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Counting What Counts: Africa's Seminal Effort to Produce Harmonized Official Statistics on Governance, Peace and Security

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Abstract

The paper documents the practical experience of eleven African national statistical offices that tested and eventually institutionalized a methodology for producing official harmonized statistics in the area of governance, peace and security statistics between 2012 and 2017. This took place whilst the rest of the world was still debating the rationale for including this new domain in the next global development agenda. It situates Africa's successful GPS-SHaSA experiment in the context of the continent's long-standing commitment to "achieve political sovereignty through data autonomy". The paper also presents some strategic advantages of the GPS-SHaSA methodology, provides illustrations using selected targets of Africa's Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on how the four types of data generated by the methodology can inform policymaking. It finally concludes by identifying a number of methodological, institutional, financial and communicational investments necessary for GPS statistical production by NSOs to be sustainable, in Africa and beyond.

Keywords: *Measurement, Indicators, Governance, Peace, Security, Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063, Household Surveys.*

JEL Code : C18, C81, C83, O10, O55

Résumé

Cet article présente l'expérience concrète des instituts nationaux de la statistique (INS) de onze pays africains qui ont testé en pratique et institutionnalisé une méthodologie harmonisée pour produire des statistiques officielles dans le champ de la gouvernance, la paix et la sécurité (GPS) entre 2012 et 2017. Cette expérience s'est déroulée alors que le reste du monde était encore en train de débattre de la pertinence d'inclure ce nouveau champ thématique comme une composante à part entière de l'agenda global du développement post 2015. Le papier montre comment le succès de l'expérience GPS-SHaSA s'inscrit dans un engagement de longue date de l'Afrique pour « atteindre sa souveraineté politique à travers l'autonomie des données ». Il décrit également les avantages stratégiques de la méthodologie GPS-SHaSA, et offre quelques illustrations tirées de cibles particulières de l'Agenda 2063 de l'Afrique et de l'Objectif du Développement Durable (ODD) 16 pour montrer comment les quatre types de données produites par le projet peuvent informer les politiques publiques et le processus de décision. Il conclut en identifiant un certain nombre de défis méthodologiques, institutionnels, financiers et en termes de communication à relever pour que la production de données GPS par les INS puisse être durable, en Afrique et au-delà.

Mots clefs : *Mesures, Indicateurs, Gouvernance, Paix, Sécurité, Objectif du Développement Durable, Agenda 2063, Enquête auprès des ménages.*

1. AN AFRICAN PARADOX

Very few people are aware that some African statistical offices had long been producing official statistics on governance well before European statistical offices did. Madagascar first published a comprehensive set of governance statistics in 1995, followed by seven Francophone West African countries in the first half of 2000, several of which – notably Mali and Benin – have been doing periodic updates since then¹.

It is only in 2013 that Eurostat began experimenting with governance-related questions in its core EU survey module on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) applied by national statistical offices (NSOs) across the European Union². The Quality of Life Expert Group, mandated in 2012 by EU Directors of Social Statistics to develop multi-dimensional measures of quality of life, concluded in its final report that with respect to “Governance and Basic Rights”, several topics continue to be “difficult for official statistics to approach” (European Union, 2017). While these topics – namely satisfaction with public services, discrimination, and voice and accountability – are yet to be included by Eurostat in its survey modules, they are routinely measured by a dozen African statistical offices. They may well be measured continent-wide in the near future, as intended by the African Union’s second edition of the *Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa* (AU, UNECA, AfDB, 2017).

Whilst some regard Africa as a continent doomed to perpetual crisis and bad governance, it is also the continent that has advanced most rapidly – and confidently – in measuring progress on governance.

This paper aims to shed light on this apparent paradox by showing how the adoption by African Heads of States in 2011 of an official commitment to produce harmonized official statistics on governance, peace and security (GPS) was the culmination of two decades of efforts to reclaim “data sovereignty”. We examine the motivations that led eleven African statistical offices, from 2012 to 2017, to pilot-test (and for some, to institutionalize) a methodology for producing official statistics in a domain where few had experience. This happened at a time when the rest of the world was still debating the rationale for including governance and peace in the next global development agenda, let alone its feasibility.

Given that world leaders have adopted Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies, a review of the SHaSA methodology on Governance, Peace and Security Statistics (GPS-SHaSA) developed by the community of African statisticians is timely. Insights and lessons emerging from this African experience may be of use to national statisticians worldwide as preparations for reporting on Goal 16 take effect.

¹ The periodic repetition of governance surveys by a number of African countries is all the more striking that according to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, only half of Africa’s population live in a country that has conducted more than two comparable surveys in the past 10 years (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2016).

² The EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey, more specifically its *ad hoc* module 2013 on subjective well-being, included three survey questions on trust (in the legal system, the political system and the police), and the EU-SILC *ad hoc* module 2013 on social and cultural participation included one question on “active citizenship” (i.e. participation in activities of a political party or local interest group, participation in a public consultation, signing a petition, writing a letter to a politician or to the media, participation in a demonstration, etc.) (See <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/income-and-living-conditions/data/ad-hoc-modules>)

Amongst several such insights, three are of particular relevance to ongoing efforts to establish a global monitoring mechanism on SDG 16. First, the conclusive results of the GPS-SHaSA pilot in Africa prove that nationally produced survey-based statistics on GPS that are comparable across countries *are* feasible. Second, the high diversity amongst participating countries – including post-conflict settings such as Mali’s, countries-in-crisis such as Burundi (at the time), “new” democracies such as Tunisia, and top-ranking democracies like Cape Verde – shows that NSOs in both transitional and consolidated democracies are interested *and* able to produce GPS statistics — politically, financially and methodologically. Third, the GPS-SHaSA dataset demonstrates the policy value of combining administrative and survey data sources.

The first section of this article takes a historical perspective and puts into context Africa’s successful GPS-SHaSA experiment within the continent’s commitment to “achieve political sovereignty through data autonomy”. The second section presents some strategic advantages of the GPS-SHaSA methodology, as we illustrate how the four types of data generated by the GPS-SHaSA instruments can inform policymaking, using an example on the “free and fair elections” target of Africa’s Agenda 2063 and on the “no discrimination” target of the world’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the third section, we analyze the political and institutional contexts in which national pilots took place and the strategies applied by NSOs to secure the buy-in of their political leadership and to create broad-based demand for GPS statistics in their respective countries. Finally, the last section identifies a number of methodological, institutional, financial and communicational investments necessary for GPS statistical production by NSOs to be sustainable.

2. THE GPS-SHASA ORIGINS

Africa’s bold decision to embark on a continent-wide statistical program on governance, peace and security is best understood in the broader context of various commitments made by the continent over the past fifteen years to “reclaim sovereignty through data autonomy,” *especially* in the highly strategic domain of governance and peace.

2.1 Inviting citizens’ feedback: The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

When the AU created the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) in 2002 as part of the African Renaissance initiative, it wanted to set a new stage for managing its own development agenda and for finding “African solutions to African problems”. To this end, a homegrown governance evaluation system was needed, which would allow countries to come together as equals, to engage in “peer reviews” and to share lessons learnt and best practices amongst themselves.

Established in 2003 as a voluntary mechanism for African countries to self-assess on governance, the APRM was pioneering in at least two respects (APRM/NEPAD, 2003). Firstly, the APRM’s self-assessment questionnaire was structured around adherence to a set of *continental and regional* standards and codes on various aspects of democratic, economic and corporate governance. This was a bold assertion of African sovereignty at a time when a mushrooming industry of international rating and ranking indices were gauging individual countries’ performance based on externally determined criteria on “good” governance (Arndt et al., 2006).

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the APRM was a daring experiment in inviting people's participation in the evaluation of governance. When developing their self-assessment report, states had to gather the perspectives of a broad range of non-state actors, including ordinary citizens. While such efforts may have been imperfect, they nonetheless were "a powerful political and moral symbol" (Corrigan et al., 2017) of Africa's adherence to the idea that governance reform needed to be informed by the experience of ordinary citizens. In this regard, the APRM established an important precedent: it "formalized" public participation in governance assessment processes, and helped popularize the idea that without it, the legitimacy and credibility of governance evaluations may suffer.

2.2 Including GPS in official statistics: The SHaSA

The SHaSA was adopted by African Heads of States in 2011 to accelerate the African integration agenda – a process which "*requires quality statistics – statistics that are accurate, objective, timely, consistent, harmonized i.e. comparable across time and space, and produced efficiently and regularly*" (AU et al., 2011). The SHaSA was first and foremost a response to African frustrations with international methodologies: "*statistics are produced using methodologies that do not always reflect African realities [...], partly because international statistical references and standards do not always take into account continental specificities (i.e. the nature of African economies, the cultural habits of local populations, etc.)*" (AU et al., 2011). Underpinning the SHaSA was also a realization that "political sovereignty begins with data autonomy." This idea was subsequently championed by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation in its 2012 report³, which lamented the paucity of African data and advocated for statistical autonomy within African countries: "*This is a leadership and governance issue.*" (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2012).

The SHaSA was also adopted at a time when international governance indices were harshly criticized for the subjectivity inherent in the selection and interpretation of the data used in their construction. Their lack of transparency and comparability over time, and their limited use for policymakers who struggled to find what action to take based on a single composite score, were also frowned upon (Arndt et al., 2006). These well-known biases and limitations of international governance indicators made it imperative for national statistical systems to start generating their own data. As explained by the Director General of Kenya's National Bureau of Statistics: "*Governance in Kenya is being assessed by some twenty organizations — and not one of them is Kenyan! This proliferation of externally-led, uncoordinated data-collection drives not only marginalizes our national statistical agencies but also creates confusion by applying different methods to measure the same things*" (UNDP, 2017).⁴

According to insiders who attended the high-level discussions⁵ leading to the adoption of the SHaSA, concerns about a potential backlash domestically in the event of unflattering statistics on governance became secondary to the primary motivation of the AU leadership, namely

³ "One of Africa's biggest challenges going forward is to master its own robust statistical system. *Political sovereignty begins with data autonomy.*" (Mo Ibrahim Index Report, 2012) The Mo Ibrahim Foundation also started investing in nationally generated data sources for its index that year.

⁴ Quote by Zachary Mwangi, Director General, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

⁵ Based on authors' interviews with AU officials.

reclaiming continental and national sovereignty over a thematic area of vital importance for national planning, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It is in this context that the methodological approach proposed by the SHaSA Group on GPS statistics was unanimously adopted by the Committee of Directors General of African NSOs at its first annual meeting after the adoption of the SHaSA, in 2012, in Yamoussoukro. After a call for expressions of interest to pilot the GPS-SHaSA instruments was issued by the AU Statistics Division to the continent's 55 national statistical offices, as many as twenty⁶ NSOs confirmed their interest, after having duly secured approval from their respective heads of ministries.

At their subsequent annual meeting in 2013 in Johannesburg, Directors General reaffirmed their strong backing of the initiative, this time formally requesting the GPS-SHaSA Group to “*secure funding for a regional project to support NSOs in the institutionalization of GPS data collection across the continent.*” (AUSTAT, 2013) On the eve of the adoption of the continent's new development framework for the next fifty years, *Agenda 2063 — The Africa We Want*, Directors General also underlined the timeliness of the GPS-SHaSA initiative, and welcomed it as a direct contribution towards Agenda 2063's vision of “*a more united and strong Africa, [...] a global power to reckon with [...], speaking with one voice*” (AU, 2013). Rooted in pan-Africanism and setting the road towards an “African Renaissance”, Agenda 2063 further legitimized the GPS-SHaSA endeavor and consolidated statisticians' buy-in, while also triggering a “race to the top” amongst this tightly knit community.

2.3 Advocating for GPS data sovereignty globally: The Common African Position on the Post-2015 Agenda

African Heads of State once again demonstrated African leadership over issues of governance monitoring, this time at the global level, when the Open Working Group on SDGs considered relegating issues on governance and peace to a set of “cross-cutting development enablers” in the preamble of the new development agenda (as was done in the Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000). Africa's Common Position on the post-2015 Agenda (AU/UNECA, 2014), which included a stand-alone pillar on “Peace and Security”⁷ addressing a broad range of governance issues (AU/UNECA, 2014), was a game changer in at least three respects. First, it was instrumental in securing a global consensus around SDG 16 even when another powerful faction in the Group of 77 – led by China, India and Russia – remained staunchly opposed to it (Cling et al., 2016).⁸ Secondly, by championing the inclusion of a dedicated goal on governance and peace in the 2030 Agenda, with corresponding targets and indicators, African member states were also

⁶ The twenty countries that officially expressed interest to the African Union in piloting the GPS-SHaSA instruments in 2013 were the following: Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape-Verde, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Guinea-Conakry, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, Tunisia and Uganda.

⁷ This “Peace and Security Pillar” underlined the importance of “addressing the root causes of conflict” through tackling a broad range of governance issues such as reducing social inequality, exclusion and discrimination and encouraging democratic practices (AU/UNECA, 2014).

⁸ The authors explain that “*the countries most opposed to this SDG [on Governance and Peace] (China, India et Russia) found themselves increasingly isolated, and eventually had to give in to the position of the majority, further to the announcement by Africa of its position in favor of a stand-alone governance goal.*” They further note that Africa's assertive stand “*really shifted the balance of power*” in the politics of SDG16.

signalling to the world their confidence in the measurability of these issues. This confidence was largely derived from their own recent experiments in this area, notably through the APRM and the GPS-SHaSA initiative,⁹ which were showcased at various high-level events¹⁰ leading to the adoption of the final 2030 Agenda in September 2015. Thirdly, the AU's advocacy around the importance of making governance and peace a stand-alone Goal further promoted "GPS data sovereignty" across the continent – and indeed, across the world – since the adoption of such a Goal would then require countries to produce *national* statistics to report on progress, just like for any other goal.

3. THE GPS-SHaSA METHODOLOGY AND ITS POLICY RELEVANCE

Below we briefly describe the main features and advantages of the harmonized statistical instruments developed by the SHaSA Group on GPS and field-tested by eleven pilot countries between 2013 and 2017. We illustrate, using examples, the policy relevance of statistics generated by these instruments and their suitability for reporting on SDG 16 and on Aspirations 3 (on good governance) and 4 (on peace and security) of Agenda 2063.

3.1 Strategic advantages of the GPS-SHaSA methodology

The GPS-SHaSA methodology includes four instruments: two survey modules (two one-page questionnaires, one on governance and another on peace and security, for a total of around 60 questions) and likewise, two administrative data collection instruments (again, one schedule of administrative items on governance, and another on peace and security). Above and beyond these four data collection instruments, a number of supporting methodological tools¹¹ were developed – including an interviewer training manual, metadata sheets to guide the collection of administrative data, survey results tabulation plans, as well as indicator matrices classifying GPS-SHaSA indicators by theme and sub-themes, and showing the complementarity of survey-based and administrative data.

The deeply rooted ownership of the methodological design process by the dozen or so African statisticians constituting the SHaSA Group on GPS is perhaps the most distinctive feature of this initiative (Razafindrakoto and Roubaud, 2015). At various steps in the process, expert inputs were invited and subsequently debated within the Group – notably from the Afrobarometer, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Small Arms Survey, UNODC and UNWomen. This strong

⁹ "It appeared clearly in the debates that African countries' positions were informed by their experiences with household surveys on governance, peace and security, conducted as part of the GPS-SHaSA pilot initiative" (Cling et al., 2016). For instance, during subsequent negotiations on the selection of indicators for SDG 16, Africa once again asserted its leadership when expressing support for survey-based indicators, citing conclusive results from the GPS-SHaSA experience, even while several developed countries had expressed serious reserves for using survey data to measure governance, mainly due to a lack of experience in this area and to a general belief that NSOs should not get involved in this area.

¹⁰ For instance, the Joint UNDP/AU High-Level Event on SDG16 and the GPS-SHaSA – "Towards Regional and National Statistical Capacities for Measuring Peace, Rule of Law and Governance: An Agenda for the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals Framework", June 11-12, 2014 at the African Union Commission Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and the Joint UNDP/AU High-Level Event on SDG16 and GPS-SHaSA, New York, December 2014.

¹¹ All of these methodological tools were made available in three languages, namely French, English and Portuguese.

ownership of the methodology within the GPS-SHaSA Group translated into a similarly strong endorsement by the Committee of Directors General of African NSOs throughout the data production cycle, including at the (critical) publication stage.

The scientific provenance of the governance survey methodology adopted by the SHaSA Group on GPS contributed significantly to creating the confidence level required for its swift adoption by the broader community of African statisticians. As early as in 1995, the national statistical office of Madagascar (INSTAT), assisted by the French research institute IRD-DIAL, was pioneering survey-based measurements on democratic governance (Herrera et al., 2007). They developed a compact module on governance questions that could be appended to any household survey, the latter often donor-funded for a particular purpose such as health or agriculture. On the basis of this successful initiative, the IRD-DIAL researchers replicated the approach in seven Francophone West African countries simultaneously, in the first half of 2000, and in seven countries of the Andean community in South America, in the latter half of 2000. Subsequent scientific analyses of these initiatives demonstrated the reliability of the governance indicators produced, thanks to the established rigorous standards of the NSOs and to the large samples they could undertake. The utility of such indicators to policymakers, researchers and civil society, and their legitimacy in the eyes of such actors, deriving from strong country ownership over the data production process, also represented real value-added over externally generated international indices on governance (Razafindrakoto and Roubaud, 2005; Herrera et al., 2007; Giang et al., 2011). All of these features proved essential in renewing the uptake of this approach in 2012 for the survey component of the GPS-SHaSA methodology. Generally speaking, the combination of survey modules and administrative data collection instruments provided five main strategic advantages.

3.1.1 Combining survey data and administrative sources to get a complete picture

Conducting surveys may be operationally easier in developing countries relative to maintaining up-to-date administrative records¹². Nonetheless, the GPS-SHaSA methodology was deliberately designed to show the links between “inputs” — capabilities and efforts by the state to be inclusive, accountable and effective in managing public affairs, best measured through administrative sources — and “outcomes” — namely the lived experiences of citizens and their trust in institutions, best measured through survey data. The SHaSA Group on GPS felt strongly that investing in administrative data collection systems on governance and peace was no less important, even if the investments required are more consequential.¹³ In Côte d’Ivoire, for instance, administrative statistics were used to help contextualize survey data on people’s trust in the courts of justice. When pairing levels of trust with the ratio of judges per 100,000 people,

¹² Only half of GPS-SHaSA pilot countries tested the administrative data collection instruments, namely Kenya, Cote d’Ivoire, Malawi, Cape Verde and Burundi, while all eleven of them tested the survey modules.

¹³ This consideration was also shared by Directors General. At their 2016 annual meeting in Cote d’Ivoire, a number of Directors noted that “while much progress has been made on the survey component of the GPS-SHaSA methodology, the importance of also investing in administrative statistics should not be underestimated: the assessment of the ‘demand’ side [...] needs to be complemented by an assessment of the ‘supply side’ [...]. The more extensive investments required to establish administrative data collection systems in ministries and agencies (in time, in human resources, technologically and financially) should not deter the STG 1 from moving forward on this front while continuing its excellent survey work” (Laberge, 2016).

with budgetary allocations to legal aid services and with the proportion of defendants who had legal representation in courts, policymakers were able to identify some of the reasons why people in different regions of the country were more or less satisfied with court services (UNDP, 2017).

3.1.2 The imperative of capturing people's "voice" when assessing GPS

When monitoring GPS, the very nature of the issues at stake – how peaceful and inclusive are societies, how just and accountable are institutions – makes it especially important to bring people's "voice" into GPS measurements. In other words, the measurement approach used to monitor official commitments to improve governance needs to be true to the values and principles put forth in these commitments, such as the principle of state-to-people accountability. It is in this context that the GPS-SHaSA methodology placed strong emphasis on the use of survey-based evidence to capture peoples' own assessments of governance practices and peace dynamics in their day-to-day life. As remarked by a senior advisor to the GPS-SHaSA pilot initiative, *"For the vast majority of people — the uneducated, low-income labourers living in rural areas who rarely get a chance to participate in national policymaking, except for casting a ballot once every four or five years, but even that may turn out to be useless — for the vast majority of these people, participating in a governance survey represents a rare chance to have their voice heard by power-holders, particularly in countries where civil society or other intermediary bodies are poorly organized"* (UNDP, 2017).¹⁴

3.1.3 Leveraging the statistical advantages of using nationally representative household surveys

Piggybacking survey modules on a large support survey allows for the precise identification of which population groups – women, university graduates, northerners, urbanites, the unemployed, the poorest quintile, young people, etc. – are most affected by the dysfunctions of governance systems. This is a major advantage of working with NSOs, compared with other types of organizations running governance surveys on smaller samples. The Afrobarometer surveys, for instance, are run on samples of approximately 2,400 respondents and as such have considerably higher margins of sampling error than GPS-SHaSA surveys which have sample sizes that can go up to 40,000 households (see Table 1).

As shown in Table 1, GPS-SHaSA modules in most pilot countries were grafted on general living conditions surveys or labour force surveys. In all countries, GPS-SHaSA survey modules were administered to a representative sample of adults (above 18 years of age) randomly selected from the support survey.¹⁵

¹⁴ Quote by Mark Orkin, Senior Advisor to GPS-SHaSA, former Statistician-General, Statistics South Africa, and Associate Fellow, Department of Social Policy and Intervention, Oxford University

¹⁵ Generally speaking, the selection of adults for the GPS-SHaSA survey was carried out at two levels. A first selection was done at the household level: in 40% of pilot countries, only a subset of the households sampled by the support survey were selected for the GPS-SHaSA modules. A second selection was done at the individual level: in 70% of pilot countries, only a subset of all adults living in a household were surveyed (in most cases, only one adult per household was randomly selected, using a variety of methods such as the Kish Grid, the nearest birthday, cards, etc.)

Attaching GPS survey modules to large-sample official surveys also offers the advantage of mobilizing other socio-economic variables available in the support survey to investigate interactions between measures of governance and broader measures of development outcomes, such as health-related data collected by a demographic and health survey, or food security data collected by a living conditions survey.

Table 1. Overview of sampling strategies applied to the GPS-SHaSA survey modules

	Pilot Countries					Other Countries (<i>Self-starters</i>)					
	Cameroon	Cape Verde	Kenya	Malawi	Tunisia	Benin	Burundi	Côte d'Ivoire	Mada gascar	Mali	Uganda
Support Survey											
Name of the Survey	ECAM 4	IMC	GATS	WMS	GPD	EMICoV	ECVMB	ENV	P1-E123	EMOP	UNGBS
Type of Survey	HLS/123	HLS/123	Specific	HLS/123	GoV	HLS/123	HLS /123	HLS/123	HLS/123	HLS/123	GoV
Number of PSUs	1,024	n.a.	Test	699	298	911	415	1 068	220	911	375
Nb. of HH (theor.)	12,848	9,918	Pilot	12,700	4,470	22,080	7,128	12,816	4,020	5,466	3,750
Nb. of HH (final)	10,303	8,804	-	14,198	n.a.	21,402	7,006	n.a.	4,020	n.a.	n.a.
GPS-SHaSA Modules											
Year of Survey	2014	2013	2013	2015	2014	2015	2013-14	2015	2015	2014-15	2013
Universe	Adult	Adult	Adult	Adult	Adult	Adult	Adult	Adult	Adult	Adult	Adult
Nb. of HH (from S. S.)	50%	50%	-	All	All	All	All	25%	All	All	33%
Nb. of ind. (from HH)	1	n.a.	1	1	All	All	All	1	All	<3	1
Nb. of ind. (final)	5,102	3,771	74	14,198	10,600	39,991	13,116	3,082	7,166	13,835	1,036

Sources: Razafindrakoto and Roubaud (2015); GPS-SHaSA modules, 2013-2015, NSOs.

Note: The Kenya National Bureau for Statistics (KNBS) was only able to test the GPS-SHaSA survey modules on a small sample of 74 individuals, as the donor funding the implementation of the larger support survey declined the NSO's request to graft the GPS-SHaSA modules to that survey.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on the robustness of the GPS-SHaSA survey results, already reviewed and discussed at length in Razafindrakoto and Roubaud (2015). Their analysis (based on a review of measurement and sampling errors in national GPS-SHaSA datasets, and on a review of the internal and external consistency of survey results) concludes that GPS-SHaSA survey results are robust and reliable, in some cases of higher statistical quality even than traditional survey-based statistics on the labour force, living conditions or demographics. Importantly, GPS-SHaSA results produced by national statistical agencies were found not to differ significantly from those of the Afrobarometer survey, produced by a research network (Razafindrakoto and Roubaud, 2015). This finding refutes the view that governance cannot be reliably measured through surveys run by public institutions, due to their assumed lack of independence. As explained by Razafindrakoto: *“The Afrobarometer survey, at the end, asks respondents who they think is running this survey. Even if it is clearly mentioned by enumerators in their introduction that the survey is conducted by a non-governmental research outfit, more than half of the respondents still assume that the survey is run by the government. So, if Afrobarometer survey results are seen as independent and impartial even if most respondents think it is run by the government, then why would similar surveys run by public institutions such as NSOs be any less reliable?”* (UNDP, 2017).¹⁶

¹⁶ Quote by Mireille Razafindrakoto, Senior Advisor to GPS-SHaSA, Senior Research Fellow, DIAL, IRD.

3.1.4 Meeting the pan-African harmonization objective while respecting national specificities

Survey questions were drawn from a variety of past or ongoing surveys that have proven their robustness – including, amongst others, the democratic governance survey module developed by IRD-DIAL in the early 2000s, the well-established Afrobarometer survey of national public attitudes in Africa on democracy and governance, and standardized victimization surveys (UNODC/UNECE, 2010). In keeping with the pan-African harmonization objective of the SHaSA, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (AU, 2007) – the foremost pan-African normative framework on governance signed by 45 African member states to date – was used to define the thematic scope of the instruments and flesh out their substantive content. Out of the numerous options available, questions were also selected for their resonance with diverse national contexts across the continent, as well as for their analytical relevance.

While the core GPS-SHaSA modules must be applied *verbatim* at each survey iteration to ensure the comparability of data over time and amongst countries, the GPS-SHaSA methodology encourages countries to add a few questions on other aspects of governance and peace that were not addressed in the core questionnaire but may be important in a given national context. Four countries took up the opportunity to add country-specific questions when they piloted the core survey modules, namely Uganda, Tunisia, Benin and Madagascar.

3.1.5 The sine qua non consideration: Sustainability of the methodological approach

African statisticians involved in the design of the GPS-SHaSA survey methodology were primarily concerned about keeping the methodology as ‘light’ as possible. Concise survey modules tend to generate higher quality data as the respondent’s full attention can be mobilized when interview time is kept to a minimum. The material, financial, and human resources required for the implementation of a survey also greatly influences its feasibility, reliability, and above all, its sustainability. In this regard, the ‘add-on’ modular survey technique represented a valuable cost-cutting measure for cash-strapped African NSO, by circumventing the need to set up additional, stand-alone surveys on GPS. Using regularly conducted socio-economic surveys as vehicles for the GPS modules also helped ensure from the outset that GPS surveys would get repeated periodically – another critical feature for establishing time series on GPS statistics, without which meaningful observations can hardly be extracted for policymakers.

3.2 The policy relevance of GPS-SHaSA indicators for monitoring SDG 16 and Africa’s Agenda 2063

Monitoring progress on 17 SDG global goals and 20 African goals is no small feat. For efficiency’s sake, the monitoring frameworks for both Agendas had to reduce the number of indicators to one or two “catch-all” proxies per target. Yet there is a broad consensus (*see SDG16 Data Initiative, 2017; Bertelsmann Stiftung & Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2017; Transparency International, 2017; Institute for Economics and Peace, 2016*) that reliance on single, stand-alone indicators can produce misleading assessments on progress in

meeting any particular target. On the other hand, a “basket-of-indicators”¹⁷ approach combining several different types of (perception-based, experience-based and administrative-record-based) indicators can help evaluate the effectiveness of a policy response in a more robust manner, by shedding light on a range of factors impacting and impacted by a certain issue. Importantly, it can also help avoid creating perverse incentives for states to work towards improving performance on a few indicators without implementing real change in people’s lives.

Recent independent efforts to monitor progress on SDG 16 using a basket-approach have drawn from a wide range of data sources, a time-consuming process which also makes it difficult for the entity aggregating this data to quality-assure indicators produced by third parties. In this regard, the GPS-SHaSA methodology offers a substantial advantage. It centralizes data collection into the hands of national statistical offices while allowing for various types of survey and administrative data to be brought together, quality-assured and vetted by a single actor holding well-established expertise in statistical methods and standards.

In this section, we present a few results from selected GPS-SHaSA pilot countries that produced both survey-based and administrative data, to illustrate the value of applying a basket-approach to measuring targets under Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. As explained by Ben Paul Mungyereza, the Executive Director of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics: *“It’s a myth that policymakers are not interested in, or distrust, data because it’s based on citizen perceptions rather than on ‘real’ experiences or other ‘objective’ information. The fact of the matter is, regardless of whether a government institution is actually a hotbed of nepotism (for example), the popular perception that it is one is probably more important than the actual state of affairs—because this perception shapes citizens’ behaviour and attitudes towards the government”* (UNDP, 2017).

In this section we demonstrate how four types of data generated by the GPS-SHaSA instruments – namely perception data tracking people’s own assessments and appreciations, experience data measuring people’s experiences and behaviors, data on the values and norms they hold, and data from administrative sources compiled by various governmental entities – can be usefully combined to produce rich policy insights. This will be illustrated through actual applications of the basket-approach for monitoring Agenda 2063’s target on ‘free and fair elections’ and Agenda 2030’s target on ‘non-discrimination’.

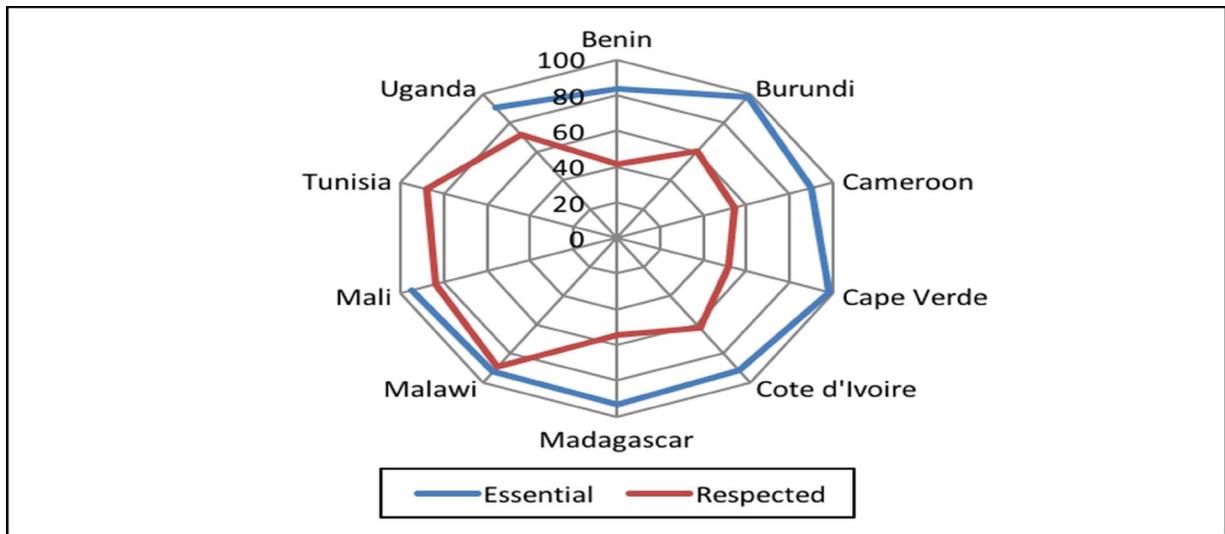
3.2.1 Monitoring Agenda 2063’s target on “Free and Fair Elections”

While the global monitoring framework for SDG 16 deliberately omitted reference to elections, this core aspect of democratic governance is addressed in a dedicated target under Africa’s Agenda 2063 Priority Area 1 on “Democratic Values and Practices are the Norm” which states that by 2023, “at least 70% of the public” should perceive elections as free, fair and transparent.

¹⁷ “Indicator baskets” typically combine experience-based indicators to monitor the actual occurrence of a phenomenon, “input” and “output” indicators – often drawn from administrative records – to track concrete steps taken to address the problem, as well as public perceptions indicators to see whether the public *feels* that an improvement is truly occurring, or what their attitudes are towards certain issues.

Figure 1. Free and fair elections

Do you consider it as “essential”? Is it “respected” in this country?



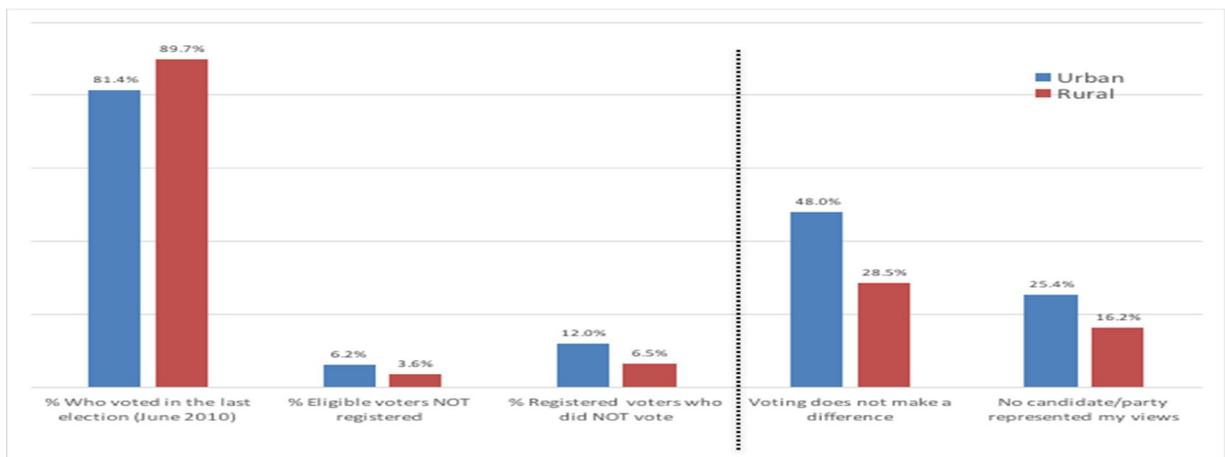
Sources: GPS-SHaSA modules, 2013-2015, NSOs, various countries; authors’ calculations.

Note: Tunisia did not include “free and fair elections” amongst the “key characteristics of democracy” listed for this question.

As illustrated by Figure 1, there is generally a wide gap (except in Malawi and to a lesser extent Mali) between the level of popular aspirations (the extent to which people say that free and fair elections are “an essential characteristic of democracy”) and people’s perception of the extent to which elections are indeed free and fair in their country. Such measures can be utilized by policymakers to “localize” global or continental targets, taking into account national circumstances, as envisaged by both Agendas. For instance, the AU 2023 target of having at least 70% of the population finding elections as free and fair might not be a realistic target in contexts such as Benin, Cote d’Ivoire and Madagascar where this figure currently stands at 40% or less.

Figure 2. Voting behavior in Burundi: Urban vs. rural population

Did you vote in the last election? If not, why?



Source: GPS-SHaSA module, 2014, ISTEERBU, Burundi; authors’ calculations.

Note: The GPS-SHaSA survey took place before the elections cycle of 2015-16.

In the left-hand-side panel, Figure 2 uses experience-based data from the GPS-SHaSA survey module to depict the voting behavior of Burundians in the 2010 elections, and reveals a higher electoral participation rate amongst the rural population. The right-hand-side panel uses perception data to draw policymakers' attention to possible reasons explaining the lower electoral turnout rate in urban areas: nearly half of urban Burundians who did not vote feel that "voting does not make a difference", and one in four feels that "no candidate or party represented my views".

Table 2 below applies the four-dimensional basket approach introduced above to the cases of Burundi and Cote d'Ivoire to illustrate how the four types of data generated by the GPS-SHaSA instruments can be used to examine the electoral situation in any given country, and help inform policy.

While people's perception of the freeness of the last elections (2010 in both countries) is almost the same in both countries (60% in Burundi and 62% in Cote d'Ivoire), the voter turnout in Cote d'Ivoire is significantly lower than in Burundi. This observation is validated by two types of data, namely a 5-point difference between the two countries in experimental survey-data (*Did you vote in the last election?*) and a seven-point difference in the electoral roll tallies of both countries. To investigate possible reasons behind this lower voter turnout in Cote d'Ivoire, a number of aspects can be examined. First, Table 2 shows a much lower level of satisfaction with democracy in Cote d'Ivoire (56%) than in Burundi (76%), a variable which may generate a certain level of voter apathy. Secondly, less than a third (31%) of the population in Cote d'Ivoire feels that politicians take into account their concerns. When comparing Members of Parliament and traditional leaders based on their ability to "listen to people like them", parliamentarians elected through the ballot box fare 30 points lower compared to traditional leaders.

Finally, it is noteworthy that 92% of the people in Cote d'Ivoire consider the principle of "free and fair elections" as essential to a democracy's effective functioning compared to 98% in Burundi. This could be explained at least in part by the generally negative views held by Ivoirians about electoral practices and elected officials. This is not a trivial point for policymakers to ponder on, as people's perceptions can ultimately affect their adherence to certain norms and values (including their relative "preference" for democratic regimes over other types of more authoritarian regimes) if their aspirations are consistently frustrated by day-to-day experiences.

As far as Burundi is concerned, the higher voter turnout and considerably higher level of satisfaction with democracy are only part of the story. Policymakers also need to pay attention to much more negative views held by urban populations (a 20-point gap with rural populations, compared to an 8-point gap in Cote d'Ivoire). Policymakers intending to understand what might be possible factors fueling such feelings of dissatisfaction amongst urban populations in Burundi will note the 33-point difference between urban populations saying that parliamentarians (23%) and traditional leaders (56%) "pay particular attention to people like themselves". Other elements of response are in the large share of voters who did not vote because "voting does not make a difference" (33% in Burundi compared to 7% in Cote d'Ivoire) or because "no candidate / no party represented their views" (18% in Burundi compared to 8% in Cote d'Ivoire).

Table 2. Four-dimensional indicator basket to monitor Agenda 2063 target on “Free and Fair Elections”

Agenda 2063 Target 2023: “At least 70% of the public perceive election to be free, fair and transparent by 2020”: Comparative illustration for Burundi and Cote d’Ivoire			
Data type	GPS-SHaSA indicators	Data for Burundi	Data for Cote d’Ivoire
1. Perceptions	% population saying that the principle of free and fair elections is respected in the country	60% (urban: 42.1% vs. rural: 62.3%)	61.9% (urban: 58% vs. rural: 65.9%)
	% population saying they did NOT vote because:	(1) 32.5% (2) 18.1%	(1) 6.8% (2) 8%
	(1) Voting does not make a difference;		
	(2) No candidate / party represented their views		
	% population saying that politicians take into account citizens’ concerns	36% (urban: 30.8% vs. rural: 36.6%)	29.8% (urban: 30.4% vs. rural: 29.2%)
	% population saying that:	(1) 21.5%	(1) 30.5%
	(1) Members of Parliament	(urban: 23.1% vs. rural: 21.3%)	(urban: 27.2% vs. rural: 33.8%)
	(2) Traditional leaders listen to people like themselves	(2) 65.7% (urban: 56.4% vs. rural: 66.9%)	(2) 60.8% (urban: 56.7% vs. rural: 65%)
	% population saying that they are satisfied with how democracy works in their country	76.2% (urban: 59.8% vs. rural: 78.3%)	56.4% (urban: 51.5% vs. rural: 61.5%)
	2. Experiences	% population saying that they voted in the last general election	88.8%
3. Norms/values	% population indicating that free and fair elections is an essential characteristic of democracy	98%	91.9%
4. Administrative sources	Proportion of registered voters who voted during the last presidential elections	90.5% (2010)	83.7% (1 st round, 2010) 81.1% (2 nd round, 2010)

Sources: GPS-SHaSA modules, 2013-2015, NSOs, and administrative sources, various countries; authors’ calculations.

3.2.2 Monitoring SDG Target 16.B on Non-Discrimination

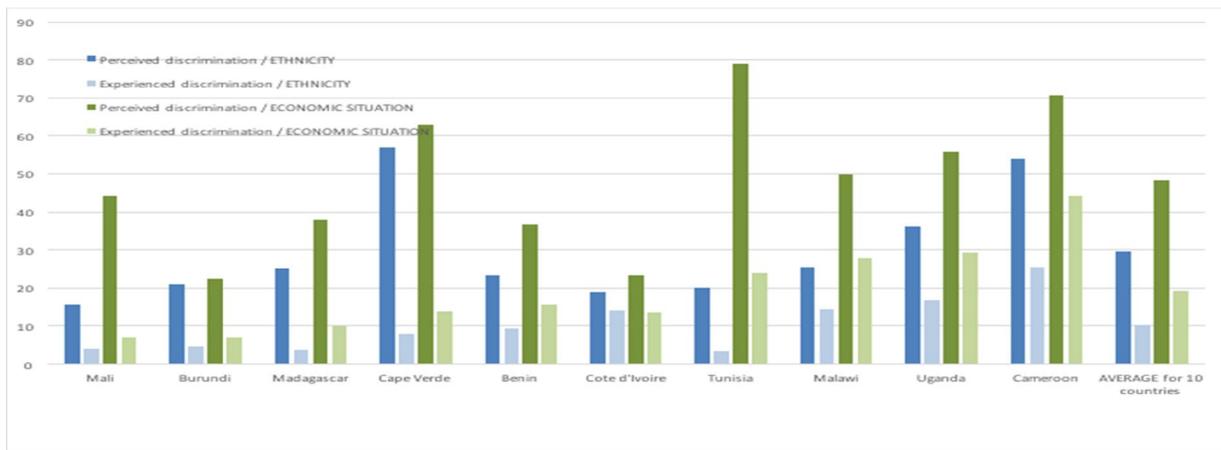
Global indicator 16.b.1 (*Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law*) does not measure the actual incidence of discrimination and harassment occurring in a given population. Rather, this indicator measures the proportion of the population having identified (subjectively) that they had been discriminated against and/or harassed, and willing and able to disclose this information to data collectors. Africa’s Agenda 2063 also has a focus on human rights and a national target¹⁸ for 2023 that requires the monitoring of discrimination.

¹⁸ Situated under Priority Area 2, this target states that “At least 70% of the people perceive the entrenchment of the culture of respect for human rights, the rule of law and due process.”

The four-dimensional indicator baskets that can be assembled with GPS-SHaSA data (Table 3) provide a more powerful analysis of discriminatory patterns than would be possible if using only global indicator 16.b.1, in at least three respects.

First, GPS-SHaSA survey data makes it possible to distinguish between ten different types of discrimination – namely ethnicity, sex, language, religion, regional origin, foreign origin, economic situation (poverty), disability, political affiliation and homosexuality. Secondly, the GPS-SHaSA survey modules allow for the monitoring of perceptions of discrimination alongside lived experiences of discrimination. Figure 3 reveals much higher levels of *perceived* discrimination, when compared with *experienced* discrimination. This observation is fairly consistent across the ten pilot countries (Cote d’Ivoire being a notable exception), with gaps between these two types of measures being highest in Cape Verde and Tunisia in respect to poverty-based discrimination. Important policy insights can be gained when measures of perception are far apart from measures of actual experience. For instance, such gaps can arise from a deficit of communication between the state and citizen, thus leaving people unaware of efforts made by the state to improve a particular issue in the country. Irrespective of whether or not they reflect reality, high levels of perceived discrimination should be causes of concern for policymakers, since perceptions drive behavior: people perceiving widespread discrimination may be more prone to themselves adopt discriminatory practices – thus fueling a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy (UNDP, 2017).

Figure 3. Perceived and experienced discrimination: Ethnicity vs. economic situation



Sources: GPS-SHaSA Module, NSOs, various countries; authors’ calculations.

Note: The questions are formulated as follow: “People are sometimes discriminated against on various grounds. In this country, do you think there is discrimination related to [this characteristic]? In the past 12 months, have you ever been victim of discrimination due to [this characteristic]?”

Thirdly, the Peace & Security component of the GPS-SHaSA methodology allows for the specific investigation of discrimination perpetrated by security forces. As shown in Table 3, the markedly higher perceptions on discrimination by security forces in Cote d’Ivoire (26%, compared to 17% in Burundi) correlate with higher levels of experiences of discrimination by security forces in Cote d’Ivoire (17%, compared to 5% in Burundi). Policymakers looking for advice on how to tackle this issue need to take into account contrasting scenarios in the two countries in terms of *where* such discriminatory practices by security forces are most prevalent.

Table 3. Four-dimensional indicator basket to monitor SDG target 16.B

“Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development”

Indicator 16.b.1: “Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law”: Comparative illustration for Burundi and Cote d’Ivoire			
Data type	GPS-SHaSA indicator	Burundi	Cote d’Ivoire
Perceptions	% population saying that the principle of non-discrimination is respected in the country	79.8%	55.2%
	% population saying that there is discrimination due to ¹⁹ :		
	(1) Ethnicity	20.9%	18.9%
	(2) Religion	13.2%	13.2%
	(3) Region	18.5%	14%
	(4) Gender	16.3%	9.2%
	(5) Economic situation	22.5%	23.4%
	% population saying that some people are discriminated against by public security services	16.9%	25.6%
Experiences	% population saying that they have been a victim of discrimination due to:		
	(1) Ethnicity	4.5%	14.1%
	(2) Religion	2.4%	9.4%
	(3) Region	3.1%	8.8%
	(4) Gender	2.4%	6%
	(5) Economic situation	7.0%	13.7%
	% population saying that they have been discriminated against by public security services on the basis of at least one type of discrimination	4.8%	17.1%
	Urban areas: 8.1%	Abidjan: 11.6% Other urban areas: 20.1%	
Norms/values	Percentage of respondents indicating that ‘Absence of discrimination’ is an essential characteristic of democracy	98.4%	83.4%
Administrative sources	Proportion of fifteen core international and African conventions [+ regional conventions as relevant] on governance and human rights which were:		
	(1) ratified AND enacted in national legislation	(1) 78% (2014)	(1) 53.3% (2014)
	(2) for which a first compliance report (at a minimum) was submitted to treaty bodies to report on implementation	(2) 67% (2014)	(2) 0% ²⁰ (2014)
	Proportion of security personnel prosecuted over total number of reported cases of misconduct	Data not available	(1) Military personnel: 69% (2014) (2) Gendarmerie personnel: 31% (2014) (3) Police personnel: 0% (2014)

Sources: GPS-SHaSA modules, 2013-2015, NSOs, and admin. sources, various countries; authors’ calculations.

¹⁹ Other dimensions of discrimination interrogated by this question of the Governance survey module include: Language / dialect; Being foreign; Disability; Political affiliation; and sexual orientation.

²⁰ Error in interpretation: 0% indicates the proportion of these conventions for which a progress report was submitted *during the year when GPS-SHaSA data collection took place* (2014) – whereas the indicator aims to measure the proportion of conventions for which a progress report has been submitted – *at any point in time since their adoption/ratification* (which is what the figure of 67% for Burundi represents.)

While in Burundi self-reported experiences of discrimination are mainly concentrated in urban areas (8% in urban areas vs. a lower national average of 5%), the opposite holds true in Cote d'Ivoire (only 12% in the capital Abidjan vs. a national average of 17%). Also of use to policymakers looking for possible measures to address this issue is the administrative data collected on “the proportion of security personnel prosecuted over the total number of reported cases of misconduct”. Data provided by Cote d'Ivoire shows that while some level of prosecution was taking place in 2014 for misbehaving military personnel (69% of reported cases were prosecuted) and gendarmerie personnel (31% of reported cases were prosecuted), no police personnel accused of misconduct was prosecuted during the relevant period – even while people typically interact with the police more frequently than with the military.

4. THE GPS-SHaSA INITIATIVE IN DIVERSE INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS

A variety of motivations prompted national statistical agencies to embark on GPS statistical production, each national context presenting a unique configuration of challenges and opportunities. In this section, we analyze the political and institutional contexts in which national pilots took place, and we investigate a number of factors which may have facilitated NSOs' entry in an area traditionally seen as sensitive in most African countries.

4.1 A variety of national scenarios

4.1.1 NSOs with no previous experience with GPS statistics

Lack of experience with GPS statistics was in no way a barrier to entry for neophytes. In countries where the production of GPS statistics was a new venture, the leadership of statistical offices essentially adopted one of two strategies.

First, in countries where a government entity had previously requested some type of governance data, the statistical agency could conveniently refer to this earlier request to introduce the GPS-SHaSA pilot. In Uganda, for example, the Ministry of Public Service had asked the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) for data to help address the scourge of corruption and abuse of public office in service delivery. In response to this request, UBOS partnered with the School of Statistics and Planning of Makerere University to map existing governance data producers in Uganda amongst government, civil society and research institutes, and to assess the quality of existing data sources (UBOS, 2014). By the time the GPS-SHaSA survey modules were brought to the attention of the Director General of UBOS, the statistical office had already designed (with support from UNDP) its own “National Baseline Survey” on governance to collect data on the specific concerns raised by the Ministry. On realizing the importance of the harmonization objectives underpinning the GPS-SHaSA modules, the DG promptly secured additional funding from UNDP to attach the GPS-SHaSA modules to the (Uganda-specific) Baseline Survey. With its specific component on peace and security, the GPS-SHaSA questionnaire offered a useful complement to the Baseline Survey on governance, especially in view of remaining tensions in the North of Uganda. The piloting of the GPS-SHaSA modules in Uganda enabled the NSO to go beyond addressing the initial specific request of the Public Service Ministry. Equipped with the GPS-SHaSA questionnaire, UBOS was able to embrace a larger ambition – namely to supply

policymakers with “*measurable governance indicators to inform the National Development Plan, the Uganda Vision 2040, the East African Community Integration Agenda, the African Union Vision 2063, and the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals*” (UBOS, 2014).

In the second category of neophyte countries, where no pre-existing government request could be leveraged to “justify” the launch the GPS-SHaSA pilot, statistical agencies had to be more opportunistic in creating demand for GPS data from the political leadership. In Burundi, for instance, the NSO (which reports to a ministry responsible for good governance, namely the “*Ministère à la Présidence Chargé de la Bonne Gouvernance et du Plan*”) introduced the GPS-SHaSA pilot as a monitoring tool aligned with existing official commitments on governance found in various national planning frameworks. The Director General of the NSO, in his preface to the first national report on GPS statistics, invokes the country’s national vision, Vision Burundi 2025, which describes governance as a critical lever for economic development and for improving the living conditions of citizens (ISTEEBU, 2014). Reference to such official commitments on governance proved to be an effective strategy for statisticians operating within the confines of limited democratic spaces to secure the buy-in of politicians who otherwise had little appetite for the type of democratic accountability enabled by nationally representative surveys on governance.

Other NSOs capitalized on ongoing efforts by the executive branch to establish national governance monitoring systems to introduce the GPS-SHaSA pilot. Empowered by the recent adoption of the GPS-SHaSA methodology by the African community of statisticians, these NSOs demanded to play a role in such national governance monitoring systems, invoking their credentials as public institutions formally entrusted with the mandate to produce official statistics on all major areas of citizens' lives – *including* governance. This was the case in Malawi where initial plans to establish a national monitoring system for the newly launched Democratic Governance Sector Strategy (Government of Malawi, 2012) had assigned overall responsibility for this system to an executive entity in the Presidential Office. Similarly, in Tunisia, the GPS-SHaSA instruments were introduced by the NSO to officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the President’s Office who were at the helm of a UNDP-supported initiative (UNDP, 2016) to demonstrate the measurability of SDG 16 through national data collection systems. The critical role played by the Tunisian statistical agency in demonstrating the feasibility of reporting on SDG 16 through (GPS-SHaSA-inspired) survey-based indicators in turn had significant ripple effects at the global level: the feasibility of the GPS-SHaSA approach beyond Sub-Saharan Africa had now caught the attention of the international community.²¹

4.1.2 NSOs with some prior experience with GPS statistics

In contrast to the first group of NSOs who were attempting to produce GPS statistics for the first time, others had an existing record of accomplishment in this area. These statistical agencies had, to some degree, already secured the blessings of their political leadership and saw their participation in the GPS-SHaSA initiative as a means to consolidate or complement ongoing efforts to produce governance statistics.

²¹ UNDP and selected governments, High-Level Side-Event SDG 16 Pilots, Participation by Tunisia, 2015.

The statistical office of Cote d'Ivoire, for instance, established in 2007 a dedicated department on governance statistics (*Département de l'Organisation de l'Information pour la Gouvernance*) which regularly publishes "governance" statistics, compiled mainly from survey data on perceptions and experiences of corruption. A request by the National Commission on Good Governance (*Haute Autorité pour la Bonne Gouvernance*) for a broader range of governance statistics to help inform the Commission's annual report on governance led the NSO to test the GPS-SHaSA instruments and to expand the scope of its governance statistics beyond corruption. Similarly, the Kenyan statistical bureau used the GPS-SHaSA pilot as a stepping stone to convert its Crime and Justice Statistics Unit established in 2008²² into a fully-fledged Governance Statistics Section which now publishes a wide range of governance statistics (*albeit* from administrative data sources only) in the Annual Economic Survey and the Statistical Abstracts. This was also the case in Cape Verde where a Justice and Security Statistics Unit had been created in 2011, at a time when security concerns ranked high on the national agenda. The GPS-SHaSA survey modules enabled the Cape Verdean statistical agency to supplement existing administrative data collection with survey data, and to widen the range of issues reported on beyond justice and security.

In Benin, the (self-funded) GPS-SHaSA pilot was launched in the wake of the publication of the 2014 Mo Ibrahim Index, which showed a decline²³ in Benin's overall governance performance since 2011 (Mo Ibrahim Index, 2014). As explained by a statistician seconded to the Prime Minister's Office, the AU's invitation to take part in the GPS-SHaSA pilot came at the opportune time – a time when the political leadership in Benin, well-versed in matters of governance indicators given the NSO's earlier publications in this area, was questioning the validity of external "expert" perceptions making up a large part of the Mo Ibrahim Index. In this context, the GPS-SHaSA survey provided a welcome countervailing approach to "cross-check" the declining trends registered by the Mo Ibrahim Index, this time based on the country's own data.

Finally, the Cameroonian NSO, mindful of the limited appetite for GPS statistics shown by authorities in previous years, presented the GPS-SHaSA pilot as an opportunity to further consolidate the country's leadership position in the sub-region (and long-standing reputation as a regional pole of statistical excellence) by being the first GPS-SHaSA pilot in Central Africa. A peer from the statistical office of the neighboring Republic of Congo, invited to attend the launching event in Yaounde, remarked to the delight of attending senior officials that Brazzaville was hoping to follow soon "*Yaounde's pioneering example*".²⁴

4.2 Hedging sensitivities by adopting a "big-tent" approach

4.2.1 National validation workshops

²² When Kenya's Vision 2030 was launched in 2008, with a strong focus on tackling crime and improving security across the country, the government requested the Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics to start producing statistics on crime, justice and security.

²³ Benin registered a deterioration of -0.2 in its Mo Ibrahim Index score between 2014 and 2011. See http://static.moibrahimfoundation.org/u/2015/10/02201305/03_Benin.pdf

²⁴ Remarks of a statistician from the NSO of the Republic of Congo who attended the launch of the GPS-SHaSA pilot in Yaounde, Cameroon, in August 2013.

The NSOs implemented the GPS-SHaSA pilots in close consultation with numerous government actors, civil society organizations, academia and research institutions. Their intention was to foster broad-based ownership of the initiative, and to create demand from the bottom-up for GPS statistics. In the words of a Ugandan statistician, “*the perception that people had of [the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics] was greatly enhanced when they started to see it as an institution in tune with their daily struggles and aspirations; suddenly, the numbers started to make sense to them*”²⁵ (UNDP, 2017).

The vast majority of countries launched the pilot by hosting a “National Validation Workshop” during which the GPS-SHaSA methodology was presented to all stakeholders. Such events brought together likely “users” of GPS statistics — including the country's political leadership, parliamentarians, relevant ministries, departments and agencies, oversight institutions such as anti-corruption commissions and audit institutions, civil society and academia — and “data producers” in relevant government entities. All actors had the opportunity to propose amendments or additions to the four data collection instruments to better suit the local context.²⁶ More advanced peers from other pilot countries sometimes also attended to share their own experience with national stakeholders.²⁷ Such experience-sharing by other pilot NSOs with a broad national audience proved to be an effective way to establish the scientific credibility of the GPS-SHaSA methodology and to build national confidence around its feasibility, while at the same time contributing to building a strong team spirit amongst pilot NSOs.

4.2.2 Multi-stakeholder “Steering Committees on GPS Statistics”

As a direct outcome of these validation workshops, several pilot countries established multi-stakeholder “Steering Committees on GPS Statistics” (called differently depending on the country). These committees’ mandate was to keep potential “users” of GPS statistics engaged throughout the process, thus increasing the likelihood that GPS-SHaSA statistics would be used by the institutions represented on such committees. Coordinated by the NSO, the membership of these committees included both statistical focal points in relevant government entities and representatives from civil society and academia.²⁸ In Uganda, for instance, the School of Statistics and Planning of Makerere University was a key member of the Technical Sub-Committee on Governance Statistics, and played a critical role in training survey enumerators.

Steering committees also acted as “guarantors of methodological rigor” throughout the process, which was essential for GPS statistics to advertise themselves as reliable and trustworthy. In

²⁵ Quote by Dorcas Nabukwasi, GPS-SHaSA Focal Point, Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

²⁶ In Cameroon, for instance, a question was added on linguistic discrimination against the Anglophone community, and a new sub-question on the elderly was added to a question on victimization, to capture abuses perpetrated against older women accused of practicing witchcraft. Similarly, in Kenya, additional indicators on natural resource governance were added to the administrative data collection instrument.

²⁷ For instance, a Malian statistician took part in Tunisia’s validation workshop, and a Cape Verdean statistician contributed to validation workshops in Malawi and in Cameroon.

²⁸ For example, the Technical Sub-Committee on Governance Statistics established by the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics included representatives from the School of Statistics and Planning of Makerere University, civil society organizations, the media, the Electoral Commission, the National Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Prime Minister, the National Planning Authority, institutions from the Justice, Law and Order Sector, and development partners such as the UN and DFID (UBOS, 2014).

Malawi for instance, the Committee performed a quality assurance function at three levels – Committee members verified the accuracy of the questionnaire translation into Chichewa and Tumbuka, the two national languages; they also contributed to the training of enumerators; and they integrated teams of senior statisticians to observe interviews during fieldwork (UNDP, 2017).

With regard to administrative data collection, Committee members served as a critical interface with their respective institution: they were responsible for assessing data availability and quality, as well as for securing the full collaboration of their agency in sharing the requested data within agreed timeframes. They also helped identify specific capacity-building needs in their respective agency to enhance data collection practices, which the NSO would then try to address through targeted training. The Cape Verde NSO was particularly effective in this regard: “cooperation protocols”²⁹ became the order of the day between the statistical office and various government entities,³⁰ detailing the format and frequency of data-sharing with the NSO, and reiterating the strict application of rules on information confidentiality.

The Kenyan Bureau of Statistics was particularly successful in establishing a Technical Working Group on GPS Statistics comprising of representatives from as many as thirty government entities³¹. This Working Group was further subdivided into three subcommittees – on criminal justice statistics, governance and security statistics, and environmental governance statistics (a Kenya-specific addition). The Working Group met on a quarterly basis to assess progress in data collection, and was particularly effective in facilitating the design of new data collection protocols to help harmonize data collection practices within sectors (between the courts and the police, for instance) and to increase data-sharing amongst institutions. The Working Group also developed a joint annual work plan, which empowered individual members to integrate specific data collection activities in the work program of their own institution (KNBS, 2014).

²⁹ In view of the high interest generated by the Cape Verdean experience, a “sample protocol” (UNDP/AUC/INECV, Sample Collaboration Protocol for GPS-SHaSA Administrative Data Production, 2013, available in French and English) was designed and made available in both French and English to other pilots, as a tested model to help formalize collaboration between NSOs and relevant government entities. In most other pilot countries however, NSOs’ efforts to implement such protocols were halted due to a lack of sufficient financial resources to implement the elaborate capacity-building plans elaborated in such protocols.

³⁰ At the time of the GPS-SHaSA pilot, the Cape Verde statistical office had formalized such protocols with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor’s Office, the Superior Council for the Judiciary, and the Judicial Police.

³¹ The Kenya Technical Working Group on GPS Statistics included representatives from the following 30 institutions: the Kenya Police Service, the Judiciary, the Kenya Prisons service, the Probation and Aftercare Services, the Public Prosecution, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, the National Registration Bureau, the Independent Electoral & Boundaries Commission, the Immigration department, the Children Service Department, the National Assembly, the Institute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi, the National Environment Management Authority, the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Law Society of Kenya, the Office of the Attorney General, the National Gender and Equality Commission, the Ministry of Defense, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the Communication Commission of Kenya, the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, Ministry of Devolution & Planning, and the National Crime Research Centre.

5. LOOKING AHEAD: WHAT IT TAKES TO INSTITUTIONALIZE GPS STATISTICS

Institutionalizing the production of GPS statistics at country-level will require at least four types of investments — institutional, methodological, financial and communicational. The specific actions, finances and skill sets required across these four domains were fleshed out in the five-year work plan and budget tabled by the SHaSA Group on GPS statistics at the annual meeting of the Committee of Directors General of Statistics in Yamoussoukro, in 2012 (AU, 2012). The details follow below, supplemented by lessons emerging from pilot experiences.

All eleven NSOs that piloted the GPS-SHaSA instruments share the same consensus on the need to institutionalize expertise on GPS statistics within the NSO – for instance by creating a dedicated unit on GPS statistics rather than relying on a few statisticians scattered across other departments. The production of GPS statistics is a new area for the vast majority of African NSOs, and requires staff properly trained on the subject matter and working full-time on this agenda, especially to cultivate the strong institutional partnerships needed across government to collect administrative statistics. Merely nominating a “GPS focal point” (as was the case during the pilot phase) with pre-existing responsibilities and insufficient time to dedicate to this new area is unlikely to lead to sustainable results.

At a methodological level, the institutionalization of GPS statistics will require the permanent integration of GPS-SHaSA survey modules in a dedicated household survey repeated on a regular basis, such as a living conditions survey or a labor force survey. For some NSOs, the piggybacking strategy for the survey modules proved challenging. Ironically, the intended cost-saving advantages using the same approach came to naught at times as the more fundamental challenge of securing sufficient funding for the support survey itself turned out to be a challenge. This was an issue in Cote d’Ivoire where the two surveys which had been considered as candidate support surveys for attaching the GPS modules were repeatedly postponed due to insufficient funding. In Kenya, the NSO failed to convince the donor funding the candidate support survey to agree to attach the GPS modules to it. Some countries therefore considered the possibility of running the GPS survey modules independently, with national resources. While this alternative approach would necessarily reduce the sample size, it would nonetheless help ensure that the survey becomes a regular activity done repeatedly over time. However, the piggybacking tactic continues to be the most feasible in most countries. In Uganda, for instance, the statistical office has selected a small subset of questions from the GPS-SHaSA survey modules, and these will be integrated in the largest household survey run by the NSO every three years.

Financial needs are a lingering concern, not only for data collection activities but also for investing in the requisite institutional architecture within NSOs and in data-producing government entities. The needs are particularly acute for administrative data collection. All five countries that tested the administrative data collection instruments confirmed the feasibility of the exercise, including Burundi, which according to the World Bank indicator of statistical capacity has the least developed statistical system amongst all pilot countries, yet could still measure 80% of GPS-SHaSA administrative indicators (ISTEEBU, 2017). These five countries nonetheless called for the deployment of an extensive training program for statistical units in government agencies.

Most NSOs observed that the main challenge is not that ministries or agencies refuse to share data, but rather that data is unavailable, or of poor quality.³² This is due to low budgetary allocations to monitoring, evaluation and statistical production across government agencies. It is therefore no small feat that some pilot countries, such as Kenya, successfully leveraged the GPS-SHaSA initiative to secure new budgetary allocations towards the production of GPS statistics (the Kenyan police, for instance, secured funding for the statistical office to help establish statistical units in police offices across the country). The establishment and/or improvements of fully-fledged statistical units in GPS-related ministries and agencies is a potential practical solution against high staff turnover, which deprives NSOs of their focal points in ministries after having invested considerable time and efforts in building their capacity.

Finally, the sustainability of GPS statistical production hinges on how vigorous is the dissemination of results and conversion of data into policy-relevant findings. In Cape Verde, for instance, the high appetite for GPS data in government entities is explained by the active role played by public servants and government officials in analyzing survey results. Instead of analyzing these results behind closed doors, the Cape Verde statistical office organized GPS-SHaSA retreats where government agencies and civil society organizations mingled in sector-wide working groups and examined datasets from the viewpoint of their own policy interests. At dissemination, a highly mediatized launch took place in the National Assembly, during which people's "voice" was conveyed unaltered to their elected representatives, in a powerful image of "direct democracy". A few days later, the GPS-SHaSA survey caught people's attention again when the President of Cape Verde seized the occasion of the country's 39th anniversary of Independence to raise concerns about a number of democratic shortcomings unveiled by the survey, notably in relation to popular perceptions of the unequal treatment of citizens before the law (UNDP, 2017)³³.

The dissemination of GPS-SHaSA survey results was equally impactful in the more "fragile" settings of Mali and Burundi. For instance, the Director General of the Malian NSO was invited to present results in Parliament and similarly, the Burundian statistical agency was invited to present results to senior decision-makers in government. In both cases, these presentations resulted in explicit government requests that the NSO repeat the survey to allow for the tracking of trends. Drawing exclusively from national resources, the Malian statistical office has implemented four rounds of the GPS-SHaSA survey to date (annually, since 2014) and the modules are now an integral part of the annual living conditions survey. With both countries invested in vast peacebuilding efforts, the use of GPS-SHaSA data for "early warnings" of potential flashpoints was found to be particularly valuable. In Burundi, for instance, the

³² For example, the Kenyan pilot noted incomplete datasets, arithmetic errors, manual processing of data in the field leading to various errors, etc. (KNBS, 2014).

³³ The President of Cape Verde, Jorge Carlos Fonseca, cited in his address a rather grim statistic on citizens' lack of confidence in the equality of all citizens before the law: "*The result recently released by the National Institute of Statistics of Cape Verde on the perceptions and experiences of citizens in the areas of governance and security remind us that we need to exert vigilance over the direction which our country is taking. We should be worried when two out of three citizens say that there is no equality before the law. We need to ask ourselves why this is the case, as this perception challenges the very foundation of our democratic system.*" Remarks by the President of Cape Verde, Launch of the GPS-SHaSA results, Praia, May 2015.

statistical agency was specifically requested by provincial governors to disaggregate results by province to reveal regional discrepancies on various aspects of governance, and to help inform peacebuilding interventions.

Beyond the mere publication of GPS-SHaSA datasets, NSOs have also highlighted the need to encourage independent research institutions to mine the datasets and to produce accessible policy briefs and data summaries on selected issues of public interest. However, concerns about the lack of a “data culture” in government agencies continue to loom large over the prospects for GPS data uptake by policymakers. This further highlights the important “ambassadorial role” played by individual members of Steering Committees on GPS Statistics, who can communicate on the initiative in their respective institution, and help identify ahead of time where the “demand” is for GPS data amongst their peers. The more in tune with country-specific policy priorities is the GPS statistical production cycle in any given country, the greater the chances that GPS data will find its way in decision-making fora.

6. CONCLUSION

The year 2017 started with the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government entrusting the APRM with an expanded mandate “to play a monitoring and evaluation role for the African Union Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030” (AU, 2017). The year 2018 will start with the same Assembly of African Heads of States and Government adopting the SHaSA II – Africa’s expanded Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics for the period 2017-2026 – which reiterates the vital importance of GPS statistics to help inform Africa’s trajectory towards the 2063 horizon.

This renewed emphasis on the APRM as an Africa-owned mechanism for self-assessment, combined with a renewed commitment to harmonize statistical production across the continent, offers an ideal conjunction of political will and technical means to help propel the institutionalization of GPS statistics across the continent. It is also a unique opportunity for Africa to reaffirm her global leadership role in promoting a nationally owned, scientifically robust and policy-useful approach to governance monitoring.

Taking advantage of the groundwork laid by the African community of statisticians, the APRM could work hand-in-hand with NSOs to generate the data needed to report on SDG 16 and on Aspirations 3 and 4 of Agenda 2063. The GPS-SHaSA instruments also offer tested and proven solutions to “upgrade” the earlier APRM experiment by addressing some of its earlier shortcomings. These include, among others, its bias towards urban, more highly educated elites for lack of a mechanism to capture a nationally representative sample of people’s voices, and its lack of a “light” monitoring methodology to enable regular and cost-effective tracking of progress over time (Corrigan et al., 2017).

The African statistical community may well be challenging the old adage that “*not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.*” Eleven African countries demonstrated that governance, peace and security “count” in their national context (so much so that six of these countries self-financed the piloting of the GPS-SHaSA methodology, and have since continued to regularly produce GPS statistics), and contrary to common wisdom,

that it *can* be “counted”. In a global context where a certain level of skepticism persists around this new domain of official statistics, concerted action by a critical mass of countries is required to demonstrate the feasibility of mainstreaming GPS statistical production in the work program of the global statistical community. Fifty-five African countries could turn the tide.

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