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Citation	Stone, Christopher. 2011. Problems of Power in the Design of Indicators of Safety and Justice in the Global South. Indicators in Development: Safety and Justice Series, Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, Harvard Kennedy School.
Published Version	http://www.hks.harvard.edu/var/ezp_site/storage/fckeditor/file/pdfs/centers-programs/programs/criminal-justice/Indicators-ProblemsofPower.pdf
Accessed	February 19, 2015 9:24:42 AM EST
Citable Link	http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:8160719
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(Article begins on next page)

Problems of Power in the Design of Indicators of Safety and Justice in the Global South

Christopher E. Stone

The aim of the project is to equip government and civil society organizations with the skills and experience to design their own indicators, routinely assess those indicators, and use them to drive meaningful reform in the justice sector. Building this capacity is a long-term undertaking, for the desire for indicators and the skill in their construction must permeate the organizational culture in governmental and non‑governmental bodies. It is also a fluid process: indicators serve ambitions, policies, governments, and staffs that inevitably change over time.

The prototype indicators developed in this project are different from the indicators in international systems created in the Global North for use in the Global South. They start by finding successes, however modest, and strengthen norms and standards that emerge in the course of reviewing local practices. They also perform different kinds of development work: They support domestic ambitions for justice and safety, reinforce management operations in government, and align the work of individual agencies with sector-wide goals. At the same time, these and other examples of country-led indicator development complement the growing number of globally conceived indicator projects by grounding the measurement culture of international development in local customs, and by articulating domestic sources of legitimacy for the standards implicit in the norms in global indicator projects.

UKaid
from the Department for International Development

Australian Government
AusAID

i.

In matters of government, indicators are instruments of power. They are not merely this, for indicators can also be sources of insight and pride, promoting good governance through inspiration rather than coercion. Still, the reason for the present interest in governance indicators is their utility for those who would exercise power in the work of government.

In other walks of life, indicators play a more straightforward role. Oral temperature and blood pressure are relatively benign indicators of personal health, just as barometric pressure is an uncomplicated indicator of weather; but the ranking of cities by their homicide rates, the discussion of low rates of criminal convictions, or the publication of surveys reporting rising fear of crime are not mere diagnostic exercises; they are efforts to shape in particular ways the priorities of police, prosecutors, judges, and the ministers. They are efforts to turn the legal and penal apparatus of the state to particular purposes.

Indicators, as I use the term here, are measures of the performance of a system, and governance indicators in particular are measures of the performance of government systems: educational, health, environmental, transportation, economic. Student test results are used as indicators of the quality of a state's educational system, just as maternal mortality rates are used as indicators of the quality of the public health system. The consumer-price index in a country and its labor force participation rate are indicators of how well a government is managing the economy. I focus here on a particular subset of governance indicators: measures of safety and justice.

As instruments of power, indicators are available to many different actors with various relationships to formal authority. Elected officials can employ

indicators to manage operations that they directly oversee—a straightforward use of indicators as a management tool to exercise legitimate authority. But where multiple officials at different hierarchical levels and in different departments are vying for control over some government policy, and where NGOs, foreign governments, and international bodies are also eager to influence this policy, advancing a particular set of indicators can be a subtle yet effective way of gaining some control of government policy and priorities, particularly when the more blatant exercise of power might appear to be illegitimate. What makes indicators so attractive in these circumstances is that they carry their own technical claims to legitimacy.

The use of indicators as instruments of power is particularly striking in developing countries where international donors and institutions of global governance exert considerable influence. A national police service may find its performance measured by dozens of competing indicators specified by its commander, by the country's prime minister, by the finance ministry, by multiple bilateral donors, and by various agencies in the UN family. In many instances, none of the indicators are used effectively nor the data collected accurately. The problem may appear to be a lack of skills, inadequate equipment, or nearly constant requests for new indicators. No sooner is a data system purchased to calculate one set of indicators than the clerks are directed to find the data needed for a different set. The result, as one aid official put it to me recently, is that many developing countries are littered with the carcasses of failed indicator projects—the consultants paid and gone, and those charged with administering justice increasingly cynical about time wasted on measurement when there is real work to be done.

In these settings, however, a field of failed indicator projects may be a sign, not of skill deficiencies, but of resistance in a particular agency to the exercise of power from some other government department or from outside of government itself. The challenge for those ambitious to advance the use of indicators across government or internationally—whether in a prime minister's office of an international development agency—is to align indicators with the ambitions of those in positions of immediate and legitimate authority.

It will help here to consider indicators deployed at three distinct levels of governance: within an individual ministry or government department, across government as a whole, and at the level of global governance. The same indicator might be used at all three levels, but the indicator exerts power on behalf of different people and different purposes at each level. For example, a police chief might use changes survey results measuring the public fear of crime in various neighborhoods to reward or demote commanders of the corresponding divisions, while a governor or treasury official might use the same measure of public fear on a government-wide basis to spur better coordination among police and prosecutors. At the level of global governance, the UN, the World Bank, or a bilateral aid agency might use the same indicator of fear to compare the effectiveness of national governance across several countries or to measure the relative success of their own projects in a region.

Rarely, however, are the same indicators used at all three levels. More commonly, a police chief will rely on one set of indicators, including the numbers of arrests, the amount of contraband seized, and the level of public support for the police revealed in occasional surveys. The governor may focus on the numbers of reported homicides and robberies, the level of fear among the public, and the cost of police services. At the same time, various international bodies may be rating the same jurisdiction on its prosecution of human trafficking cases, the perception of corruption in the police, and the speed with which it completes trials in criminal cases. The resulting cacophony of indicators is not simply the result of the complexity of efforts to deliver both safety and justice, but a result, too, of competing priorities and competing strategies at different levels of authority over the issues of crime and the administration of justice.

The indicators at these three levels interact. At each level, it is tempting for those exercising power to imagine that they can design and deploy indicators unilaterally: as if other indicators and their sponsors were not simultaneously seeking to shape the performance of the same government system. But for those on the receiving ends of these indicators— such as the police, prosecutors, magistrates, corrections officers, clerks, and others engaged in making the rule of law real—the competition among indicators is unavoidable. The conflicting incentives, partial understandings, and ideological assumptions in the various sets of indicators compete not only with one another, but also with the values and ambitions of those doing the work.

This paper explores the possibility that governance indicators can be harmonized across these three

levels, and that doing so will produce effective governance. Specifically, I argue that those operating on the global level—particularly in the domain of safety, justice, and the rule of law—might design their indicators from the bottom up, supporting local ambitions and building on the legitimate sources of authority close to the operations they seek to influence, rather than starting with ambitions and power at a global level. The paper draws on work my colleagues and I are conducting with government officials and civil society leaders in Jamaica, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, and Sierra Leone, sponsored by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). I draw as well as on a separate effort led by the Altus Global Alliance and supported by DFID that has been taking a similar approach with indicators of police reform in many countries across Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

Starting with local ambitions and local, legitimate authority may help repair a persistent problem in the construction of indicators for global governance, namely the weak sources of legitimacy for the standards implicit in indicators at the global level. If by starting at a local level, our partnerships can produce global indicators grounded in local standards and ambitions, we might forge a stronger global solidarity in the effort to improve the quality of justice and strengthen the rule of law.
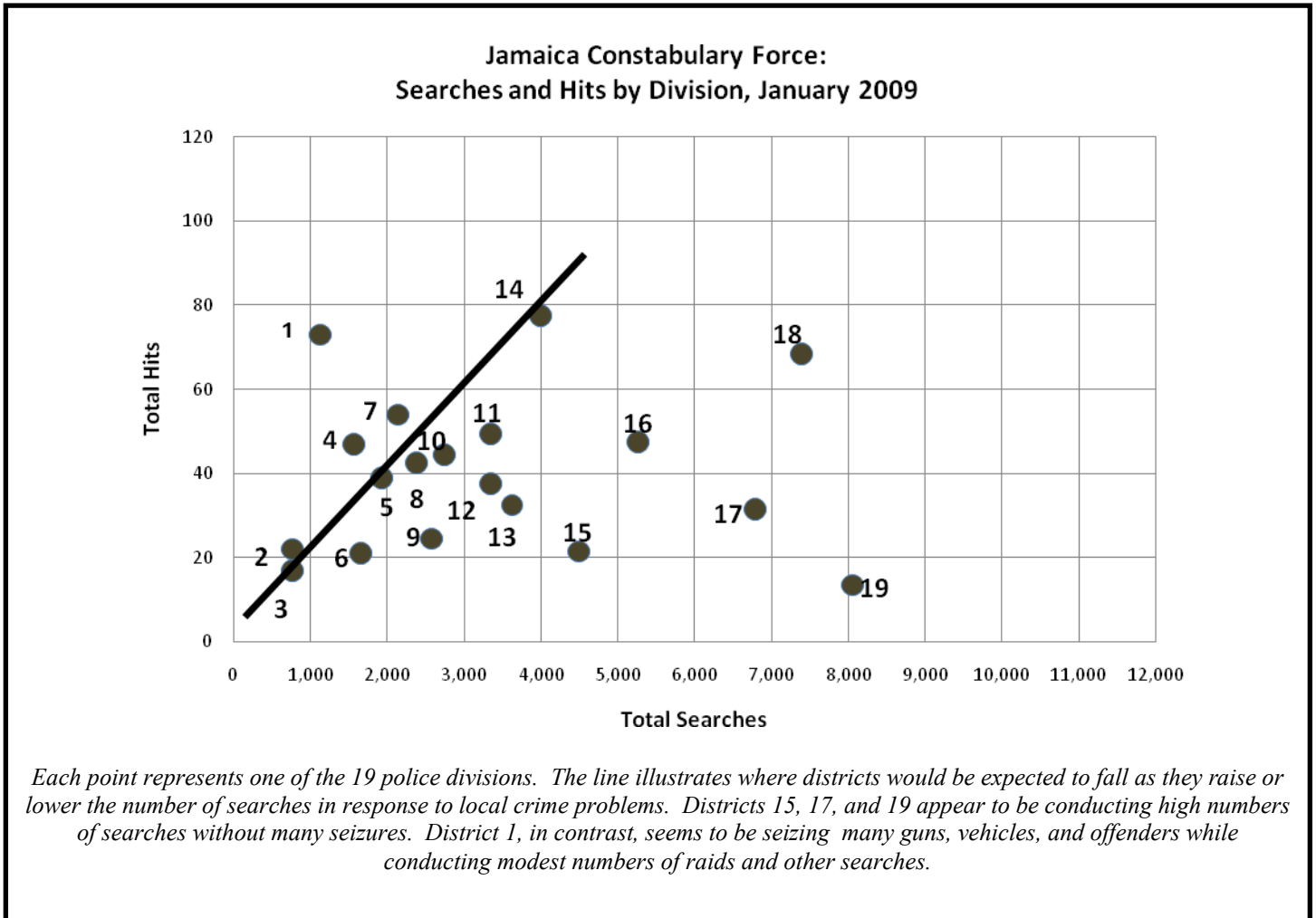
I argue here that such a bottom-up approach is not only possible and practical, but has the potential to engage citizens and domestic leaders enthusiastically in a creative and democratic construction of justice. In the next section, I describe what such indicators look like when designed collaboratively with domestic government officials responsible for some part of the administration of justice, and I introduce the term "active indicators" to distinguish these from indicators designed without the participation of local, operational authorities. In the third section, I describe how active indicators can also be created for use by citizens in civil society operating with a less formal, but nonetheless legitimate, authority. Here I also begin to sketch how locally owned indicators can be aggregated up to a global level. In the fourth section, I return to the questions of how active indicators built at the domestic level might be spread from country to country, eventually creating a coherent, global set of common indicators.

ii.

On a hot day in February 2010, the Commissioner of the Jamaican Constabulary Force walked into a meeting of his command staff, already in progress. He stood in the back of the darkened room, catching a few minutes of a presentation to his staff on "change management." Before the discussion period even began, he turned and left, but not before telling the meeting organizer from the Ministry of National Security that he would be rearranging his schedule to get back at the end of the day—long after the meetings had ended—to talk more about the presentation. He had seen something he could use.

Relatively new in the top job of his long-troubled national police service and not yet the master of his schedule, the Commissioner returned even later than he had planned. He took a chair in the now nearly empty conference room and explained what had lured him back. He wanted to see again a scatter-plot that my colleagues had constructed with his staff and with a researcher in the Ministry of National Security, showing the number of raids, vehicle searches, and pedestrian stops that each of his 19 police districts had conducted in 2009, along with the number of "hits" each had recorded during the year: offenders arrested and guns and vehicles seized. The scatter-plot revealed that for most of the divisions, there was a straightforward relationship: the more raids and searches, the more hits. But a handful of divisions were worryingly apart from the others on the chart, having conducted many more raids and searches but achieving no more hits than divisions that had conducted a tenth as many. More encouragingly, there were one or two divisions that had recorded high numbers of hits while apparently conducting relatively few searches and raids.

The Commissioner had seen all that in an instant during the morning presentation and had returned because he wanted to use the chart to better understand the apparently good work of the highest achieving division. If the results were real, he wanted the commander of that division to explain to his counterparts at an upcoming command meeting what he was doing to get those good results while intruding relatively infrequently on the lives and liberties of local residents.

Jamaica Constabulary Force:
Searches and Hits by Division, January 2009

Each point represents one of the 19 police divisions. The line illustrates where districts would be expected to fall as they raise or lower the number of searches in response to local crime problems. Districts 15, 17, and 19 appear to be conducting high numbers of searches without many seizures. District 1, in contrast, seems to be seizing many guns, vehicles, and offenders while conducting modest numbers of raids and other searches.

The Commissioner's interest spurred his staff and the team that had created the scatter-plot to dig down into these data: attempting to chart the trends month-by-month and testing which reports were reliable and which spurious. The team had to harmonize inconsistent definitions of searches and seizures, and facilitate agreement on how to count searches and hits. In May 2010, the meeting that the Commissioner had envisioned took place, with all of the divisional commanders discussing a scatter-plot that showed how each division had moved both on "searches" and "hits" from January through March 2010. Then, in July and August, the team trained the station officers-in-charge, divisional data clerks, and headquarters analysts in the continued production of this indicator so the Commissioner and the division commanders can use monthly scatter-plots on a continuing basis to improve the effectiveness of the raids and searches they conduct.

The relationship of hits to searches, illustrated on the Jamaican scatter-plot, is an example of an *active*

indicator. It is designed specifically for use by an official with formal authority over the people expected to produce the outcome being measured. In concrete terms, active indicators: (i) capture performance in tight timeframes: usually days, weeks, or months; (ii) present data at the level of operational responsibility; (iii) ground discussion at management meetings where officials are accountable for results; and (iv) describe outcomes in common language, often in graphic form, understandable by people both inside and outside the institution.

A few weeks later on the other side of the globe, some colleagues and I sat with a wise but dispirited assistant commissioner of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary. Taped to the wall of the conference room in police headquarters in Port Moresby was a page from a flip-chart titled "Strategic Planning," apparently from a meeting some days earlier. A single person's handwriting filled the large page with a couple of dozen generic categories used

by consultants everywhere, from "vision and mission" at the top to "monitoring and evaluation" at the very bottom, almost falling off the page.

The assistant commissioner explained that he is in charge of corporate services and administration including all of the Constabulary's monitoring and evaluation, but his department has been starved of resources and kept apart from the operational core of the organization. As a result, he has little up-to-date performance data. Observing an operations management meeting for the National Capital District a few days later confirmed the assistant commissioner's description. Vehicle thefts are on the rise, said one participant; but this was a data-free meeting, with no evidence of trends farther back than the latest anecdote.

Until recently, demand for quantitative indicators of police performance in Papua New Guinea emanated from outside the RPNGC. In the Law and Justice Sector Secretariat, the "monitoring and evaluation unit" is responsible for reporting on 64 indicators annually, and does so typically about six months after the close of each year. The report for 2009—the sixth Annual Report—includes relatively little data collected from the Constabulary, but instead relies heavily on a Community Crime Survey that shows "many people...reporting poorer perceptions of police" and higher levels of crime victimization.

The indicators in the Annual Report are not referenced in the operational meetings of the Constabulary and the reason for the distance between them is readily apparent. The Annual Report is the product of the Law and Justice Sector Secretariat, which—according to the opening pages of the report itself—was established to support the Law and Justice Sector Working Group, which was established to support the National Coordinating Mechanism, which is overseen by the Ministerial Committee on Justice, Law and Order. This nested set of coordinating bodies is charged with implementing the "three pillars" of the National Law and Justice Policy and Plan of Action, and has advanced that project by developing a Sector Strategic Framework with five goals. This, in turn, has given rise to a Performance Monitoring Framework with 18 indicators and 64 "sub-indicators" to track progress toward the five goals.

The Jamaicans have their equivalent of the 64 indicators in Papua New Guinea, as does just about every nation, province, and municipality at every income level. They can be useful, but they are not active indicators: they are not suited for active

management but—at best—for more general diagnosis. Their architects hope that they can align the long term goals of separate government departments with each other and, equally important in developing countries, with the goals of international donors. Such indicators may provoke conversation and they may inspire reports in the press, but on their own they rarely spur action in operational agencies. They represent a tentative consensus about a collection of more or less compatible ambitions, but they do not have the force of fully determined authority.

The Commissioner of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary is a member of the National Coordinating Mechanism, and so has a stake in the 64 indicators. He is reportedly pleased when they imply that the police are doing something right, but these are not the indicators he needs to actively drive change in the police. When the assistant commissioner for RPNGC's corporate services saw the scatter-plot designed for the Jamaican Commissioner, he recognized the difference immediately and began to think about how he could create indicators for his Commissioner that would be similarly useful for month-on-month management of the police.

In addition to serving the needs of a single departmental leader, active indicators can be built to support management across separate government institutions. Consider, for example, the issue of pretrial detention in Lagos, Nigeria. In any country, pretrial detention can easily escape management attention because the problems of prolonged detention and overcrowded conditions are felt in remand prisons, yet prison superintendents have no authority to solve the problems. They cannot shorten the stay of detainees or prevent new ones from arriving. Those who possess that authority—prosecutors and judges—do not see or experience the problem of overcrowding on a day to day basis, allowing them easily to overlook it. In Lagos, that universal problem is compounded by Nigeria's federal structure. Prisons are operated by the federal government and the police who prosecute minor cases are federal employees, yet prosecutors in serious cases and the criminal courts themselves are under the control of each state. When the Attorney General of Lagos State became concerned about the problem of pretrial detention, he understood the jurisdictional complexity and so joined forces with the prison administration to create an active indicator that would allow him and prison officials to

begin to manage the problem in meetings with prosecutors and the judges.

Why did the Attorney General need to create a new indicator? A simple search on the internet would have told him that 65 percent of the prisoners in Nigeria were being held pretrial. Indeed, this indicator is available for almost every country in the world. Why did the Attorney General need anything else?

The percentage of prisoners in pretrial detention is not an active indicator. No one is accountable for raising or lowering it, nor would a reduction in the number necessarily mean that the number of people in detention was being reduced or that overcrowding was being eased. If, for example, prison sentences were substantially lengthened, the percentage of people in pretrial detention would fall, without reducing their numbers. Indeed, overcrowding would become worse.

Nor could the Attorney General simply use as his indicator the number of people in pretrial detention. This indicator would have two faults. First, the raw number in detention is the product of so many actions by people in so many different institutions— police, prosecutors, judges, and legislators—that no one feels responsibility for it. Second, pretrial detention itself is not unjust. It only creates injustice when (a) it lasts excessively long, (b) it is imposed on people accused of trivial crimes, (c) it is imposed on people without even minimal evidence of their guilt, or (d) it entails inhumane conditions of detention. An active indicator of pretrial detention must focus the attention of officials on one or more of these four specific problems in their direct control. Because so many of the horror stories of pretrial detention in Nigeria concerned people detained for years without trial, the Attorney General decided to focus on problem (a): the length of pretrial detention. Now he needed an active indicator.

One only knows the full length of a suspect's pretrial detention when it ends. So to build an indicator of the length of detention, the Attorney General's staff, with the assistance of the Lagos-based CLEEN Foundation and some of my colleagues and students, assembled a sample of exit data from early 2010 already collected manually by the prisons in Lagos State and available in giant ledgers. The data turned out to include not only how long each person had been detained, but also the court in which the case was heard, and how each person's pretrial detention ended: with conviction and sentence, dismissal of the case, payment of bail, or some other event.

The first thing the exit data taught everyone involved was how many suspects were already staying a very short period of time in detention. So much attention had been focused on the long-term detainees, that the hundreds of prisoners cycling in and out of detention were almost invisible from a prison management perspective. Both prison staff and prosecutors were therefore surprised when the data revealed that the median length of stay for all detainees in the 2010 sample was 14 days. Looked at in more detail, the data on length-of-stay in detention revealed that the officials in Ikoyi Prison were facing the same double challenge the superintendents of most remand prisons face around the world: most of their detainees remained a very short time in detention, but the relatively few detainees who remain a long time use up the lion's share of the prison resources. Specifically, the 2010 sample from Ikoyi Prison showed that the suspects remaining in detention a month or less accounted for almost two-thirds of all detainees (64 percent), but accounted for only about eight percent of the prison space occupied over time. In contrast, only about four percent of suspects remained in detention for a year or more, but accounted for almost half (47.5 percent) of the prison space occupied over time.

Working from the existing data, it is possible to construct an active indicator that might allow the Attorney General and the prison officials in Lagos to manage the size of their remand prison population. Reducing each stay by one week would reduce the prison population by 8 percent, a worthwhile strategy since the target seems achievable and most of the suspects are staying short time in any case. At the same time, completing all of the long term cases (those that have already kept a suspect in detention for a year) before the end of another six months in detention would reduce the remand population by a further 17 percent, for a total reduction of 25 percent. The first strategy would have to be applied to all cases, while the second could be concentrated on the courts handling the long-term cases, which account for only four percent of the detainees. If these strategies succeed, the black bars on the chart on the following page should begin to even out, while the grey bars should be concentrated even more on the shorter stays.

Detainees and Prison Space Used by Length of Stay in Detention in Ikoyi Prison
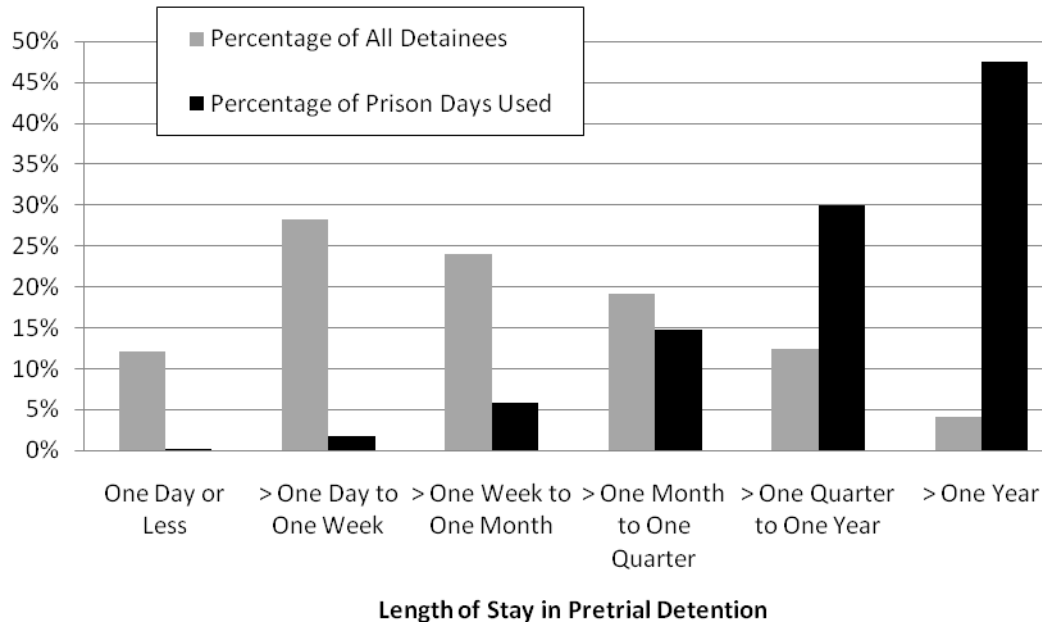
Data include all detainees whose pretrial detention at Ikoyi Prison ended in January or March 2010. The total of 964 detainees in the sample used a total of 64,123 prison days during their time in pretrial detention. The chart can be read in this way: 12% of detainees stayed a day or less, using only 0.2% of the total prison days; but while only 4% of detainees stayed a year or more, they used 47.5% of the total prison days.

The two indicators from Jamaica and Nigeria are "active" not only because they are sensitive to interventions, measured in tight time frames, expressed in simple language, and designed for particular management activities, but also because they are linked to particular officials who exercise legitimate authority over the subjects being measured. The divisional commanders in the Jamaican Constabulary Force are clear about the Commissioner's authority, so the indicator relating searches to hits can effectively serve the Commissioner's purpose. In Nigeria, the Lagos State Attorney General has made common cause with the superintendent of the prisons in his state, and between them they can effectively push the Director of Public Prosecutions and the courts to help them with a problem visible principally in the prisons. If there is a weakness in the pretrial detention indicator, it is the weakness of the link to the police

who, as the prosecutors in minor cases, also contribute to delays.

Ideally, active indicators at a department or sector level are aligned with the national, long-term, and mid-term plans; but such alignment should not be taken for granted. It is common to hear complaints from officials in operational agencies that they are measured against too many different sets of indicators: their own boss has one, the finance ministry has another, the President or Prime Minister may have a third, and international donors have a handful of their own. The multiplicity of indicators is not, in itself, a problem if they are well and clearly aligned, but too often they are developed independently of one another, overlapping only by coincidence, competing for the attention of front-line officials increasingly cynical about measurement.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to get meaningful commitment to an aligned set of indicators by

starting at the global level. The officials and consultants developing the indicators at that level rarely have the time or opportunity to dig down into the operational units of the justice sector and understand the priorities driving performance there. Relying simply on the formal agreement of domestic officials to indicators developed at the global level will rarely produce either alignment or commitment. Such agreements are politely made and easily ignored. These two examples from Jamaica and Nigeria suggest a different course: fashioning indicators first to advance the strategic ambitions management purposes at the domestic level, and building up from there.

What would such a program look like? In Papua New Guinea, for example, a working group that spans several operational departments is building active indicators for the coordination of customary and magistrates courts and for the management of private security services, and the effort is coordinated by the Law and Justice Sector Secretariat and the Department of National Planning to maintain explicit links among the active indicators, a new set of mid-term development indicators, and the longer standing 64 sector-wide development indicators. These design and alignment processes recognize that the authority that these indicators most directly convey is the power of those leading the operational agencies.

iii.

Active indicators, by definition, are tightly linked to authority, but this need not be the authority of government officials. Active indicators can serve citizens and civil society as well as the state, for there is legitimate authority in civil society, too.

Consider the common need to improve the quality of operations and service at police stations. This might include the good functioning of equipment, the knowledge of police officers in each station, and the conditions of detention for suspects. It would probably also include the transparency and accessibility of those stations to the people in the districts they serve, specifically the clarity of signage, the display of useful public information, the provision of waiting rooms, officers who do not expect a bribe to accept a report, and the courtesy and respect with which those officers meet visitors.

There is nothing to stop senior police officers from creating active indicators to monitor all of these aspects of the quality of their police stations, but such officials usually put a higher priority on issues of enforcement activity and discipline. Citizens themselves, in contrast, tend to put a high priority on these "customer service" aspects of police station management. Taking advantage of this citizen interest, an alliance of domestic NGOs in 2006 organized the first police station visitors week: a mobilization of citizens—mostly in developing countries—who used a common protocol to visit police stations and score their performance on precisely these aspects of their operations and service to citizens. The annual event has been repeated regularly since then, the most recent at this writing taking place in October 2009, when more than 5,000 individuals visited and rated police stations in 20 countries. The event is coordinated by the Altus Global Alliance with financial support from the UK Department for International Development.[1]

The police stations are scored by the visitors, who each answer the same 20 questions immediately after the visit. The 20 questions consist of four questions in each of five areas of service: (i) community orientation, (ii) physical conditions, (iii) equal treatment of the public, (iv) transparency and accountability, and (v) detention conditions. Each question is answered on a 1-to-5 scale, where 1 is totally inadequate and 5 is excellent. The questions on transparency and accountability ask if there is information available to the public at the station about patterns of crime in the area, about the station's performance in terms of arrests made, crimes solved, or public satisfaction, about how to make a complaint against the police, and about the identities of each police officer or constable. The questions about detention conditions ask if the area is safely secured, if individual detainees are identified by name or numbers, if there are visiting facilities for lawyers, family members, or others, and if the conditions are sanitary.

The ratings are deliberately subjective. The point is not to make an objective assessment against some purported global norm, but instead to determine how well local citizens think that the station performs with respect to each issue area. At the same time, the ratings permit comparisons within a country, within a region, and globally.

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[1] In previous years, the Police Station Visitors Week has been supported by the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Open Society Institute, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Citizen Assessment of Operations in Police Stations, 2009
Range and Average Scores in Each Participating Country in Latin America

Conditions of Detention

Transparency & Accountability
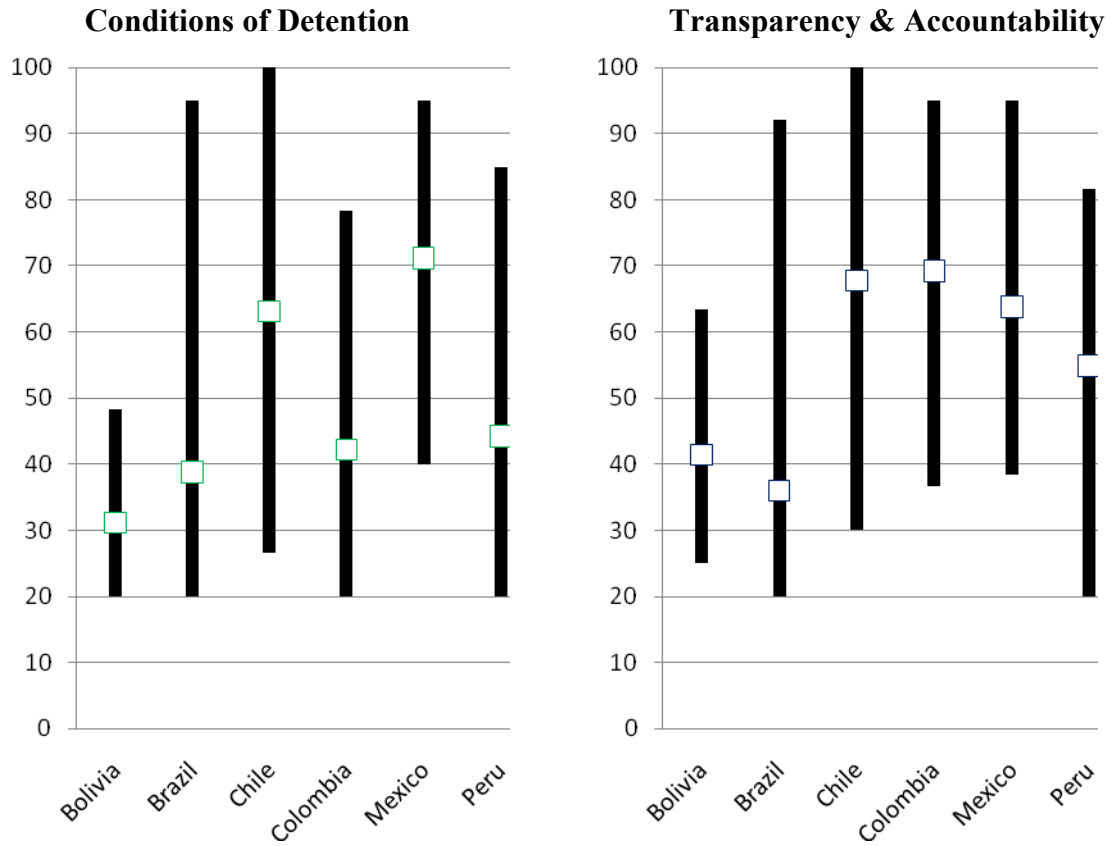
Source: Altus Global Alliance, Police Station Visitors Week Global Report, 2009*, Tables viii and ix, pages 70-71. Each police station was visited in October 2009 by citizens using a common protocol to score stations on five dimensions, two of which appear here. Numbers of stations visited in each country shown were as follows: Bolivia, 19; Brazil, 235; Chile, 53; Colombia, 9; Mexico, 16; Peru, 91. Participating visitors: 1,748.*

The Police Station Visitors Week ratings are an example of participatory indicators where ordinary citizens not only join in the process of data collection, but control the standards embodied in the indicators. In each participating country, NGOs and other citizen structures recruited, trained, and deployed citizen volunteers.   Each NGO controls the recruitment in its area, and the recruitment strategies vary widely.

In Latin America, six countries participated in 2009: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru. More than 1,700 citizens visited 423 police stations in the region.   The average overall scores were highest in Chile and Mexico, and lowest in Bolivia, but there was substantial variation from one station

to the next in each country. This variance drives competition among the stations. Public reports give special recognition to the highest scoring individual stations in each country, but police officials are also given private reports on the performance of each station, allowing national or state officials to pinpoint the weak stations depressing the national scores.

The Police Station Visitors Week scores do not make a perfect example of active indicators, for the scoring is only conducted annually, but in every other respect, the scores here meet the definition. They are calculated and presented to officials quickly, and they are responsive to changes in performance. Most important, the indicators are tightly linked to

legitimate authority over the police officers whose work is being measured, but in this case the authority lies in the public, not in a senior official.

If the local NGOs who organize the visits in each city and country are successful at persuading the local news media to publicize the results or if the NGOs otherwise have the attention of police leadership, they can drive change through the indicators. The report on the 2009 round contains several examples of just such reforms produced in earlier years, from the establishment of gender desks to the redesign of the physical stations themselves. The Royal Malaysian Police have gone so far as to include the 20 items that comprise the assessment into its own monitoring systems and it now invites citizens to visit and assess stations throughout the year, not only during the global Police Station Visitors Week—a further reminder that active indicators need to be refreshed more often than once a year.

Like the indicator of searches and hits in Jamaica, and the measures of pretrial detention in Lagos, Nigeria, the scores from the Police Station Visitors Week can usefully be aligned with longer-term, national plans and the indicators associated with those. When a national planning agency or an international donor uses this or any other active indicator as its indicator of progress, it leverages the power and authority of the official using the active indicator—or the citizens using it. In either case, the authority of the longer term program is enhanced by the incorporation of the active indicator and its sponsor's power. In contrast, when national plans and international donors insist on their own indicators of progress without regard to those being used by operational departments, they risk a power struggle.

The indicators generated by the Police Station Visitors Week are different in this respect from most other global indicators, in that they are not attempting to bolster the authority of their sponsor by reference to some purported international standard. The indicator is organized internationally, but the standards are local: how do local citizens understand the adequacy of each aspect of service being reviewed. In this way, they harness the authority of local citizens rather than national standard-setting bodies.

With that contrast in mind, I turn now to the question of how these examples can help us design a system or framework of indicators that can be used across countries, in very different national contexts.

iv.

At a 2009 meeting at the Harvard Kennedy School, three officials from Sierra Leone listened as their counterparts from Nigeria reported on their efforts to develop an active indicator to manage the problems of pretrial detention. The idea of regularly collecting data from an exit sample appealed to them, and they hoped that they could emulate their West African neighbors, creating an indicator with which they could monitor the flow and duration of pretrial detention.

Similar opportunities for cross-national inspiration abound, for the priorities among leaders of the institutions of the justice sector in different countries are already surprisingly similar. The meeting at Harvard was simply one attempt to catalyze such inspiration, with teams from Jamaica, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, and Sierra Leone each presenting the indicators they were designing to advance their own ambitions. The Sierra Leone team presented its effort to harmonize victimization survey data with administrative data on crimes reported to the police to create a credible indicator of the level of crime, but they left determined to emulate the Nigerian indicator of pretrial detention.

In the months following that meeting, the construction of a pretrial detention indicator in Sierra Leone proved more difficult than the officials had expected. The exit data available in the Lagos prisons is not maintained at the remand prison in Freetown, so admission data became the only measure of flow, depriving the team of any data on length-of-stay. Rather than stop there, however, the team constructing the indicator turned to the courts, where—at this writing—they have some hope of finding a different source of data on the duration of detention.

This suggests an iterative method for the construction of global indicators. Officials and technical experts could work together to identify local and domestic priorities, building active indicators for those with legitimate authority to use to drive improvements in performance. These examples could then be shared in any of several ways, but the sharing should be country-to-country, rather than through intermediaries, encouraging emulation. A further round of indicator development would follow in each country, and then another opportunity to share the results and find inspiration for yet further work.

Dialogue is crucial in this iterative process, hence the need for direct country-to-country conversation. The dialogue is not merely technical, although it does inevitably turn to questions of data quality and availability, statistical calculation, and presentation. The dialogue is also substantive and normative, with participants debating what matters in the administration of justice and how chains of causality might operate. Do police reduce crime even when they seize a lot of guns or arrest many offenders? Which crimes matter most? How should we conceive of the role of private security when we assess the size and competence of a nation's police?

Yet, for all the uncertainties, the priorities that emerge from such dialogue suggest that a coherent set of global indicators could emerge relatively quickly. In just two years of such conversations among country teams at Harvard, the participants are already building consensus around five key aspects of their criminal justice systems needing indicators:

1. **Crime and Public Safety**, measured through a combination of survey data and officially recorded crime

2. **Police Effectiveness**, measured in the immediate achievements of a variety of enforcement actions

3. **Pretrial Detention**, measured by the number of long-term detainees whose cases are completed without further delay, alongside the minimization of detention times for minor offenders

4. **Police-Prosecution Coordination**, measured by the speed and quality with which each responds to the other in the preparation of cases for trial

5. **Coordination of the Formal and Customary Justice Systems**, measured by the frequency of recourse that each system has to the other.

This short list is not meant as a complete representation of any system, but it does map the actual concerns of officials from domestic governments and civil society committed to improving law enforcement and the administration of justice. More important, it suggests that a system of indicators built from the bottom-up would not vary dramatically from a system built from the global level down. The difference lies in the opportunities for alignment, authorship, and linkage with legitimate authority.

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