

The background of the slide is a photograph of a large, modern building with a central tower and a fountain in the foreground. The building is constructed from light-colored stone or concrete and features several arched openings. The fountain in the foreground has several jets of water spraying upwards. The sky is a clear, light blue.

Public Policy Evaluation – Is the glass half empty or half full?

Dr. Jennifer Bremer
Public Policy and Administration Department



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Stakeholder engagement

- Why engage stakeholders
- Alternative paths to engage stakeholders
- Examples from Egypt
 - Polling Center
 - Poverty Baseline
- Limitations in the current system and ways to overcome them





Egyptian Polling Center – IDSC



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- Innovative initiative to improve dialogue with citizens
- Affiliated with Information Decision Support Center – office of the prime minister
- First specialized government polling center in region
- Has conducted more than 300 polls since established in 2003
- Emphasis on high scientific standards, wide availability of results



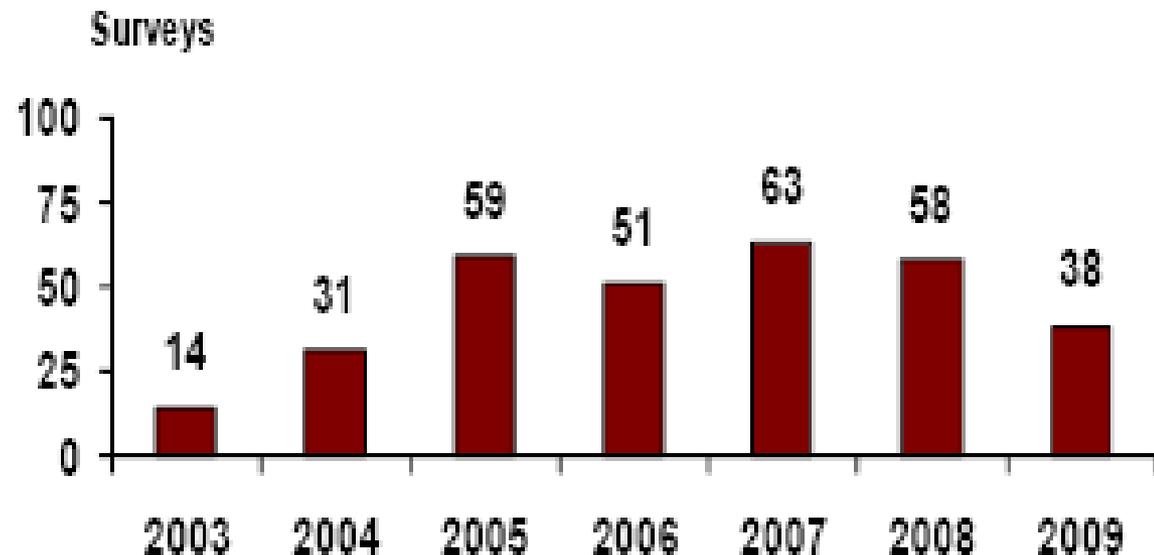
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Polling Volume

Increase in annual outputs 2003-2009



Note: These numbers do not include monthly polls on consumer trust



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Polling Center

- Rely on phone survey (landlines only) – why?
- Rebalance sample to reflect differential ownership of phones
- Ask hard questions
- Still more descriptive
- Beginning to tackle views on policy



www.pollcenter.idsc.gov.eg



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Polling Center – Examples

- Preferences between two ways of delivering government subsidy: in-kind transfer system or cash transfer system.
 - Government favored cash transfer system
 - Public favored in-kind transfer system
 - Stimulated major discussions in the media.





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More examples...

- E-government awareness poll
 - revealed people unaware of e-services introduced despite efforts to publicize major initiatives
 - sent to all concerned policymakers even though embarrassing
- Corruption, reinstating sixth grade in primary schools, agency performance, private tutoring problem, problem of unemployment, internet use by youth, traffic...
- Repeated some polls for better tracking – e.g., confidence in govt, internet use





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Polling Center: Results

- Government health insurance system was modified after indicated public complaints
- More basic goods made available in the market after poll results on the availability of basic goods showed shortages
- Some public TV channels canceled after poll showed low viewership.
- Set rates for new fuel-efficient cab system
- Changed law to permit part-time work for men in government



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Polling Center – Strengths

- Commitment to methodological excellence
- Commitment to fully reporting results
- Commitment to linking internationally – Think Tanks Network, new consortium of polling agencies
- Commitment to openness

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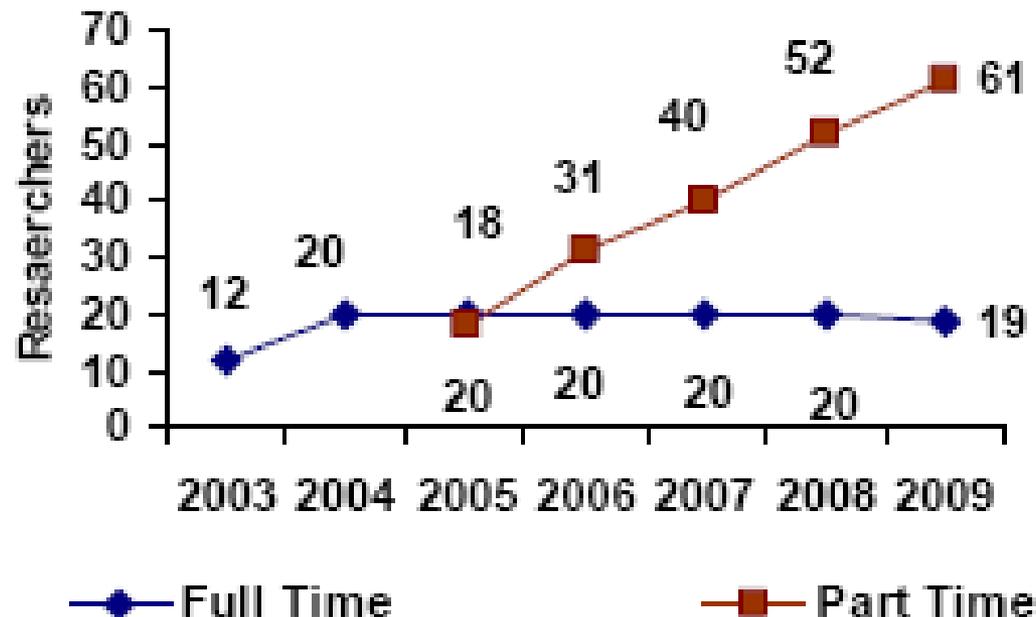
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Staff capacity-building

Increase in the number of staff (Part time and full time) between 2003-2008





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Polling Center – Challenges

- Low level of trust in government
- Lack of statistical literacy in press and NGOs
- Lack of strategic plan – staff-driven(?), but creating board
- General avoidance of evaluation in favor of descriptive studies (changing)





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Poverty Baseline Analysis

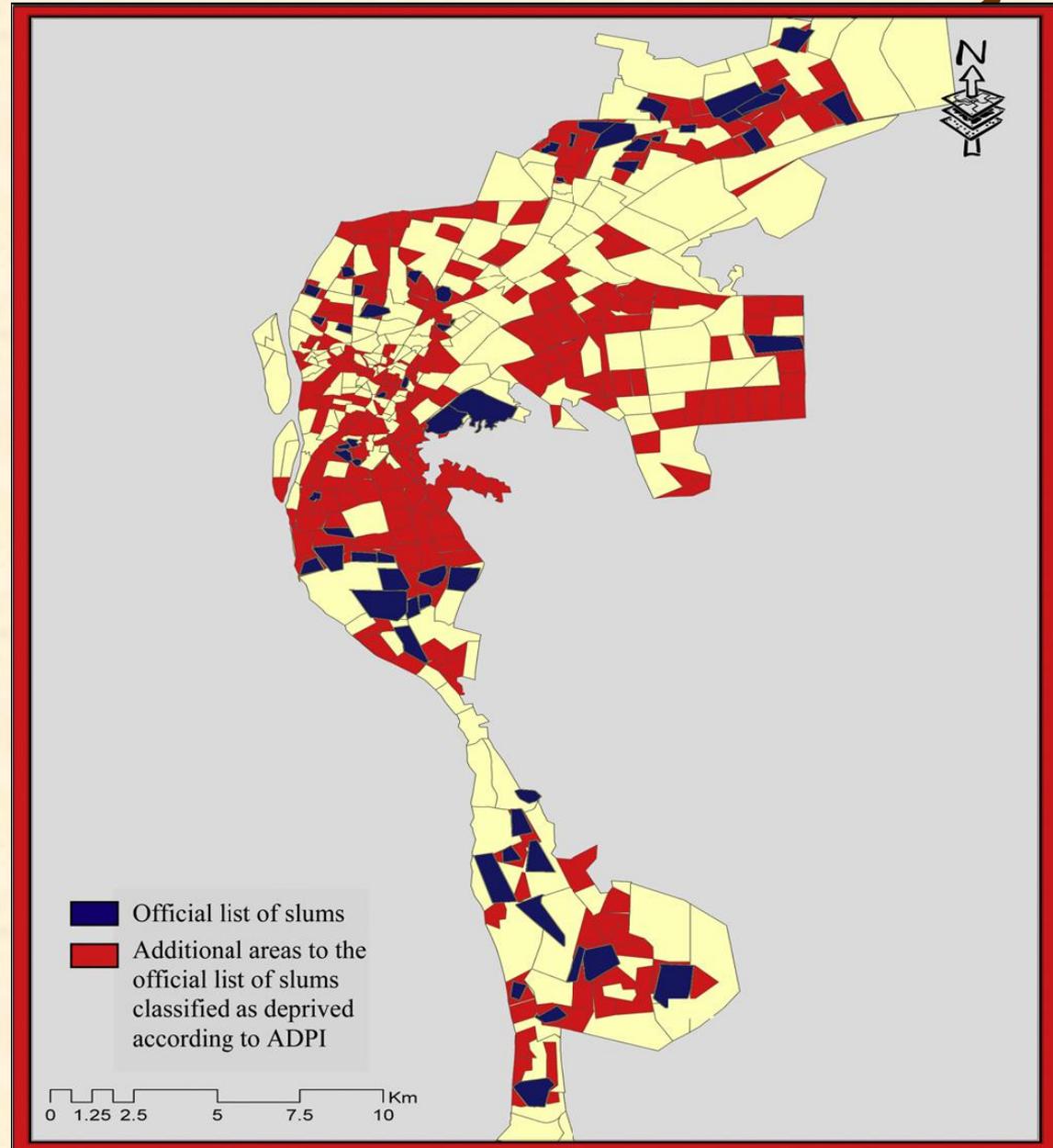
- Innovative effort by GoE and AUC's Social Research Center
- Integrated GIS data with existing and new survey data
- Aim to prioritize specific regions within Greater Cairo, understand poverty on multi-dimensional basis as basis for intervention





Found More Poverty...

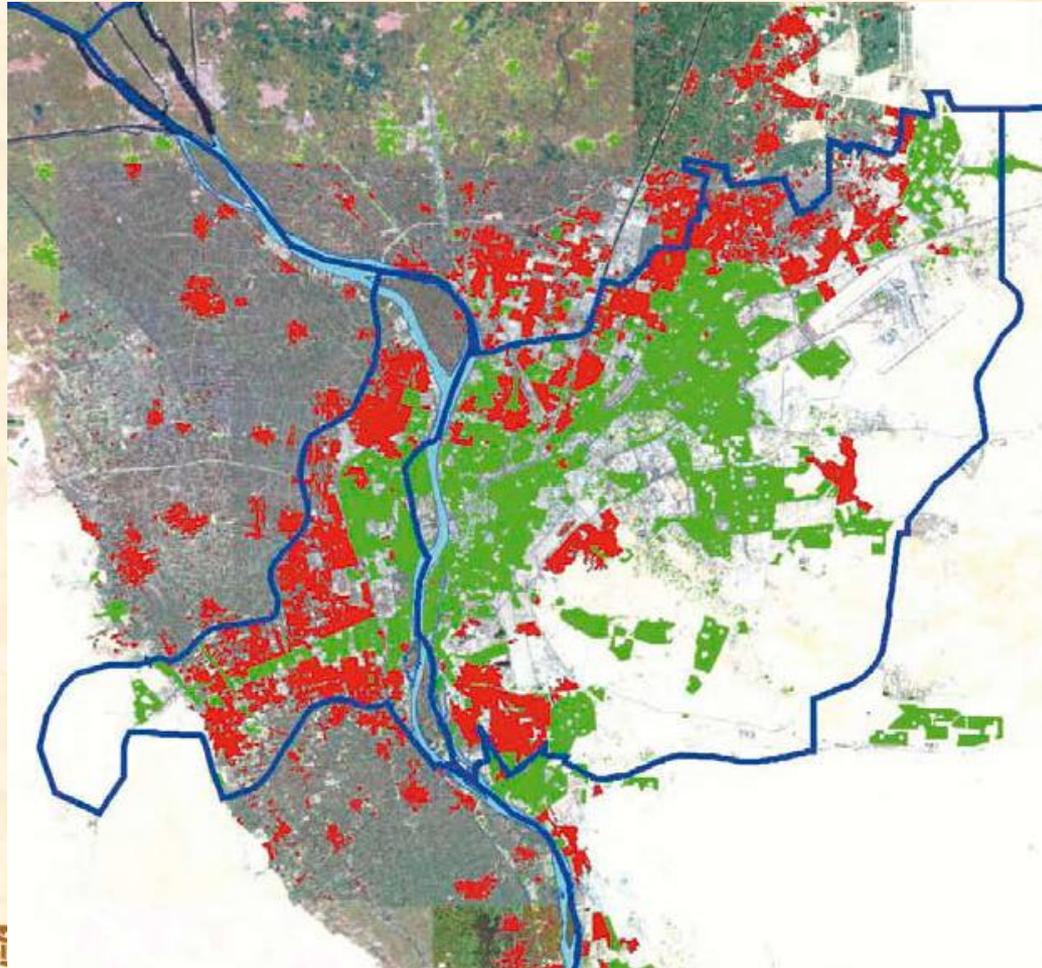
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Challenge of Assessing Multi-Agency Policy Outcomes



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Key Issue: Where to Put Capacity to Ensure Stakeholder Responsiveness?

- Where to put capacity?
 - Independent agency
 - Under prime minister
 - Cours des comptes model
 - Legislative agency
 - The ultimate stakeholder representative
 - Incorporate with audit function or not
 - Must have ministry-level capacity
 - Reliance on academy/consultants or in-house
 - Need both



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Issue: Changing the Culture of Secrecy

- Right to know – information flow to the public
- Overcoming the culture of secrecy in the government
 - Follow the money...
- Overcoming the culture of secrecy in the private sector
 - Facilitate formalization, further reduce burdens
- Growing recognition that lack of hard data is harming development
- Value of international rankings





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Revolt of the Researchers!

- Headline from a report on an IDSC conference on polling:





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Revolt of the Researchers!

- Headline from a report on an IDSC conference on polling:

**Arab researchers
threaten to
conduct unauthorized
researches (!)**

10/11/2009—Al Youm Al Sabe'e



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- “If governments persist to hide information and make it difficult to issue research permits, we will have to work without them” [A senior Jordanian researcher] assures that we are suffering a lot of restrictions in attaining information, and there is great shortage in monitoring information which represents a great challenge for scientific efforts that aim to monitor public opinion indicators.



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Independence and Transparency Challenges

- 3-6 months to get permission to conduct surveys, even for government units
- Permission may be denied
- Government authority has been known to demand to censor results
- Surveyors without police stamps may be arrested





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Issue: Overcoming Limitations to Stakeholder Engagement and Public Policy Evaluation in MENA

- Hesitance to ask the hard questions
- Unwillingness to accept bad news – although fundamental to progress
- Lack of reliable data
- Lack of “data literacy”
- Limitations on field research
- Lack of countervailing forces to call for evaluation
- Over-reliance on donors



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Issue: How to Build Capacity in Policy Reform in MENA

- “Reform” as primary, evaluation a key support to it
- Need for continuous improvement – policy cycle
- Need to move from design to implementation to assessment
- Difficulty of bridging technical analysis and policy/political level
- “Missing chapter – missing section”
- Unidisciplinary models of education
- Communication and advocacy



A New Profession: the Public Policy Analyst

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- Have existed on an ad hoc basis – technical offices, advisors from academia, etc.
- No recognized profession, however
- Formal graduate programs established in the U.S. to train policy analysts in late 1960s
- Interdisciplinary master's programs (MPP) at Harvard, Princeton, Berkeley, Texas/ now perhaps 100 graduate programs





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What Is the Public Policy Discipline?

Combines:

- Economics, Political analysis,
- Statistics, Operations research and management
- French model adds legal studies
- AUC's planned master's in public policy
 - to be launched in Fall
 - First MPP in region
 - Must be supplemented with ST training to build demand for analysis
 - Hope others will develop their own models to establish policy analysis in MENA



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