



labour

Department:
Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Industrial Action 2005 Annual Report

Publisher
Department of Labour
Chief Directorate of Communication
Private Bag X117
Pretoria
0001

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Printer
Government Printer

ISBN No.
0-621-36814-8



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List of acronyms

AMCU	Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union
AMAWU	African Miners and Allied Workers Union
ATUSAW	Associated Trade Union of South African Workers
AWAWU	African Wood and Allied Workers Union
CAWU	Construction and Allied Workers Union
CSA	Commission Staff Association
CEPPWAWU	Chemical, Energy, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union
CUSA	Commercial Workers Union of South Africa
CWU	Communication Workers Union
DENOSA	Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa
FAWU	Food and Allied Workers Union
GIWUSA	General Industries Workers Union of South Africa
ICHAWU	Independent Commercial, Hospitality and Allied Workers Union
IMATU	Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union
MUSU	Medical University Staff Union
NDCAWU	National Democratic Change and Allied Workers Union
NEAWU	National Education and Allied Workers Union
NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union
NEWU	National Entitled Workers Union
NTESU	National Tertiary Education Staff Union
NUFBWSAW	National Union of Food, Beverages, Wines, Spirits and Allied Workers Union
NUFAW	National Union of Furniture and Allied Workers
NULAW	National Union of Leather and Allied Workers' Union
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa
NUPSAW	National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers
PAWUSA	Public and Allied Workers Union of South Africa
POPCRU	Police, Prisons and Civil Rights Union
PSA	Public Servants Association
PTWUSA	Professional Transport Workers Union of South Africa
SACCAWU	South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union
SACU	South African Communications Union
SAEWA	South African Equity Workers Association
SACTWU	South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union
SACWU	South African Chemical Workers Union
SADNU	South African Democratic Nurses Union
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SATU	South African Typographical Union
SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers Union
SATAWU	South African Transport and Allied Workers Union
SU	Solidarity Union
TAWU	Transport and Allied Workers Union
TAWUSA	Transport and Allied Workers Union of South Africa
UASA	United Association of South Africa
UTATU	United Transport and Allied Trade Union
WESUSA	Workers Equally Support Union of South Africa

Executive summary

According to data kept and maintained by the Department of Labour there was a marked rise in the number of strike cases and workdays lost in 2005, compared with 2004. About 102 strike cases were identified and recorded by the Department and this resulted in the loss of about 2 627 953 workdays. The number of strike cases recorded in 2005 is more than double the total of cases in 2004 and represents an increase of 108.2%. This is the highest number of strike cases recorded in South Africa in more than five years.

The 2 627 953 workdays lost through labour disputes in 2005 is also more than double the workdays lost in 2004 and the highest in more than five years. Workdays lost rose by 104.4% from 1 286 003 in 2004 to 2 627 953 in 2005. Having looked at the brief holistic picture of strike activity in South Africa in 2005, it is also important to focus on the key features of labour disputes in 2005.

Key features of the report include the following:

- South Africa has witnessed a fluctuation in strike cases from 2001 to 2005. However, the number of strikes increased from 49 in 2004 to 102 in 2005, whilst workdays lost rose from 1 286 003 in 2004 to 2 627 953 in 2005. This is an indication of a clear rise in both strike cases and workdays lost in 2005, compared to 2004. This is also higher than the 1999, 2000 and 2001 figures
- The number of workdays lost has been on the rise since 2002. Workdays lost increased from 615 723 in 2002 to 2 627 953 in 2005. This represents an increase of 326.8% in workdays lost between 2002 and 2005. This is the highest workdays lost in five years since workdays lost also increased from 919 780 in 2003 to 1 286 003 in 2004



Wages remains the main reason for strike incidents. About 1 747 816 workdays were lost due to strikes related to pay, in 2005

- By province, Gauteng accounted for the highest number of workdays lost of 1 080 267 (41.1%). This is largely due to the national strikes that occurred including the road freight industry strike in the beginning of the year, the wage municipal strike in July, glass industry strike, pick and pay

and the gold strike

- A number of large stoppages took place in South Africa in 2005. This includes, road freight strike; harmony gold strike; Solid Doors strike; toll road strike; Early Bird farm strike in Standerton; municipal strike in July; South African Airways strike; Cape Furniture manufacture's strike; glass strike; Pick and Pay strike and the gold strike, the first in 18 years. All these 11 strike cases accounted for about 2 009 226 workdays lost. This represents about 76.5% of the total workdays lost in 2005. The gold strike alone accounted for about 479 850 workdays lost, which represents about 18.3% of the total workdays lost in 2005
- Wages remains the main reason for strike incidents. About 1 747 816 workdays were lost due to strikes related to pay, in 2005. This represents about 58.9% of the total workdays lost.
- The most strike-prone industry in the period 2001 and 2002 was the community, social and personal services, while in 2003 to 2005, mining and quarrying were the sectors most affected by strike incidents
- Most strike incidents during the period 2001 and 2005 were procedural and in compliance with the provisions of the Labour Relations Act of 1995. The annual breakdown of compliant strike incidents was as follows: 59.0% in 2001, 46.8 % in 2002, 76.8 % in 2003, 66.0 % in 2004 and 56.9 % in 2005. There is an increase in non-compliance with the provisions of the Labour Relations Act on the part of strikers. This might be attributed to "wildcat" strikes that were not sanctioned by unions
- Employers are increasingly turning to scab labour during industrial actions. In 2003, the use of replacement labour was at 36.0 % and rose to 45.0 % in 2004. During the period under review, about 50.0 % of employers reported the use of scab labour. This therefore explains how Solid Doors, a steel company in Ekangala, Mpumalanga might have survived during the longest strike in the history of South African labour relations. The strike started in November 2004 and ended in August 2005. The strike lasted for about 177 workdays
- Whilst few employers between 2001 and 2005 have reported locking out workers during strikes, the indication is that the number of employers locking out workers during industrial actions is on the rise. Five employers reported to have locked out workers in 2001, six in 2002, eight in 2003, 11 in 2004 and 16 in 2005. This development might be partly due to the fact that employers would like to prevent the intimidation of non-strikers by strikers during industrial actions, which can affect production adversely
- The year 2005 has witnessed the emergence of multi-union strike incidents, like the municipal wage strike in July sanctioned and supported by SAMWU and IMATU; X-Strata Alloys Lydenburg Works sanctioned by NUMSA and Solidarity Union; and Electrical Cable strike called also by NUMSA and Solidarity Union. This development indicates unity in the broad unionised workforce in South Africa which will always serve as a strength during negotiations in the future
- The year 2005 was also characterised by socio-economic protest actions called by the Federation, COSATU against job losses and privatisation
- About 14 390 workdays were lost during strike incidents that were not sanctioned by unions
- Approximately R308 449 173 was lost in wages due to the participation of workers in industrial actions in 2005
- About 48 328 workdays were lost due to the participation in strikes of workers in essential services
- On 15 September 2005, the country's State-funded labour mediators, i.e CCMA, who usually work to end other workers' industrial disputes, went on strike.

Introduction

This Report is an annual update that is meant to provide an overview of developments in industrial action in South Africa in 2005 compared to 2004. It covers the basic measures of strike activity like the number of strikes, working days lost, working hours lost and workers involved. As with the previous reports, our objective is to provide some broad general data on current industrial action developments. It is designed for a variety of individuals and groups with an interest in South Africa's industrial action developments including government departments, unions, employers, businesses, research institutes, NGOs and students. Although we have provided definitions on how the figures were arrived at, this report is not meant to be a statistical guide, which implies that only individuals familiar with issues covered during industrial actions will follow this report without any difficulty.



The 2005's wave of industrial disputes received extensive media coverage and attracted public attention, as it affected the whole spectrum of the economy.

The Labour Relations Act of 1995 provides a fairer balance between the interests of employers, workers and the community as a whole and establishes effective measures which assist in ensuring that unjustified and unlawful industrial action can be stopped or prevented. However, industrial disputes in South Africa have increased recently and so has social tension. The 2005's wave of industrial disputes received extensive media coverage and attracted public attention, as it affected the whole spectrum of the economy.

In 2005 we have seen distinctive strikes, for example, the first nationwide gold miners' strike in 18 years, and the first South African Airways (SAA) strike in a long time. They have had distinctive features, in terms of the kinds of workers involved and the rhetoric behind the wage demands. There is something unique about this year's strike wave that needs exploring. It may be telling us a lot about changes in the nature and aspirations of South Africa's workforce. For what is perhaps most striking about the wave is that these were strikes of good times. The present revival of

industrial action, contrary to the predictions of economic theory, comes amidst a climate of good macroeconomic performance with fast growing output and an unemployment rate remaining relatively constant at 26.5%. The Real Gross Domestic Product accelerated from an annualised rate of 3.5% in the first quarter of 2005 to 5.0% in the second quarter. Real Gross Domestic Product increased at a rate of 4.5% in the first two quarters of 2005. Inflation has remained within the target range of between 3% and 6% since September 2003.

For many analysts, industrial action in South Africa follows fluctuation in economic cycle. Furthermore, it is believed that expectations for substantial pay increases have been indirectly fuelled by the relationship between profit and pay. The relatively new corporate practice of disclosing directors' pay packages has drawn attention to the disparities between raises offered to shop-floor workers and those granted to executives. P-E Corporate Services' national salary survey shows that actual salary increases over 12 months ending 31 December 2005 averaged 8.5% at top management level, 7.0% at senior management level and between 6.0% and 6.9% at other levels in organisations, depending on the particular function (clerical staff, engineering staff, IT staff, etc.), or region concerned. Projected increases for 2006 are approximately 6.5% at all levels and just below 7.0% at top executive level. That has given unions plenty of ammunition during negotiations. It has done so in a socio-economic environment where workers' needs and aspirations are changing. With rising incomes have come expanding needs. In the context of the population as a whole, many of the strikers might be said to have been relatively affluent.

Indeed in 2005, wage negotiators were always querying the official inflation rate, which had fallen to 3.5% in the middle of the year as a basis for wage increases, arguing that the rate workers experience is much higher. But what the 2005 wage round suggested was that though South Africa's inflation-targeting policy has gained credibility, employers and workers still have higher ranges in mind for pay. The year 2005 has witnessed an upsurge of strikes in relation to 2004, and the past three years when industrial action was subdued.



Overview of industrial action in 2005

A number of strike cases were reported in the media in 2005 and the Department of Labour's media monitoring system captured most of them. These kinds of labour disputes affected both small and big companies. However, this overview will be limited to high profile cases since they accounted for a higher percentage of workdays lost. The Department of Labour's media monitoring system reveals the following:

- On 3 January, FAWU embarked on a national strike following a wage deadlock with Nestle. FAWU members were demanding an 8.0 % increase while the company had offered 6.4%. This was the continuation of the dispute that was referred to the CCMA in December 2004
- On 19 January, FAWU members went on a wage strike at Delmonte in Somerset West and Tulbagh. The union wanted a 6.0% wage increase to be backdated to 1 October 2004, while the company was offering 3.0%. It was reported that workers were unhappy with the wage disparity between seasonal and permanent workers at the plants. Striking workers were also demanding a provident fund, with the company to contribute 3.5% and paying R15 000 to workers who did not qualify for the fund such as those over the age of 60 years
- On 3 February, workers at Frame Textiles went on a wage strike after a deadlock with management. Workers were demanding 7.0% across the board, whilst the company was offering 4.0%. In addition the union was protesting against the practice of paying workers above grades. They believed that new workers should be paid the minimum wage and that the extra money should be distributed amongst those who have been with the company longer
- On 7 February, Early Bird workers in Standerton embarked on a wage strike. The workers wanted wages equal to the Olifantsfontein Branch
- On 15 February, Messina Platinum was hit by an illegal strike at its mining operations. Rockdrill operators who had laid down tools were dismissed as reported in the media
- On 26 February, some workers in the road freight sector downed tools after wage negotiations deadlocked, disrupting delivery of fuel and goods across the country. SATAWU was demanding a 9.0% increase across the board, with the raise of 10.0% for those earning a lower wage. Employers represented by the RFEA (Road Freight Employers Association) were offering a 6.5% raise across the board and for those workers earning the minimum
- On 23 March, hundreds of disgruntled Uitenhage municipal workers downed tools in protest against the slow pace of talks in addressing the issue of payment of transitional allowances. SAMWU expressed concern about the discrepancies in wages and salaries of municipal workers in the three metro centres of Uitenhage, Despatch and Port Elizabeth
- Late in March, workers at Gold Reef City Fun Park embarked on a wage dispute with management. The union was demanding an across the board 12.7% pay rise, study loans, bursary scheme and free transport for workers to the funerals of colleagues. It was reported that management had offered a 7.9% rise and had reached agreement on giving its workers paid maternity leave, compassionate leave for funerals involving immediate family members and a provident fund contribution
- On the night of 23 March, workers at Harmony's Free State mines went on strike after Harmony said it planned to fire about 4 914 workers at the mines to cut cost. The union's other demands included larger housing allowances for workers who do not live at the mine compound and an improvement in living conditions for those that do
- Goldfields obtained a Court interdict to compel about 30 000 striking miners back to work after the company's South African operations grounded to a halt on 30 March as workers downed tools to demand an increase in living-out allowance



Most strike incidents during the period 2001 and 2005 were procedural and in compliance with the provisions of the Labour Relations Act of 1995.

- On 7 April, Johannesburg Metro police officers went on “an unprotected” strike in protest against new Sunday overtime payment rates, which they said was drastically slashed
- On 7 April, miners at a northern KZN coal mine staged a sit-in at the Sheleza shaft at the Zululand Anthracite Colliery. They were demanding retrenchment packages from the mine’s owners Ingwe Collieries after the company agreed to sell to another company. Workers were objecting to the sale even though their jobs were guaranteed
- On 18 April, academic staff of the University of Transkei embarked on a wage strike
- On 20 April, North-West Star bus drivers went on strike. The drivers alleged that the company forced them to carry passengers in defective vehicles
- On 6 May, workers of the company that prints South Africa’s bank notes began a pay strike. The strike was protected and came after unresolved attempts at mediation. The strike was in pursuit of a 10.0% salary increase and for a long service award to be bestowed after five years and not the current 10 years
- On 9 May, workers at VW’s parts factory in Roodekop in Alberton downed tools due to an outsourcing agreement with logistics supply company Uti. The company reported that the National Bargaining Forum agreement with the union allowed outsourcing and also pledged to provide workers whose job security was affected by outsourcing with alternative employment
- On 23 May, workers of the Kromberg and Schubert company in Brits went on a wage strike. It was reported that workers were paid R8.00 an hour and were striking for an increase of R4.00 an hour. Some of the reasons for striking were that the company’s general labour practices were unfair. Transport, safety and clocking-in systems were also reported to be not properly managed
- Workers at the chrome mines in North-West and Mpumalanga downed tools on 2 June after parties failed to reach consensus on job gradings emanating from last year’s wage talks. Workers were protesting against the company’s refusal to upgrade certain positions which had been evaluated as part of the 2003/04 wage agreements
- On 6 June, UTATU and UASA embarked on a nationwide pay strike demanding a 6.5% wage increase while metrorail management had offered a 5.5% increase

- On 6 June, Fidelity Supercare's workers in Johannesburg went on strike. The action was in protest against what workers said was an unfair labour practice by the company. It was reported that workers were forced to sign employment contracts which are not fixed and therefore makes it easier for management to dismiss workers at any time
- On 10 June, seasonal workers at the Unifrutti citrus packing facility between Kirkwood and Addo in the Eastern Cape went on a pay strike. The workers also had concerns about the provident fund, night shift allowance and employment equity
- On 13 June, toll road workers downed their tools after demands for a R2 000 minimum salary, as well as a 12.0 % wage increase was refused by management of toll road companies
- A wage strike that started on 23 November 2004 continued to August 2005. This was a dispute between CEPPWAWU and Solid Doors. It was reported that the union declared a dispute with the company after management refused to increase the workers' salaries to more than R760 a month. The union was demanding a minimum wage of R1 200 a month and a guaranteed 10.0% increase
- On 24 June, Zimbabwean farm workers who were hired to pick oranges at Maswiri Boerdery in Tshipise, near Musina in Limpopo went on a pay strike. They were demanding to be paid at least 48 cents for each bag of oranges they pack. Workers said that their employer had breached an agreement to pay them per bag, and was instead paying them per hour
- On 27 June, South African workers demonstrated against job losses and poverty in a countrywide one-day strike that was called by COSATU
- On 8 July, glass production at Nampak and Consol factories was disrupted by a strike over a wage increase. Workers wanted wages to be raised by 6.0%, while employers offered 5.0% from 1 July, rising to 5.5% by January 2006
- 12 July witnessed the beginning of an "on and off" national pay strike by municipal workers. Municipal workers countrywide took to the streets, or stayed at home, to protest against SALGA's 6.0% wage increase offer; municipal bosses' high wages; privatisation of services; and the fact that they have to negotiate a three-year wage deal. The unions wanted to negotiate on an annual basis
- On 22 July, SAA's cabin crew and ground staff went on a wage strike after management and unions deadlocked
- On 22 July, workers at X-Strata Chrome in Rustenburg in the North-West went on strike for higher wages. The strike followed an impasse of two months with the union demanding a 10.0% wage increase for the lowest paid workers, a two-year wage agreement, an hour long meeting every month, a R500 risk allowance as well as skills upgrading of the lowest paid workers
- On 26 July, steel and metal workers started a two-day strike. The Solidarity Union reported that workers were protesting against a wage offer by the sector's employer federation giving unskilled workers a larger percentage increase than skilled workers. It was reported that employers agreed earlier in July to pay 5.2% for the highest-paid skilled workers, and 6.8 % for the lowest paid grades of unskilled workers
- On 27 July, workers at Highveld Steel and Vanadium, SA's second largest steel producer went on a pay strike after NUMSA and Solidarity rejected a revised wage offer of 5.5%. The unions demanded 8.0% and a 5.0% increase in a housing allowance. In a bid to avert the strike, Highveld Steel increased its offer from 5.0% to 5.5% but after the workers went ahead with the strike, the company reverted to 5.0%
- On 29 July, the National Union of Furniture and Allied Workers went on strike for more pay. The workers initially demanded a 15.0% wage increase, but lowered it to 9.5%. The Cape Furniture Manufacturing Association was offering 5.5%, but the workers then wanted an 8.0% wage increase
- On 7 August, South African gold miners forged ahead with a national workstoppage, rejecting

wage offers from employers trying to end the biggest strike in 18 years. The unions were demanding increases of between 8.0% and 12.0%. The Chamber of Mines representing the employers initially offered a 5.0% pay increase for miners and 4.5% for higher-income workers, prompting unions to announce strike action

- Thousands of Metcash Africa Trading workers embarked on a strike on 12 August. This came after a recent retrenchment of hundreds of workers at Wholesale Metcash Africa
- On 31 August, eight Western Cape fishing factories came to a standstill when workers in the sardine and anchovy industry downed tools. The strike started after FAWU and the Pelagic Fishing Industry Association deadlocked over a wage dispute and several other issues. Full time workers were demanding a 7.0% wage increase and the company was offering a 6.5% increase. Companies were also offering workers 16.3% of the basic income for off-season allowances but they demanded 17.0%
- On 6 September 2005, workers of Kanhym Estates, a farming company in Middelburg, Mpumalanga went on strike for higher wages. The workers were demanding a 10.0% increase, while the company was offering 6.5%. They also wanted 20 working days' leave per year and a R10 per shift across the board payment for night shifts
- On 14 September 2005, about 360 CCMA workers began a strike. The dispute revolved around the CCMA's pay offer of 5% and CSA's (Commission Staff Association) demand of 6%. Other issues included the matter of the 13th cheque
- On 15 September, more than 3 000 Magnum Shield Security Services workers, mostly guards in Gauteng went on strike against poor working conditions. The two main issues at the core of the dispute were, not being paid their money in full when working on public holidays and that only 12 days are available for annual leave instead of 21 days
- On 19 September 2005, NUM began a strike at Bonanza South Gold mine near Klerksdorp along with what was termed an illegal underground sit-in. It was reported that the company had offered NUM a three-year wage agreement, starting with an effective 10.0% raise for this year, backdated to 1 June. This would have been followed by a 7.0% increase next year and 7.2% increase in the third year. In addition, management offered to jointly investigate the setting up of a provident fund, into which workers could contribute on a voluntary basis
- On 25 September, workers of Nationwide Airline embarked on a wage strike. Workers were demanding a 5.0% salary increase plus another 3.0% increase in pension fund contributions. Management was offering a 4.0% salary increase
- In October, Cosatu embarked on a job loss protest action. These protests took place every Monday in specific selected provinces
- On 7 October, workers of beauty and pharmacy retailer Clicks embarked on a nationwide strike. Clicks had offered a wage increase of R225 per month, an 8.8% rise over 2004 levels, while the union was demanding a R300 or 10.0% wage hike
- On 13 October, workers at the University of Limpopo embarked on a pay strike. It was reported that workers were not happy with a proposed 7.0% salary increase offer. The university had already implemented the proposed 7.0% increase. The workers were demanding 12.0%
- Workers of the Protea Hotel Wilderness Resort went on a wage strike on 28 October. The workers were in an official dispute with management over terms of this year's annual pay negotiations. It was reported that workers had disagreements with the hotel concerning the amount of their annual increase, the minimum wage levels and the compensation for public holidays. Workers were demanding a wage increase of R180 a month and a minimum wage of R2 100 while management was offering a R155 a month wage increase and a minimum wage of R1 955
- On 11 November, workers of the Estate Agency Affairs Board, the regulatory body for estate agents went on a pay strike. Workers belonging to NEHAWU were demanding a 10.0% salary increase for the board's administrative staff members
- On 16 November, guards based at the Special Armed Services in Johannesburg went on strike



complaining about abuse in the hands of management

- On 18 November, security guards and cleaners at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront went on a wage strike after wage negotiations deadlocked with management. Members of SATAWU were asking for a 9% wage increase. The V and A Waterfront offered a 6.5% increase. This dispute was also referred to the CCMA
- Workers employed by the Woolworths supply chain service provider Universal Product Networks (UPN) went on strike on 15 November. SACCAWU had reported that workers had demanded a 10.7% increase on the minimum wage of R3 268. It was reported that UPN had offered an across the board increase of 7.3% which workers had rejected
- The average level of settlement for the 12 months ending 31 December 2005 was 6.3% according to Andrew Levy and Associates.



Trends in work stoppages and workdays lost, 2001-2005

This section is meant to give trends of workstoppages and workdays lost for the period 2001 to 2005. The two basic measures of strike activity (i.e. number of strikes and workdays lost) will be covered in this section since this report is mainly focusing on 2005 with comparison to 2004. Each of these refers to a different dimension of strike activity, which is affected by somewhat different causal factors. Partly for this reason variations in each measure can be said to have a different significance. **Figure 1** presents workstoppages for the period 2001 to 2005. In 2005, there were 102 stoppages of work due to labour disputes, higher than the 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 totals of 83, 47, 62 and 49 respectively. The number of strike incidents increased by 22.9% (19) between 2001 and 2005. Although the number of strike incidents in 2005 was the highest in five years, strikes have been fluctuating in the five-year period, declining in one year and rising in another as shown by **Figure 1**. Whilst eleven large strikes were counted in 2005, as opposed to only two in 2004, 2005 was also characterised by too many small strikes that involved even about five workers. For example, Pres-Les (Pty) Ltd, where only 42 workers participated in the strike, Baer Safety Footwear (Pty) Ltd with five workers participating, and M Meydell with only 14 workers participating.

Figure 1: Trends in work stoppages in South Africa, 2001-2005

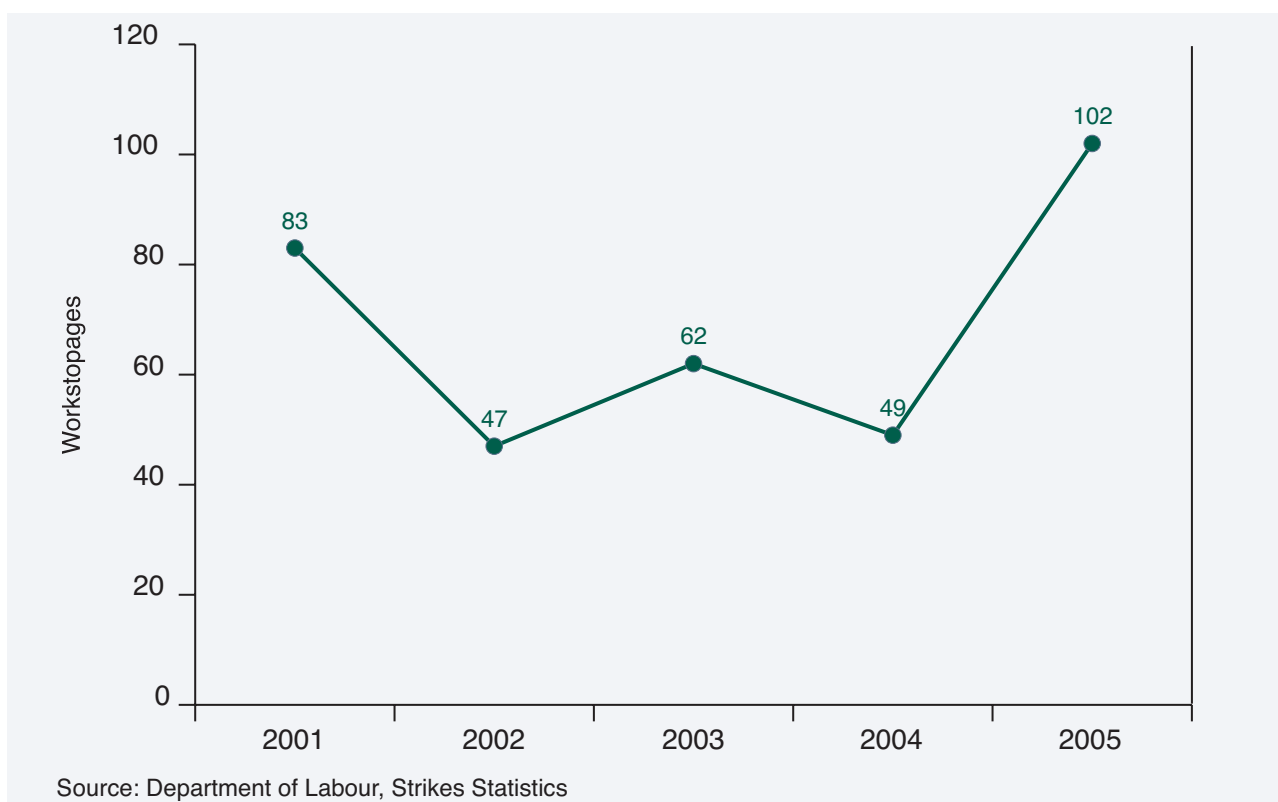
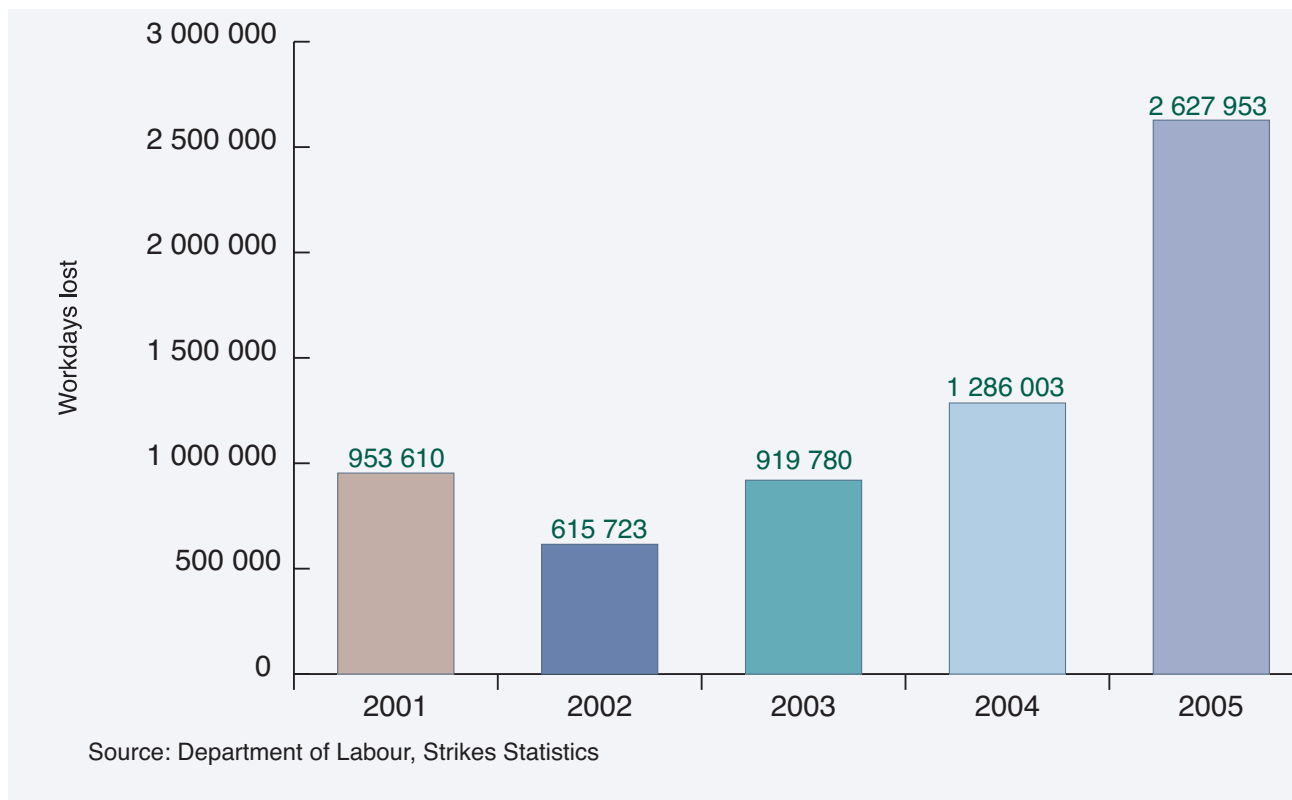


Figure 2 illustrates another basic measure of strike activity, i.e. working days lost. It is calculated by multiplying the number of workers involved by the duration of the strike. The Department of Labour covers all workers involved in the strike, i.e. directly and indirectly involved. However, we do not make a distinction between working days lost by those directly involved and those indirectly involved, an aggregate figure for the affected establishments is all that is analysed. Given our aim of maximising comparability between the various strike series we regard these aggregated figures for working days lost as a further justification for not separating workers involved directly and indirectly.

In 2005, 2 627 953 working days were lost in South Africa from 102 stoppages of work arising from labour disputes. The working days lost were more than double the total lost in 2004 and was the highest annual total since 2001. Working days lost increased by a whopping 175.6% (1 674 343) between 2001 and 2005. The unusually high number of working days lost in 2005 was due to 11 very large stoppages which accounted for 75.6% of the total working days lost in 2005. One incident, the gold strike accounted for about 18.3% of the total working days lost in 2005. This shows the impact that large disputes can have on the statistics. This was also evident in 2004 when two disputes in the platinum mining sector accounted for about 53.0% of the total working days lost over the year.

Figure 2: Trends in workdays lost due to labour disputes in South Africa, 2001-2005





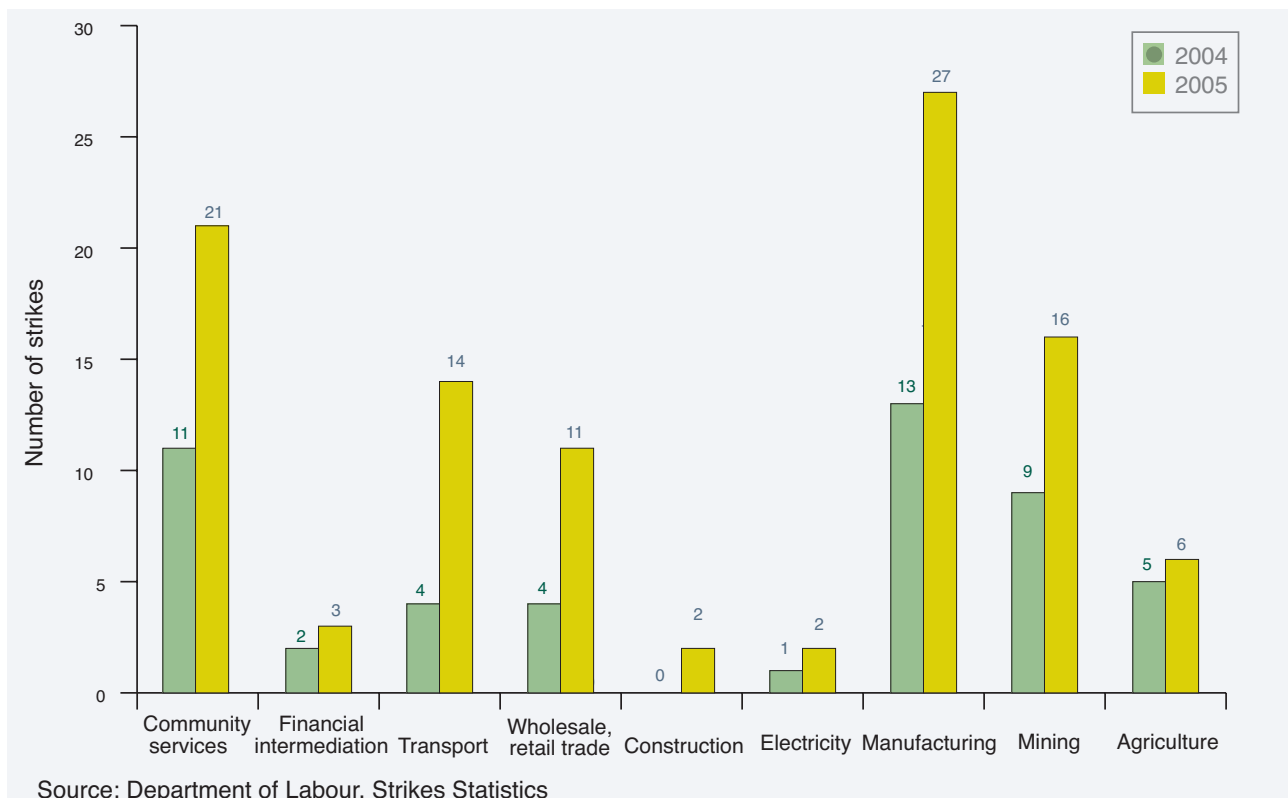
Comparative analysis, 2004 and 2005

This section presents figures on labour disputes between 2004 and 2005. The statistics presented in this section are useful for showing relative levels of the number of strikes, working days lost and working hours lost through disputes in South Africa and how they have changed over time.

4.1. Industrial action by industry

Figure 3 presents strike cases by industry (classified according to Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)). As in earlier analysis of strikes, we found that the industrial distribution of strikes was most uneven. While a few strikes were recorded in the electricity, gas and water supply and the construction industries, the industry with the highest incidences of strikes in 2005 was manufacturing with 27 stoppages. This represents an increase of 107.7 % (14) compared with 13 incidences of strikes in the manufacturing industry in 2004. However, even in 2004, the manufacturing industry also accounted for the highest number of strike incidences. The industry with the second highest number of strike incidences in 2005 was the community, social and personal services with 21 industrial actions, followed by mining and quarrying with 16, transport storage and communication with 14, and the wholesale and retail trade with 11. Altogether these 5 industries accounted for 87.3% (89) of all stoppages. In general those industries which were sizeable contributors to the strike totals were also sizeable contributors to the major strike series, such as the Pick 'n Pay strike in the Wholesale and Retail Industry and the gold strike in the Mining and Quarrying Industry. In 2004, the three industries, i.e. manufacturing, community social and personal services and mining and quarrying accounted for 67.4 % (33) of all stoppages.

Figure 3: Industrial share of strike incidents, 2004 and 2005



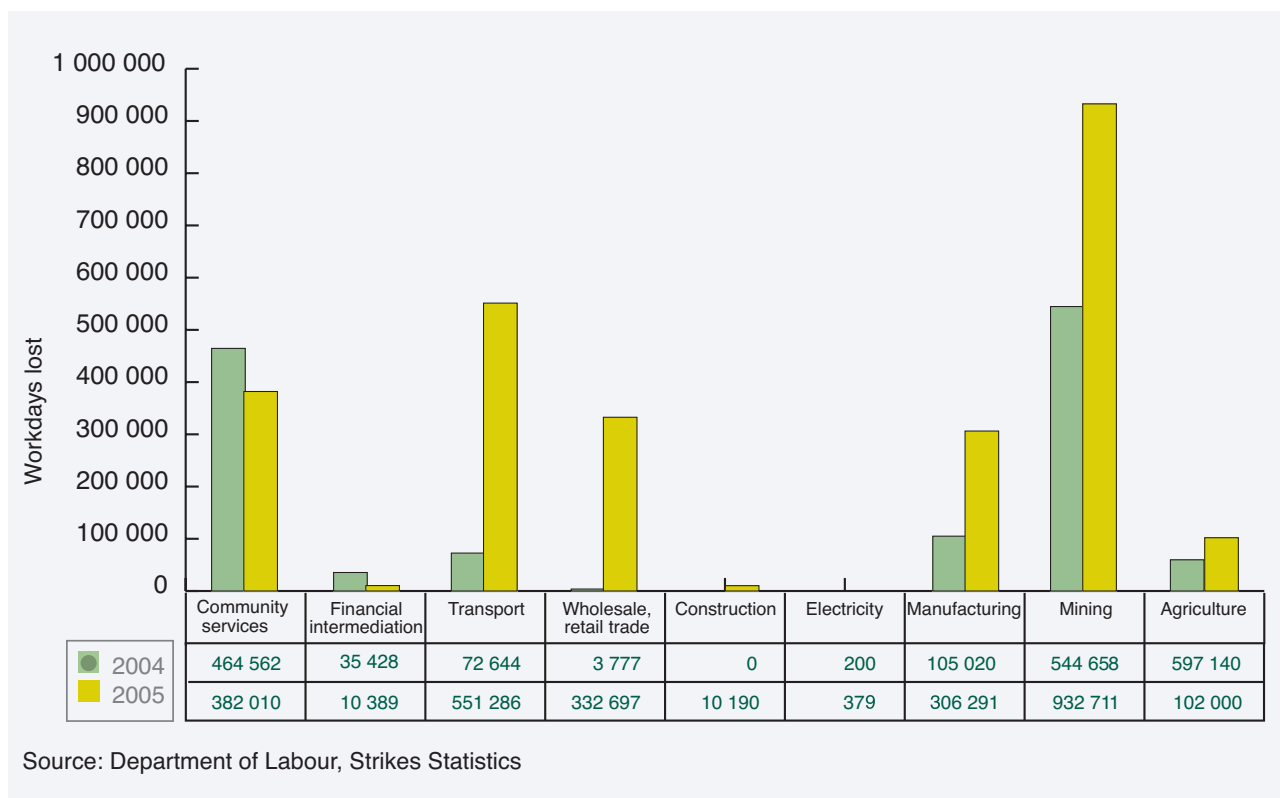
4.2. Workdays lost by industry

Figure 4 shows working days lost broken down into nine industrial groups (classified according to the Standard Industrial Classification). The number of working days lost is sometimes used as an indicator of the economic effects of strikes on production. However, the days lost series may considerably under- or over estimate the effect on production. In situations where large stocks are available, or where extra working before or after the stoppage is possible, or where suitable spare capacity exists elsewhere, the losses incurred during a stoppage may be offset by increased production at other times or in other places. Alternatively, if a stoppage occurs where stocks are low or the product is not storeable, or no spare capacity exists, the disruption may spread far beyond the immediately affected area.

In practice it is often difficult to distinguish the effects of stoppages from those of the thousands of other changes which are constantly occurring in the economy. In any case identification of the effects of stoppages on production would not permit an estimation of the economic loss involved unless it could be shown that the “lost production” would have been sold. Indeed, it has been argued that the tendency for big long stoppages to occur during recessions suggests that the production was surplus to requirements, i.e. stoppages provide a means of reducing stocks without reducing capacity (Durcan et al, 1983:12). Yet despite all the difficulties of interpretation the number of working days lost remains an important indicator of the extent and duration of strike activity. In 2005, about 2 627 953 working days were lost due to strike incidents in South Africa, as opposed to 1 286 003 in 2004.

Just like in 2004, mining and quarrying had the largest share of working days lost in 2005 with 932 711 (35.5%). Transport, storage and communication had the second highest number of working days lost in 2005 with 551 286 (21.0%), an increase of 658.9%. This development could be attributed to a multi-employer strike in the gold and road freight sectors. Electricity, gas and water supply and construction had the least number of working days lost in both 2004 and 2005. However, working days lost slightly increased in both years.

Figure 4: Industrial share of workdays lost, 2004 and 2005

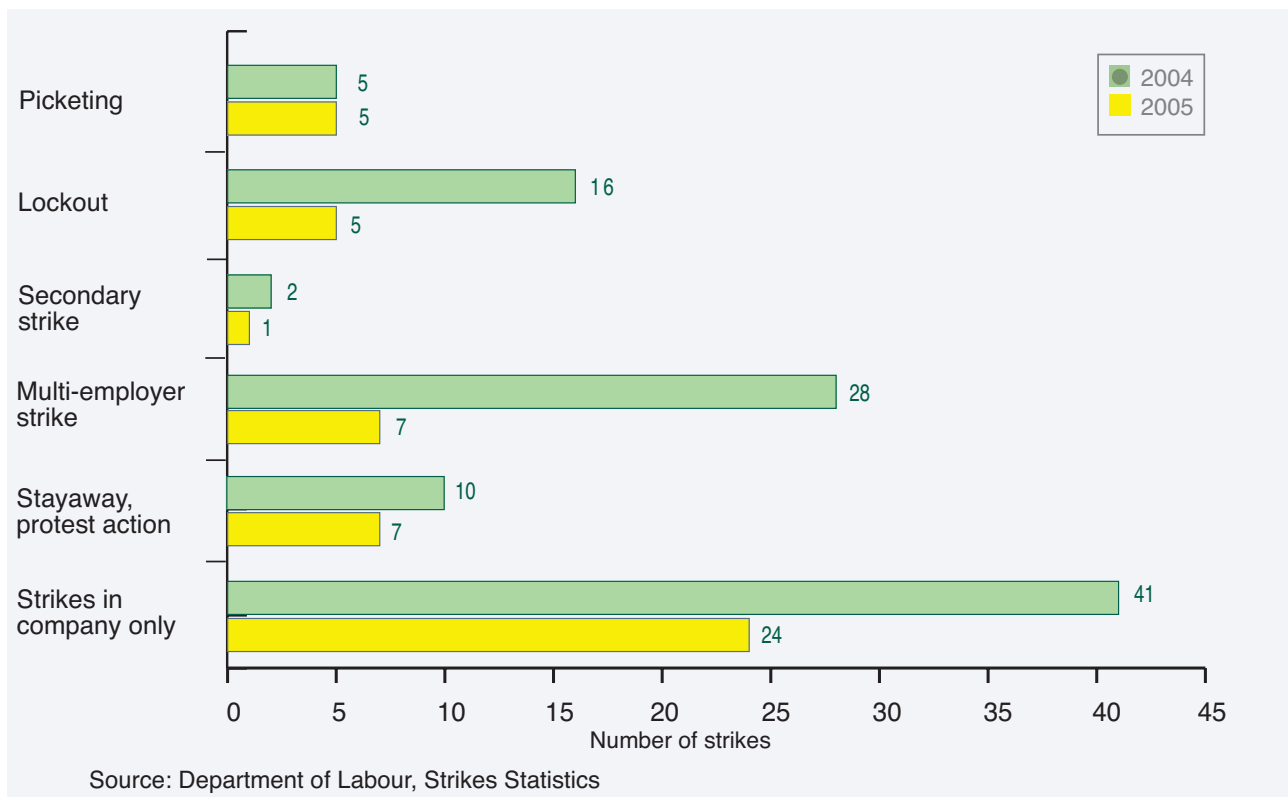


4.3. Nature of industrial actions

Strike incidents take several forms like picketing, lockout, etc. However, it should be noted that one stoppage might also take more than one form of strike incident. For example, while workers are on strike in a company, they might also decide to picket in front of the company to make customers aware that there is strike action taking place. The recent example is the two strikes that affected New Clicks South Africa that began on 7 October and another one affecting the University of Limpopo that began on 13 October. Another case is when workers who are on strike in one company are locked out by employers for various reasons. A recent example is that of the EET Group of Companies that locked out its workers after a strike that began on 15 September and ended on 4 October.

Figure 5 shows the number of strike incidents by its nature in both 2004 and 2005. Most of the strikes that took place in both 2004 and 2005 were single employer strikes, i.e., strikes in a company only. About 40.2 % (41) of the total strikes affected single-employers as opposed to 49.0 % (24). Comparing 2004 and 2005, strikes in company only increased by 70.8 % (17). There was also a dramatic increase in the number of multi-employer strikes that include the gold and glass industry strikes. About 28 multi-employer strike incidences were recorded in 2005 in contrast to only seven in 2004. This represented an increase of 75.0 % (21) of industrial actions. There were few sympathy strikes and picketings throughout the country in both 2004 and 2005 that were recorded by the Department of Labour.

Figure 5: Industrial actions distribution by its nature, 2004 and 2005



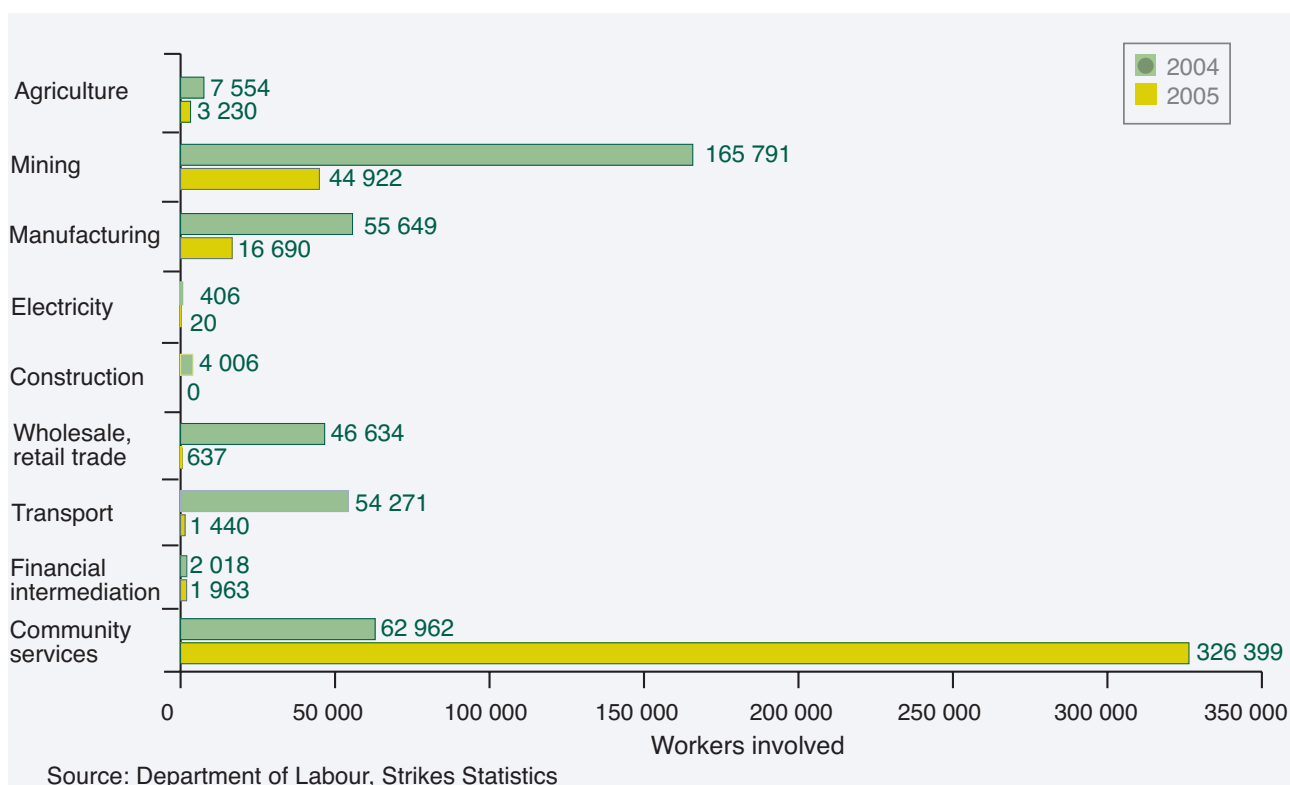
4.4. Workers involved in industrial actions

The instrument used to collect strikes data provides for the distinction between workers “directly” and “indirectly” involved in industrial actions. Workers directly involved are those who went on strike, or were locked out, as a result of a dispute. Workers indirectly involved are those not working as a consequence of the initial stoppage of work because the necessary supplies or orders are no longer available. The Department only counts those workers indirectly involved who

are employed in the same establishment(s) as part of the total involved in strikes. All our series of workers involved, relate to all workers involved, i.e. to the total of directly and indirectly involved at the same establishments. Workers involved in repetitive strikes like Harmony gold mine, and municipal strikes were counted on each occasion they took the strike action. There was an increase in the total number of workers participating in industrial action in 2005 compared to 2004. Workers involved in industrial actions had relatively increased by 1.0% (3 990) from 395 301 in 2004 to 399 291 in 2005.

Figure 6 shows that the number of workers involved in industrial actions differs by industry. In 2005, mining and quarrying had the highest number of workers that participated in industrial actions, whilst community, social and personal services accounted for the highest number of workers involved in strike incidents in 2004. The number of workers involved in industrial actions in the mining and quarrying industry increased from 44 922 in 2004 to 165 791 in 2005. This represents an increase of 269.1% (120 869) of workers involved in industrial actions. However, workers involved in strike incidents in the community, social and personal services decreased from 326 399 in 2004 to 62 962 in 2005. This represents a decrease of 418.4% (263 437) of workers involved in strike incidents.

Figure 6: Workers involved in industrial actions by industry, 2004 and 2005



4.5. Working hours lost by industry

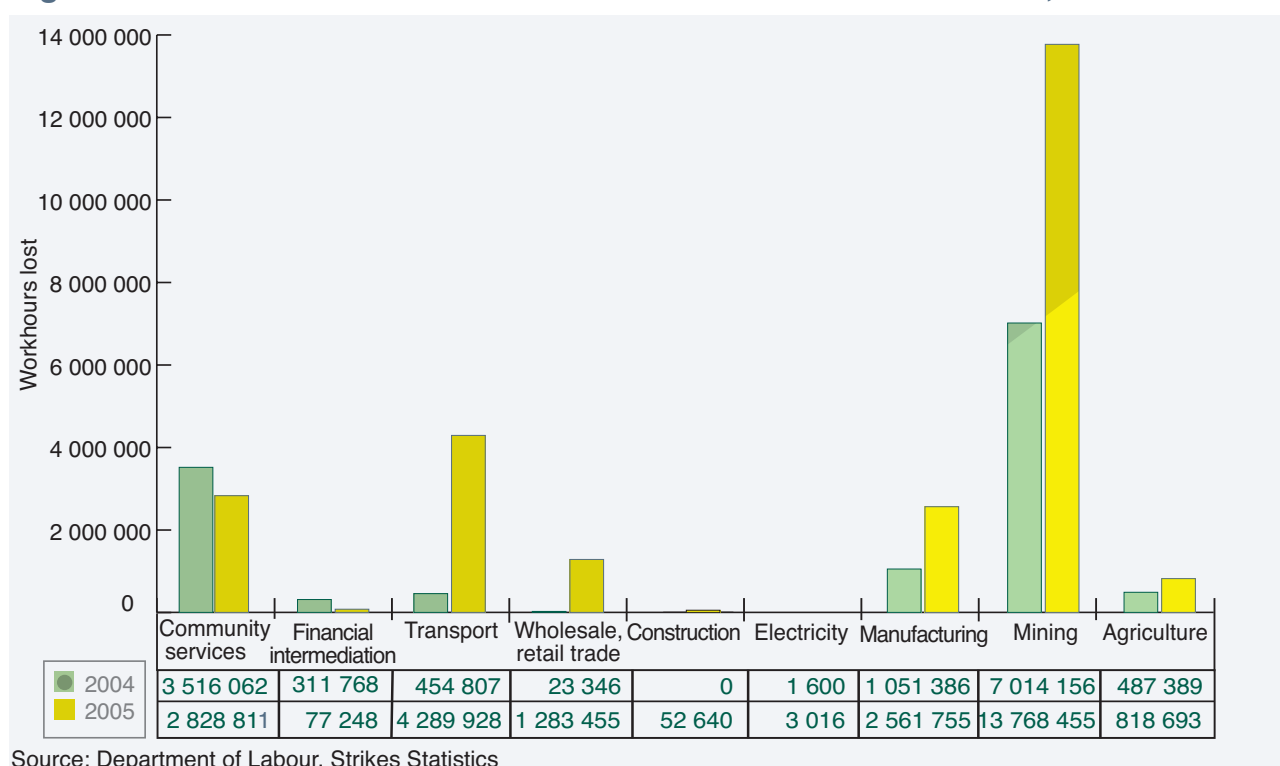
An alternative way of putting the strikes statistics into a wider context is to consider working hours lost through strikes as a proportion of hours actually worked in South Africa in a specified period of time. Unfortunately, it is not possible to come up with this kind of analysis in South Africa since there is no survey conducted in the country on the actual time that has been worked in any period of time. In 2005, about 25 684 001 working hours were lost due to labour disputes as opposed to 12 860 514 in 2004. **Figure 7** reveals that just like with working days lost, mining and quarrying had the highest share of working hours lost with 13 768 455, an increase of 6 754 299. Transport, storage and communication had the second highest number of working hours lost in 2005 with 4 289 928, an increase of 3 835 121. Electricity, gas and water supply had few working days lost with a slight increment in both years.

4.6. Industrial actions and workdays lost by province

The distribution of industrial actions and workdays lost differ by province. **Table 1** shows the provincial distribution of strike incidents and working days lost in both 2004 and 2005. When interpreting working days lost, it is important to bear in mind that the industrial composition of employment in a province is a major factor influencing the scale of labour disputes experienced. In both 2004 and 2005, Gauteng accounted for the highest number of strike incidents in the country with 22 and 51 respectively. This represented an increase of 131.8% in the number of strikes. Limpopo and the Free State accounted for the least number of strike incidents in 2005 with five each. However, Limpopo experienced a slight increase in strikes, whilst the Free State recorded a decrease.

Similarly, Gauteng also accounted for the highest number of working days lost in the country in 2005 with 1 080 267, as opposed to North-West in 2004 with 547 186. In Gauteng, working days lost increased from 228 922 in 2004 to 1 080 267 in 2005. This represents an increase of 371.8% in working days lost. Limpopo and Northern Cape lost the least number of working days in 2005 and the former province experienced a decrease in working days lost, whilst Northern Cape recorded a rise.

Figure 7: Industrial share of workhours lost due to industrial actions, 2004 and 2005



Source: Department of Labour, Strikes Statistics

Table 1: Number of industrial actions and workdays lost by province , 2004 and 2005

Province	Industrial action		Workdays lost	
	2004	2005	2004	2005
Gauteng	22	51	228 922	1 080 267
Western Cape	9	8	59 261	135 914
Mpumalanga	11	8	65 261	274 500
KwaZulu-Natal	9	7	269 327	179 890
Eastern Cape	6	12	13 480	292 182
Limpopo	4	5	66 403	25 926
North-West	4	9	547 186	221 949
Northern Cape	2	11	13 544	67 381
Free State	11	5	22 396	349 944
Total	69	116	1 286 003	2 627 953

Source: Department of Labour, Strikes Statistics

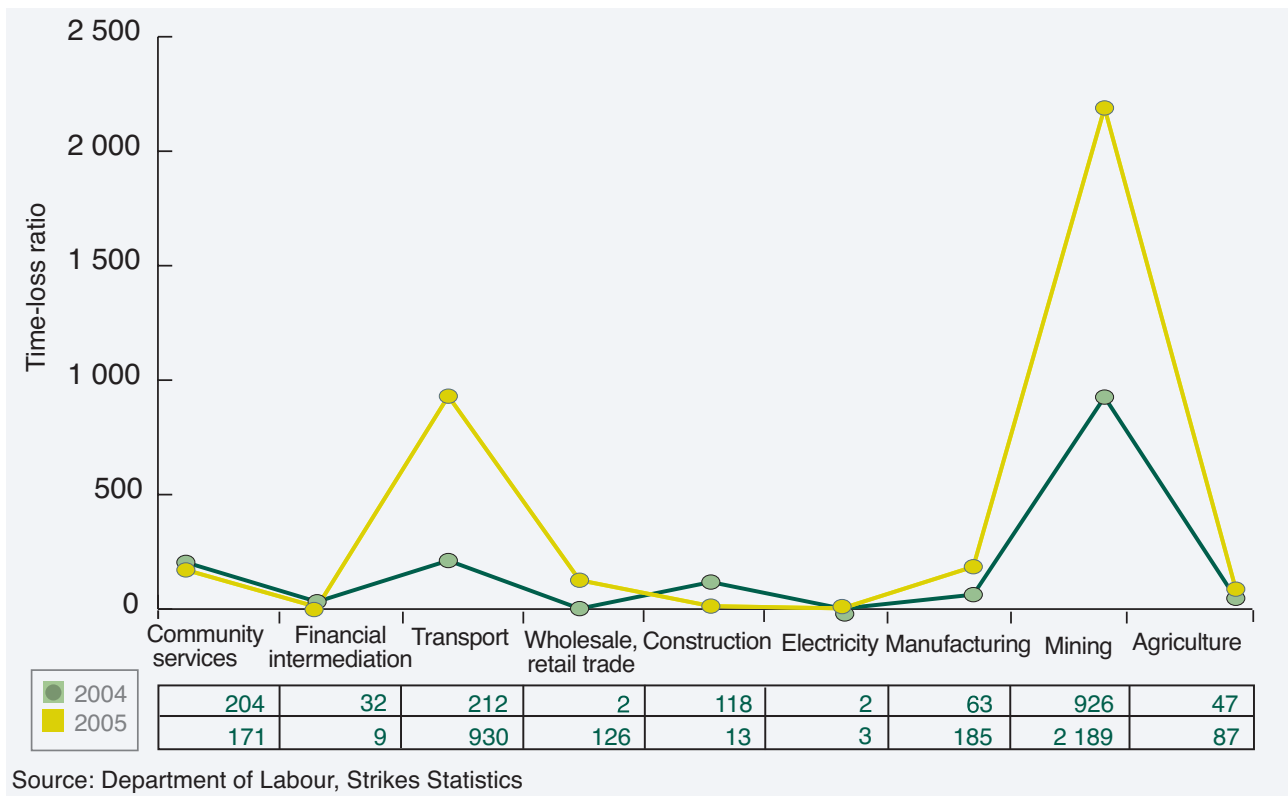
4.7. Time-loss ratio by industry

Time-loss ratio is defined as the number of workdays lost due to strikes per 1 000 workers. It is the standard method that is used to convert workdays lost into a strike rate that takes account of the size of total employment in a specific country. In this way a researcher will be able to make comparisons across industries and provinces that differ in employment size. Time-loss ratio is a useful measure of the intensity of strike activity in a country over a particular time period. This is the only indicator that can be used reliably to compare strike activity in different countries and industries.

According to the Labour Force Survey produced by Statistics South Africa, total employment stood at 11 907 000 in March 2005. However, South Africa lost about 1 286 003 and 2 627 953 working days in 2004 and 2005 respectively. This translates into 107 and 221 working days lost per 1 000 workers in 2004 and 2005 respectively. It represents an increase in time-loss ratio by 114 working days lost per 1 000 workers between 2004 and 2005.

Figure 8 indicates working days lost per 1 000 workers by industry for the years 2004 and 2005. Mining and quarrying accounted for the highest working days lost per 1 000 workers in 2004 and 2005 with 926 and 2 189 respectively. This represents an increase of 1 263 (136.4%) working days lost per 1 000 workers between 2004 and 2005. Transport had the second highest time-loss ratio in 2005 with 930, a dramatic rise from 2004. Electricity, gas and water supply and financial intermediation had the least time-loss ratios of them all. These developments indicate clearly that mining and quarrying remains the most strike-prone industry in the country. In 2004, it was the platinum mines that were hit hard by strikes and in the period under review we saw the first gold strike in 18 years. Transport, storage and communication was also hardest hit by strikes in 2005 with road freight strike, toll road etc.

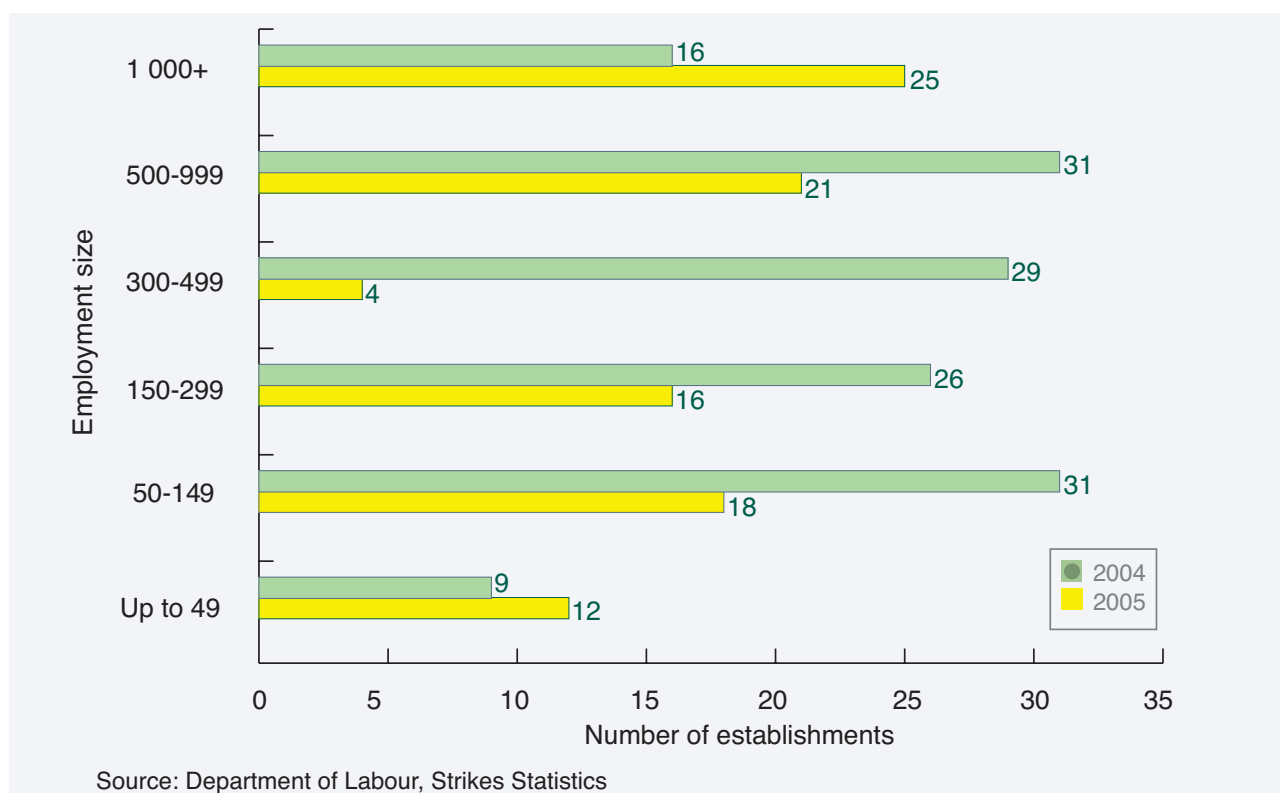
Figure 8: Workdays lost per 1 000 workers by industry, 2004 and 2005



4.8. Industrial action by establishment size

Figure 9 shows establishments affected by industrial actions by employment size. In South Africa, a small and medium size enterprise is defined as any business with fewer than 200 workers (Cronje et al, 1997:451). The Department's records reveal that incidents of industrial actions are not confined to an organisation with a certain number of workers. Big and small establishments are affected by labour disputes. **Figure 9** shows that about 31 (21.8%) establishments affected by strikes in 2005 had a workforce size of between 50 and 149 workers, whilst only 16 establishments employed 1 000 and more people. The number of establishments affected by strikes and employing between 50 and 149 increased from 18 in 2004 to 31 in 2005. This represents a rise of 13 (41.9%) in the number of establishments employing between 50 and 149 workers that were affected by strikes between 2004 and 2005. The number of establishments employing 1 000 workers and more that were affected by strikes in turn declined from 25 in 2004 to 16 in 2005. This represents a decrease of nine (36.0%) establishments employing 1 000 and more workers that were affected by strikes between 2004 and 2005.

Figure 9: Employment size of the establishments affected by industrial actions, 2004 and 2005



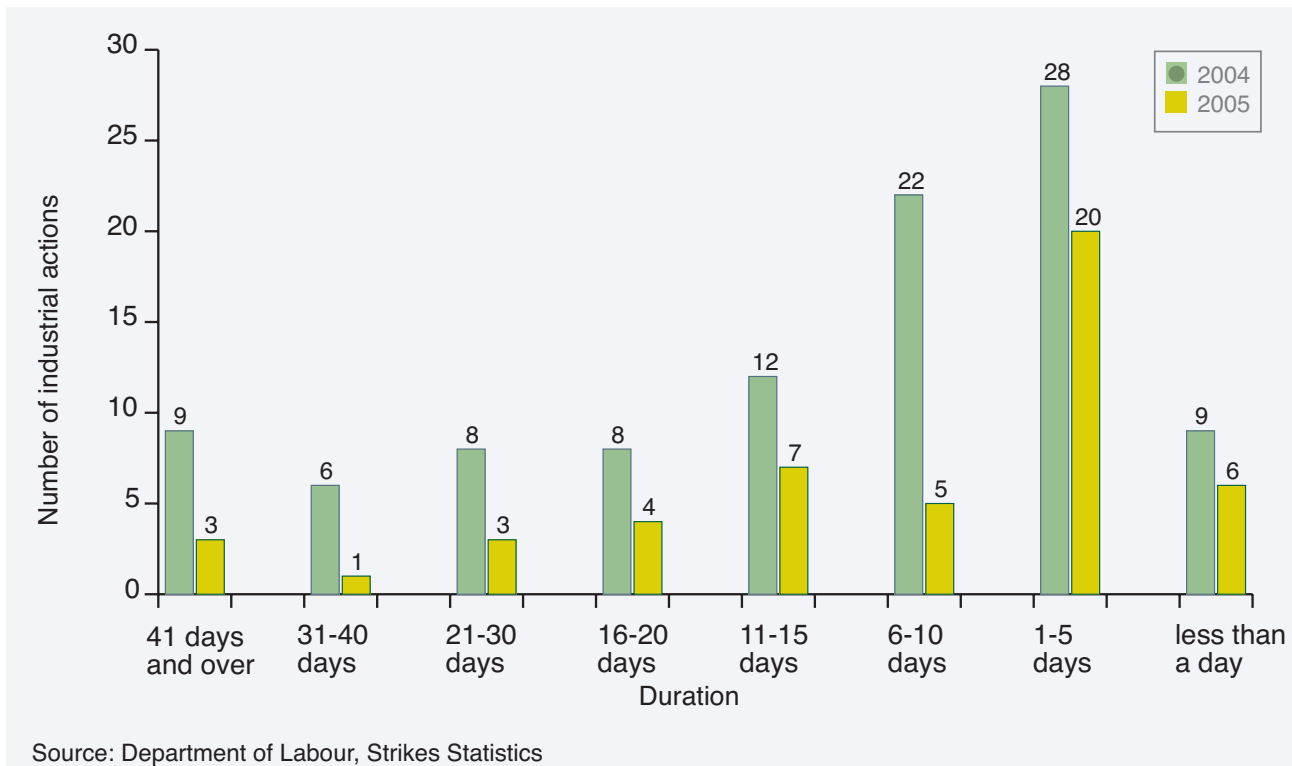
4.9. Duration of industrial actions

The duration measured in working days of stoppages in the period 2004 and 2005 is shown in **Figure 10**. In 2005, the longest strike lasted for about 177 days. This was a strike over wages that started on the 23 November 2004 and ended on the 15 August 2005. The strike involved CEPPWAWU and the Solid Doors company in Ekangala, Mpumalanga. Some strikes in 2005 were only resolved after more than 40 days. This includes a strike that affected SA Bulk Terminals Ltd in KwaZulu-Natal that lasted for about 49 days, Pt Operational Services (Pty) Ltd in Gauteng that was resolved after 45 days, the toll road strike also resolved after 45 days and the Cape furniture manufacturer's strike that only ended after 41 days.

Figure 10 shows that about 28 (27.5%) strikes lasted between one and five days, whilst 22 (21.6%) strikes were resolved within six and 10 days in 2005. Stoppages that lasted between one and five days rose from 20 in 2004 to 28 in 2005. This represents an increase of eight strikes

(40.0%) that lasted between one and five days. Strikes that were resolved within six and 10 days also rose from five in 2004 to 22 in 2005, which represents an increase of 17 strikes (340.0%). It is evident that stoppages lasting between one and five days became more common in 2004 and 2005. These changes may be interpreted as indicating that small scale token stoppages became more common and that other disputes became more difficult to resolve, perhaps because the hardening of attitudes by parties involved in negotiations, prolonged the disputes. The majority of prolonged stoppages involved a relatively small number of workers. For example, the Solid Doors strike that lasted for 177 days involved only 325 workers. It is evident that prolonged strike action is still the exclusive province of small stoppages. It seems that pressures to bring about a speedy settlement are still more likely to be effective in the case of large stoppages, since the first gold strike in 18 years that involved almost 100 000 workers and only lasted for five days.

Figure 10: Industrial actions distribution by duration, 2004 and 2005



4.10. Working days lost and causes for strikes

Figure 11 shows the distribution of working days lost by cause. Of all possible causes which could be ascribed to working days lost, the most frequently occurring is wage issues. In 2005, wage issues accounted for 1 747 816 working days lost (66.5%). **Figure 11** shows an increase in the number of working days lost accounted for by wage increase from 1 112 984 in 2004 to 1 747 816 in 2005. This represents an increase of 634 832 (57.0%) working days lost accounted for by wage increase. In 2005, socio-economic and political conditions also accounted for the second highest number of working days lost with 550 197 (20.9%). However, affirmative action accounted for the least number of working days lost in 2005. This clearly indicates that affirmative action has not been a bargaining issue recently.

4.11. Working days lost and trade unions

Table 2 presents working days lost due to labour disputes sanctioned by trade unions and also without the support of trade unions. In both 2004 and 2005, most working days were lost in strike incidents that had full support of NUM. In 2005, 927 419 working days (35.3%) were lost in industrial actions that were sanctioned by NUM, whilst in 2004, NUM's related strikes accounted for about 404 263 working days lost (31.4%). SATAWU has also been prominent in calling strikes that resulted in the second highest number of working days lost in both 2004 and 2005. SATAWU

sanctioned strikes resulted in the loss of 554 771 working days (21.1%) in 2005, as opposed to 218 736 (17.0%). Some strikes that affected the following companies, i.e. Messina Platinum Mines, Zululand Anthracite Colliery and Maswiri Boerdery Edms Bpk, went ahead without the support of trade unions. “Wildcat” strikes, i.e. those organised without the support of unions resulted in the loss of 14 390 working days in 2005 as opposed to only 56 working days lost in 2004.



In 2005, wage issues accounted for 1 747 816 working days lost (66.5%).

Figure 11 Workdays lost distribution by main cause, 2004 and 2005

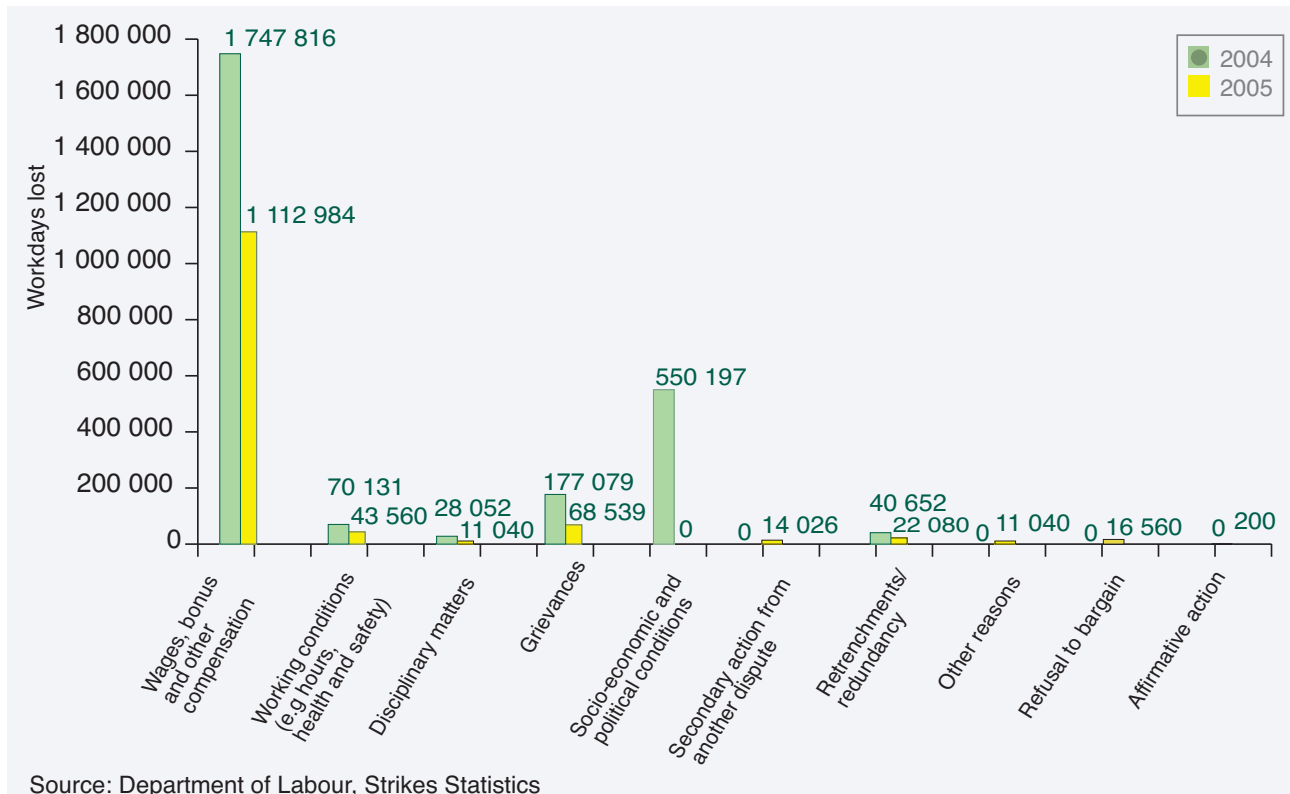


Table 2: Distribution of working days lost by trade union movement, 2004 and 2005

Trade union	2004		2005	
	Workdays lost	%	Workdays lost	%
FAWU	62 271	4.8	139 777	5.3
NUMSA	84 407	6.6	54 738	2.1
SACCAWU	16 356	1.3	319 060	12.1
TAWU	2 521	0.2	10 000	0.4
NUM	404 263	31.4	927 419	35.3
NONE	56	0.0	14 390	0.5
AMAWU	7 770	0.6	0	0.0
NEAWU	4 059	0.3	0	0.0
AMCU	18 632	1.4	0	0.0
CEPPWAWU	5 920	0.5	53 910	2.1
NEWU	1 140	0.1	0	0.0
POPCRU	3 257	0.3	0	0.0
SADNU	1 430	0.1	0	0.0
AWAWU	114	0.0	0	0.0
NEHAWU	218 407	17.0	16 972	0.6
NUFBSAW	8 337	0.6	0	0.0
CWUSA	3 624	0.3	0	0.0
NDCAWU	23 205	1.8	0	0.0
ATUSAW	19 086	1.5	0	0.0
NULAW	297	0.0	112	0.0
UASA	5 000	0.4	28 130	1.1
CUSA	204	0.0	0	0.0
CWU	7 084	0.6	983	0.0
PSA	90 000	7.0	0	0.0
WESUSA	10	0.0	0	0.0
SAMWU	1 000	0.1	214 747	8.2
SOLIDARITY UNION	67 000	5.2	112 047	4.3
SACTWU	0	0.0	10 349	0.4
SACWU	0	0.0	626	0.0
IMATU	221	0.0	40 548	1.5
NTESU	0	0.0	1 000	0.0
NUPSAW	0	0.0	6 909	0.3
SATAWU	218 736	17.0	554 771	21.1
PTWU	0	0.0	10 240	0.4
GIWUSA	0	0.0	1 442	0.1
TAWUSA	3 000	0.2	390	0.0
SACU	0	0.0	44	0.0
UTATU	8 596	0.7	31 665	0.8
NUFAW	0	0.0	82 000	3.2
PTWUSA	0	0.0	4 888	0.2
CSA	0	0.0	796	0.0

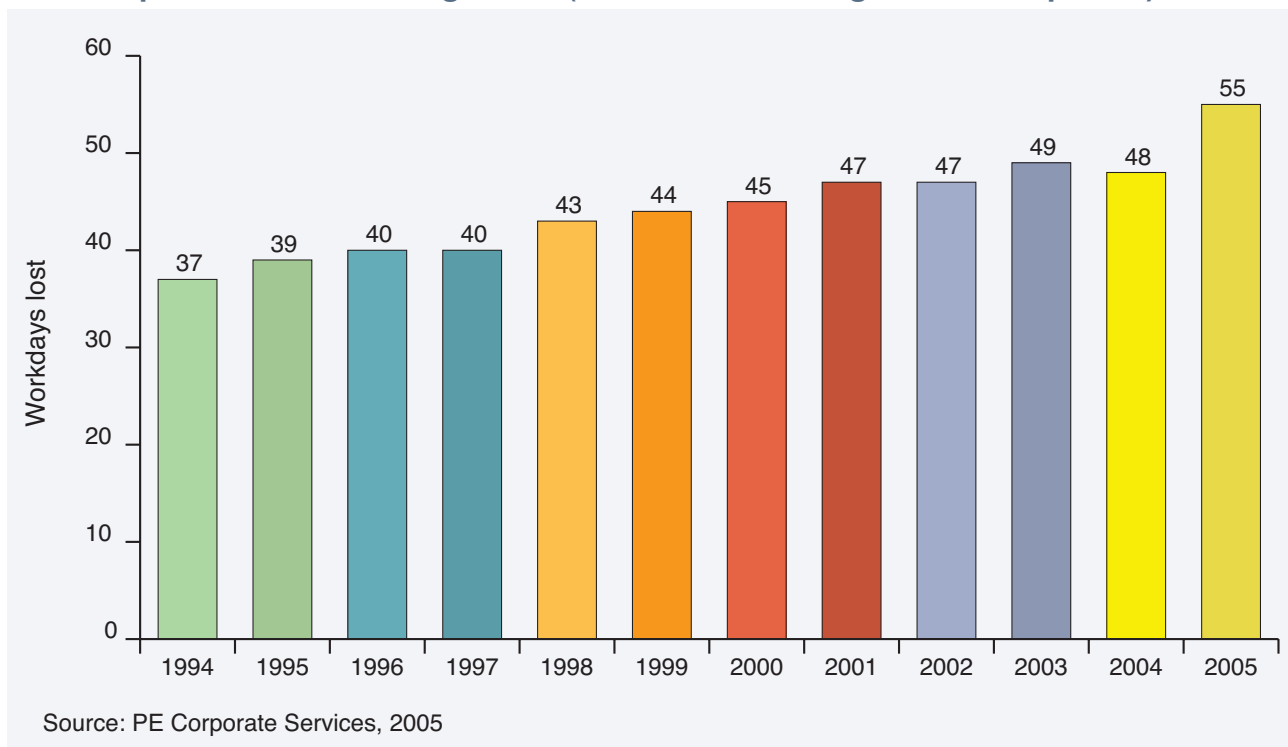


What explains the 2005 high strike incidence in South Africa?

Strike activity (measured in work days lost) in South Africa has been on the increase over the past four years and this development leaves a major question unanswered, what explains the recent high strike incidence in South Africa? Whilst the Department has not yet conducted a study to properly test the influence of both exogenous and endogenous factors in explaining strike activity, however, it is in a position to provide some pointers towards answering this fundamental question.

The downward trend in the rate of inflation heightened the potential for conflict in collective bargaining in 2005. Given the long-standing expectation among union members of above inflation linked wage increases and the fact that increases have until 2005 been high, there seems to be reluctance by unions to drop to inflation linked increments. With the rate of inflation of 3.5% in the middle of the year, it was not surprising that wage settlements were more difficult to achieve in 2005. Unions were rejecting pay offers well above inflation and using massive wage gaps between top management and lower-paid workers to leverage increases. The wage gap between top corporate executives and minimum wage workers is growing steadily, research shows. This year's survey by PE Corporate Services, a human resources management firm, found that chief executives were earning much higher than minimum wage workers. Workers would also want to have a bigger share on the increasing profits that they are generating. What we were witnessing was the hardening of attitudes by both parties during negotiations. **Figure 12** shows pay differentials (the ratio between pay of a chief executive and an operative at basic skill level) on a consistent basis for the past 11 years. The more the wage differential increases the more the wage gap increases. From **Figure 12** it is clear that the wage differential has increased substantially over this period and so has the wage gap.

Figure 12 Wage differentials in SA, chief executives compared with basic skill level workers paid at minimum wage level (Intermediate to large sized companies)





Recommendations

The report shows that strike activity has increased dramatically in the past four years. This development indicates that the Department has made considerable progress in monitoring industrial actions in the country. Our monitoring approaches are now on par with any other country in the world. Yet at present, our ability to better understand and provide explanations behind the recent poor South African strike record is limited. There is clearly, a crying need for micro industrial relations studies to explain thoroughly high strike incidence in the country. This will form an important part towards understanding an upsurge in strikes. The research section of the Department will conduct a proper analysis on strikes that would require a number of micro studies investigating the determinants of strikes in individual plants or workplaces in different industries, regions and time periods. These micro studies will provide more explanations on what is at the core of the current high level in strike activity in the country.





Conclusion

Working days lost more than doubled to 2 627 953 in 2005 compared to 2004. The current Labour Relations Act of 1995 provides a fairer balance between the interests of employers, workers and community as a whole and establishes effective measures which assist in ensuring that unjustified and unlawful industrial action can be stopped or prevented. Clearly, however, whatever the advancements there have been in recent years, there is still plenty of room for improvement. The need to encourage employers and workers to adopt a more consensual and constructive approach to agreement making is an important issue for all South Africans.



Data appendix

The following two supplementary tables contain data not included in the main report

Table A1: Number of workers involved, workdays lost and workhours lost by sector, 2005

Sector	Workers involved	Workdays lost	Workhours lost
Manufacturing			
Clothing and textile	898	4 319	33 466
Transport equipment	3 202	7 871	30 048
Rubber and plastic products	291	582	6 984
Food products, beverages and tobacco	4 447	54 555	630 971
Coke, refined petroleum products and nuclear fuels	71	71	568
Wood and wood products	5 222	82 017	640 168
Other non-metallic mineral products	4 704	113 220	885 212
Basic metals and fabricated metal products	34 812	41 654	318 322
Electrical and optical equipments	2 002	2 002	16 016
Community, social and personal services			
Public administration and defence	60 324	337 504	2 517 303
Health and social welfare	679	3 398	17 392
Education	1 693	28 370	252 635
Other services activities	266	12 738	41 481
Mining and quarrying			
Metal ores except gold and uranium	7 334	10 592	61 731
Gold and uranium ore	155 162	883 380	13 393 354
Coal and lignite	1 241	6 205	20 896
Other mining and quarrying	2 054	32 534	292 474
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of vehicles			
Retail trade	44 907	328 617	1 246 832
Hotels and restuarants	1 053	4 080	36 623
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing			
Agriculture, hunting and related services	3 126	75 312	625 638
Fishing	4 428	26 688	193 055
Transport, storage and communication			
Post and telecommunications	1 275	1 275	10 357
Air transport	5 345	44 468	353 536
Land transport	54 271	505 543	4 289 928
Financial intermediation, insurance, real estate	2 018	10 389	77 248
Electricity, gas and water supply	406	379	3 016
Construction	4 006	10 190	52 640

Table A2: Number of workdays lost by nature of organisation, 2005

Nature of organisation	Workdays lost
Central government (General)	4 178
Government enterprise	134 195
Local government (General)	330 189
Private sector	2 158 375
Provincial government (General)	1 016



B: Methodology for monitoring industrial action

B1. Introduction

The following exposition is aimed at providing the reader of the Department of Labour's Industrial Action Report with a definition of concepts and the full methodology used in collecting, compiling and analysing data on industrial action. The Department has been provided with a legislated instrument (Form LRA 9.2) to collect data on labour disputes.

The collection and analysis of industrial action statistics is guided by the guidelines and practices that have been developed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The point of departure can be found in the ILO Resolution adopted by the Fourteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in January 1993, concerning statistics of strikes, lockouts and other action due to labour disputes. This resolution is accommodative rather than prescriptive in its approach. It states that; "Each country should aim at developing a comprehensive programme of statistics of strikes, lockouts and where relevant other action due to labour disputes in order to provide an adequate statistical base for the various users, taking into account the specific national needs and circumstances" (ILO Bulletin of Labour Statistics, 1993-2, Annex I, XI).

B2. Definitions

Section 213 of the Labour Relations Act, 1995 provides the following definitions:

Strike

The partial or complete concerted refusal to work, or the retardation or obstruction of work, by people who are or have been employed by the same employer or by different employers, for the purposes of remedying a grievance or resolving a dispute in respect of any matter of mutual interest between employer and worker, and every reference to work in this definition includes overtime work, whether it is voluntary or compulsory (s 213).

Lockout

The exclusion by an employer of workers from the employer's workplace, for the purpose of compelling the workers to accept a demand in respect of any matter of mutual interest between employer and worker, whether or not the employer breaches those workers' contracts of employment in the course of or for the purpose of that exclusion.

Protest action

The partial or complete concerted refusal to work, or the retardation or obstruction of work, for the purpose of promoting or defending the socio-economic interests of workers, but not for a purpose referred to in the definition of strike".

Barker, F et al (1996) in "South African Labour Glossary) defined the following concepts:

Picketing

Action by workers or other people to publicise the existence of a labour dispute by patrolling or standing outside or near the location where the dispute is taking place, usually with placards indicating the nature of the dispute. The aim of picketing might simply be to communicate the grievance to the public or it might be to persuade other workers in that workplace not to work and

to take their side in the dispute, to deter scab labour, to persuade or pressurise customers not to enter the workplace, to disrupt deliveries or drum up public support.

Secondary strike

A strike in support of a strike by other workers against their employer. The strikers have no issue with their employer, but that employer might be in a strong position (due to there being a close business relationship as either an important customer or supplier) to pressurize the employer who is in dispute.

Stayaway action

Industrial action by a group of workers in the form of absenting themselves from work without permission in support of some socio-political or socio-economic issue which does not relate to their employment situation.

Work stoppage

A collective refusal to work which is not linked to a demand or, if so, such demand is not related to the employment relationship.

Industrial action

Action by unions, workers to pressurise the other party in the furtherance of an industrial dispute. It usually refers to strikes and lockouts but could also include picketing, product boycotts, sit-ins, go-slow strikes and other actions which disrupt the product process.

Work hours

Those hours during which a worker is obliged to work.

B3. Coverage

Data collection attempts to cover the entire country, all economic activity and all sectors of the economy, legal and illegal industrial action. The system attempts to cover all industrial action due to labour disputes. Since LRA Form 9.2 has been redesigned, the Department is now in a position to cover workers both directly and indirectly involved in industrial actions separately, that is, those who participate directly or indirectly by stopping work. Workers absent from their normal place of work at the time of a strike or stoppage, for reasons such as sick-leave, vacation, business or personal reasons, whether authorised or unauthorised, are excluded from participation in industrial action and are therefore not counted.

The Labour Relations Act (LRA) excludes independent contractors from the definition of employee. The LRA further excludes from the scope of coverage certain categories of workers, namely members of the National Defence Force, National Intelligence Agency and South African Secret Service. The coverage by the Department of industrial action, however, includes all of the above, provided they embarked on an industrial action in the period under consideration.

B4. Data collection

In addition to the legal obligation on employers to report industrial action, the Department has introduced an active media monitoring programme. Through this system, media information on industrial action is used to make contact with employers and to encourage voluntary compliance with reporting requirements. Telephone and telefax communication with affected employers ensure a reasonably accurate coverage of all industrial action.



The cooperation of private sector employers also speeds up the process of data collection. After completing the form, most employers send it to the Head Office of the Department. Some employers keep blank forms with them to complete and when an industrial action arises they voluntarily complete the forms and send them to the Department.

After receiving the form either directly from the employer or from the provincial office, Head Office staff members check the form to assess if the information provided is sufficient. If the information is insufficient, Head Office staff contact the employers with the aim of getting relevant information, after which the data is captured on a database specifically designed for monitoring industrial action. The form is designed for workers who are both directly and indirectly involved in the industrial action, excluding all those who are on leave. The method of data collection and processing has remained the same ever since. The Department has to rely on the employers affected by disputes for detailed information on such matters as size, length, reason given for striking, etc., which it requires for its records as required by the Labour Relations Act, 1995. Hence at this level, employers constitute a principal source of strikes data.

B5. Calculations

Working days lost

All calculations are made on the basis of information recorded on the LRA Form 9.2. After capturing the data, the loss of working days is calculated by multiplying the number of workers involved in each stoppage by the duration of the stoppage in days lost and adding the totals for all stoppages during the reference period. For example, if during the reference period there is one stoppage, involving 2 000 workers and lasting three days, working days lost would be computed as follows:

- 2 000 workers x 3 days = 6 000 working days lost

Working hours lost

Working hours lost are the aggregate number of working hours lost stemming from all work stoppages during the reference period. The statistic is calculated by multiplying the number of workers involved in each stoppage by the number of hours of the stoppage and summing the products thus obtained for all stoppages during the period. For example, if during the reference period there is one stoppage, involving 2 000 workers and lasting three hours, working hours lost would be computed as follows:

- 2 000 workers x 3 hours = 6 000 working hours lost

Estimated working time is computed by multiplying the employment for the period by the number of days typically worked by most employed workers during that period. In some cases, Saturdays (when customarily not worked), Sundays, and established holidays are excluded. It is also to determine the normal hours of work for groups of workers since the LRA form 9.2 provides for this. An average eight-hour day is used to represent the normal working day in the country.

Measurement

The criterion used to identify a single strike, lockout, stoppage or protest action, is the industrial action in question. The following is, therefore, used to denote one industrial action:

- a temporary work stoppage, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in one establishment at one time

- temporary work stoppages, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in several establishments at the same time
- temporary work stoppages, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in one establishment at different times, in which the period between stoppages is not more than two months
- temporary work stoppages, due to one industrial action, occurring among workers in several establishments at different times, in which the period between stoppages is not more than two months.

While attempts to satisfy the International Labour Organisation (ILO) requirements are made, the instrument of data collection (LRA Form 9.2) served as the point of departure, in order to meet the specific needs of the Department.

