

A History of Census Taking in Botswana, 1904-2011

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Abstract

Census taking is as old as humankind. Historically, the taking of census has been associated with political, administrative, taxation and military requirements. In Botswana, the history of census taking is traceable to 1904 during the British colonial period. Between 1904 and 1964 the Bechuanaland Protectorate (now Botswana) administration conducted censuses at irregular intervals owing to administrative and political challenges some of which were beyond its control. For instance, the censuses were conducted in 1904, 1911, 1921, 1936, 1946, 1956 and 1964. All these experienced serious challenges rendering the results questionable. The 1964 census coincided with the constitutional talks and the first general elections which led to Botswana's independence in 1966. Five censuses have been conducted after Botswana gained independence each occurring every ten years since 1971 and the recent being 2011. The uses of census and the list of census variables included in the various censuses are dealt with in this paper. Therefore, this paper presents, albeit briefly, a history of census taking in Botswana over a period of roughly 100 years.

Introduction and Historical Background

The history of census taking is over six-thousand years old. The Babylonians are the pioneers in this regard having conducted their first population census in 3800 BC (Missiakoulis 2010:413). They were followed by the Persians, Greeks, Romans and the various Chinese dynasties. Since then census taking has become an administrative exercise and it is the responsibility of governments to undertake it. Population censuses have 'manifold uses and aspects' (Shryock and Taeuber 1976). 'Census [is] an important piece of administrative reform and [is] a potential source of demographic and other historical information', notes Adrian Pearce (2001:71). There is a consensus amongst scholars that historically the main purpose of census taking was for military and taxation purposes (Frank 1924:329; Hakim 1980:551 and Cascio 1994:23-40). Interestingly, there is a lot of reference to census in the Bible. For instance, the Old Testament makes extensive reference to census taking. The law on census is found in Exodus 30:11-16 (Speiser 1958:17). 'The Book of Numbers' owes its name to 'the census takings' (Ashely 1993:1) and directly deals with census in chapters 1-4 and 26. Timothy Ashley explains that 'Israel is counted by Moses, Aaron, and the leaders in order to prepare for the march to Canaan and life in the land following the conquest' (1993:1). There is also a reference in the Bible of King David performing a census and that of King Solomon ordering the counting of all foreigners in Israel.

The New Testament makes reference to census too. For example, Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem during the time when his parents had travelled there from Nazareth to be enumerated (Rist 2005:490 and Brindle 1984:43-50). The extensive reference to census in the Bible has been noticed by Speiser who writes that 'there is much about the census in the Bible that has long been a puzzle. [But] [w]e do know that the underlying purpose was military' (Speiser 1958:17).

Cecrops, the first King of Athens, conducted a comprehensive census in the sixteenth century BC. This census is regarded as having had 'all the properties of a population census' (Missiakoulis

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2010:413). The King devised a method whereby each person was asked to cast a stone, and these stones were then counted. From a statistical point of view, Cecrops undertaking was, probably, the first known and reported real population census (Missiakoulis 2010:413). The Roman rulers conducted census from 225 to 28 BC.

They emphasised the taking of census every five years registering citizens and their property in the form of land holdings and livestock (Cascio 1994:23-40). The Roman census, however, primarily focused on male citizens who were over seventeen years and were needed for military duties (Frank 1924:329 and Speiser 1958:17). There is a view that in most of the earlier censuses, the counting was done on men only as they were needed for military purposes. In this regard, it is argued that the word 'citizen' implied only the male population. 'So when we read in historical sources about citizens' census, we must keep in mind that it is a census of males only', cautions Missiakoulis (2010:413).

The Chinese also have a very rich history of census taking dating back to the Han Dynasty and towards the end of the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1911 (Durand 1960:209-56 and Durand 1977:262-64). Although some observers such as Durand (1977:260) argue that the reliability of this data remains questionable it is, nonetheless, the most comprehensive spanning hundreds of years. In India, the records show that the taking of census is traceable to 300BC (Lehohla 2012:4). India and China are the most populous countries in the world.

In Europe the oldest ever recorded comprehensive statistical data, which includes census, was commissioned by William The Conqueror in 1086. It covered England and parts of Wales. The statistics from this census are compiled in the 'Domesday' Book. William had wanted statistical data on various aspects such as revising tax and solving disputes over property (McDonald and Snooks 1985:148). Catherin Hakim contends that in 1790 the United States of America (USA) started the regular decennial census while Britain followed in 1801. 'But modern census, as defined by the UN, was first taken in 1841 in Britain and 1880 in the USA' (Hakim 1980:551).

In Africa, with the exception of Egypt, the history of census taking is traceable to the seventeenth century (Zuberi and Bangha 2006:4). In Africa, the records show that the first systematic population counts were done in the Islands and in the countries along the coast by the European, Chinese and Arab travellers, traders and explorers in the seventeenth century. These countries were easily accessible by sea or ocean (Zuberi and Bangha 2006:4). Because of their great and advanced civilisation, the Egyptian rulers conducted census taking as far back as 4000BC (Lehohla 2012). Interestingly, in some African communities, the practice of head count was done by chiefs for military and taxation purposes even before the arrival of the Europeans, Arabs and Chinese (Zuberi and Bangha 2006:4). However, census taking became more systematic during the European colonisation in the nineteenth century. Generally, Africans had no system of writing compared to other societies. Therefore, record keeping was poor. Thus, 'No empirical data or records exist but the practice of headcount was apparently known to some African countries before the arrival of the European colonists' (Zuberi and Bangha 2006:4). Such counts were done for the purpose of military or taxation demands as already noted. The common customary method which the chiefs employed was 'the dropping of articles into receptacles such as grains of cereals, beads or cowries in function of the number of their dependents' (Zuberi and Bangha 2006:4).

In southern Africa, the available data suggests that census taking started with the Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 (Zuberi and Bangha 2006:4). The Berlin Conference of 1884/85 (which resulted in the Scramble for Africa) meant that each European power had to conduct its own population assessment in the new colonies for administrative purposes, hence imposition of taxation. In most cases, they were unwilling to spend financial resources in administering their colonies (Halpern 1965:108). In British Africa, tax was institutionalised and for its effective collection regular censuses were conducted.

Botswana's Population Censuses in Historical Perspective, 1904-1964

When the British colonial administration introduced hut tax in 1899, poll tax in 1907 and native tax in 1919, the *dikgosi* were instructed to collect such taxes, and were entitled to ten per cent share of the total tax collected (Makgala 2004:282). These taxes, amongst others, necessitated the taking of censuses. Because the population was illiterate and largely 'unsophisticated' naturally it viewed the introduction of censuses with suspicion. The British authorities had planned to conduct the territory's first census in 1901. Curiously, this census would have immediately followed the introduction of the hut tax in 1899. As we point out above this gives credence to the view that one of the primary reasons for conducting censuses was taxation (McDonald and Snooks 1985:148). However, the intensification of the South African War (1899-1902), in which some Batswana *merafe* were involved, made the undertaking of census impossible in 1901. It was only in 1904 that the exercise could be undertaken following Proclamation number 10 of 1904, issued on the 6 April 1904. The 1904 census faced challenges such as administrative problems, poor communication and transportation, suspicion and fear from the population. During those days the territory's roads were rough and accessibility to remote areas was extremely difficult. The country was also sparsely populated with illiteracy being very high. In many cases whole communities could neither read nor write and were suspicious of the colonial government agents. The 1904 census showed that the total population was 120,776 (Batson 1956:5).

In 1911 and 1921 the territory conducted its second and third censuses but, just like the 1904 census, the Batswana were suspicious of the process and its motives. Similarly, poor communication and the inaccessibility of remote areas made the exercise cumbersome. The 1911 and 1921 censuses, just like the 1904 one, were limited in scope. Both did not provide comprehensive data. For instance, in the 1921 census, and even the 1936 one, particulars given of the African population were on sex, age distribution in 'rough groups', literacy and illiteracy. As for the European population, 'the numbers are only given as to sex and age, distinguishing those under and over 21 years' (Cousins 1946:i). Furthermore, with regard to the Coloured and Asians 'the numbers distinguish sex but nothing more' (Cousins 1946:i). Taking into account such discrepancies, it is impossible to make comparisons between these censuses and others before and after. According to the 1921 census, there were 150,185 Africans, 1,003 Coloureds and 52 Asians (see Table 1). These figures are questioned by Cousins who warns that 'It would not be safe to draw any definite conclusions from the figures relating to Africans, as there are likely to be considerable degrees of inaccuracy and incompleteness in every census of the African population in every part of southern Africa' (Cousins 1946:iii).

The 1931 census was postponed to 1936 due to the Great Depression of the early 1930s. The Great Depression forced the significant cutting down of financial support to the colonies, and Botswana was no exception (Pim 1933 and Steenkamp 1991). The 1936 census was preceded by Sir Allan Pim's study in 1933 after the Great Depression. The British economist Sir Alan Pim was commissioned by the British imperial government to assess the financial and economic situation in Botswana. Curiously, in his report Pim referred to the 1921 census arguing that the way it was conducted made it difficult for any useful information to be extracted. He wrote that 'The census was unfortunately carried out on lines giving the minimum information; it did not, for example, give any information as to the number of the different tribes. The degree of its accuracy may be estimated by the character of the methods which had to be adopted. In certain districts the census papers consisted of pieces of string in which the headman tied knots to indicate the number under his charge' (Pim 1933).

The 1921 and 1936 censuses provided particulars to the ages in the following groups: infants, children under six years, adults who were 16 years and over and old people. The 1936 census reported some 260,064 Africans in the territory. The 1946 census went further and provided a tabulation of sexes at every year and age (Cousins 1946:v). In the history of census taking in Botswana the 1946 census is

credited as being the first real comprehensive. In general the schedule adopted for this census covers all the particulars important in documenting a country's population. The census is thus 'doubtlessly the most reliable' in the colonial period (Cousins 1946:1). This census had been great improvement to the previous ones so much that the legendary anthropologist, Isaac Schapera, published a book entitled *The Ethnic Composition of Tswana Tribes* (1952) which was based on the 1946 census. The main challenge to the 1946 census was also related to the use of the line-up method. It required heads of families to present themselves before the authorities at the *kgotla* to provide relevant information about their dependants. In this way, the degree of accuracy was questionable (Fawcus and Tilbury 2000:179). There are concerns that until the 1956 census the methods used to enumerate people left a lot to be desired as we show below. It is not clear if large numbers of the nomadic populations such as the Basarwa were ever enumerated in the 1946 census. It is also unclear whether the absentee population was included or enumerated. In his 1952 book, based on the 1946 census, Schapera concentrates on the then so-called principal *merafe* (the Setswana-speakers). The book excludes the non-Setswana speakers. Schapera contends that the 1946 census had lots of discrepancies, and writes that it 'cannot be regarded as more than approximate' (Schapera 1952:1). He questions the total numbers given for each morafe. His contention is that some of the figures excluded a large number of people who were either in the Union of South Africa or elsewhere in the protectorate. For example, he states that the figures given for the Seleka-Rolong left out those who lived in the area around Francistown. Similarly, the numbers given for the Tshidi-Rolong excluded those who lived in South Africa, and only concentrated on those who lived in the Barolong farms. He also observes that the numbers of absentees were not specified for the Khurutshe and Seleka-Rolong. Schapera's critique is that the 1946 census results were inaccurate (Schapera 1952:28).

Until 1956, the line up method was used to enumerate people. Batswana were instructed to congregate at the main *kgotla* of the nearest large villages for census taking. The country was divided into administrative districts headed by the colonial district commissioners (DCs). The DCs, with the help of insufficiently trained enumerators in the form of school teachers and government clerks, lined up people and counted them but some people ignored the exercise and went about with their daily work. It was noted that 'People resent being told to line-up and wait their turn to give personal information to a stranger [...] People are more willing to answer personal questions at their own homes and feel a certain sense of importance that officials should come[...] to collect their particulars' (Bechuanaland Protectorate 1964a:1)

In 1956 there was an attempt to conduct a more accurate census. This census was to be based on the sample taken from tax registers. The 1956 census is considered the most accurate of the six previously conducted censuses. However, making any comparisons would be misleading because the methods employed varied (Batson 1946:5). In the 1956 census the tribal reserves (districts) were grouped into the 'eastern' region (Francistown, BamaNgwato, Tuli Block) and 'southern' region (Kweneng, Gaborone, Kgatleng, Ngwaketse and Lobatse). The 'north-western' region composed of Ngamiland, Chobe, Ghanzi and Kgalagadi. Initially, there was objection to the use of tax registers from the colonial officers. It was argued that in 1950 the tax registers were used for agricultural census, but these registers either contained outdated information or had some critical information missing. Nonetheless, it was also noted that since 1950 efforts were made to update the register in all the reserves. It was in this context that 'it was proposed to continue this work and intensify it in the six months before the census' (Batson 1946:19).

The colonial administration commissioned Professor Edward Batson from a University in South African, and he emphasised the use of tax registers. He argued that when brought up-to-date, the registers would be the best tools as 'they would permit the sample to be contracted from persons whose identity was known in advance' (Batson 1946:20). Peter Fawcus and Alan Tilbury, former colonial

officials in Botswana, argue in their later book that the 1956 census ‘also failed because of the uneven distribution of the population and the inaccuracies of many of the [tax] registers’ (Fawcus and Tillbury 2000:180). Serious tax evasion was common in many colonies, and Botswana was no exception. In some cases tax collectors and or *dikgosi* poorly kept records (Makgala 2004:280-82). Therefore, relying solely on tax registers for census taking was ill-advised. There is another view that the 1956 census was supposed to have been held in 1951 but due to the complexity of the 1946 census the process dragged on making it difficult to adequately prepare for the 1951 census. This sounds plausible because the 1946 census particulars were very comprehensive. Table 1 below tabulates growth of population in Botswana from 1911 to 1946.

Table 1: Growth of Population from 1911 to 1946

Year	European			African			Coloured			Asiatic			Total		
	M	F	Per-sons	M	F	Persons	M	F	Per-sons	M	F	Per-sons	M	F	Per-sons
1911	-	-	1,692	-	-	123,303	-	-	355	-	-	-	-	-	125,350
1921	1,010	733	1,743	77,857	72,328	150,185	500	503	1,003	47	5	52	79,414	73,569	152,983
1936	1,064	835	1,899	129,259	130,805	260,064	1,904	1,823	3,727	55	11	66	132,282	133,474	265,756
1946	1,303	1,076	2,379	145,205	147,205	292,755	549	533	1,082	63	31	94	147,465	148,845	296,310

Source: Cousins (1946:ii).

A Closer Look at the 1964 Census

There was an urgent need for the country to embark on a comprehensive census for political and administrative reasons in the 1960s. Many African colonies became politically independent from their colonial masters in the 1960s. For the first time Africans held general elections that led to independence of their countries. In 1963 constitutional talks in preparation for the independence of Botswana started and this necessitated the taking of an ‘accurate’ census. In preparation of the 1964 census, Proclamation 10 of 1904 was amended to empower the resident commissioner to institute a census. The instructions booklet was prepared for the enumerators and their supervisors. With clear and commanding tone it explains their duties in capital letters: ‘YOUR JOB IS TO GO TO ALL PLACES WHERE PEOPLE STAY IN THE AREA ASSIGNED TO YOU AND TO RECORD ALL PERSONS, MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILD, WHO STAYED THERE THE PREVIOUS NIGHT’ (1964b:2). The booklet further instructs that ‘You must go, not to all huts, but also to all camps, lands and other places where people have stayed’.

The 1964 census was primarily planned for the holding of the general elections (for parliamentary and council seats in 1965 and 1966 respectively). It was also done for the development and planning needs. George Winstanley, a former colonial official, tells us that based on the 1964 census, the country was to be divided into constituencies- a process known as delimitation (Winstanley 2000:223). Delimitation would solely depend on ‘accurate population figures by area’ (Fawcus and Tilbury 2000:180). At the constitutional conference of 1963/64 held in Lobatse it was decided that the country would be divided into 30 constituencies. Immediately the census data was ready the delimitation commission was appointed. Fawcus and Tilbury note that ‘Once constituencies had been delimited it was necessary to register voters, for the first time ever for the majority of them, and for the preparation of the conduct of election itself’ (2000:179). The delimitation commission came up with 31 constituencies ‘based on a population quota of 17,473 person per constituency’ (Fawcus and Tilbury 2000:182). The Batswana were still primarily agrarian and illiterate. Therefore, it was important to take a census in order to fully design appropriate election materials for this largely illiterate population.

Alec Campbell, then a young DC in Ghanzi, was appointed to lead the 1964 census. His appointment came after he had threatened to resign from his position as the DC because he felt

underutilised. To placate him he was appointed the census officer and the new duty proved to be rather too laborious (Fawcus and Tillbury 2000:180). It involved traversing the breadth and length of the country. He set his office in Francistown. Unlike the previous censuses the 1964 census had a full and working administrative structure. In August 1963 a UN advisor on population, Dr Vaino Kannisto, was seconded to Botswana to assist Campbell in this mammoth task.

One district officer was appointed for each district as a district census officer. The district census officers were tasked with drawing up 'maps showing every place of habitation in the district to enable the census officer to plan the enumeration from village to village' (Fawcus and Tilbury 2000:180). The census officer was expected to submit the preliminary results by June 1964 'for the Delimitation Commission to do its work' (Fawcus and Tillbury 2000:180). In December 1963 a pilot census was undertaken in the village of Serule. Serule has an interesting history. It emerged as a place for railway workers, who were hired to construct the railway line linking the Cape Colony (South Africa) and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Most of these workers were from Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi). After the completion of the railway line, most of these workers settled in Serule. They were later joined by the Bakalanga, Bangwato, Ndebele from Senyawe in the North East District and Barotsi (the Lozi) from Zambia (Phiri 1998:1-8).

After the 1963 pilot project in Serule, a proper census taking started in January 1964 and like the previous censuses it was complicated by the large size and the scattered population of the country. Botswana then had 'only about 2 miles of tarred roads' (Winstanley 2000:223). Other challenges were the 'overlapping of village areas', the movement of people from and to ploughing fields, cattle posts and villages, lack of public transport and funds (Fawcus and Tilbury 2000:180). The census questionnaires were sent to the Rhodesian Department of Census (Zimbabwe) for analysis. The final report was released in early 1965. The 1964 census yielded 543,105 people in the country and was 'subject to an estimated under-count of about 3% to 4%' (Fawcus and Tilbury 2000:181).

The 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 Censuses

The post-independence censuses started in 1971, which was about eight years after the 1964 census. The administrative and technical aspects of the 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 censuses are encompassed in the 2001 administrative and technical report of the population and housing census published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) which was a government department in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. It has since been constituted into a parastatal organisation and renamed Statistics Botswana. The 1971 census was the first census in Botswana after the country attained independence in 1966 and was also the first to use *de facto* basis- with the idea of enumeration area (EA) being applied for the first time in Botswana's census history. (The *de facto* method counts people based on how many people spent census night at a specific location. EA is the smallest geographic unit, which represents an average workload for an enumerator over a specified period. The average size of an EA is approximately 120-150 dwellings (*malwapa*.) In terms of the quality of data obtained and the wide subject coverage, it was an important census for future planning.

During the 1971 census, a census office was established. Under the provisions of the Special Commonwealth Assistance to Africa Plan, the census officer was recruited externally. Moreover, 'a cartographer-draughtsman was recruited on a part-time basis' (Republic of Botswana 2003:21). At the time Botswana did not have the data processing facilities. To process the data the government had to seek help from Zambia (Republic of Botswana 2003:21). As mentioned above in the 1964 census, the data was processed in Zimbabwe. It is worth noting that Zambia was the first African country to establish a diplomatic mission in Botswana immediately after the latter got independence.

The 1981 population and housing census (PHC) was the second census undertaken after independence. It was the first ever to include a housing component in its questionnaire. To undertake

this census, an *ad hoc* census office was instituted. Moreover, the government appointed on temporary basis Maitlhoko Mooka, a national senior statistician, the census officer. To boost the technical side of the census taking a UN technical advisor was recruited. Furthermore, 'a UN Cartographer was recruited to take charge of the geographic preparations for the census' (Republic of Botswana 2003:21). The UN cartographer was assisted by two draftsmen from the Department of Town and Regional Planning and the Department of Geological Surveys. To process the data an expert from the UN was recruited. Unlike in the 1964 and 1971 censuses the 1981 data was processed in Botswana with the assistance from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (Republic of Botswana 2003:21-22). Films or documentaries on census taking were shown in various parts of the country to prepare the people for the exercise.

The 1991 population and housing census was the third after independence. It is described as a success story in conducting decennial censuses in Botswana. It was more comprehensive and covered wide-ranging topics. During this time, there was a great improvement in cartographic work which resulted in very few incidents of omission of localities during enumeration. In preparing for the 1991 census, the government established a temporary census office in 1988. Its function was 'the day-to-day professional and administrative responsibility of designing, coordinating and executing the Census' (Republic of Botswana 2003:22). For its contribution the UNFPA contracted 'three UN experts to the Government of Botswana to provide technical assistance on this census' (Republic of Botswana 2003:22). The UN team was headed by the UN Chief Technical Advisor who joined the census office on 14 November 1989.

In 2001 Botswana conducted her fourth census since independence. Unlike the previous censuses it was part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) 2000 census project. The project sought to harmonize all census-taking activities and collect information on similar topics in the region. The SADC member states agreed that the censuses in the region should cover similar topics for better comparability of demographic characteristics in SADC. It was in this context that the Botswana 2001 census was conducted (CSO 2009). Following the 2001 census reports were published. For example, the Administrative and Technical Report of 2001 analyses the whole census cycle, whereas the Analytical Report of 2001 presents detailed analysis of demographic and housing variables. It is worth noting that in 2001 Botswana was no longer eligible for UN technical support because the country was now seen as having graduated to a high-middle-income country. Hence, the 2001 Census, unlike the previous ones, was solely funded by the government of Botswana. There were some changes:

The Cartography Section was in charge of all the cartographic requirements of the exercise, including recruitment, training and daily supervision of the cartographic personnel. Cartographic work being an integral part of any successful census, the Cartographic section was upgraded to a fully-fledged unit. In the place of a Census Data Processing Expert this time there was a Data Processing Manager whose services were provided through a private consultancy company DCDM [De Chazal Du Mee]. Botswana was contracted to manage the data processing (Republic of Botswana 2003:24).

The 2011 Census

The 2011 population and housing census was the fifth after independence. It was conducted under the technical supervision of the census advisor seconded by the UNFPA. The government appointed the Statistician General of Statistics Botswana as the executive head of the 2011 census taking process. Trying to avoid the past experiences, the preparation of the 2011 census started in 2009. A comprehensive census project document was developed by Statistics Botswana in collaboration and support from the UNFPA. The document served as a source for support and resource mobilisation for the undertaking

of the census. This document was largely based on the evaluation of the 2001 census processes. It also touched on the envisaged structure of the 2011 national census secretariat. It again outlined the roles and responsibilities of different census committees. Furthermore, it assessed the institutional capacity of the CSO for a successful conduct of the 2011 census (Republic of Botswana 2009).

The 2011 census was, like the 2001 one, fully funded by the government of Botswana. Its overall objective was to contribute to the improvement of the life of Botswana through the provision of relevant, reliable and timely data and information for development planning, policy formulation, and service delivery as well as monitoring and evaluation of human development, sector programmes and plans (Republic of Botswana 2009). This may translate, but not limited, to:

- i. enumeration of the population and households in the country,
- ii. acquisition of demographic information used for calculating population estimates,
- iii. data collection and production of information for government, local authorities and private entities for development planning and market research purposes, and
- iv. collection and production of socio-economic information of residents at all levels (Republic of Botswana 2009).

About a month after the 2011 census Statistics Botswana released the preliminary results brief (total population and housing count, population growth, distribution and density). It was the first of the series of census output released. It was followed by a report containing population of cities, towns, villages and associated localities. The release of the next series of major outputs such as i) summary statistics on small areas, ii) census analytical report, iii) population projections, iv) national statistical tables report, and (iv) guide to the villages of Botswana are in progress.

Uses of Population and Housing Census Data

Electoral boundary delimitation

In terms of section 64 of the Constitution of Botswana, ‘the Judicial Service Commission shall appoint a Delimitation Commission at any time after a comprehensive national population census has been held in Botswana. The interval between appointing one Delimitation Commission and another shall not be less than five years nor more than ten years’ (Botswana Constitution 1966). Implicitly, therefore, a comprehensive national census shall be held at regular intervals to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution. We have already shown how the urgency of the 1964 census was to satisfy the delimitation process in preparation of the general elections.

Policy-making, planning and administration

Since independence Botswana adopted an approach of development planning based on National Development Plans (NDPs). This started with Botswana’s Transitional Plan for Social and Economic Development prepared in 1965. The NDPs guide the overall development of the country. Among others, the NDPs contain (i) Government strategies planned to be undertaken over the plan period, and (ii) programmes and projects to be implemented to achieve such strategies. Since 1997 the NDPs are guided by the country’s long-term vision, Vision 2016.

Vision 2016 is Botswana’s principle to propel its socio-economic and political development into a competitive, winning and prosperous nation. Seven key goals have been developed to achieve this. The vision reflects the aspirations of Botswana about their long-term future and is a result of extensive consultations with a wide spectrum of individuals and institutions in the country (<http://www.vision2016.co.bw/>)

Currently, the NDP10 (2009-2016) is ongoing. It is in line with Vision 2016 and aims to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The eight MDGs – which range from halving extreme poverty rates to halting the spread of HIV and AIDS and providing universal primary education to all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world’s countries and all the world’s leading development institutions (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>). The 2011 census data is important in that it would inform mid-term reviews of the NDPs. It is also necessary in the monitoring and evaluation of Vision 2016 and the MDGs. The census data is also useful in determining the post-2015 agenda.

Research

The 2011 census provided data for further analysis, leading to published material, policy documents and researches on national issues. The data will also be useful to researchers interested in conducting more insightful analysis. A conference organised for the dissemination of the 2011 conference was held on 9-12 December 2013. It attracted researchers who made valuable presentations.

Service to stakeholders

The population and housing data is also needed by the private sector for various uses. Moreover, the information on the size, gender dimension, age distribution and human resources is vital in any country.

Vulnerable population data and their utility

The 2011 census collected comprehensive data on different categories of population with varying types of vulnerability. Among the special groups are the disabled, orphans, youth and women. Their demographic and socio-economic attributes require special treatment in policy and programme terms. As the policy planners design policies, these should be factored in the development process at all levels.

Diversification in the development sphere

For decades now, the government of Botswana has been trying hard to diversify its economy away from overdependence on the non-renewable diamonds. The 2011 census generated data that will inform different development frameworks aimed at diversification of the economy. Amongst these are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the Citizenship Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA), youth development programmes and other emerging economic issues. CEDA was established by the government of Botswana to provide financial and technical support for business development with a view to promote viable and sustainable citizen owned business enterprises. CEDA was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 12 April 2001 and commenced operations in June 2001 (<http://www.ceda.co.bw/>).

Sampling frame for sample surveys

The updated information about the demographic and economic indicators at enumeration area (EA) level will serve as sampling frame for social and economic household sample surveys.

Formulation of housing policy and programmes

The population and housing census data is also useful in the formulation of housing policy and programmes. The census data will enable planners and policy makers to formulate meaningful housing policy and design appropriate programmes to meet the demand for housing countrywide.

Census Variables

Table 2: The list of census variables covered during 1904-2011 censuses

Sl. No.	Topics	Year(s) carried
	Race	1904-1964
	Broad age group	1904-1936
	Livestock	1904-1936
	Poultry	1936
	Agricultural Lands belonging to households	1956, 1991-2011
	Name	1956-2011
	Relationship	1964-2011
	Sex	1904-2011
	Age (Single year)	1956-2011
	Village of allegiance	1964-1971
	Citizenship	1981-2011
	Residential Status (Permanent visitor etc.)	1964
	Place of birth	1991-2011
	Place of usual living at time of census	1981-2011
	Place of living one year ago	1981-2011
	Place of living five year ago	2001-2011
	Parental survival	2001-2011
1. L	Language	1956
	Language spoken most often at home	2001-2011
	Literacy	1956-1964
	School attendance	1991-2011
	Highest school grade attained	1964-1971
	Highest school grade passed/completed	1981-2011
	Training (field and subject)	2001-2011
	Religion of head of household	1956
	Religion of household members	2001-2011
	Marital Status	1956-2011
	Economic activity	1971-2011
	Work on family lands	1971-2011
	Working Status	1964
	Occupation	1964-2011
	Industry	1971-2011
	Children ever born alive	1971-2011
	Particulars of most recent births	1971, 2001-2011
	Children born one year before census	1956, 1981-2011
	Absent Botswana citizens	1956, 1971-2011
	Household farming status	1971-2011

Sl. No.	Topics	Year(s) carried
	Particulars of deaths one year before census	1956,1981-2011
	Blindness	1956, 1991- 2011
	Disability	1991-2011
	Ownership of household durables	1971, 1991-2011
	Type of tenure of dwelling	1981-2011
2. T	Type of housing unit	1991-2011
3. N	Number of rooms	1991-2011
	Material of construction of housing	1981-2011
	Principal source of water	1981-2011
	Principal source of fuel for cooking, lighting and warming the house	1981-2011
	Toilet facilities	1981-2011
	Refuse disposal	2001-2011
	Ownership of durables	1991-2011
	Disability	1991-2011
	Household cash activity	1991-2011
	Land tenure for farming and grazing livestock	1991-2011

Source: Central Statistics Office (2010:8)

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