



The Data Are Not Enough

Perspectives on Migration Data Use in Local Government

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African Centre for Migration & Society

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African Centre for Migration & Society

An internationally engaged; Africa-oriented; and African-based research and teaching centre dedicated to shaping academic and policy debates on migration, development and social transformation

- Graduate degree programme with students from across Africa, North America, and Europe
- Research in 12 African countries on issues related to migration, human rights, development, governance, and social change
- Partnerships on 4 continents
- Regional reference point for public and scholarly debate and policy formation



Points for the day

- Categories, methods and presumptions blind policy makers and researchers
- Political economy of research fosters conservatism
- Bureaucratic / political incentives to ignore or abuse data



My approach:

- Not about migration or mobility, *per se*
- About data generation and use in decision making
- Organizational sociology based on 3 years of research in eight municipalities
 - Support from Moop-RPC/DFID: SA Presidency and others
 - Cooperation with South African Local Government Association (SALGA)



Downtown Johannesburg



Kawangare, Nairobi

Research Sites in Southern Africa



Limits on learning

- Data use shaped by political incentives and considerations
- Solution driven; garbage can approach
- Pace of decision outpaces data generation and analysis



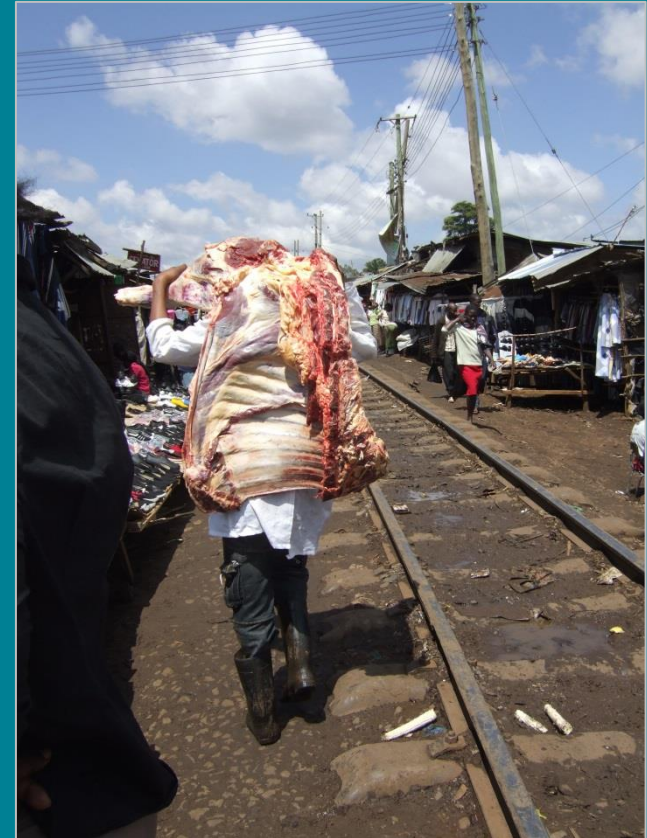
Hillbrow, Johannesburg



Philippi, Cape Town

The research-policy nexus

- Limited autonomous research space – dependency relationships
- Conventional, space bound and materialist epistemologies
- Heightening imperative for policy impact □ decreased critique



Bringing home the bacon, Nairobi

Challenges of mobility research & engagement

- Information is difficult to obtain:
 - Multi-sited
 - Dynamic
 - Reasons for invisibility
- Movements do not match planning cycles and spatial mandates
- Research field closely tied to policy concerns
- Migration threatens socio-political community



Mozambicans on the move



Illustrations from local govt: the technical

There is a need to improve, the availability of demographic information to municipalities; improving inter-departmental data gathering and policy cohesion tools; conducting research on migration dynamics...’ (Roux 2009:7).

- Data availability a problem, but by no means the only one
 - Lack of capacity to collect
 - Narrow and limited consistency in collection and measurement
 - Lack of capacity to use



Gaborone, City Centre



Building houses in Lephalale

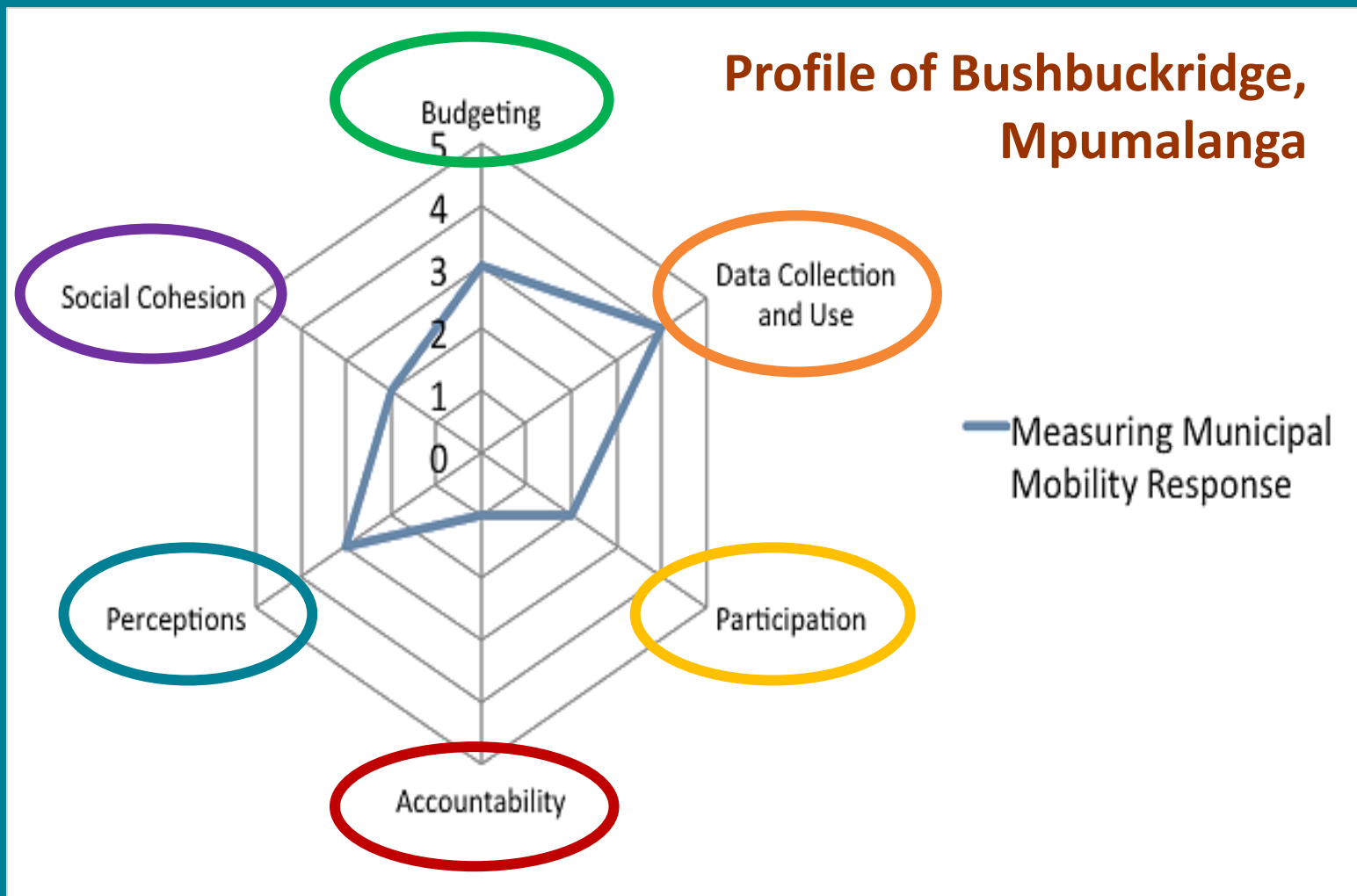
Illustrations from local govt: the political

- Primary reasons for misuse are bureaucratic and political
 - No belief in the need for data
 - Anti-migration and mobility bias and naiveté
 - No budgetary support for additional needs
 - Fear of exposing or heightening shortcomings
 - Public participation



Obsession, Senzo Shabanugu

Towards evaluating local govt preparedness



Conclusions

- Improve data collection and technocratic capacity
- Heightened understanding of data use and abuse
- Create autonomous sphere for data collection and analysis
- Enhanced focus on:
 - Budgeting process
 - Accountability mechanisms
 - Public participation
 - Incentivizes for data collection and use



Take Me Away From the City
Senzo Shabanugu

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