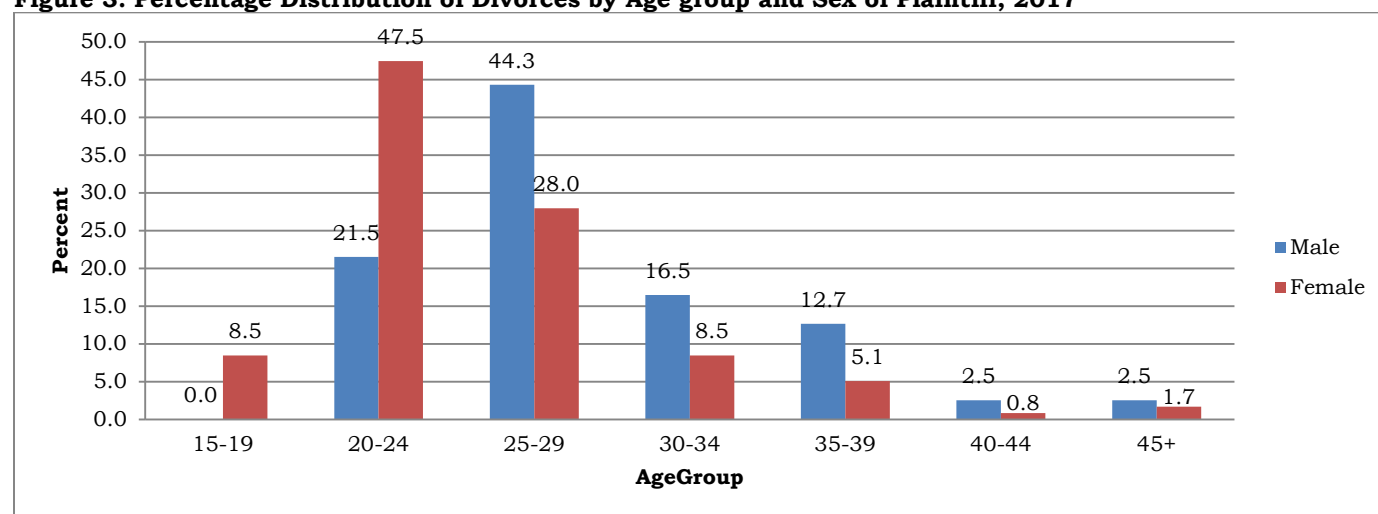
**Figure 2: Percentage Distribution of Divorces by District and Sex of Plaintiff, 2017**



### 2.3 Age

The age composition of divorced people is important in establishing the age at which most couples dissolve their marriages. Figure 3 presents the percentage distribution of divorces by age group and sex of plaintiff. The percentage of divorces among males reached a peak at ages 25 to 29 years with 44.3 percent, while that for females was prominent at age group 20 to 24 years with 47.5 percent. Thereafter, the cases of divorces began to decline gradually as age increased. Females filed for divorces more than their male counterparts for age groups 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 years but for all other age groups more males filed cases than the females. It is therefore observed that females mostly file for divorces at younger ages while their male counterparts do that at older ages. It is further noted that at age groups 15 to 19 years only females were divorcing with 8.5 percent representation.

**Figure 3: Percentage Distribution of Divorces by Age group and Sex of Plaintiff, 2017**



## 2.4 Age Group and Sex of Defendant

Table 1 portrays the percentage distribution of divorces by age group and sex of defendant for the year 2017. Large proportions of divorces to defendants are concentrated at age groups 25 to 29 years for males (44.1 percent) and 20 to 24 years for females (55.7 percent). Generally, the peak for both males and females is observed at age group 25 to 29 years recording 37.6 percent. The overall observation is that divorces reach a peak at age 25 to 29 years at 37.6 percent and then gradually decline as age increases reaching 1.5 percent at age 45 years and above.

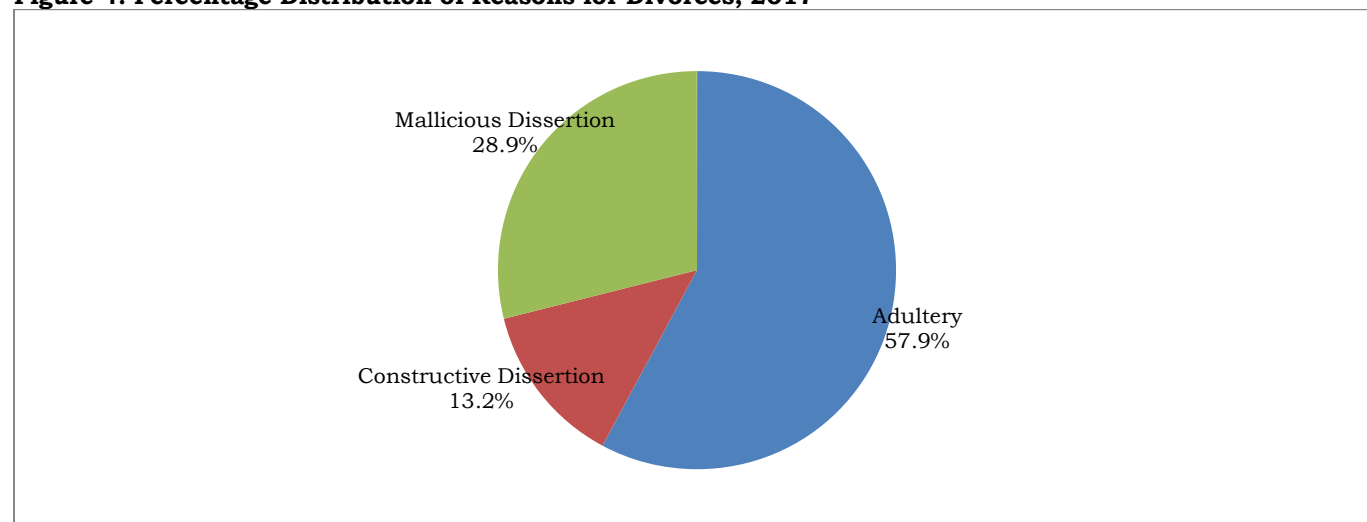
**Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Divorces by Age Group and Sex of Defendant, 2017**

<b>Age-Group</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>15-19</b>	0.0	3.8	1.5
<b>20-24</b>	21.2	55.7	35.0
<b>25-29</b>	44.1	27.8	37.6
<b>30-34</b>	20.3	5.1	14.2
<b>35-39</b>	6.8	6.3	6.6
<b>40-44</b>	5.1	1.3	3.6
<b>45+</b>	2.5	0.0	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 2.5 Reasons for Divorce

There are many reasons that commonly contribute to the breakdown of marriages in the marital union. In Lesotho it appears that the most common reasons for divorces are adultery and desertion. Almost two thirds (57.9percent) of the marriages in Lesotho are broken down due to Adultery. The other one third happens due to Constructive and Malicious Desertion estimated at 13.2 and 28.9 percent respectively.

**Figure 4: Percentage Distribution of Reasons for Divorces, 2017**



## 2.6 Place of Residence and Reasons for Divorce

The percentage distribution of divorces by district and reasons for divorce is presented in Table 2. On the overall, the major cause of divorce in all the districts was adultery constituting 57.9 percent. Constructive Desertion at 13.2 percent was the next reason for divorce followed by Malicious Desertion with 28.9 percent. Maseru district had the leading percentages for reasons for divorce amongst the reasons given with 52.8 and Adultery was most common in Maseru with 49.1 percent. There were no marriage dissolution due to Constructive Desertion in the four districts, namely; Quthing, Qacha's Nek, Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka. On the other hand, the district of Botha-Bothe reported no dissolution of marriage concerning Malicious desertion. Amongst all the districts of Lesotho, Thaba-Tseka had the least number of divorce cases estimated at 2.0 percent.

**Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Divorces by Place of Residence and Reason for Divorce, 2017**

Place of Residence	Reason For Divorce			Total
	Adultery	Constructive Desertion	Malicious Desertion	
Botha-Bothe	2.6	11.5	0.0	3.0
Leribe	8.8	7.7	5.3	7.6
Berea	17.5	15.4	12.3	15.7
Maseru	49.1	57.7	57.9	52.8
Mafeteng	4.4	3.8	5.3	4.6
Mohale's Hoek	5.3	3.8	7.0	5.6
Quthing	1.8	0.0	1.8	1.5
Qacha's Nek	5.3	0.0	3.5	4.1
Mokhotlong	3.5	0.0	3.5	3.0
Thaba-Tseka	1.8	0.0	3.5	2.0
Total	57.9	13.2	28.9	100.0



## 2.7 Age and Reasons for Divorce

Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of divorces by age group of defendant and reasons for divorce. It is evident from this table that, the age group where marriages were most dissolved was 25 to 29 years accounting for 37.6 percent. The most common reason for the dissolution of marriage was Constructive desertion with 38.5 percent followed by Adultery constituting 37.7 percent in the same age group. Age group 20 to 24 years followed at 35.0 percent while malicious desertion was noticed mostly with 40.4 percent as the most popular reason for ending marriage. The age group with the least incidences of marriage dissolutions is age groups 15 to 19 years and 45 and above represented by 1.5 percent each.

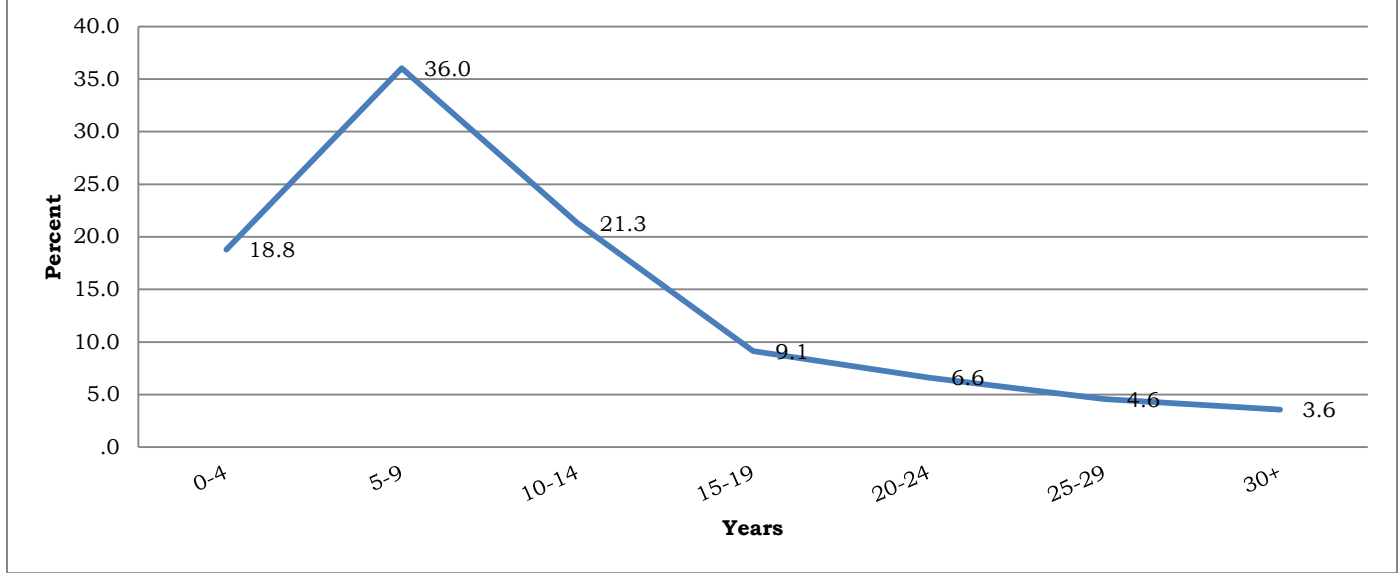
**Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Divorces by Age Group of Defendant and Reason for Divorce, 2017**

Age-Group	Reason For Divorce			Total
	Adultery	Constructive Desertion	Malicious Desertion	
15-19	0.9	0.0	3.5	1.5
20-24	5.1	23.1	40.4	35.0
25-29	37.7	38.5	36.8	37.6
30-34	15.8	19.2	8.8	14.2
35-39	3.5	19.2	7.0	6.6
40-44	5.3	0.0	1.8	3.6
45+	1.8	0.0	1.8	1.5
Total	57.9	13.2	28.9	100.0

## 2.8 Duration of Marriage

The length or period of marriage that end in divorce vary greatly from place to place, with some not even making it to their tenth anniversary. Figure 5 illustrates the percentage distribution of divorces by duration of marriage. It shows that most marriages lasted between 5 to 9 years with 36.0 percent representation. This is followed by the duration of 10 to 14 years where couples tend to dissolve their marriages. The behavior of divorces shows that the more the number of years the couple stays in marriage; the less likely are chances of divorce. This is depicted by the figure where the minimal percentages of divorces are observed at higher number of married years. The least number of divorces within those couples who had been married for 30 years and above recorded 3.6 percent as the lowest.

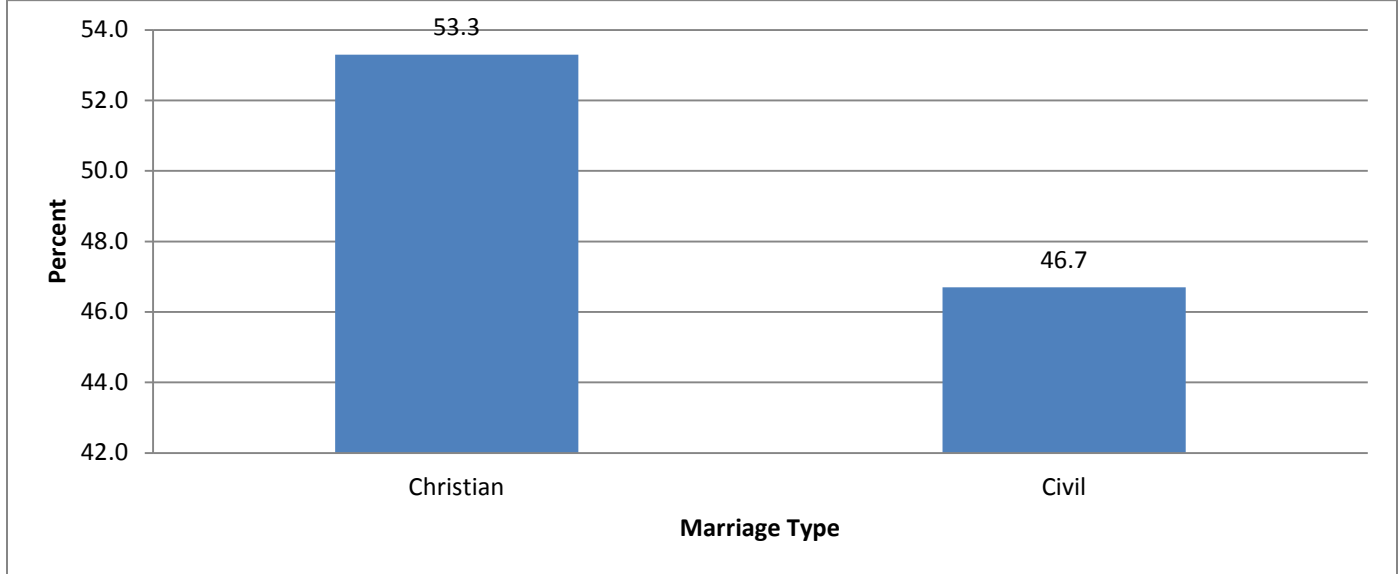
**Figure 5: Percentage Distribution of Divorces by Duration of Marriage, 2017**



**2.9 Type of Marriage**

Marriage exists in all societies and in all stages but the type or forms of marriage differs from place to place. The types of marriage that will be considered in this report are two, namely; the Christian and Civil types. It is depicted in Figure 6 that a higher proportion of divorces occurred among marriages which had been solemnized in churches at 53.3 percent as opposed to those that were solemnized by civil registration authorities with 46.7 percent

**Figure 6: Percentage Distribution of Divorces by Type of Marriage, 2017**



## Annex

### Divorces by Place of Residence, 2017

Place of Residence	Number
Botha-Bothe	6
Leribe	15
Berea	31
Maseru	104
Mafeteng	9
Mohale's Hoek	11
Quthing	3
Qacha's Nek	8
Mokhotlong	6
Thaba-Tseka	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>

### Divorces by place of Residence and Sex of Plaintiff, 2017

Place of Residence	Male	Female	Total
Botha-Bothe	2	4	6
Leribe	9	6	15
Berea	9	22	31
Maseru	41	63	104
Mafeteng	4	5	9
Mohale's Hoek	5	6	11
Quthing	3	0	3
Qacha's Nek	2	6	8
Mokhotlong	2	4	6
Thaba-Tseka	2	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>197</b>

### Divorces by Age Group and Sex of Plaintiff, 2017

Age	Male	Female	Total
15-19	0	10	10
20-24	17	56	73
25-29	35	33	68
30-34	13	10	23
35-39	10	6	16
40-44	2	1	3
45+	2	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>197</b>

### Divorces by Age Group and Sex of Defendant, 2017

Age	Male	Female	Total
15-19	0	3	3
20-24	25	44	69
25-29	52	22	74
30-34	24	4	28
35-39	8	5	13
40-44	6	1	7
45+	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>197</b>

**Divorces Reasons for Divorce, 2017**

<b>Reason for Divorce</b>	<b>Number</b>
Adultery	114
Constructive Desertion	26
Malicious desertion	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>

**Divorces by Place of Residence and Reason for Divorce, 2017**

<b>Place of Residence</b>	<b>Adultery</b>	<b>Constructive Desertion</b>	<b>Malicious Desertion</b>	<b>Total</b>
Botha-Bothe	3	3	0	6
Leribe	10	2	3	15
Berea	20	4	7	31
Maseru	56	15	33	104
Mafeteng	5	1	3	9
Mohale's Hoek	6	1	4	11
Quthing	2	0	1	3
Qacha's Nek	6	0	2	8
Mokhotlong	4	0	2	6
Thaba-Tseka	2	0	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>197</b>

**Divorces by Age of Defendant and Reason for Divorce, 2017**

<b>Age-Group</b>	<b>Adultery</b>	<b>Constructive Desertion</b>	<b>Malicious Desertion</b>	<b>Total</b>
15-19	1	0	2	3
20-24	40	6	23	69
25-29	43	10	21	74
30-34	18	5	5	28
35-39	4	5	4	13
40-44	6	0	1	7
45+	2	0	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>197</b>

**Divorces by Type of Marriage, 2017**

<b>Type of Marriage</b>	<b>Number</b>
Christian	105
Civil	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>

**Divorces by Duration of Marriage, 2017**

<b>Marriage Duration</b>	<b>Number</b>
0-4	37
5-9	71
10-14	42
15-19	18
20-24	13
25-29	9
30+	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>