



Mpala, Ke Botlhokwa

# LEVELS AND TRENDS OF URBANISATION IN BOTSWANA

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# INTRODUCTION

Urbanisation generally refers to the demographic transition of population from being rural to being urban in nature. This may also include an increase in the number of urban places, that invariably leads to an increase in population size in these areas.



# Objectives

The main objective of this paper was to trace trends and levels of urbanisation in Botswana from 1971 to 2022



# METHODOLOGY

- Levels of urbanisation are measured through the percentages of urban population.
- Trends are measured using changes in the number of urban places from one census period to the next.
- To appreciate the levels of the population size in urban areas, the rural areas population is focused on where appropriate.
- While the official records differentiates between towns and urban areas, the former being areas on state land regardless of the population size, the later is used when referring to the areas that qualify to be urban based of the definition that uses the population size of 5,000 or more and 75 percent of the labour force engaged in non-subsistence agricultural activities

# LIMITATION OF DATA

- The main limitations of information on urbanisation especially trends is associated with both reclassification of areas into urban as well as boundary changes
- Most of the reclassified large urban villages are within 50 kilometre radius of Gaborone, Francistown or Lobatse, this brings in a question of whether these large villages grew as a result of the spill-over of population from the said towns.

# FINDINGS

- The recent urban growth in Botswana can be traced to the period just around independence in 1962 at the time Lobatse and Francistown were already towns
- The discovery of mines in the late 1960s led to an increase in the number of urban areas from the initial 3 at independence to 5 then 8.
- The reclassification of large villages result in 66 areas being classified as urban that included the initial 8

# SOME INDICATORS

- **Urban Density:** The index shows the relationship between the land areas of a country per 1000 number of urban areas. Regardless of high urbanisation this indicator remains very small
- **Urban Rural Growth index:** The difference between urban and rural areas growth rates, the first observation is that the growth rates of rural areas are generally very low compared to the growth rate of urban areas. In some cases the rural population growth rates are negative

# POPULATION SIZE

- The percentage increase in urban places was accompanied by increases in urban populations.
- The initial increase in population size in urban areas was associated with rural to urban migration due to employment opportunities as well as natural increase. However, in recent years the increase seems to be associated more with reclassifications where the whole population changes status without physically changing residences.
- Natural increase has slowed down due to declines in both fertility and mortality

# Demographics of Urban Population in Botswana in 2022

**Sex distribution in urban areas:** There were more females in urban areas than males as evidenced by 91.5 males per 100 females. In comparison the sex ratio in rural was 103 males per 100 females. This is not really expected needs to be interrogated.

# Age Distribution

- Age Distribution shows that at younger ages (under age 15), the proportion is large for all the areas; However, the largest proportion in this group is found in rural areas
- Towns and urban areas also tend to have higher percentages of people expected to be in the labour force, those aged 15-64
- The proportion of those above the age of 65 years is high for those in rural areas compared to rural, probably due to individuals retiring to their home areas.
- **Dependency ratio:** 51.5 for urban and 74.6 for rural. This may be due to lower fertility in urban areas and the retirement related return migration.

# Problems of Urbanisation Classifications in Botswana

- There are towns
- Townships (Ghanzi, Kasane, Maun)
- Urban villages
- The use of a percentage of labour force involved in non-agricultural activities gives an added complexity as it does not state where the said population should be employed.

# GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS

- Some government control the growth of urban areas directly by restriction movement of people from one areas to another.
- Others use indirect method of providing rural areas with attractions related to urban areas by providing rural areas with employment opportunities, housing, health and many other amenities
- The government of Botswana seems to have opted for the indirect method of controlling rural to urban migration. To address the urban and rural differentials in development, the Botswana government has over the years invested more on poverty deduction programmes in rural areas that empower the rural population.
- These indirect measures include rural electrification, provision of clean water, making sure that health facilities are available and assessable in rural areas.
- There are school feeding programmes in all school regardless of where they are located

# NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRONOUNCEMENTS

- It seems some of the policy pronouncement by government and other international organisation may have worked indirectly to influence the rate of population growth in large villages to facilitate their transition to urban among them being transportation and road infrastructure

# RECOMMENDATION

- There does not seem to be a nationwide definition of what constitute an urban area apart from the definition provided by the census office. Therefore, there is need for such a definition.
- There is need for a clear definition of what constitute rural as well
- It is said that part of urban growth came as a result of rural to urban migration, given that there have been more areas classified as urban, it is necessary to assess the main contributing factor to urbanisation in Botswana.

# THANK YOU

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