



*What do statistics mean in a colonial and postcolonial situation?
(Anglophone and Francophone Africa, 19th -20th centuries),
presentation and discussion of a research program*

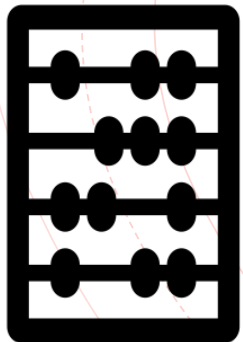


Wednesday 15 March 2023 13h00
Room 207, 2nd Floor, Robert Sobukwe Block



Béatrice TOUCHELAY, Professor of Contemporary History, IRHiS UMR
CNRS 8592 Université de Lille

<https://chiffrempire.hypotheses.org>



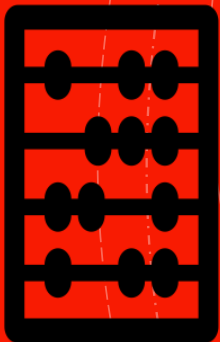
Maison européenne
des sciences de l'homme
et de la société



Statistics, what are we talking about?

What makes history students run away ... and sometimes others too....

And yet ... **figures**, even if they are limited to official statistics (produced and disseminated with the approval of the authorities), permeate all subjects of research - they **are unavoidable** ... The challenge of this seminar is to try to convince people of **the need to take hold of them in a critical way** and to make them an object of research, to **'make them talk'**, to use them as observatories, to **shed light on the societies that produce them**, on the relationships and hierarchical relations that are formed within them, the foundations, justifications and impact of their classifications and to point out what they do not show or see - knowingly or unknowingly (domestic work, for example) - as well as the 'grains of sand', **the dysfunctions** of the organisations (the non-responses, what remains 'unknow') **that they reveal**.



Statistics, what are we talking about?

The statistics of the Union of South Africa accompany nation-building and are of great interest for that reason alone. This is particularly true for the founding period, i.e. the first 40 years of the 20th century. The wealth of documents consulted at the National Archives in Pretoria (NAP) has confirmed this intuition.

This seminar begins with **the presentation of a research program** on statistics that I am coordinating. It continues with a **few details on the subject of statistics** and then with a **presentation of what I found in the National Archives of South Africa in Pretoria**, which illustrate the interest of studying statistics to deepen our knowledge of the functioning of contemporary societies.

Work in progress....



A Research program:
Statistics of territories colonised by France-
Francophone Africa XIX-XXth Century



A team spread over two continents:

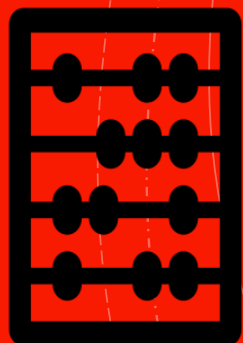
Europe (France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland)

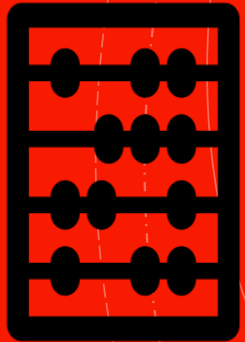
ANR-21-CE41-0012 Counting in a colonial situation: French Africa (1830-1962) (2021-2024) Four axes: Axis 1) Official colonial statistics; Axis 2) Banks, currencies and credit; Axis 3) Labour censuses and statistics on working conditions; Axis 4) Production and uses of numerical data by economic circles/

Africa (Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Senegal)

An **International Research Network (IRN) - COUNT** financed by the CNRS INSHS (2023-2027) which aims to found a school of socio-history of quantification with partners from French-speaking Africa.

An extension to Anglophone Africa would be very welcome.



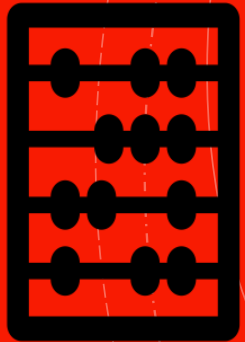


We have chosen to take the opposite position to that of a common one, which consists of bypassing statistics and not using them on the pretext that they are inaccurate, approximate and misleading.

Considering that good or bad these statistics exist, that they have been produced and used, **we intend on the contrary to make them our main object of study**, to deconstruct them and to make them tell us everything they can about the societies they are supposed to represent.

Statistics appear to us as a particularly rich medium for illuminating the circulations at the heart of power relations.





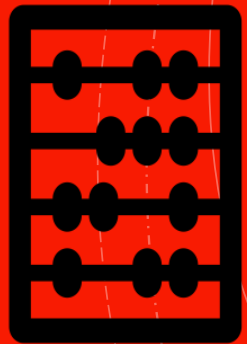
The **colonial period** seemed to us to be the most appropriate time to question the statistical object and to study in detail the image of colonised societies that it reflects and that it partly shapes.

It is a question of examining the **relationship between statistics, power, domination and sovereignty** during colonisation and then during the transition to independences.

It is also a question of examining the **continuity of statistical or counting systems** between the pre-colonial and colonial periods and then at the time of independence in order to shed light on the legacies and transmission mechanisms that are at work and to see how these representations shape colonial imaginaries.

Initially, the research focuses on the period before the Second World War.





A very short historiography

The developments of the 1990s, the work of **Theodore Porter** (1995) and **Alain Desrosières** (1993, 2008) have established the **socio-history of quantification**.

The analysis of the grip of numbers on contemporary societies (Martin, 2020) and that of the consequences of this grip (Supiot, 2015) aim to **'deconstruct' official statistics, to clarify their relationship with the State** ('government by numbers') and to clarify the relationship between statistics and political powers (Berns, 2009) or between statistics and **economic powers** (Jerven, 2013).

Since these works, **statistics are no longer approached as simple techniques**, or only through the institutions that produce them, **but they are understood as structuring elements of the organisations and societies that produce them and that they influence in return**.

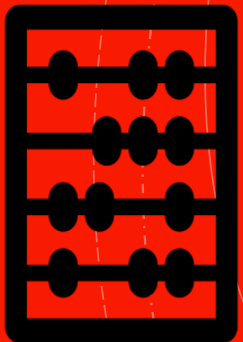


... historiography ...

The critical approach to classifications provides information both on **the uses of statistics** (by the colonial administration and by the colonised when they take them over) and on the way in which societies are ordered, **the intentions of their sponsors**, the recognition and social positions of their producers, the means at their disposal, **the relations between investigators and respondents**, etc.

Through specific fields, some historians clarify the issues at stake in statistics and **point out their partiality**. For example, for demographic censuses, see among others Gerardo Serra and Morten Jerven, "Contested Numbers: Census Controversies and the Press in 1960s Nigeria". *Journal of African History*, or the work of the Nigerian economist Stopler who questions the **relevance of planning without numbers** (*Planing without number*, 1966).

And many others ...



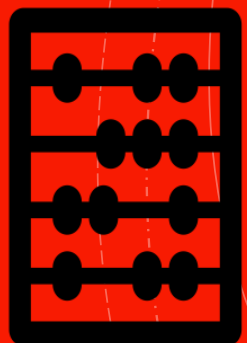
Some clarification on the meaning of statistics

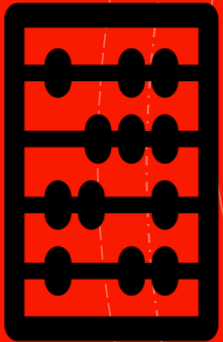


Statistics, not statistic which is a branch of mathematics, are :

- **conventions** (which imply an agreement on what and how to measure?);
- **practices** for counting, classifying, anticipating...;
- **institutions** (financed by taxes);
- **People**, 'professionals', which raises the question of the foundations of statistical expertise and the training of statisticians, the positions of the investigators (missionaries, teachers and gendarmes, pensioners for the censuses, market control actors for the mercurial, etc.) and their relationship to power.

Their production pursues specific objectives.

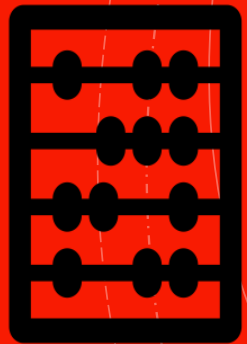




Statistics aim to :

- **count** inhabitants (to enrol and tax),
- **classify** (e.g. assets/assets),
- evaluate, control and allocate available resources (e.g. the land register, the surveyor- one of the oldest professions in the world...)
- **monitoring** changes in production, living and working conditions
- **anticipating and forecasting** (e.g. demographic projections).

They have been **constructed by hybridisation**, and this was particularly true for the statistics of South Africa, a Union integrated into the British Empire, whose network was strengthened by the Imperial Conferences and regular meetings between the Empire's statisticians.



In short, **statistics are figures in the service of the Prince or the government.** In South Africa, the Census and Statistics Office, and later the department of Statistics and Census, was first attached to the Ministry of the Interior, and then to the Ministry of Finance... What does it mean?

Statistics are **witnesses and vectors of social and political organisations**, but also of the pyramidal structure of administrations and the hierarchy of powers. They are **indicators of the quality of the transmission** of information and the strength of the hierarchical chain.

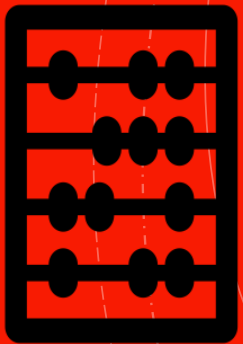
The History of South African Union statistics (1910-1940)

Presentation of the consulted archives

Rich archives consulted since my arrival in Pretoria at the beginning of March: the RSA, TAB, SAB series and particularly the sub-series GG (General Government), SES (Statistics and Census Service - 395 unclassified files), SKT (Censuses), MKN (Mines) for the most numerous.

For lack of time I did not consult the archives kept in Cape Town which relate the activities of the statistical service of the colony before 1910, but it is to be done...

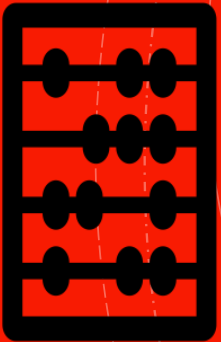
It is up to me to convince you of the interest of that study.



Some general points to start with



The **relationship between statistics and power** is evident in the British Commonwealth at the beginning of the last century. Thus, the collection, production and transmission of data confirmed both the **'submission' of the Dominions** (which were accountable) to the Crown (the symbol being the standardised Blue Books that had to be transmitted yearly by the colonies to London) **and their resistance**, which manifested itself in 1921 through the refusal of the British proposal to organise a central statistical office for the Empire that would have centralised all the data in London.





A fair amount of **correspondence** between the director of the Census and Statistics Office (Pretoria), particularly with India, around the imperial conferences and statisticians' meetings shows that they make a clear difference between the statistics of the 'Old' and 'Young' Nations, the latter basing their policy on **extensive statistical knowledge**.



The way in which statistics are produced reflects the domination of the 'centre' over all territorial levels.

From 1910 and the creation of the Union, statistics were centralised in Pretoria and, to avoid offending anyone, the meetings of the Census and Statistic Council were organised alternately in Cape Town, which had a very active statistics service before 1910 (publication of the Cape of Good Hope Blue Books and Statistical Registers for the period 1821-1909 and organisations of census 1865, 1875, 1891, 1904, 1911) and in Pretoria.

Three questions to the archives

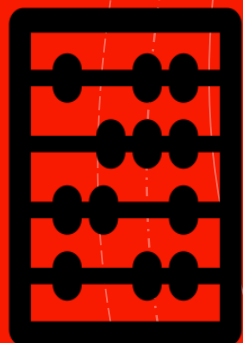


Firstly: Who makes statistics and how?

Secondly: What do statistics tell us about the economic and social situation in the Union (non exhaustive ...)? What categories are used?

Thirdly: What are the biases introduced by statistics in the representation of facts?

To end with a **hypothesis** that highlights a paradox. Given the complexity of the categories used and the lengthy developments devoted to them in all the demographic surveys and censuses of the 1930s, it would seem that the statistics examined **reinforce the divisions of the population** more than they seek to unify it.



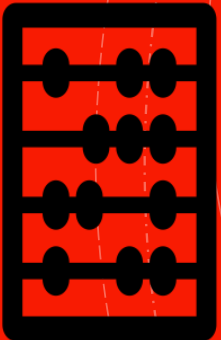
Who makes the figures and how?



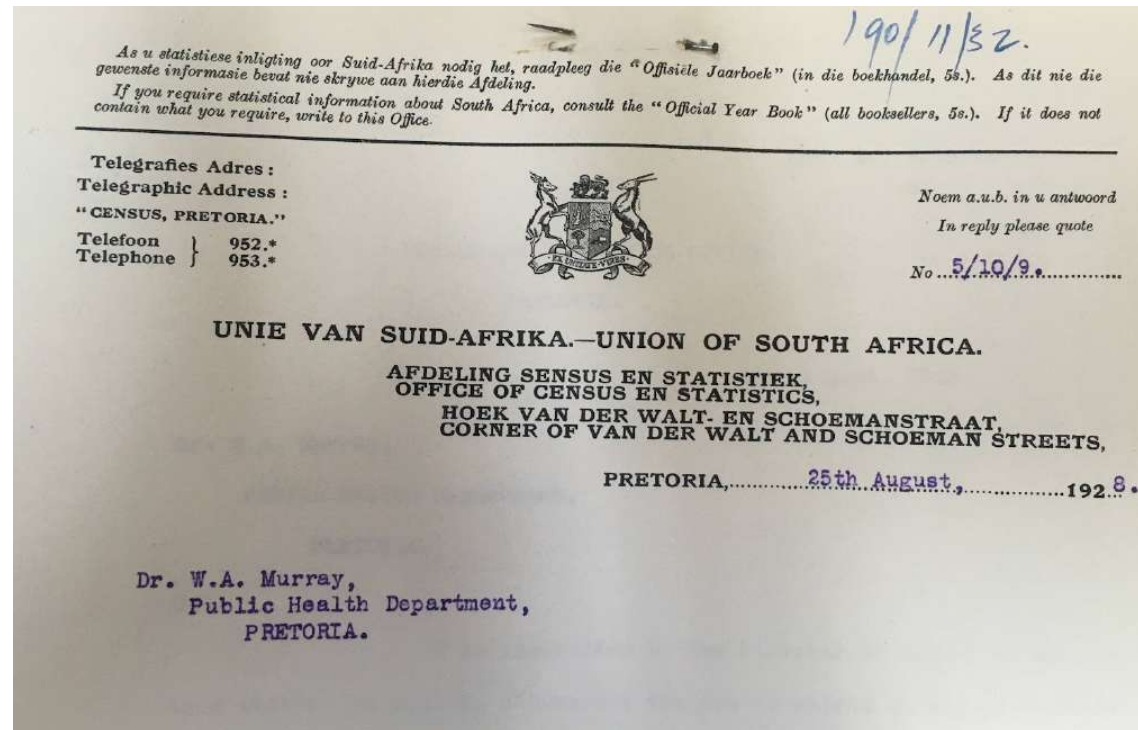
The organisation was set up by **the Statistics Act of 1914** and its implementing decrees adopted in 1918. These texts established the principle of **compulsory statistics**. A **Census and Statistics Office** was attached to the ministry of Interior and its head reported directly to the Minister.

From 1919 onwards, a **Statistical Council** made up of representatives of the administrations of the main sectors of activity (agriculture, railways, mines, etc.) and of the hygiene and public health services met regularly under the direction of the head of the Census and Statistics Office to **define the program of surveys** to be carried out and to determine their **methods**.

The records of **the Council's meetings** provide very detailed information on the program and conduct of the various surveys. The census bulletins and survey forms are attached to the council minutes and kept in the archives in the Vital Statistics (public health) or SES series, for example.



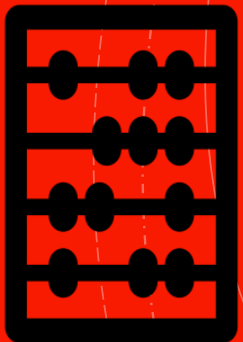
To sum up:
 One Office of Census and Statistics
 attached to the Ministry of Interior

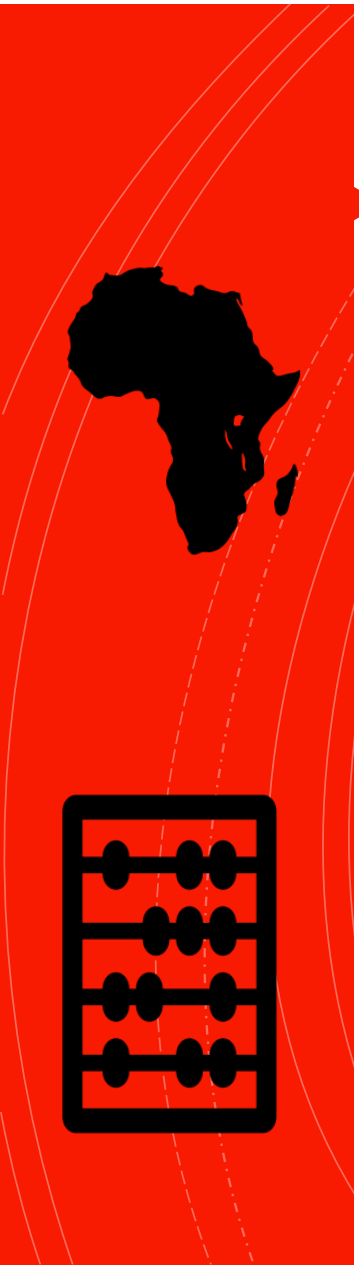


The Statistical Council

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The Statistical Act 1914





The organisation of data collection is partly decentralised: the Mining Department is responsible for mining statistics, the various territories for organising censuses

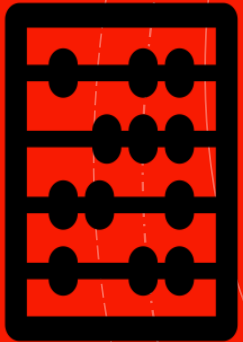
The agenda of a Council meeting in 1930 gives an idea of the scope of the work.

Statistical Council Cape Town session 2nd April 1930.

Agenda of the meeting

- 2) Chairman 'Reports
- A publications
- B Monthly retails sale turnover ...
- 3) Statistics of civil Litigation
- 4) Agricultural Census Form 1930 and minutes of production Committee
- 5) Wholesale Price Indexes
- 6) Retail Price Indexes
- 7) Statistics of Motor vehicle Insurance
- 8) Population Census Form - Census 1931
- 9) Physical Measurement of citizen force recruits
- 10) Migration statistics
- 11) Fisheries statistics
- 12) Wine and Brandy Blending Statistics of

Source. AN AS SAB GES 1901 11.32C – 11/32/D (1929-1932) Census 1931 Distribution of native population



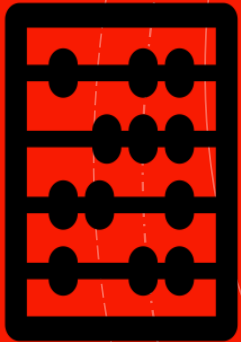
What do these figures tell us about the state of the Union (non exhaustive)?



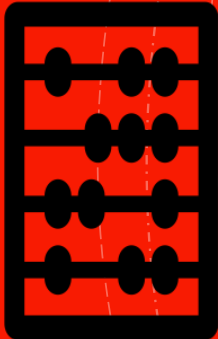
What is striking is **the extreme complexity of the organisation of surveys as soon as they concern the population**. Taking racial differences into account makes the measurement very costly ... without ever being justified.

Thus, in the 1931 census, for example, but also in the agricultural and industrial surveys...**racial questions** are omnipotent and rarely discussed (except in the industrial surveys by the heads of different Companies).

The other point is the **difficulty of the participation of the territorial administrations** in the surveys...



Different questionnaires for the Census of 1931



CENSUS 1931 - EUROPEAN QUESTIONNAIRE.

Census 1931	Census 1925.	Census 1921.	Census 1911.
Name.	Name.	Name.	Name.
Relationship.	Relationship.	Relationship.	Relationship
Sex.	Sex.	Sex.	Sex.
Age.	Age.	Age.	Age.
Date of Birth.	Date of Birth.	-	-
Marital Condition.	Marital Condition.	Marital Condition.	Marital Condition.
Official Languages.	Official Languages.	Official Languages.	Official Languages.
Birthplace.	Birthplace.	Birthplace.	Birthplace.
-	Dist. of Birth.	-	-
Period of Residence.	Period of Residence.	Period of Residence.	Period of Residence.
Nationality.	Nationality.	Nationality.	-
-	Parentage.	-	-
Religion.	Religion.	Religion.	Religion.
Occupation.	Occupation.	Occupation.	Occupation.
Industry.	Industry.	Industry.	-
Grade of Employment.	Grade of Employment.	Grade of Employment.	Grade of Employment.
Unemployment Period and Cause.	-	-	-
Visitors: Normal place residence.	Visitors: Normal place residence.	Visitors: Normal place residence.	-
Pensioner: Nature and Source.	-	-	-
-	-	-	Education: (R. & W) Instruction.
-	-	-	Sickness and Infirmary.
-	Fecundity: children Date of Marriage.	Fecundity: children No. of years married.	-
-	Orphanhood	-	-

CENSUS 1931 - COLOURED QUESTIONNAIRE.

Census 1931.	Census 1921.	Census 1911.
Name.	Name.	Name.
Relationship.	Relationship.	Relationship.
Sex.	Race.	Race.
Age.	Age.	Age.
Date of Birth.	Sex.	Sex.
Marital Condition.	Marital Condition.	Marital Condition.
Official Languages.	Fecundity.	-
Birthplace.	No. of years married.	-
Period of Residence.	Official Languages.	-
Nationality.	Birthplace.	Birthplace.
Religion.	Nationality.	-
Occupation.	Period of Residence.	Period of Residence.
Industry.	Religion.	Religion.
Grade of Employment.	Occupation.	Occupation.
Unemployment Period and Cause.	Industry.	-
Visitors: Normal place residence.	Grade of Employment.	Grade of Employment.
Pensioner: Nature and source.	Visitors: Normal place of residence.	-
-	-	Education (R & W) Instruction.
-	-	Sickness and Infirmitities.

Source. AN AS SAB GES 1901 11/32/C – 11/32/D (1929-1932)

Minutes of the session of the Census and Statistics Council 18-19th March 1935 et suiv.

Where is the National Unity?

CENSUS 1931 - QUESTIONNAIRE; ASIATICS.

<u>Census 1931.</u>	<u>Census 1921.</u>	<u>Census 1911.</u>
Name.	Name.	Name.
Relationship.	Relationship.	Relationship.
Race.	Race.	Race.
Sex.	Sex.	Sex.
Age.	Age.	Age.
Marital Condition.	Marital Condition.	Marital Condition.
-	Fecundity; children Years married.	-
-	Number wives.	-
Occupation.	Occupation.	Occupation.
Industry.	Industry.	Industry.
Grade employment	Grade employment.	Grade employment.
Nationality (Sub-Race).	Nationality.	Nationality.
Birthplace.	Birthplace.	Birthplace.
Period of residence.	period of residence.	Period of residence.
Religion.	Religion.	Religion.
-	-	Education (R & W) Instruction.
-	-	Sickness and Infirmity.

82.

ASIATIC SCHEDULE - CENSUS, 1931.

PROPOSED QUESTIONNAIRE.

A. Name in full of each Asiatic, whether member of family, visitor, lodger, servant, who spent the night from Tuesday 5th May to Wednesday 6th May, 1931, in this dwelling, or who was absent on that night but returned to this dwelling on the 6th May without having been counted elsewhere.

B. Relationship to head of family. State whether the person whose name appears at the head of the column is the head, or wife, son, or daughter, visitor, lodger or servant.

C. Sex. State whether the person recorded in each column is a male or female. Write M. for male and F. for female.

D. Age. In years and months. (For infants under one month, write "under one month").

E. (i) Industry, Trade, Profession or Service. Insert the branch of industry, trade etc. in which employed, such as, gold mining, building, legal, commercial business, municipal service, etc. For persons receiving wages or salary the industry, etc., will be that industry or business which is carried on by the employer. For domestic servants and others in private personal service insert "Personal Service". For persons employed in unpaid domestic service at home, insert "Home Duties".

(ii) Personal Occupation or Craft. Insert the craft or calling which each person was following at the time of the Census, such as Clerk, Attorney, Blacksmith, Governess, Manager, Typist. Distinguish between dealers, makers, and manufacturers. If out of work at time of Census, state usual occupation. (If retired from business, of independent means, or if living solely on a pension, state accordingly.)

(iii) If employing labour (European or Non-European) in connexion with the occupation shown on the preceding line, write "E". If working on own account, but not employing anyone for business, write "O". If receiving wages or salary, write "W". If at present out of a job write "U". If none of the foregoing is applicable, write "N.A."

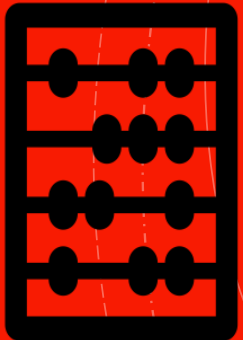
F. Marital or Civil State. If never married write 1. If married write 2. If widowed, but not remarried, write 3. If divorced, but not remarried, write 4.

G. Nationality. State whether British Indian, Portuguese Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Burmese, etc.

H. Birthplace. If born outside the Union, state the Country or Province of India in which born. If born in the Union, state whether in the Cape, Natal, Transvaal or Orange Free State Provinces. If born at sea, write "At Sea".

I. Residence in Union. If NOT born in the Union, state the number of complete years of residence therein, ignoring temporary absences. If less than one year, write "under one".

J. Religion. State clearly the particular religion, such as "Hindu", "Buddhist", "Parsee", "Mohammedan", "Confusion", "Roman Catholic", etc.



CENSUS 1931 - NATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE.

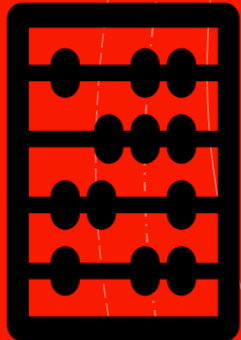
Census 1931.	Census 1921.	Census 1911.
Name.	Name.	Name.
Relationship.	Relationship.	Relationship.
Race.	Race.	Race.
Sex.	Sex.	Sex.
Age.	Age.	Age.
Marital Condition.	Marital Condition.	Marital Condition.
-	No. of wives.	No. of wives (Location only).
-	Education (R & W)	Education; (R & W) Instruction.
Occupation.	Occupation.	Occupation.
Industry.	Industry.	-
Birthplace.	Birthplace.	Birthplace.
Religion.	Religion.	Religion.
Tribe.	Tribe.	Tribe.
-	-	Period of Residence.
-	-	Sickness & Infirmities.

Native Questionnaire dealt with yesterday.
 representative of N.A. Dept. present.
 Chairman mentioned this & enquired if I had any
 special remarks to make
 I emphasized great importance of this figure - as
 as the only reliable data available as to Nat. Pop. - that
 it had been adopted as machinery for census
 advisory was inadequate - as seen in Zululand. & that the
 figure then used saturnus rather than enumeration
 Chairman said they hoped to improve the machinery
 for the annual Census in such areas. *2/11/30*

NATIVE SCHEDULE - CENSUS 1931.

PROPOSED QUESTIONNAIRE.

- Name of every Native, whether member of family, visitor, or Native servant, who spent the night from Tuesday 5th May to Wednesday 6th May, 1931, in this dwelling, or who was absent on that night but returned to this dwelling on the 6th May without having been counted elsewhere.
- Relationship to head of family. State whether the Native whose name appears at the head of the column is the head, or wife, son, servant, visitor, etc.
- Sex. State whether the Native recorded in each column is a Male or Female. Insert M. for male and F. for female.
- Age. If age is less than one year write "Under one". If age is over one year, state age last birthday, or approximate age, if exact age is unknown.
- (i) Industry, Trade or Service. Insert the branch of industry, trade, etc., in which employed, such as gold mining, building, Municipal Power Station, motor garage, railway, road building, etc. For domestic servants in private personal service, write "Personal Service". For persons employed in Unpaid domestic service at home, write "Home Duties".
- (ii) Personal Occupation or Craft. Insert the craft or calling which each person was following at the time of the Census, such as Peasant, Squatter, Farm Labourer, Teacher, Messenger, Domestic Servant, Boot Repairer, etc. If out of work at time of Census state usual occupation.
- Marital or Civil State.
 If never married write 1.
 If married write 2.
 If widowed but not remarried write 3.
 If divorced but not remarried write 4.
- Birthplace. If born outside the Union, state Country only, such as Rhodesia, Basutoland, South West Africa, etc. If born within the Union, state whether, Cape, Natal, Transvaal or Orange Free State.
- Religion. State clearly the particular religious denomination or sect, such as, "Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk", "Wesleyan", "Roman Catholic", "English Church", etc.
- Tribe. State the tribe to which each person belongs, e.g. Baka, Baralong, Barotse, Basuto, Bevanda, Bchuana, Bomvana, Damara, Fingo, Herero, Hlangwani, Mashona, Mozambique, Ndebele, Ovambo, Pondo, Pondomise, Shangean, Swazi, Tembu, Tonga, Xosibe, Xosa, Zulu. *Hottentot, Bushman, Brikwa,*



ANNEXURE F.

GENERAL MOTORS SOUTH AFRICAN, LTD., TO
THE DIRECTOR OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS, PRETORIA.
10TH JANUARY, 1935.

I recently received advice through the South African Motor Traders' Association of your decision to discontinue furnishing the monthly statistics of new cars registered in the Union of South Africa. As I happened to be in Johannesburg at the time I went to Pretoria to interview you and, in your absence, I interviewed the Honourable the Minister of the Interior.

I cannot too strongly stress the great inconvenience and serious difficulties which we will encounter in the operation of our business if this decision is strictly enforced. Our parent Corporation in the United States, as well as the Assembly plants, such as our own, throughout the world, base their entire future programmes on the trend of the market as disclosed by these registration figures. On the estimates of the probable future volume, as determined after a close study of these figures, we base our entire pricing and merchandizing policies, and also determine the number of men we can employ, and order forward materials. The discontinuance of this data will deprive us of this most important index, on which we rely so heavily in our day to day operations.

While I can quite appreciate your position in the matter and your anxiety to obviate a similar occurrence in the future, I should like to point out that, in my opinion, the fault lay principally with the licencing system, which made it possible for these erroneous registrations to take place, and arrangements have been made in Johannesburg in regard to future registrations, which will make a recurrence impossible.

In my interview with the Minister he indicated that he thought you would be prepared to reconsider this matter provided you were reasonably satisfied that a similar situation would not occur again. As I have previously indicated, the method of licencing cars in Johannesburg has been strengthened considerably, and I do not think it will be possible in future for a car to be fictitiously registered. Moreover, in the six years that these figures have been issued this is the first time that such a position has arisen.

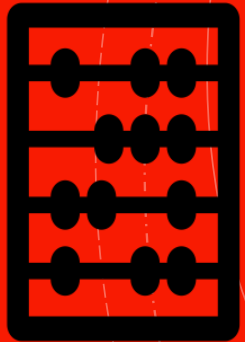
The purpose of this letter is to appeal to you to reinstate the furnishing of this information, in the interests of the more important motor assembly plants and dealers in this country. I should like to point out that my Company, which has now been operating in this country for eight and a half years, is carrying an investment of over \$1,000,000 in plant machinery and materials. At present we are employing nearly 1,000 white South Africans whose livelihood depends entirely upon our ability to plan intelligently ahead. I am deeply conscious of my responsibilities towards these men and I cannot believe that it is your intention to penalize this Company so severely on account of the action of one small dealer.

Biases

In addition to racial prejudice, **weak gender considerations**, outcomes related to **budget allocations** and various pressures ...



Geographically unequal knowledge



SESSION OF STATISTICAL COUNCIL TO BE HELD
AT THE LABOUR OFFICES, CORPORATION STREET, CAPE TOWN,
ON 18TH AND 19TH MARCH, 1935.

A G E N D A.

	<u>Page.</u>
1. Report on -	1
(a) Local Government Statistics.	
(b) Union Trade Statistics.	
(c) Index of Retail Sales.	
(d) Mortgage Bonds.	
(e) Conference in 1935 of Commonwealth Statisticians.	
(f) Population Census and Forms - 1936.	
(g) Population Census - Bonuses to Supervisors.	
(h) Census Act - Amending legislation.	
(i) Accident Statistics.	
(j) Industrial and Agricultural Censuses - 1934 and 1935.	
(k) Publications.	
2. Statistics of New Motor Vehicles.	2 - 12 (2)
3. Agricultural Census - Form 1934-35.	13 - 15
4. Rent Census, 1935.	16
5. Index of Industrial Activity - Change of base.	16
6. Census of Fluid Milk Production.	17 - 18
7. Periodical Collection of Stocks of Dried Fruit.	19
8. Migration Statistics - Tourist Traffic.	20 - 21
9. Census of Merchandising and Service Establishments.	22 - 23
10. Index of the Physical Volume of Production.	24 - 25
11. Retail Price Index Numbers - Revision of Base.	26
12. Industrial Census Form - 1935 and separate Memorandum.	27 - 30 (3)
13. General.	

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATISTICS. - Since the date of the last meeting of the Statistical Council good progress has been made. All the Provinces have now come into line with the scheme and their co-operation with the special Committee of the Institute is assured. A copy of a letter from V.E. Lewis, President of the Institute, containing an interim report of progress, is appended.

FROM THE INSTITUTE OF MUNICIPAL
TREASURERS AND ACCOUNTANTS TO
THE DIRECTOR OF CENSUS, PRETORIA.

COLLECTION OF MUNICIPAL STATISTICS.

With reference to the telephone message from your Office on the 12th of this month, I have to advise you that the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants has given an assurance to the Minister of the Interior that it will undertake the work of collecting municipal statistics in the respective Provinces. For this purpose there have been appointed representative members in each Province who have undertaken to erect a panel of officials to collate statistics.

The Provincial Administration of the Transvaal and, I understand, also the Natal Provincial Administration, have instructed their respective Local Authorities to forward copies of their 1934 accounts to the gentlemen who have been appointed by the Institute. So far as the Transvaal is concerned, these are coming in fairly rapidly and it is hoped that we shall be able to commence work at a comparatively early date. In cases where accounts have not reached the City Treasurer, reminders are forwarded and replies are generally forthcoming to the effect that the accounts have not yet been fully audited, hence the delay. When the Provincial work has been done, the Institute Office in Durban will collate the information received from the various Provinces and mould it into a shape which it is hoped will be most useful to the various parties concerned.

You will readily appreciate that in a work of this kind divergencies will make themselves apparent because of the various closing dates for municipal accounts in the different Provinces, particularly where periods of depression overlap with those of comparative prosperity. However, this will no doubt right itself and the divergencies will play a part in emphasising the necessity for uniformity in the date of closing accounts.

Source. AN AS SAB GES 1901 11/32/D (1929-1932) Minutes of the session of the Statistical Council held on the 18th and 19th March 1935

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATISTICS.

1. OBJECT OF MEMORANDUM.- The object of this memorandum is to draw the attention of the Statistical Council to certain unsatisfactory features of the statistics relating to the finances of urban local authorities. It is suggested that the Council consider what steps should be taken to bring about an improvement in the position.

2. COLLECTION OF STATISTICS BY CENSUS OFFICE.- In 1918 the question of a uniform local government questionnaire was discussed by the Council and a Conference between representatives of the Statistical Council, the four Provinces and the Census Office resulted. At that Conference the form of the questionnaire to be used by the Census Office was decided upon. Regulations dealing with the collection of local government statistics were introduced in 1920 and the forms then adopted have remained practically unchanged since that time.

Local government statistics are collected by the Census Office on two forms. One of these (S.67 - Annexure A) which provides for the collection of detailed statistics of indebtedness, income, ordinary expenditure, and capital expenditure is issued to municipalities, boroughs and village councils. The other (S.67b - Annexure B) which calls only for a statement of total indebtedness, total revenue and total expenditure, is used for urban areas of minor importance, e.g., village management boards, health committees, etc. Both these forms provide for the collection of other statistics relating to urban areas, but these statistics do not call for any comment at present.

The method of collection adopted by the Census Office is not uniform throughout all Provinces. The procedure in each case is as follows :-

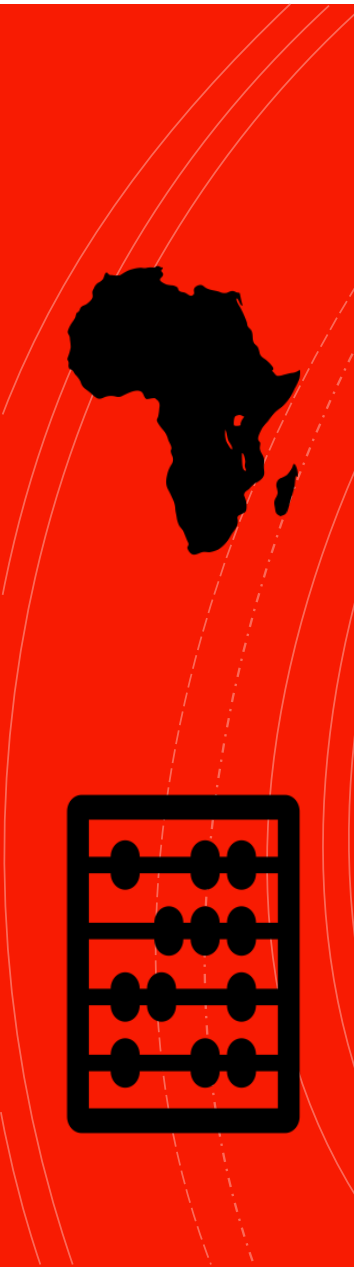
- (a) CAPE.- Statistics are collected from all urban local authorities on the forms adopted in 1918.
- (b) NATAL.- Financial statistics relating to Boroughs are obtained from the Annual Report of the Provincial Auditor, certain adjustments being made in the figures relating to trading departments.
- (c) TRANSVAAL.- Statistics are collected from all urban local authorities on the forms adopted in 1918.
- (d) ORANGE FREE STATE.- By arrangement with the Provincial Auditor, the Census Office is furnished with copies of the accounts of each municipality as certified by the Provincial Auditor. From these copies the necessary information is extracted in the Census Office and entered against the various items of Form S.67. The form of these statements and the details furnished vary widely and the amount of work involved in extracting the necessary particulars is considerable.

The following statement shows the number of each class of local authority now in existence in the Union.

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY.	ORDINANCE.	CAPE.	NATAL.	VAAL.	TRANS-ORANGE FREE STATE.	TOTAL
Municipalities	No.10 of 1912-Cape. No.11 of 1925-O.P.S.	129	-	-	61	190
Boroughs	No.19 of 1924-Natal	-	9	-	-	9
Town Councils	No.11 of 1926-TVL.	-	-	27	-	27
Townships	No.11 of 1926-Natal.	-	17	-	-	17
Village Management Boards.	No.10 of 1921-Cape. No.11 of 1925-O.P.S.	90	-	-	7	97
Village Councils	No.11 of 1926-TVL.	-	-	31	-	31
Local Boards	No.11 of 1921-Cape	24	-	-	-	24
Local Administration and Health Boards.	No. 4 of 1926-Natal.	-	7	-	-	7
Health Committees	No. 14 of 1930-Natal. No. 11 of 1926-TVL.	-	17	35	-	52
Malaria Committees *	No. 11 of 1932-Natal	-	16	-	-	16
Divisional Councils (Rural)	No.13 of 1917-Cape.	94	-	-	-	94
Local Areas(rural)	No.13 of 1917-Cape	22	-	-	-	22
TOTAL		359	66	93	68	586

* The relative regulations do not provide for the audit of the accounts of these Committees by the Provincial Auditor though that officer, at the request of the Provincial Secretary and the Committees, has conducted an audit in several instances. The duties of these bodies are confined to carrying out measures for the stamping out and prevention of malaria. No statistics relating to Malaria Committees have so far been collected by the Census Office.

The.....



4908-25/1/33-1900.

STATISTICS ACT, 1914.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATISTICS.

SECTION A.

Name of Local Authority.....

Year of Return ended..... 193...
(State month and year.)

Area: (a) Residential Portion.....

(b) Town Lands.....

Value of Rateable Property..... £.....

Value of Exempted Property..... £.....

Value of Town Lands (not included in above)..... £.....

Total Value, all Property..... £.....

Number of Electors on Voters' Roll.....

SECTION B.—LOAN INDEBTEDNESS. (EXTERNAL LOANS ONLY.)

NOTE.—Under (b) Government Loans include loans for Municipal Housing Schemes. Housing Loans to individuals must not be included.

1. GROSS INDEBTEDNESS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR— £

(a) Municipal Stock and Debentures.....

(b) Government Loans.....

(c) Bank Overdrafts.....

(d) Other Loans.....

TOTAL..... £.....

2. LOANS RAISED DURING YEAR— £

(a) Municipal Stock and Debentures.....

(b) Government Loans.....

(c) Bank Overdrafts.....

(d) Other Loans.....

TOTAL..... £.....

3. LOANS REPAYED OR REDEEMED DURING YEAR— £

(a) Municipal Stock and Debentures.....

(b) Government Loans.....

(c) Bank Overdrafts.....

(d) Other Loans.....

TOTAL..... £.....

4. GROSS INDEBTEDNESS AT END OF YEAR— £

(a) Municipal Stock and Debentures.....

(b) Government Loans.....

(c) Bank Overdrafts.....

(d) Other Loans.....

TOTAL..... £.....

NOTE.—The Amounts at (1) plus the Amounts at (2) less the Amounts at (3) should give the Amounts at (4).

5. REDEMPTION OR SINKING FUNDS— £

(a) Amount at beginning of Year.....

(b) Additions to Fund during Year from Revenue [vide Section E, item 25 (b) (i)].....

(c) Additions to Fund during Year from Accrued Interest and other sources.....

TOTAL (a), (b), AND (c)..... £.....

Less (d) Deductions from Fund for Redemption of Debt.....

(e) Deductions from Fund for other purposes.....

TOTAL (d) AND (e)..... £.....

Total amount of Fund at end of Year..... £.....

SECTION H.—STREETS AND BRIDGES.

1. TOTAL LENGTH OF CONSTRUCTED STREETS WITHIN THE AREA OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.....

2. TOTAL NUMBER OF BRIDGES FOR GENERAL TRAFFIC (excluding culverts) in existence, including bridges constructed during year— NUMBER

(a) Under 20-feet Span.....

(b) With 20-feet Span and over.....

SECTION I.—FIRE BRIGADES AND AMBULANCES.

1. NUMBER OF ENGINES IN USE.....	4. ORDINARY REVENUE DURING YEAR FROM FIRE BRIGADE AND AMBULANCE: £	5. ORDINARY EXPENDITURE DURING YEAR ON FIRE BRIGADE AND AMBULANCE: £
2. NUMBER OF CALLS DURING YEAR:	(a) Fees.....	(a) Salaries and Wages.....
(a) Minor Fires.....	(b) Other.....	(b) Maintenance.....
(b) Major Fires.....		(c) Interest and Loan Repayments.....
(c) False Alarms.....		(d) Other.....
3. NUMBER OF STAFF EMPLOYED:		
(a) European.....		
(b) Non-European.....		
TOTAL.....	TOTAL..... £.....	TOTAL..... £.....

NOTE.—The Revenue and Expenditure in this section should be extracted from Section C, Item 10, and Section E, item 13.

SECTION J.—EMPLOYEES.

1. NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR (including whole-time and part-time officials and employees)—(Excluding Relief Workers)

(a) European.....

(b) Non-European.....

TOTAL.....

2. GROSS AMOUNT PAID AS SALARIES AND WAGES DURING YEAR—(Excluding Wages Paid to Relief Workers) £

(a) European.....

(b) Non-European.....

TOTAL..... £.....

I certify that the information given under each heading in the above returns is correct.

(Place)..... Town Clerk or Secretary.

(Date)..... 193...
(a) European.....
(b) Non-European.....



Source. AN AS SAB GES 1901 11/32/D (1929-1932) Minutes of the session of the Statistical Council held on the 19-20th March 1934

Source. ANAS SAB GES 1901 11/32/D (1929-1932) Minutes of the session of the Statistical Council held on the 12-13th Nov. 1934

SESSION OF STATISTICAL COUNCIL TO BE HELD
AT THE CENSUS OFFICE, PRETORIA, ON THE
12TH AND 13TH NOVEMBER, 1934.

A G E N D A

	<u>Page.</u>
1. Report on -	
(a) Farm Mortgage Bonds. Suggestion to obtain information from Inland Revenue.	
(b) Provincial Finance. Alteration of representation of in Official Year Book.	
(c) Medical Certificates of Cause of Death. Recommendations of Council relating to.	
(d) Census Act. Proposed amendments to.	
(e) Publications.	1 - 4
(f) Local Government Statistics.	-
2. Scope of 1934-35 Agricultural Census. Resolution re taking full quinquennial census.	5 - 11
3. Population Census, 1936.	-
4. Authorization of forms for 1934 Industrial Census.	12
5. Census of Fluid Milk Consumption.	13 - 15
6. Fishing Statistics.	16 - 17
7. Energy Balance Sheet of the Union (World Power Conference).	(Separate)
8. Questionnaire for League of Nations. Convention of 1928 relating to Economic Statistics.	18 - 22
9. League of Nations. Minimum List of Commodities for international trade statistics.	23 - 24
10. Retail Trade Statistics.	25
11. Consumption of Electric Current in chief towns.	26
12. Monthly returns of Electric Current generated.	27 - 30
13. Vehicle Accidents.	-
14. General.	-

JFW/JF.

*I attended the session as alternate for Dr. Morrison
for JFW
ZHP*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATISTICS.

In pursuance of the resolution adopted by the Statistical Council at its last meeting, steps were immediately taken to approach the Provincial Administrations in terms thereof, through the medium of the Office of the Secretary for the Interior. The replies so far received from the various Provinces serve to indicate that generally speaking the prospects of achieving agreement, though all the Provinces have not yet come into line, are fair.

In the Cape and Transvaal the proposals are favourably dealt with but in the case of Natal it is intimated that the Administration is unable to see its way to make the suggested alterations. It is hoped, however, to find some informal means of breaking down this reluctance to co-operate in the Council's scheme. So far as the Orange Free State Province is concerned, it was stated that the views of the Orange Free State Municipal Association were being obtained, but the results of this action are not yet available.

Fortunately there are other means of promoting the scheme available. At the Fifth Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants held in March last, the subject of standardisation in the form of municipal accounts was favourably dealt with in the address of the President, Mr. V.B. Lewis, and the discussion lent support to his views. In view of this promising opening, the City Treasurers of Bloemfontein, Capetown, Durban and Johannesburg were immediately communicated with in the matter, each being furnished with a copy of the Memorandum which was drawn up for the Statistical Council. Very favourable replies were received from these gentlemen and it was intimated that the subject would probably come up for discussion at a meeting shortly to be held in Johannesburg. The Secretary for the Interior was thereupon asked to communicate with Mr. Lewis, subject to there being no objection on the part of the Provincial Authorities to such action, and it is pleasant to record that certain formal resolutions of a favourable character (vide attached copy of letter from Mr. Lewis "A") were adopted. It will be seen that an offer is made therein of the undertaking by the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants of an investigation and report, to be furnished to the Secretary for the Interior, on the standardisation of the accounts of Local Authorities and the introduction of a uniform financial year. It was suggested that, if this offer was accepted, the co-operation of the Provincial Authorities and Provincial Auditors should be secured. The Secretary for the Interior has been asked to proceed on the lines suggested (vide annexure "B").

ANC/JJ.



To conclude

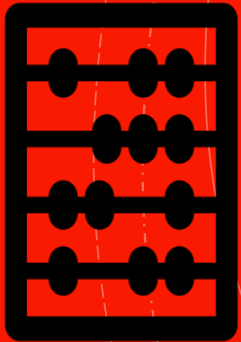
Seen from France, one cannot but be struck by the **diversity, regularity and quality** of the statistics produced by the Union of South Africa at the beginning of the 20th century. It benefited from a **rigorous organisation**, from the emulation of other **Commonwealth partners** and showed the **political will to know, organise and control all the territories**. The French statistics of the period were much less developed: the results of the demographic censuses took nearly ten years to be published, demographic projections were embryonic, and there was no index of industrial production until the 1940s. The General Statistics of France, created in 1830, had barely 100 people on the eve of 1940. It had no contacts in the ministries... **and I am not referring to the colonial statistics of the empire...**

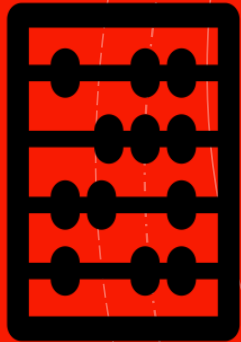
To conclude



A paradox, however. While statistics aim to homogenise and standardise situations that are by nature disparate, it seems that those of the South African Union do not aim to unify. Their systematic presentation in two languages is both a sign of a desire to integrate and to distinguish (?)... but above all, by making geographical origin (Native, European), colour (coloured) or race the pivot of all their studies, they create categories and hierarchies that separate and divide more than they harmonise. In this sense, the statistics reflect the lack of political will to integrate what they define as minorities. **They aim to describe an heterogeneous nation.**

In the focus on racial differences obscures other inequalities (social, geographical, gender, etc.). Am I right?





I hope to have convinced you that what is counted count and that statistics matter.

Many thanks for your patience

Questions and comment are welcome

After the last slide on the Stat Sa



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Statistics South Africa
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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