GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY: WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE REALLY SAY?

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Many of the problems that developing and emerging countries face today occur because of governance shortcomings. Governance is not only about governments but also about citizens. Governments are expected to listen and serve. Within the World Bank's Governance Global Practice we are working to foster a more citizen-centric approach to governance. We do this because we know that active, engaged citizens are at the center of good governance. We also know that governments who listen to and work with citizens can be more efficient and effective.

Social accountability offers a way for actors inside and outside the government to work together for better governance, ensuring that countries and communities get the results they need and deserve. Social accountability is not about putting civil society to work against civil servants but about ensuring that information from the citizen's perspective is put in the hands of the officials in charge to make their work easier and more effective.

Social accountability enables citizens to provide feedback on and voice demand for improved service delivery, greater budget transparency, open contracting and regulation. For responsive public officials, social accountability offers valuable feedback and intelligence, builds citizen trust in government, and lends them political capital to implement and sustain pro-poor reforms.

Discussions on social accountability initiatives today are rightly focused on questions about their tangible evidence and impacts: what works, how and why does this work, for whom, in what circumstances, and can it be replicated? A considerable amount of research has been carried out, and a broad agreement on many of these important questions has yet to emerge. Some still consider that social accountability lacks rigorous evidence, and discussions often conclude with a somewhat unhelpful charge of there being 'mixed results'.

This is why the GPSA asked Jonathan Fox, Professor at American University, to undertake a meta-analysis of the main social accountability program evaluations that have framed the discourse on its evidence. His mission was to rethink the current evidence, assessing the limitations of traditional social accountability initiatives that were tool-based, information-led and lacking both coordination and collaboration.

Professor Fox's vast experience and expertise in the field resulted in this seminal paper. Helping to re-think the conceptual framework by distinguishing between traditional 'tactical' approaches, and evolving 'strategic' approaches, this paper offers a new frame and language for the important debate on social accountability's evidence and impact. Prompting us to further explore strategic social accountability approaches, he offers a number of insightful propositions based on the causal dynamics that drive real impact on societies.

I am confident this paper provides a useful contribution to the discussion, and I look forward to being part of the ongoing debate.
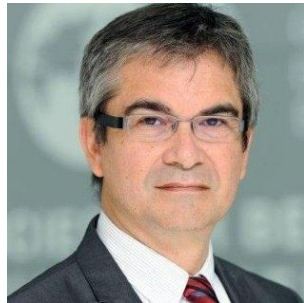
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ABSTRACT

Policy discussion of social accountability initiatives has increasingly focused on questions about their tangible development impacts. The empirical evidence is mixed. This meta-analysis rethinks some of the most influential evaluations through a new lens: the distinction between tactical and strategic approaches to the promotion of citizen voice to contribute to improved public sector performance. Field experiments tend to study bounded, tactical interventions that rely on optimistic assumptions about the power of information alone both to motivate collective action and to influence public sector performance. More promising results emerge from studies of multi-pronged strategies that encourage enabling environments for collective action and bolster state capacity to actually respond to citizen voice. This reinterpretation of the empirical evidence leads to a proposed new series of grounded propositions that focus on state-society synergy and sandwich strategies through which 'voice' and 'teeth' can become mutually empowering.

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About the author

Jonathan Fox is a professor at American University, in the School of International Service. His research addresses the relationships between accountability, transparency and citizen participation, and he has carried out field research in rural Mexico since 1982. He currently serves on the boards of directors of Oxfam-America and Fundar (Mexico) and is a member of the International Expert Panel of the Independent Reporting Mechanism of the Open Government Partnership.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Social accountability strategies try to improve institutional performance by bolstering both citizen engagement and the public responsiveness of states and corporations. In practice, the concept includes a wide range of institutional innovations that both encourage and project voice. Insofar as social accountability builds citizen power vis-à-vis the state, it is a political process – yet it is distinct from political accountability, which focuses specifically on elected officials and where citizen voice is often delegated to representatives in between elections. This distinction makes social accountability an especially relevant approach for societies in which representative government is weak, unresponsive or non-existent.[1]

Social accountability (SAcc) is an evolving umbrella category that includes: citizen monitoring and oversight of public and/or private sector performance, user-centered public information access/dissemination systems, public complaint and grievance redress mechanisms, as well as citizen participation in actual resource allocation decision-making, such as participatory budgeting. Yet amidst this diverse array of ongoing experimentation (at both small and large scale), analysts are beginning to note the differences between limited tools for civil society monitoring and voice and broader public interest advocacy approaches for policy reform (e.g., Joshi and Houtzager 2012).

Social accountability initiatives are multiplying in the broader context of the booming global transparency and accountability field, which also includes high-profile open government reforms and an extraordinary proliferation of voluntary multi-stakeholder initiatives that attempt to set social and environmental standards, mainly for the private sector.[2] These diverse efforts are based on the assumption that 'information is power' – that transparency will necessarily leverage accountability. Yet widely-accepted, normatively appealing theories of change, summed up as "sunshine is the best disinfectant," turn out to have uneven empirical foundations (Fox 2007a). In response, both practitioners and policy analysts are increasingly posing the "what works" question – and the answer remains inconclusive.[3] Practice in the SAcc field continues to race ahead of research, and relevant theory lags even further behind.

The diverse mix of institutional change initiatives that fall under the rubric of social accountability complicates efforts to draw broader lessons. Those who seek answers in terms of one-size-fits-all, easily replicable tools quickly confront the empirical reality that social accountability processes and outcomes are heavily context-dependent

(O'Meally 2013). Calling for an evidence-based approach is not enough. *Rethinking* the growing body of evidence can advance the way we understand SAcc more generally, which can help to inform realistic strategies and expectations.

This study reinterprets both the empirical evaluation evidence and the analytical concepts involved in SAcc, in order to help to address the "what next?" question.[4] First, the paper identifies limits to the conceptual frameworks usually applied to SAcc. Second, a meta-analysis assesses the SAcc impact evaluation literature through new conceptual lenses. This exercise draws primarily on 25 quantitative evaluations, with an emphasis on field experiments that are widely considered to be iconic in the field, based on their uptake by mainstream practitioners.[5] Third, the study proposes a series of grounded conceptual propositions to analyze the dynamics of SAcc strategies, informed by the "state-society synergy" approach to institutional analysis. The study concludes with an emphasis on pro-accountability coalitions that bridge the state-society divide.

To preview the main argument, if one unpacks the impact evaluation evidence, it actually tests two very different approaches under the broad SAcc umbrella: *tactical* and *strategic.* Tactical SAcc approaches are bounded interventions (also known as tools) and they are limited to "society-side" efforts to project voice. Their theory of change assumes that access to information alone will motivate localized collective action, which will in turn generate sufficient power to influence public sector performance.[6] Strategic SAcc approaches, in contrast, deploy multiple tactics, encourage enabling environments for collective action for accountability and coordinate citizen voice initiatives with governmental reforms that bolster public sector responsiveness. Reinterpreting evaluation evidence through this new lens, it turns out that the results of *tactical* approaches are indeed mixed, whereas the evidence of impacts of *strategic* approaches is much more promising. This interpretation points to the relevance of institutional change strategies that promote *both* 'voice' and 'teeth' (state responsiveness). The concluding proposition for discussion is that 'sandwich strategies' of mutually empowering coalitions of pro-accountability actors in both state and society can trigger the virtuous circles of mutual empowerment that are needed to break out of 'low-accountability traps.'

2. RETHINKING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR SACC

The SAcc field has outgrown conventional conceptual frameworks, and lessons learned from practice should inform new approaches. This section reviews the limitations of four widely-accepted approaches, all of which were imported from other intellectual agendas rather than developed in order to understand social accountability.

A decade ago, the World Bank's World Development Report on public service delivery set a path-breaking global intellectual agenda, framing service delivery performance problems in terms of accountability gaps and pathways (2003). Conceptually, the report emphasized the principal-agent framework as the most relevant tool for understanding the relationship between citizen voice and public sector response.[7] The P-A approach became the conventional wisdom in mainstream development thinking, assuming that citizens are ultimately the principals - regardless of whether or not they actually live under representative forms of government (e.g., Griffin, et al, 2010). Yet when the P-A framework is applied to governance, it implicitly assumes what it needs to demonstrate – that citizens are indeed ultimately in charge - the "principals." Moreover, this approach often makes the assumption that citizens have relatively homogenous interests and goals. Implicitly, the P-A framework also assumes that "principals" are "principled" – that they can and will act against impunity (Persson, Rothstein and Teorell 2013). The issue here is one of "conceptual stretching" (Sartori 1970). The P-A model originally referred to two-way market relationships, such as shareholders-managers, managers-employees, or customers-service providers. When applied to politics, it originally focused on clear-cut, formal relationships of delegated authority. Social scientists then stretched the metaphor, applying it to more amorphous power relations involving mere influence rather than authoritative power, as well as multiple "principals." [8] This diluted its parsimony. The model also has difficulty with non-hierarchical oversight relationships, as in the cases of mutual accountability in partnerships, checks and balances institutions and informal accountability relationships – all of which are especially relevant for social accountability processes.

The 2004 WDR built on the P-A approach to propose another very influential metaphor for understanding different sets of power relations between citizens and public service providers. The "long route" has citizens exercising their "principal-ness" by delegating authority to political representatives, who then govern bureaucracies by choosing policymakers who in turn form compacts to manage front-line service providers. The

"short route," in contrast, links citizens directly to service providers, through various oversight and voice mechanisms (as well as exit options, if available). The long-short route metaphor did not address the potential contributions of other public "checks and balances" institutions, such as legislatures, the judicial system, audit institutions, ombuds agencies, or public information access reforms. In addition, the 2004 WDR's proposed short route approach to addressing frontline service providers is also exclusively local, reflecting an assumption that "government failures" are primarily local, rather than distributed all the way up the governance "supply chain." A decade later, mixed results suggest that the "short route" may not be so short after all. Indeed, influential World Bank researchers recently concluded that when the problem is government accountability failure, there is no short route (Devarajan, Khemani and Walton 2013). This suggests there is no way around the central issue of political accountability and the incentive structure that influences whether elected officials are responsive to citizens.

By the latter part of the decade of the 2000s, official World Bank documents began to promote a third discursive frame for accountability issues, deploying the market metaphors that contrast the "supply" and "demand" for good governance. This reflected the World Bank's own internal organizational divisions, which separated staff dealing with inward-looking public sector reforms (the supply side) from those who promoted public interfaces and civil society engagement (the demand side). In contrast to the 2004 WDR, this approach does emphasize the potential contribution of checks and balances-type institutions, which fit under the "supply side" (anti-corruption bureaus, open budgeting, legislative oversight capacity-building, grievance review mechanisms, etc.). Yet the market metaphor implies that somehow demand will create its own supply, or vice versa. Moreover, the implicit assumption that an invisible hand would bring them together is unrealistic.[9]

A fourth conceptual framework for understanding accountability draws on spatial metaphors. Vertical accountability refers to political accountability relations between citizens and their elected representatives (Mainwaring and Welna 2003). Horizontal accountability refers to the mutual oversight embedded in the governmental institutions of checks and balances – relatively co-equal relationships that do not fit easily into principal-agent models (O'Donnell 1998). Diagonal accountability refers to hybrid combinations of vertical and horizontal oversight, involving direct citizen engagement within government institutions. This can involve either participation in or direct management of official oversight bodies – as in the classic case of citizen-run administration of elections, independent of elected authorities.[10] Some of these official state-society power-sharing bodies are created from above, as in the case of "invited

spaces" (Cornwall and Schattan Coelho 2007). Others are constructed in response to broad-based citizen protest and advocacy, as in the case of independent citizen-run election administration in Mexico (Isunza Vera and Olvera 2006, Avritzer 2002).

In the context of these spatial metaphors, social accountability efforts can be either vertical or diagonal. They are vertical when citizens make demands on the state directly, whether inside or outside of electoral channels (Peruzzotti and Smulovitz 2006). These vertical and diagonal dimensions interact with each other, since the space for citizen power within official oversight bodies may be created in response to vertical pressures. Conversely, some argue that where horizontal accountability is weak, the underlying cause is flaws in the vertical accountability process (Moreno, Crisp and Shugart 2003). Where weak horizontal and vertical accountability systems reinforce each other, one can speak of "low accountability traps" (Fox 2007b). Analysis of these accountability bottlenecks involves unpacking the state in terms of its often spatially uneven degree of institutionalization and efficacy (O'Donnell 1993). Moreover, under some conditions, elected national authorities may have incentives to allow undemocratic subnational regimes to persist – or they may lack the clout to break them (Gibson, 2005, Giraudy 2013). Yet when social accountability efforts do have impact on the state, it is often through a pathway that involves triggering or empowering horizontal public oversight institutions to act (Peruzzotti and Smulovitz 2006, Fox 2007a).

Each of these four broad conceptual frameworks has their own strengths and limitations, yet they do not direct us to the kind of analytical tools that are needed to further categorize, measure and compare the dynamics of the many different approaches that fall under the umbrella category of social accountability. A fresh set of conceptual propositions is needed, drawn inductively from reform experience, including the distinction between tactical and strategic approaches, the relationship between voice and teeth, "squeezing the balloon," vertical integration, accountabilities of scale, forward vs. backward-looking accountabilities, and the sandwich strategy. First, however, a meta-analysis of the impact evaluation evidence is in order.[11]

3. REREADING THE SACC EVALUATION EVIDENCE: WHAT DO 'MIXED RESULTS' MEAN?

How does one draw broader lessons from a body of empirical evidence that covers very diverse reform efforts, in a wide range of contexts? The SAcc impact evaluation evidence combines apples and oranges. As a result, it should not be surprising to find that "the evidence is mixed" – but it raises the question of how to *interpret* the findings. Do specific cases of lack of SAcc impact "disprove" the broader concept? Do specific cases of positive impact "prove" the broader concept? This raises the broader question: what would "*proof of concept*" for SAcc look like?

The notion of "proof of concept" is very relevant for first addressing the "what works?" question – and then for reframing it. Widely used in scientific, medical and engineering fields, "proof of concept (or principle)" refers to the demonstration that a proposed idea functions as predicted.[12] Moreover, the process of testing the possible *validity* of an idea is distinct from assessing its *generalizability*. In other words, there is a difference between demonstrating whether a proposition works at all, and showing that such a proposition holds across a wide range of conditions. In the case of SAcc, the general proposition would be that informed citizen engagement can improve the public sector's performance, especially if it bolsters the functioning of public oversight institutions. Yet tests of this general proposition under specific conditions would only provide hard evidence of whether that particular version of the idea works under those specific conditions.[13]

For taking stock of the evidence related to SAcc, one of the most relevant observations from the experience with "proof of concept" in the biomedical field is that the pathway for translating a promising idea into practical, applied solutions is often long and difficult. For example, the "theory of change" behind vaccines originated in 1796. Now - centuries later – no one doubts the validity of that theory of change, yet vaccines still only work for certain diseases, to some degree, with problem-specific substances and doses that require very extensive experimentation to discover. The point of this analogy for assessing institutional change strategies is that even potentially "high impact" solutions to problems are likely to have only partial impacts, only under certain conditions, only for certain problems.

The "proof of concept" idea suggests reframing a common SAcc question: "does it work?" The problem is that this formulation implicitly sets up the answer in

dichotomous, yes-or-no terms.[14] It is more appropriate to frame questions in terms of the *degree* to which – and the *conditions* under which – an institutional change initiative would work. In addition, the criteria for assessing whether a change initiative "works" may well be contested. Especially in contexts in which the baseline is a complete absence of public accountability, even partial and uneven increases in accountability may be quite significant.[15] For example, in the case of Mexico's regional Community Food Councils, at most one third of them managed to play their autonomous role of overseeing the performance of a large-scale rural food distribution program. Therefore, program failed two-thirds of the time. Yet for those millions of low-income rural citizens whose interests *were* represented by the more autonomous councils, the program certainly did work (Fox 1992, 2007b). Moreover, the "does it work?" framing also implies that a robust general answer can be drawn from what is still a relatively small body of literature.[16] Perhaps most importantly, the "does it work?" framing of the question also implies that SAcc is expected to work *all by itself*, in the absence of *other* good governance reforms that could give voice some teeth.

The issue of proof of concept for SAcc is on the agenda for very good reason – because a series of influential studies have documented cases that have led to little or no tangible development impact. Development practitioners are drawing at least three general "takeaways" from these evaluations:

- First, *information is not enough*. Specifically, impact evaluations have tested the proposition that local dissemination of service delivery outcome data will activate collective action, which will in turn improve service provider responsiveness. The studies that find no impact from information dissemination interventions include Banerjee et al (2010), Lieberman, Posner and Tsai (2013), Keefer and Khemani (2012) and Ravallion et al (2013), among others.   Indeed, Khemani suggests that local information campaigns intended to generate participation "cannot have sustainable or large-scale impact on public services unless they change incentives of politicians who have ultimate authority over the management of public employees and public budgets" (2007: 56-57). Ravallion, et al, concur that "complementary actions are need on the supply side to assure that the [information] scheme's potential is realized" (2013: 5)

- The second general proposition is that *bottom-up monitoring often lacks bite*. Here, an especially influential impact evaluation has tested the proposition that local oversight of public works, by itself, can limit corruption. Olken's field experiment involving community road-building in Indonesia's KDP program

found that community monitoring had littleo impact on reducing corruption (2007).

- Third, a growing body of research finds that *official "community-driven development" programs are often captured by local elites* (e.g., Mansuri and Rao 2013, Platteau and Gaspart 2003). This literature focuses on government-led ("induced") participation rather than on SAcc per se, but both approaches overlap to a degree, insofar as they share the goal of encouraging the under-represented to exercise voice in the use of public resources.

These three propositions are quite compelling, so what do they mean for understanding SAcc? The interpretation of the empirical evidence of SAcc impacts is complicated by the fact that some of the most influential studies of SAcc non-impact do not actually show what many think they show. It is instructive to examine three especially iconic studies in terms of the differences between how their findings are widely understood and what they actually show. The choice of these studies and the interpretation of how their findings are widely understood was based on 15 interviews with World Bank staff and consultants, carried out between December, 2013 and March 2014. The interviews asked which evaluations they considered to be the most influential, both among their colleagues and for their own thinking about the strengths and limitations of SAcc approaches.

First, consider Olken's methodologically elegant comparison of anti-corruption interventions in village public works in Indonesia (2007). Practitioners often interpret this study as supporting the more general claim that top down central audits work, whereas community monitoring has little impact on corruption.[17] To "work" in this case meant a reduction of one third of the estimated leakage (down 8 percentage points from 24%). Yet the causal mechanism behind the audits rarely involved official penalties. It was mainly the threat of community responses to the promised local dissemination of the findings that gave the audits the clout to reduce corruption.[18] Moreover, all of the communities involved in the field experiment were *already* mobilized through their involvement in KDP, a national participatory rural development program.[19] As an architect of KDP put it, while the study itself clearly stressed the community read-outs of the audit findings, "for some reason the evaluation community at large didn't want to hear that part."[20] This study was subsequently quite influential in policy terms, leading the Indonesian government to scale up its application of central audits to more than 80% of the local development projects in 70,000 villages. Yet the project's official monitoring data do not indicate whether the community dissemination of those audit findings was also scaled up.[21] In spite of its imbalanced

uptake, this study shows that top down and bottom up approaches were synergistic rather than dichotomous.

Second, consider Banerjee et al's influential field experiment focusing on village education committees in Uttar Pradesh (2010). Researchers collaborated with a prominent Indian education civil society organization to test approaches to the provision of information about schooling outcomes to parents and village education committees, in an effort to activate them to attempt to improve school performance. The CSO convened parent meetings that generated attendance, but no learning outcomes. Their findings show that "providing information on the status of education and the institutions of participation alone is not sufficient to encourage beneficiary involvement in public schools" (2010: 5). The study also documents the weaknesses of the official channels for community participation and oversight. In that state, the Village Education Committee is composed of the head teacher, the elected head of village government, and three parents chosen by local officials. They are therefore – by design - not independent oversight bodies.[22] Moreover, the study found that a quarter of the parent members specifically denied being members, the vast majority of members knew little about the VEC, and 92% of villagers were unaware of the VEC's existence. [23] Nevertheless, the study recognized that "citizens are unlikely to participate in collective action unless there is a concrete course of action available" (2010: 4). In this case that action involved training parents to teach literacy outside of the public schools. This was the most intensive of the study's interventions, and offered a viable option to a minority of families – showing that the main constraint was not lack of parent interest in their children's education. [24] Yet "none of the interventions increased parents' involvement with the public school system" (2010: 21). This suggests that neither the existing channels for parent participation in schools, nor the intervention's attempt to activate them, managed to create an effective enabling environment for independent community oversight of the public schools. Indeed, the *kind* of information emphasized in the intervention – and the content of the facilitated discussions – focused on child learning outcomes rather than on teacher or school performance. . Yet in spite of the lack of parental collective action to hold the schools accountable, the study's title, "Pitfalls of Participatory Programs," implied that the official school oversight process was participatory.

Third, Mansuri and Rao's tour-de-force meta-analysis of almost 500 studies examines both community-driven development and local decentralization to address "the impact of large-scale, policy-driven efforts to induce participation" (2013: 2). Many within the World Bank concluded that the study found that participatory local development often does not work -- that it is often captured by elites or leads to modest development

impacts that are often socially biased. Yet the study explicitly limited its focus to top-down "local development" projects, and did not address bottom-up, "organic" participation. Moreover, many large-scale official development programs that ostensibly attempt to induce participation or that fund local governments do not include substantive measures to promote accountability, either from above or below.[25] Local capacity to respond to potential openings from above may be limited – "civil society failure," as they put it. It should therefore not surprise analysts of participation that such interventions would be vulnerable to elite capture. The authors conclude that context-sensitive participatory efforts that are combined with the use of central authority to improve state responsiveness – and therefore accountability – are indeed quite promising. The study's conclusions are therefore very consistent with an emphasis on social accountability.

This exercise of re-reading three iconic impact evaluations helps to inform a more nuanced approach to different kinds of social accountability efforts. Many of the SAcc interventions that have produced meager results are based on key assumptions that turn out to be weak, such as "information is power, "decentralization brings the government closer to the people, "community participation is democratic" and "community voice can (by itself) influence public service providers." Field evidence indicates that these propositions need to be further specified:

First, what *kind* of information can empower the poor?

▶ Information needs to be *perceived* as actionable.[26] For citizens to be able to act on this information, an enabling environment needs to reduce fear of reprisals.[27] Incentives for information-led action increase with the likelihood that the state will actually respond to voice.

Second, what *kind* of decentralization can bring the government closer to the people?

▶ Only those local governments that are pushed to be more democratic are likely to become more responsive when bolstered by the increased funding and authority that comes with decentralization. [28]

Third, what *kind* of community participation is likely to represent the socially excluded?

▶ Enabling environments to actively encourage the voice and representation of those who would normally be excluded because of gender, ethnic or class bias are necessary.

Fourth, what *kind* of community oversight can address "government failure?"[29]

▶ Local voices that challenge un-accountable authorities, by themselves, are likely to be either ignored or squelched. Under what conditions can voice change the balance of power? Citizen action that has the backing of government allies who are both willing and able to get involved, or that has forged links with other citizen counterparts to build countervailing power, has a much greater chance of addressing impunity.

In brief, exclusively localized, information-led "demand-side" interventions – what can be called tactical approaches – tend to be based on unrealistic assumptions. In contrast, what can be called strategic approaches to SAcc combine information access with enabling environments for collective action that can scale up and coordinate with governmental reforms that encourage actual public sector responsiveness to voice.

The relevance of this distinction between tactical and strategic approaches to SAcc becomes clearer when one turns to the body of evidence that finds tangible *positive* development impacts. Table 1 synthesizes the findings from a wide range of countries and sectors. In terms of issue areas, this evidence of tangible development impacts clusters in the areas of education, participatory budgeting and water management, in countries with at least nominally responsive elected governments.[30] This snapshot of the evidence does not claim to be complete, and it is limited to quantitative studies, with an emphasis on field experiments. While space does not permit detailed analysis of this body of evidence, broader patterns of interaction between citizen voice and state response do emerge.

Table 1:
 Social accountability evidence: Positive development impacts (large N studies only)

Sector	Country	Tool	Impact	Key sources
Education *	Uganda	Dissemination of $ info	Less leakage	Reinikka & Svensson (2004, 2011)
Education +	Uganda	Participatory monitoring	Education outcomes	Barr et al (2012)
Education +	Kenya	Community hiring of teachers	Teacher effort & educational outcomes	Duflo et al (2012)
Education +	India	Dissemination of $ info & parent roles	Teacher effort & educational outcomes	Pandey et al (2011)
Education +	Indonesia	School co-governance	Education outcomes	Pardhan et al (2011)
Local govt *	Brazil	Participatory budgeting	Lower infant mortality	Gonçalves (2013) Touchton & Wampler (2013)
Local govt *	Mexico	Participatory budgeting	Increased basic service coverage	Díaz-Cayeros et al (2013)
Local govt *	India	Participatory budgeting	Improved targeting	Besley, Rao, Pandey (2005), Heller, Harilal, & Chaudhuri (2007)
Health +	Uganda	Participatory monitoring	Improved health outcomes	Björkman & Svensson, (2009), Björkman, de Walque, Svensson (2013)
Local elections + *	Brazil	Dissemination of audit info	Electoral accountability	Ferraz and Finan (2008)
Public works *	India	Social audits	Less wage theft	Shankar (2010)
Public works *	Indonesia	Dissemination of audits locally	Less leakage of road funds	Olken (2007)
Water *	Int'l	Co-governance	Econ, social & sustainability impacts	Narayan (1995)
Water *	India, Sri Lanka	Co-governance	Econ, social, & sustainability impacts	Krishna & Uphoff (2002), Uphoff & Wijayaratna (2000), Isham & Kähkönen (2002)
Targeted food subsidy + *	India	Access to info	Access to ration cards w/o bribes	Peisakhin & Pinto (2010)

* Large-scale policy or program

+ Field experiment

Unpacking studies with evidence of SAcc impact

Drawing on Table 1, it is useful to illustrate several cases of *whether* and *how* social accountability processes can lead to tangible development impacts by spelling out their respective causal chains.[31] Note that the degree to which each case is "fully" strategic varies, and together they certainly do not constitute "proof" of specific generalizations that would hold up across diverse contexts. But the combination of the breadth and depth of this evidence supports the hypothesis that strategic approaches are more promising than tactical approaches for leading to tangible development impacts.

1) **Uganda education spending information campaign:** Perhaps the single most influential study that demonstrates tangible positive impacts of "information for accountability" interventions is Reinnika and Svensson's analysis of the public dissemination of school-level funding information in Uganda (2004). Public spending tracking surveys had shown systematic, high rates of leakage, undermining efforts to invest more in education. An information campaign then tried to increase parental awareness of block grants for schools. The statistical analysis demonstrated a clear correlation between a school's distance to newspaper distribution and the fraction of school block grants that reached the school, sharply reducing the share of funds diverted. This experience was hugely influential in informing the 2004 World Development Report's "short route" to more accountable service provision. Yet two key elements were not spelled out in the causal chain. First, the study assumed rather than documenting or explaining the role of participation.[32] Second, subsequent analysis added the contextual "supply side" dimension, since the government was simultaneously prioritizing sharp increases in school enrollments and spending – which also got parents' attention (Hubbard 2007: 3).

2) **Participatory municipal budgeting in Brazil:** A second example of the causal pathway through which SAcc can promote tangible development impacts is based on two decades of large-scale, nation-wide institutional practice (rather than on a field experiment). Numerous municipalities in Brazil have been practicing participatory budgeting (PB) for extended periods, beginning more than two decades ago (169 of 5,561 as of 2000, with 27% of the population).[33] Independently, two nationwide studies compared social indicators in Brazilian municipalities with and without this elaborate process of direct citizen input into municipal resource allocation decision-making (Gonçalves 2013, Touchton and Wampler 2013).[34] Municipalities with PB allocated a larger share of funding to sanitation and health services, reducing infant mortality rates (holding per capita budgets constant). While PB processes vary widely in practice, on balance their positive impacts are clear. The studies find that PB encourages authorities

to provide services that meet needs of otherwise underrepresented citizens, and the deliberative process also creates frequent citizen checks on promised governmental actions. This body of research also underscores the long time horizon and iterative pathways involved in reaching tangible development impacts.

3) **Uganda community-based health clinic monitoring plus deliberative local compact:** Björkman and Svensson's very influential field experiment in Uganda worked with local civil society organizations to promote a local compact between communities and local health workers in dozens of Ugandan villages. After extensive piloting, they tested a community monitoring process designed to encourage voice, to avoid elite capture and to facilitate periodic dialogue with health workers ("interface meetings"). The impacts were dramatic, including reduction in infant mortality in treatment communities (33%), increased use of outpatient services (20%) and overall improvement of health treatment practices (immunization rates, waiting time, absenteeism). This was made possible by voice, expressed through inclusionary community discussion and assessment of service performance, bolstered by interlocutors who facilitated direct negotiation of expected actions with the service providers, informed by making public the contrast between health worker and community perceptions of performance.[35] Social rewards and sanctions were key incentives. Years after this first study, the researchers then conducted a followup comparison of efforts to encourage beneficiary control with and without access to information about staff behavior, finding that such information was indeed crucial to enable stakeholder action to improve services (Björkman, De Walque and Svensson 2014). The international literature does not indicate whether these field experiments influenced health policy in Uganda, but they inspired replication efforts in Sierra Leone (Hall, Menzies and Woolcock 2014). This case indicates that not all report cards are the same. For example, in contrast to the education intervention in Banerjee et al (2010) discussed above, this experiment involved a primary focus on service provider performance and explicit, negotiated "community contracts" that specified how services were to be improved, as well as elected community representation in the subsequent oversight process. Indeed, "more than one third of the [previously ineffective] local oversight committees were dissolved and new members elected following the intervention" (2009:747).

4) **India's right to information law, applied to social programs:** In spite of the widespread optimism regarding the spread of public information access laws, few studies document how they can bolster access to public services. Peisakhin and Pinto (2010) tested India's Right to Information Act with a field experiment that compared different strategies for low-income citizens to apply for food ration cards. Bureaucrats ignored most applicants, but those who also filed official information requests about

both the status of their application and district level processing times were consistently successful. Only bribery produced comparable results. To understand the causal mechanism would have required a different method, however. With institutional ethnography, researchers could enter the black box of frontline government agencies to analyze the determinants of the behavior of public sector workers.[36] In this case, the study hypothesizes that mid-level bureaucrats fear that non-compliance with the information access law may slow their professional advancement.[37] India's RTI law is also unusual in that non-compliant administrators are potentially subject to nominal fines.

5) **Community-driven development and village public works in Indonesia.** First known as KDP, then PNPM, this nation-wide rural community development program followed a strategy that created enabling environments for community-level participatory budgeting and oversight, mainly for local public works and later for health and education programs. The program led to increased consumption and access to health care in poor households and reduced poverty in all the sub-districts where it operated, especially in the poorest and most remote communities – though members of marginalized groups did not benefit as much as others (PNPM 2012). The program involved relatively low levels of corruption, especially compared to other government programs, and the causal factors include local transparency, informed participation, local trainers, central audits and extensive monitoring and evaluation (Guggenheim 2006, Friedman 2013). Levels of community participation were high, including women, though spillovers to improved access to information and governance involving other programs were low (PNPM 2012).

6) **Social audit hearings in India.** The incorporation of community public oversight hearings into India's national rural right-to-employment law is one of the most significant examples of a grassroots social accountability initiative that influenced national policy. Because of India's federal system, states exercise a high degree of autonomy in their interpretation and implementation of this law. In the state of Rajasthan, for example – the home of the grassroots social audit – state government efforts to implement the law were blocked by resistance from local politicians (Pande 2014). Andhra Pradesh became the only state whose government committed itself to institutionalize the social audit strategy, bypassing local government and politicians, using a relatively disciplined bureaucracy to create the enabling local environment needed to have widespread, repeated public hearings to oversee the rural employment program (Aiyar et al, n.d., 2013, Maoirano 2014). This process led to improved performance of the rural employment program, compared to states where the social audit process was captured or not implemented (Shankar 2010).

4. DISENTANGLING TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC APPROACHES

To sum up, this exercise of reinterpreting the empirical evidence of both strong and weak SAcc impacts indicates that the wide range of change efforts that are pursued under the SAcc umbrella are not all pursuing the same theory of change. Instead, this rethinking process suggests reframing the basic propositions that inform SAcc into two quite distinct categories: tactical and strategic (see Table 2). These two terms warrant explicit definitions. At the most general level, strategies link coordinated actions to goals, with a macro view of the overall process, whereas tactics refer to specific micro-level actions. "Strategic" is defined in this context as an approach with a theory of change that takes into account the relationship between pro-change actions and eventual goals by specifying the multiple links in the causal chain. A "tactical" approach is limited to a specific link in the causal chain.[38]

The argument here is that a tactical approach to SAcc, which emphasizes local-level dissemination of information on service delivery outcomes and resource allocation to under-represented stakeholders – an exclusively "demand-side" intervention – is based on two unrealistic propositions. The first assumption is that people who have been denied voice and lack power will perceive vocal participation as having more benefits than costs (if the costs are recognized at all). The second assumption is that even if locally bounded voices do call for accountability, their collective action will have sufficient clout to influence public sector performance - in the absence of external allies with both perceived and actual leverage.

> **Table 2: Tactical and strategic approaches to social accountability**
>
> ▶ **Tactical SAcc approaches involve**
> - Bounded interventions
> - Limited to society-side voice
> - Assume that information provision alone will inspire collective action with sufficient power to influence public sector performance
> - Are bounded to local arenas
>
> ▶ **Strategic SAcc approaches involve**
> - Multiple, coordinated tactics
> - Enabling environments for collective action, to reduce perceived risk
> - Citizen voice coordinated with governmental reforms that bolster public sector responsiveness (voice plus teeth)
> - Scaling up (vertically) and across (horizontally)
> - Iterative, contested and therefore uneven processes

Strategic approaches to SAcc, in contrast, focus on disseminating information that is clearly perceived by users as *actionable*, in coordination with measures that actively enable collective action, influence service provider incentives and/or share power over resource allocation.[39] This proposition also suggests that SAcc strategies that manage to scale up voice and collective action beyond the local arena, while bolstering the capacity of the state to *respond* to voice (i.e., teeth) are more promising.

This tactical-strategic distinction has major implications for how one assesses evidence. Localized, voice-only, tactical interventions test extremely weak versions of SAcc. In treatment and control terms, this could be considered 'under-dosage.'[40] To recall the earlier analogy, if a small dose, or an insufficient number of doses of a vaccine fails to prevent a disease, that does not rule out the possibility that larger or more numerous doses could be more effective. Critical mass is needed, and this may require significant lead time (as in Brazil's diverse participatory budgeting experiences). The pathway to impact may also be quite discontinuous, perhaps following a J-curve (Woolcock 2013). Moreover, information-led, voice-only approaches tend to focus on the symptoms rather than the underlying causes of "government failure" (e.g., teacher or nurse absenteeism). Insofar as the prospects for SAcc strategies to transform state-society interfaces depend on bolstering the state's capacity to *respond* to voice, voice needs to find synergy with *other* governance reform strategies – such as bolstering the

autonomy and capacity of oversight agencies, as well as access to the rule of law more generally.[41]

The distinction between tactical and strategic approaches to SAcc allows one to return to the "proof of concept" idea and assess what stage SAcc is at in terms of its development as a practical approach for institutional change (see Figure 1). The evidence that SAcc *can* contribute, coming from the wide range of contexts and issue areas indicated in Table 1, suggests a high level of progress towards proof of concept. Extensive piloting and field-testing of applied SAcc measures has also contributed greatly to understanding the strengths and limitations of specific tools (e.g. community scorecards). Yet the available evidence suggests much less progress towards understanding how context-specific SAcc strategies work.[42] Research has barely addressed the role of bolstering enabling environments for collective action and the central role of fear in many contexts. Grievance redress mechanisms with teeth are remarkably rare (Gauri 2013). In addition, the key potential contributions of scaling up towards vertically integrated civil society monitoring and oversight has not received attention, nor has the sustained, coordinated articulation of "demand" and "supply-side" accountability. On balance, the evidence for the SAcc concept has progressed significantly over the past two decades, but significant gaps remain – in part because much of what has been documented in depth involves 'underdosage.' Perhaps one could say that the SAcc approach is reaching an "early middle" stage, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Has social accountability reached an "early middle" stage?

Dimensions of SAcc development	Estimated degree of development (LOW → HIGH)
Proof of concept	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Context-specific change strategies	★ ★
Piloting & field-testing applied tools	★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Enabling environments for collective action	★ ★
Scaling up & vertical integration of monitoring	★
Effective grievance redress mechanisms	★
Articulation with "supply side" reforms	★

5. SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROPOSITIONS FOR DISCUSSION

If SAcc is arguably reaching the "early middle" stage of its development, then the tactical/strategic distinction is not the only alternative conceptual frame that can help to shed light on both the opportunities and obstacles for bolstering SAcc impact. So far, mainstream development thinking about how to close accountability gaps has taken a deductive approach, importing concepts like "principal-agent" theory that were not designed to address SAcc's multiple principals, checks and balances and mutual accountabilities.[43] An inductive approach to concept development may be more appropriate to inform future research into the causal dynamics that drive SAcc impacts. To provide context for the tactical/strategic distinction, here follow a series of additional analytical and conceptual propositions for debate and elaboration, initially developed inductively from both top down and bottom up SAcc efforts in Mexico over more than two decades (Fox 2007b).

Campaigns are more strategic than interventions

The concept of 'Intervention' is widely used to describe top-down social accountability initiatives, in response to the widespread equation of rigor with randomized controlled trials. Those SAcc interventions that are studied by impact evaluations tend to be temporally and spatially bounded, one-off actions. They are rarely combined with other initiatives that involve many actors, mainly because from the point of view of statistical analysis, if one bundles intervention X together with actions A, B and C, then one cannot adequately isolate its impact.[44] The term intervention is also closely associated with a powerful adjective – *external* - that one could contrast with a more contextually-embedded partnership approach. Moreover, interventions are closely associated with tactical rather than strategic approaches, whose 'learning-by-doing' and multiple stages do not lend themselves to bounded treatment vs. control distinctions. As an alternative, the analytical tool of the causal chain is especially relevant here, because it can unpack dynamics of change that involve multiple actors and stages (e.g., Joshi 2013b). This approach is similar to what political scientists call "process tracing." This approach is more compatible with analysis of campaigns – an underused term in the SAcc field. The idea of a campaign inherently involves an attempt to engineer change, usually with some combination of coalitions and contestation. Consider the different uses of the term – a military campaign involves contesting power with force, an electoral campaign involves contesting votes with ideas and mass organizing, a media campaign involves changing mass opinions and practices with bold messages and

images. To sum this up, project-level interventions attempt to encourage bounded change, whereas campaigns seek broader change strategically.

Targeted transparency helps to identify *how* information can redistribute power

The tactical approach to SAcc interventions tends to assume that external actors can predict what kinds of data are going to be most relevant to activate previously passive stakeholders. It would be much more useful to draw on the concept of "targeted transparency," which focuses specifically on accessible information that is *perceived* as useful and actionable by stakeholders, which can be integrated into their routines (Fung, Graham and Weil 2007). In this view, information disclosure informs action by changing actors' perceptions, mediated by a political economy analysis of the different interests involved. In other words, it is unrealistic to assume that information that is not linked to credible pathways to change will overcome well-known obstacles to collective action. This *user-centered* emphasis on actionable information contrasts sharply with widespread optimism that larger quantities of publicly-accessible data will inherently promote good governance.

Voice needs *representation* as well as aggregation

The SAcc literature tends to refer to voice without defining it. In practice, voice can have many different modalities, ranging from weak to strong, from small to large-scale, from socially biased to more inclusionary. Some policymakers may consider local level "beneficiary satisfaction" surveys – the aggregation of numerous individual responses to questions determined from above- to "count" as voice.[45] Public interest groups, in contrast, would tend to understand voice in more collective, scaled-up terms. Widespread experimentation with social media has made the "scaling up" of voice easier in often-inhospitable contexts. Yet while ICT-enabled voice can certainly play an agenda-setting role, crowd-sourced voices have limited capacity to negotiate with authority about what to *do* about those new agendas. If and when the political space created by voice makes it possible for the excluded to gain a seat at the table, who decides who is going to sit there to negotiate on behalf of those whose voices are trying to be heard? How can the scaling up of voice transition from aggregation to representation?[46] This process involves not only large numbers of people speaking at once, but the consolidation of organizations that can effectively scale up deliberation and representation as well – most notably, internally democratic mass membership organizations.[47]

This raises the issue of how to address the challenge of "civil society failure" – social contexts with limited capacity for autonomous, pro-accountability collective action (Mansuri and Rao 2013). Where traditions of scaled-up self-organization are weak, freedom of association is limited, or cultural and linguistic differences complicate the projection of voice, the role of *interlocutors* becomes crucial (Fowler 2014, Tembo 2013). Interlocutors are facilitators of two-way communication, and their role is often crucial for bridging cultural and power gaps. In contrast to tactical approaches that assume that information will by itself motivate action among subordinated people, strategies that emphasize interlocutors recognize that for the voiceless to exercise voice effectively requires support – as well as cross-cultural translation and bridge-building. The proposition here is that in a SAcc context, voice is most usefully understood as involving *both* the aggregation and the representation of the views of otherwise-excluded citizens.

Recognize that voice can be constrained by the "fear factor."

Tactical information-led interventions are often based on the implicit assumption that participation has more benefits than costs -- if the costs are recognized at all – and that the people who are targeted for encouraging participation also *perceive* the benefits as being greater than the costs. These assumptions ignore well-founded fears of reprisals. External allies can reduce the risks inherent in challenging impunity from below, as well as their capacity to help to identify actionable pathways through which collective action could leverage a response from power-holders. That is the substantive meaning behind the technocratic-sounding term "enabling environment."

Where under-represented citizens fear reprisals if they openly criticize local government officials, one under-recognized element that is key for SAcc tools is the degree to which they enable voice by providing anonymity.[48] To take a larger-scale example – India's widely-hailed right-to-know law – violent reprisals against information-requestors have been significant. Still-incomplete collections of news reports document the assassination of at least 41 information-requestors, as well as threats and injuries to hundreds more.[49] Yet most research on SAcc does not take reprisals, the "fear factor" and the capacity to defend oneself from threats into account.[50] The gap between SAcc and legal empowerment strategies is relevant here (Maru 2010). There are significant opportunities for synergy with this parallel field, which focuses on alternative legal defense approaches, such as community paralegals, in contexts where the rule of law is weak (Gauri and Brinks 2008, Goodwin and Maru 2014, Maru 2006). Indeed, until the fear factor is addressed and grievance redress

mechanisms have more teeth, many SAcc initiatives will fall short of a rights-based approach.[51]

'*Teeth*' is shorthand for institutional capacity for accountability - including both positive incentives and negative sanctions.

The analysis offered here, in the SAcc context, has used teeth as shorthand to refer to governmental capacity to respond to voice. However, teeth are also associated with pressure from below generated by protest. For the purposes of this framework, protest can be understood as an especially vigorous form of voice. If the idea of teeth is limited to the public sector, it is intuitively associated with governmental capacity to apply negative sanctions (legal or administrative). While the capacity to sanction is certainly key for accountability, the proposition here is the notion of "teeth" is more usefully understood in broader terms, as shorthand for clout more generally. Teeth can also include capacity for positive institutional responses, including: following the citizen recommendations that emerge from deliberative participatory budgeting processes, investigating and verifying complaints and grievances, changing public sector incentive structures to discourage abusive or wasteful behavior, or deploying preventative measures to reduce opportunities for corruption or abuse. The rationale for this emphasis on response capacity is that voice is so often ignored by the powers that be. Yet when governments *do* respond to voice, they create incentives for more voice – and vice versa. The reason for including both positive incentives and negative sanctions in this definition is that they often need to be deployed *together* in order to have maximum impact (hence the term 'carrots and sticks'). The proposition here is that for SAcc, teeth is most usefully understood as *governmental capacity to respond to voice*.[52]

Unpack accountability goals in terms of *reactive* vs. *preventative* approaches.

One of the foundational questions in the emerging field of accountability studies involves the two key elements of the term's definition – answerability and sanctions (Schedler 1999). Is "answerability" is enough to "count" as accountability, or does the concept *necessarily* require the inclusion of the capacity to sanction as well (Fox 2007a)? Looking forward, it would be useful for analysts to address how the relative weight given to sanctions may vary across different accountability efforts. The strategies that prioritize responding to past problems are likely to be distinct from those whose emphasis is on preventing future abuses.

Louis Brandeis' classic formulation of what would now be called the theory of change that links transparency to accountability actually involves two distinct causal

propositions. The first is the most widely-cited: "sunshine is… the best of disinfectants." This implies that the public spotlight has curative powers. The second part of his phrase is less well-known: "electric light [is] the most efficient policeman" (Brandeis 1913). This proposition suggests preventative effects, insofar as the spotlight makes crimes less likely to be committed in the first place. Clearly, this contrast does not necessarily imply a dichotomy. An emphasis on consequences – sanctions, redress, compensation – is not only just but can also change the mix of perceived incentives that influence transgressors' behavior. Yet in many political contexts – notably in cases of fragile or post-conflict situations – pro-accountability actors with very limited political space and resources often face stark tradeoffs in terms of their relative emphasis on carrots and sticks. This is the classic challenge that faces promoters of "transitional justice" around the world, as they attempt to build democratic institutions following authoritarian regimes. The political dynamics of these possible tradeoffs between forward and backward-looking accountability efforts have rarely been explicitly addressed in the research literature on social accountability. Yet frontline accountability campaigners, operating in institutional contexts that combine high risk with little means of recourse or redress, are likely to be quite strategic about investing their limited political capital primarily in forward-looking, preventative approaches. [53]
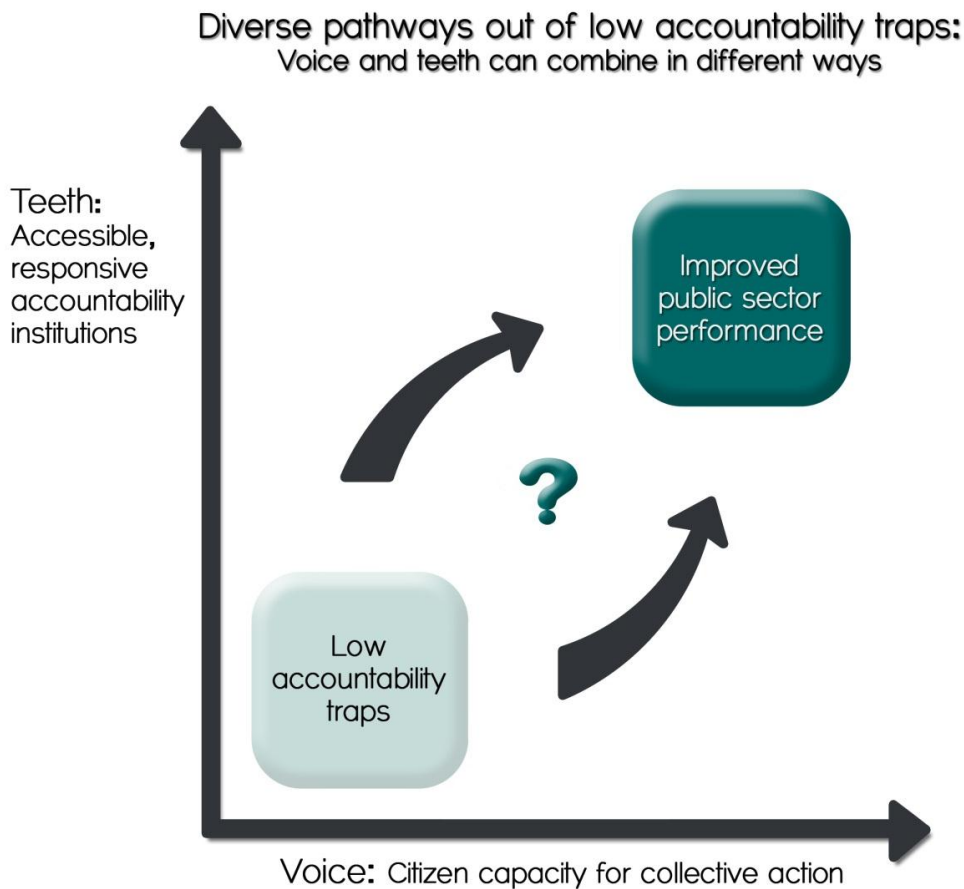
Bring *vertical accountability* back in

 According to the 2004 World Development Report's conceptual framework, the long and short routes to accountability are separate. Yet in practice, both public sector managers and frontline service providers are rarely insulated from electoral politics.[54] Indeed, in many contexts the politicized delivery of public services is widely used as a tool of electoral control (e.g., Fox 2007b, 2012). Moreover, less-than-democratic elections produce political leaders who are often quite willing and able to control or restrain the public oversight agencies whose actions are crucial to give teeth to SAcc initiatives. In addition, the combination of partisan manipulation of access to social programs with the politicization of horizontal oversight agencies can undermine fair elections, which leads to vicious circles of self-reproducing "low-accountability traps" at both national and subnational levels. This problem suggests the need to complement the "transitions to democracy" research of the 1980s and 1990s with new analytical frameworks that can account for the inherently uneven and contested processes of "transitions to accountability" within regimes that are considered to be at least formally democratic (Fox 2007b).

Reviewing the SAcc evaluation evidence a decade after the 2004 WDR, the short route to accountability has turned out to be much more indirect than initially postulated, and

its success may depend on making the long route more responsive as well.[55] The proposition here is to identify obstacles to SAcc by recognizing the interdependence of vertical, horizontal and diagonal accountability relationships, since blockages in one arena can spill over to the other. Figure 2 shows that voice and teeth need to reinforce each other in order to break out of low accountability traps. This diagram's two arrows also suggest that these pathways of mutual support can be either more voice-led or more teeth-led. Unless the mutually-reinforcing linkages between non-accountable politicians and bureaucrats can be broken, they are likely to be able to resist SAcc efforts.

Figure 2:

Diverse pathways out of low accountability traps:
Voice and teeth can combine in different ways

Teeth: Accessible, responsive accountability institutions

Improved public sector performance

?

Low accountability traps

Voice: Citizen capacity for collective action

Accountabilities of scale matter

Scale needs to be brought to the center of the study of accountability-building. Agenda-setting mainstream approaches to SAcc focus exclusively on local accountability gaps (e.g., World Bank, 2003, Mansuri and Rao 2013). The implicit assumption is that both the causes of "government failure" – and the spaces for potential citizen voice to address it - are exclusively local. The vertical and horizontal accountability metaphors do not address scale either - how do multiple levels of

government fit in? The concept of "accountabilities of scale" suggests two relevant insights. First, it evokes the economic concept of increasing returns to scale, in which the cost of each additional unit of X goes down as more of X is produced and/or distributed. In other words, the more accountability one has, the more one can get.[56] Conversely, the less accountability one has, the more difficult it is to get each additional degree of accountability (as in the "low accountability traps"). Second, local accountability reforms do not necessarily 'scale up' to influence higher levels, while national accountability reforms do not automatically 'scale down' to subnational and local levels (Fox 2007b). Note that these two propositions involve different ways of understanding scale – the first involves *how much* accountability is generated, the second involves *where* it is generated.[57]

SAcc strategies need to address the *'squeezing the balloon'* problem.

The targets of citizen oversight may well adapt by reconfiguring their corruption or diverting advocacy attention to other agencies or levels of government. The corrupt are flexible, so their corruption can be fungible. For example, in some large-scale community oversight programs, like India's social audits or Indonesia's KDP, it appears that corrupt officials respond by inventing new and less visible ways to divert funds, shifting from wage theft to manipulation of materials billing (e.g., Shankar 2010, Olken 2009). Indeed, neither of these very large-scale national social accountability programs do much to bolster voice with teeth, in the form of official willingness and capacity to sanction corrupt officials from above. Moreover, if citizen oversight efforts only address local, front-line service providers, this leaves out the rest of the "supply chain" of governance.[58] Program monitoring that is partial or exclusively local in scope may well manage to change the *shape* of the "corruption market," but not necessarily its *size* (the amount of leakage).[59]

Civil society oversight needs *vertical integration*

The premise here is that corruption and social exclusion are produced by vertically integrated power structures. Insofar as multiple links in the chain of governance facilitate the deflection of civil society oversight and advocacy, effective responses require parallel processes that are also vertically integrated.[60] Vertical integration of local, regional and national civil society oversight can begin to mitigate the "squeezing the balloon" problem. Yet there are often missing links between local community voice and national citizen policy/oversight. Given the often well-coordinated coalitions between *anti*-accountability actors across scale, vertically integrated civil society monitoring and advocacy is likely to be only as strong as the weakest link in its chain. Clearly, this is a tall order, though examples may be more numerous than the literature

on development policy and service delivery suggests. The impact evaluation literature has not addressed vertical integration, but in practice, CSOs around the world have extensive track records with vertically integrated/horizontally broad oversight and advocacy strategies - in the field of election monitoring, for example. Overall, institutional analysis of the density and dynamics of the local-national linkages that ground civil society advocacy campaigns in the global South is relatively rare. Indeed, after two decades of extensive research on local-global civil society relationships, scholars are still in the relatively early stages of "bringing the national back in."[61]

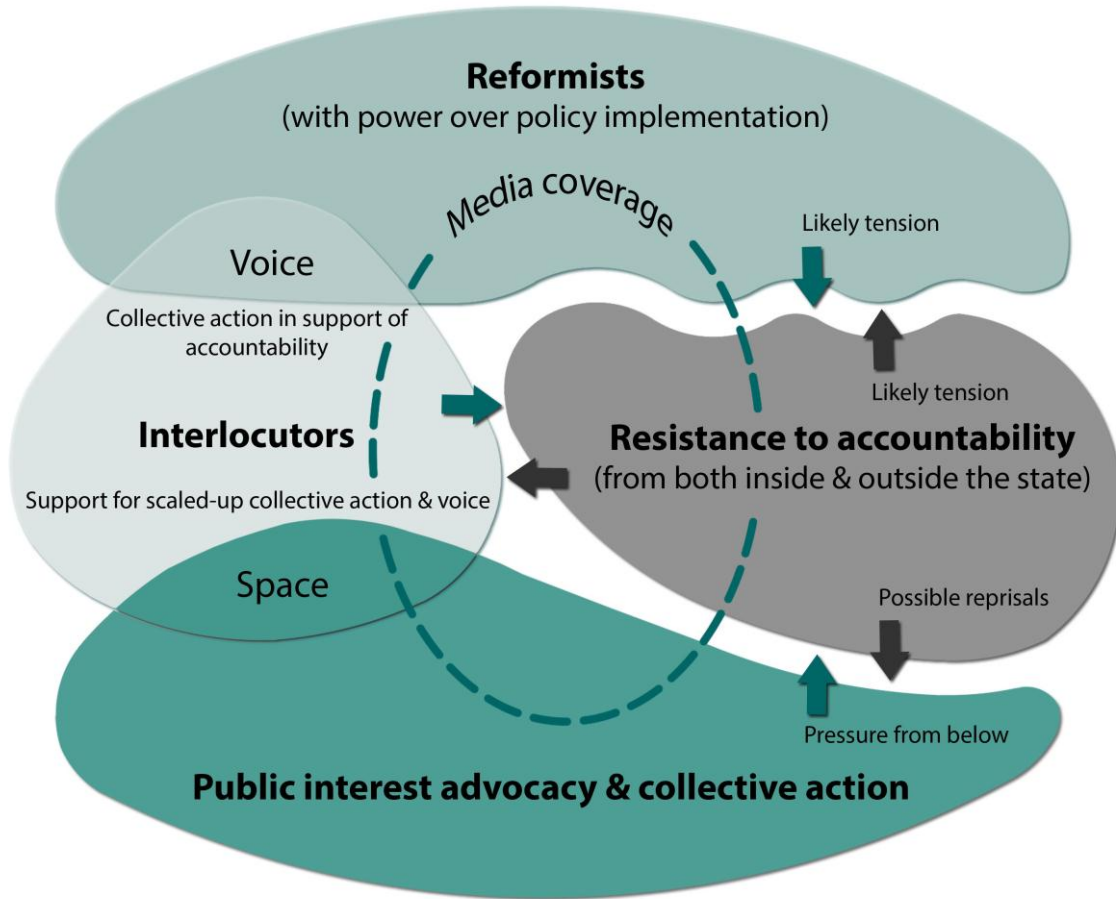## Sandwich strategies can shift power with *state-society synergy*.

This proposition is grounded in the "state-society synergy" conceptual framework for understanding institutional change (Evans 1996).[62] This process of mutual empowerment across the state-society divide is also called "co-production" or "co-governance" (Ostrom 1996, Ackerman 2004). The specific theory of change here is that the construction of accountability is driven by coalitions of pro-accountability forces that bridge the state-society divide – acting to offset anti-accountability forces that are also often linked across the state-society divide. The term "sandwich strategy" is shorthand for these coordinated coalitions among pro-accountability actors embedded in both state and society (Fox 1992). [63]

The sandwich strategy's point of departure is that anti-accountability forces, deeply embedded in both state and society, are often stronger than pro-accountability forces. To break these "low-accountability traps," resistance is likely and therefore conflict should be both expected and necessary – as indicated in Figure 3. While initial opportunities for change are necessarily context-driven and can be created either from society or from the state, the main determinant of a subsequent pro-accountability power shift is whether or not pro-change actors in one domain can empower the others – thereby triggering a virtuous circle.[64] In this scenario of mutual empowerment -- as illustrated in Figure 3 -- reformists within the state need to have actual capacity to deliver to their societal counterparts, by providing tangible support and the political space necessary to provide some degree of protection from the likely reprisals from vested interests.

Figure 3:

The Sandwich Strategy
Opening From Above Meets Mobilization from Below

Reformists
(with power over policy implementation)

Media coverage

Voice

Collective action in support of accountability

Likely tension

Likely tension

Interlocutors

Resistance to accountability
(from both inside & outside the state)

Support for scaled-up collective action & voice

Space

Possible reprisals

Public interest advocacy & collective action

Pressure from below

Source: Revised version of diagrams in Fox (1992: 220).

This process of openings from above led by reform champions that meet collective action from below represents one only of many possible strategic approaches, using the term in the sense described above. Many other kinds of accountability campaigns are clearly led by pressure from below, which may or may not find and empower counterparts within the state.

Because context matters, the subnational comparative method is necessary to capture variation

The comparative method has a great deal to offer the "what works, and why" research agenda, but it has been persistently crowded out by the dominant qualitative-

quantitative debate (Fox 2013). In the emerging field of accountability studies, few analysts recognize that the comparative method is a broad logic of inquiry within which quantitative and qualitative approaches are both sets of tools whose relevance and relative strengths depend on the question. Among those who do use the comparative method, nation-states are often the main unit of analysis. Yet the study of SAcc requires more nuanced approaches that can address their inherent uneven-ness *within* states and societies. In practice, any large-scale change initiative is likely to unfold in diverse ways across districts, provinces and sectors. Empirically, the subnational comparative method can reveal patterns of variation that otherwise would be hidden by homogenizing national averages. Analytically, this approach allows researchers to hold many key contextual factors constant, which can help to highlight the impacts of variation in specific institutional change strategies (Snyder 2001).

CONCLUSIONS

This study reconsidered the empirical evidence through new conceptual lenses, in order to transcend the impasse associated with the notion of "mixed results" and to inform more strategic approaches to social accountability. The main elements of the argument include:

First, the SAcc umbrella of diverse citizen-state engagement interfaces involves two qualitatively distinct sets of approaches: tactical and strategic. The impact evaluation evidence indicates that while the tactical approach has led to mixed results, strategic approaches are more promising. Tactical approaches are bounded, localized and information-led – yet information alone often turns out to be insufficient. More innovation, experimentation and comparative analysis will help to determine what *kinds* of information are most actionable for pro-accountability stakeholders, as well as the channels for dissemination that can motivate collective action, empower allies and weaken vested interests.

Strategic approaches to SAcc, in contrast, bolster enabling environments for collective action, scale up citizen engagement beyond the local arena and attempt to bolster governmental capacity to respond to voice. Yet so far, both SAcc advocates and skeptics have tended to assume that citizen voice, by itself, is supposed to be able to do the work of the state's own horizontal accountability institutions. Few voice-led initiatives are well-coordinated with relevant public sector reforms that encourage government responsiveness (i.e., audit/anti-corruption investigative bodies, information access reforms, ombudsman, access to courts, etc.). At the same time, ICT-led SAcc initiatives are increasingly framed in terms of "closing the feedback loop" – in other words, getting institutions to listen to citizen voice. Yet in practice, this institutional response capacity often remains elusive and feedback loops rarely close.

Second, now that the SAcc field has generated a substantial body of practice, this is a timely moment to take stock. This exercise in rethinking the impact evaluation evidence suggests that the SAcc approach has reached an "early middle stage." Yet while research lags significantly behind practice, theoretical and conceptual work lags even further behind research. This study concludes with a series of grounded conceptual propositions intended to inform higher-impact SAcc strategies – with an emphasis on the potential synergy between "voice" and "teeth" – with the latter defined as governmental capacity to respond to voice.

Third, both practical and analytical work on SAcc needs to take scale into account. When voice spreads horizontally, the excluded can gain representation. When voice is projected vertically, it can gain clout. When authorities listen, they can both build trust and create incentives for more voice. Yet this process is easier said than done, and the dynamics that drive it will not be well-understood if mainstream development agencies continue to treat "government failure" as a strictly local, "end-of-the-pipe" problem.[65] This leads to the case for combining vertical integration with the horizontal spread of civil society oversight and advocacy capacity. This combination of scaling up with "scaling across" can make possible the combination of voice with representation that is crucial for significantly changing the terms of engagement between excluded citizens and the state.

What does this emphasis on scale have to do with the vast and growing on-going array of SAcc initiatives around the world? At the local level, many small-scale pilots may be ready for more scaling up and horizontal expansion – though only fine-grained contextual analysis can determine which ones, when and how. Already-existing large-scale governmental SAcc reforms need more support from *other* governance reforms in order to both broaden and deepen the openings they have created – for example, in the cases of India's social audits in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Program and the community participation in Indonesia's PNPM rural development program. Both innovative reform initiatives potentially reach tens of millions of people, both build in openings for voice for the poorest yet state capacity to respond remains limited, uneven and contested, and grassroots stakeholders have yet to scale up their monitoring capacity and gain a seat at the table.

To sum up, the challenge facing social accountability strategies is how to break low-accountability traps by triggering virtuous circles in which enabling environments embolden citizens to exercise voice, which in turn can trigger and empower reforms, which can then encourage more voice. That is, ***voice needs teeth to have bite – but teeth may not bite without voice.***

Endnotes

[1] Some political theorists have also argued persuasively that elections – usually considered *the* public accountability mechanism par excellence – are actually quite blunt instruments for holding authority accountable, especially since voters are often more prospective than retrospective in their behavior (Przeworski, Stokes and Manin, 1999). See also Peruzzotti and Smulovitz (2006).

[2] So far, social accountability efforts focused on the public and private sectors have evolved independently of each other, with development policymakers focused almost exclusively on the public sector. Yet the first of the "social accountability's" 980,000 google hits is Social Accountability International, which focuses on improving private sector labor standards and the human rights of workers. This study will focus on the public sector application of the term, though for a brief discussion of the dynamics of the challenges involved in assessing the impacts of voluntary international multi-stakeholder initiatives, see Fox (2013). In the early 1990s, the multilateral development banks' own safeguard policies included pioneering social accountability processes in their environmental impact assessment and indigenous peoples policies, as well as the World Bank's Inspection Panel (Fox and Brown 1998).

[3] This was a key conclusion of an agenda-setting body of research commissioned by the Transparency and Accountability Initiative (a donor consortium) and completed by the Institute of Development Studies in 2010 (McGee and Gaventa 2010, Gaventa and McGee 2013, Joshi 2013a, Carlitz 2013, Mejía Acosta 2013). While the total amount of funding for transparency and accountability work in the global South is difficult to measure, the funders in TAI alone invest approximately US$200 million per year (primarily private foundations and DfID). This includes broader open government work and does not include spending by national governments, municipal participatory budgeting, the World Bank, most bilateral development agencies, or international CSOs with large SAcc programs, such as CARE and World Vision International.

[4] Most of the impact evaluations discussed here are either field experiments or large N quantitative studies, in order to be able to compare "apples to apples" in terms of methodology.

[5] This analysis was informed by interviews with 15 World Bank staff and consultants involved in SAcc and open government agendas.

[6] The term "theory of change" is used here by convention, but as Tiago Peixoto points out, "hypothesis" is the more precise term (2014).

[7] Though the 2004 WDR did not use the term "social accountability," its focus was on the local citizen-state interface.

[8] For example, if the P-A approach is applied to efforts to promote parent voice to improve schools, then the teachers are ostensibly the agents and they face a chain of formal principals, including the elected officials who designate education authorities, the principals and head teachers who oversee the teachers directly – as well as the parents who make claims on the school, and often the external political actors that may influence the hiring and firing of teachers. These multiple principals may have competing interests. The conventional P-A approach frames the challenge in terms of how principals can create incentives to influence

agents' behavior and encourage compliance, but it has difficulty accounting for what happens when multiple principals have conflicting goals (see Whitford 2005, however).

9 To address the World Bank's internal separation of supply and demand for governance reform, its current restructuring brings these units together in a new Governance Global Practice.

10 Key studies include Paul (1992), Goetz and Jenkins (2001), Avritzer (2002), Ackerman (2005) and Isunza (2006). In addition, Mexico's multi-sectoral National Solidarity Program (1989-1994) included core elements of state-society "co-responsibility," with mixed results (Cornelius, Craig and Fox 1994). Ackerman's institutional analysis provides a broad overview of diagonal accountability experiences as of the early 2000s (2005).

11 For a review of a related body of evaluations of information-led initiatives from a different perspective, see Kossack and Fung (2014).

12 As a senior biomedical scientist with extensive experience with the process of translating scientific evidence into viable medicines put it, "The key to whether such proof is accepted as fact requires a precise definition of the concept being tested and an applicable test setting or system in which the principle is predicted to give a positive result if true." Paul Liebowitz, former director of biotechnology at Schering (email communication, March 26, 2014).

13 Woolcock addresses this external validity issue in the context of the question of the generalizability of results from field experiments with development interventions (2013).

14 The dichotomous framing of the subtitle of Mansuri and Rao's meta-analysis – "does participation work?" – contributed to a contentious internal debate about the study within the World Bank (2013).

15 For an example of different perspectives on the appropriate criteria for assessing impacts, consider the experience with social audits in India's rural employment program in the state of Andhra Pradesh. A statistical study found that 87% of theft amounts had not been recovered, as an part of overall assessment of modest impacts (Afridi and Iversen 2013). Yet from the point of view of one of the senior state managers in charge of promoting the social audits, with, "a comparative perspective they would realize that recovering Rs.100 of stolen money would be considered an enormous success in most other Indian states and indeed in much of the developing world. Saying that recovering 13% of the money is trivial means living in a fairy tale" (Sowmya Kidambi, email communication, Feb. 22, 2014). She also stressed that - in contrast to other Indian states - grassroots activists involved in promoting information requests regarding the rural employment program have not been murdered.

16 The scope of the SAcc-related impact evaluation literature is uneven, insofar as it focuses primarily on a narrow subset of SAcc tools -- mainly local information dissemination and community oversight efforts. There is less evidence on the impacts of grievance redress mechanisms or scaled-up citizen policy monitoring, for example. Moreover, many of the impact evaluations are limited to the study of pilots. Few address already-existing, nationally scaled-up SAcc strategies (e.g., social audits in India, participatory budgeting in Brazil, community food

councils in Mexico). Olken's study of Indonesia's large-scale KDP program is a notable exception (2007).

[17] The same author later showed that because local authorities were skilled at hiding their corruption, the community-based monitoring lacked adequate project oversight capacity (Olken 2009) – at least until the roads may have washed away in the next rainy season. This underscores the distinction between community monitoring that detected problems and then lacked influence, versus community monitoring that lacked the capacity to detect problems in the first place.

[18] Though the research experiment did not find any criminal sanctions, former World Bank liaison with KDP, Scott Guggenheim, reports that "KDP has by now helped incarcerate more than 72 corrupt officials – more than the entire World Bank Integrity office has globally" (email communication, May 18, 2014).

[19] Scott Guggenheim (email communication, Jakarta, Feb. 3, 2014). He also notes that the field experiment was bolstered by the shock effect of the first-ever promise of audits and their dissemination. This effect may have been temporary, insofar as local authorities subsequently learned that the audits were rarely backed up by official sanctions. In addition, the auditors themselves – who previously rarely visited the villages - were especially diligent because the researcher directed the field experiment. As a result, "the government auditors for the first time got paid on time, they received their travel allowances, they were supervised in the field, and somebody checked their work."

[20] Scott Guggenhiem (Jakarta, email communication, Jakarta, April 21, 2014).

[21] Audrey Sacks, World Bank (Jakarta, email communication, January 26, 2014).

[22] On the issue of conflict of interest when head teachers monitor their colleagues, see Barr and Zeitlin (2011).

[23] A recent large-scale pilot community monitoring project covering 9 Indian states confirmed this pattern, finding that the institutional channels for parent involvement in school oversight and management did not actually operate anywhere (CPR 2014: 30).

[24] As the paper's CSO co-author concluded: "If people do not feel that the school is "their" school or the "village" school, then their engagement is also low no matter how much information you give them" (Rukmini Banerji, email communication, Pratham, March 4, 2014).

[25] The author pointed this out to World Bank Mexico country staff in 1996, noting that their support for decentralized rural municipal funding – though positive in the state of Oaxaca - was simultaneously bolstering authoritarian local governments in states like Chiapas (Fox 1997).

[26] Kossack and Fung add an important distinction - between those information-led interventions that offer citizens data about public service performance, vs those that involve indicators that specifically allow citizens to compare their services with others (2014). In addition, Loewenstein, Sunstein and Golman bring the insights of behavioral economics to the analysis of the impacts of information disclosure (2014).

[27] The term "enabling environment" is rarely defined with precision. For the purposes of this paper, the term refers to actions by external allies that have two characteristics. First, they reduce the actual and perceived risks and costs often inherent in collective action. Second, they bolster the actual and perceived efficacy of collective action by increasing the likelihood and/or degree of positive institutional response. Thanks to Tiago Peixoto for encouraging a clear definition of the term. For a study that operationalizes enabling environment by documenting the actual degree of application of World Bank safeguard policies in the context of ten rural development projects, see Fox and Gershman (2000).

[28] On specifically democratic decentralization, see, among others Ribot (2002), Ribot and Larson (2005) and Fox (2007b).

[29] On "government failure," a concept analogous to "market failure," see Mansuri and Rao (2013) and Devarajan, Khemani and Walton (2014).

[30] The research literature on SAcc initiatives in the health sector is growing. See Boydell and Keesbury (2014), Freedman and Schaaf (2013) and Hecht et al (2014).

[31] For an application of the concept of causal chains to SAcc, see Joshi (2013).

[32] The one exception is a sentence in a later article, which reported that of the half of the schools that did not receive their grant after the information campaign, "47% complained or protested to some formal or informal authority that could transmit the complaints onwards or act on them" (Reinikka and Svennson 2011: 959). Their causal model explicitly assumes that because information makes protest possible, it is the access rather than actual collective action that mattered: "since both an actual protest and the threat of voice may have discouraged the local political elite from diverting resources intended for the schools, in equilibrium, there is no reason to believe that the incidence of voice and local diversion of funds should be correlated" (2011: 959). It is not clear whether this assumption was tested.

[33] Participatory budgeting can be considered to be a case of social accountability insofar as it includes processes to monitor and encourage governmental responses to citizen input.

[34] The dynamics of participation and impact of PB vary widely, both within Brazil and cross-nationally (e.g., Baiocchi, Heller and Kunrach Silva 2013, Goldfrank 2011, Wampler 2007). The international replication of Brazilian-style participatory budgeting is remarkable, though key elements are often lost in translation (Ganuza and Baiocchi 2012, Goldfrank 2011). Independently, very participatory budgeting strategies were also pursued on a large scale by Kerala's decentralized planning campaign (Heller, Harilal and Chaudhuri (2007) and for generations in Oaxaca's indigenous villages (Díaz-Cayeros, Magaloni and Ruiz-Euler 2014, Fox and Aranda 1996). For one review of the vast PB literature, see Speer (2012).

[35] According to Walter Flores, a Guatemalan CSO health policy advocate and convener of the international network Community of Practitioners for Social Accountability in Health, Björkman and Svensson's study "is the most influential, but at the same time it has created confusion because [in most of Latin, Africa and Asia where we work] the interaction between communities and service providers is… often tense because of the power relationship. The

study treats this interaction as a given, it is assumed that all the service providers are willing to dialogue and interact with the communities… [In addition,] in this experiment the health services were able to count on the resources they needed (medicines, staff, equipment)…" (Centro de Estudios para la Equidad y Gobernanza en los Sistemas de Salud, Guatemala, email communication, April 22, 2014, translation by the author).

[36] Key conceptual contributions to the study of frontline service workers include Lipsky's focus on "street-level bureaucrats" as decision-makers (1980), as well as Long's emphasis on state-society interfaces (1984) and the incentive-based frameworks in the 2004 World Development Report (World Bank 2003).

[37] Yamini Aiyar, of India's Accountability Initiative, suggests the hypothesis that "the RTI was tactically designed to appeal to the tools of the bureaucracy -- files and paper work. The [RTI] movement was careful to speak the language of the bureaucracy in its definition of transparency and in designing the mechanisms through which to obtain transparency. So when you file an RTI, the government has to open a "file" and once files are opened, a response becomes necessary (even if it is half baked, or is rejected, as is often the case). This is one of the greatest assets of the RTI but also its limitation in that it allows government to set limits on what makes for "transparency"-- so transparency is about responding to applications rather than proactively disclosing information. It also serves to reinforce the use of the very bureaucratic tools that enable the bureaucracy to be unresponsive in the first place… [This] reinforces… the importance of process-tracing and ethnography to study social accountability" (email communication, June 29, 2014).

[38] Thanks to Anu Joshi for suggesting that these definitions be more explicit, and to Jeff Unsicker for feedback.

[39] This focus on actionable information and user perceptions draws from Fung, Graham and Weil's compelling analysis of targeted transparency (2007).

[40] For another example of weak information treatment, consider a field experiment that tested the impact of dissemination of non-partisan information about municipal corruption immediately before elections in Mexico. The main impact was a very modest decrease in voter turnout. The study reported that it tested information made public about "rampant political corruption" (Chong et al 2011). The experiment's actual message about corruption, however, consisted of a small pie chart on a flyer that indicated, amidst many other larger figures about municipal spending, the percentage of municipal spending that "did not comply with the rules" (translation by the author). The study does not demonstrate that residents were likely to interpret this rather muted statement and subtle data visualization as clear evidence of "rampant corruption."

[41] This last point underscores two of the many limitations of the vaccine analogy mentioned above. First, vaccines need to be consistent, whereas SAcc efforts may vary. Second, when vaccines work, they work by themselves – in contrast to most SAcc initiatives, whose effectiveness may depend on complementary governance reforms.

[42] Participatory budgeting is the SAcc approach that has been analyzed in the greatest detail across context, including extensive subnational and cross-national comparative scholarly

research (e.g., Baocchi, Heller and Silva (2011), Wampler (2007) and Goldfrank (2011), among others. More generally, see Gaventa and McGee (2010), Joshi (2014) and O'Meally (2013) for the most comprehensive frameworks so far for understanding contextual dynamics.

[43] For an application of P-A theory that seeks to address the limiting conditions under which it can account for multiple principals - in the case of explaining World Bank environmental reforms - see Neilson and Tierney (2003).

[44] This methodological requirement also conflicts with the practitioner impulse to learn by doing, which involves making changes in real time in respond to feedback about what is and is not working (e.g., Hall, Menzies and Woolcock 2014).

[45] Development practitioners are increasingly interested in feedback mechanisms, an approach that focuses on projecting voice upwards. The term "feedback" implicitly leaves out two key questions - who sets the agenda that feedback is supposed to respond to, and whether and how voice can actually influence institutional behavior. Many ICT advocates expect that the aggregation of voices makes them hard to ignore, but that remains an open empirical question. The term "closing the feedback loop" only begins to address these questions (e.g., Gigler and Baivur 2014). Integrity Action's effort to document institutional response with context-specific "fix-it rates" is a step in this direction (Galtung 2013).

[46] As Rosie McGee put it: "Aggregation can just be about numbers and scale, and is technical. Representation implies mediation and framing, and is political" (Institute for Development Studies, email communication, June 18, 2014).

[47] On the ebbs and flows of leadership accountability within scaled-up mass membership organizations, see Fox (2007b).

[48] In the context of a panel discussion of CARE's community health scorecard initiative in Malawi, for example, one of the government officials involved recognized: "Before the community scorecard, you could not bring the two types of people together [community and government health providers]. Because as community members they have a feeling that if they talk ill of the health providers... [and then] they happen to be sick, go to the facility, they will be given an injection to kill them... So the community scorecard has helped to improve feedback and accountability loops between providers and users. It has linked community scorecard findings with internal management and incentive systems. It has strengthened citizen voices and ... also empowered service users to claim responsibility, to assume community ownership." (Diana Khonje, Director, Reproductive Health Unit, Malawi Ministry of Health, presentation at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 5, 2014).

[49] The Indian press has reported at least 41 cases of deaths of information requesters. Thanks to Suchi Pande for data collection (Rajasthan, India, email communication, June 23, 2014).

[50] For an exception, see Ackerman (2005).

[51] Tilly defines rights as "enforceable claims on the state" (1998, pp. 56–57). This approach is much more tangible than widespread normative approaches to the notion of rights.

[52] See Blair (2011) for an overview of the dynamics of state uptake of social accountability approaches.

[53] For example, according to Holloway's overview of a diverse array of grassroots social accountability initiatives in Nepal, there was little "evidence of citizens demanding restitution for money stolen from them, or a desire to take the cases to the courts. Citizens, instead, were enthusiastic to inform the local government officials that:
a. They now knew what their rights and entitlements were
b. They now knew that they had been robbed of their rights and entitlements
c. They did not intend to let this happen again
d. They were putting the local government officials on notice that they would be watching for future infringements" (2013: 11).

[54] For example, if one wants to understand why teacher absenteeism rates may be very high in a given context, then a tactical approach to SAcc would focus on monitoring their behavior and then applying sanctions for non-compliance and/or incentives for positive performance. If one took a strategic approach, then one would also ask who decides which teachers to hire in the first place, based on what criteria – and one may find that political patronage at higher levels of the system plays a major role. When ghost nurses or teachers have political backing, their capacity to resist local parent or NGO oversight is likely to be very high. This is the implication of Banerjee, Glennerster and Duplo (2008). On the clientelistic politicization of a common SAcc approach, community-managed schools, see also Altschuler (2013).

[55] For example, Bangalore's famed Citizen Report Cards had their most significant impact on public sector performance only after a responsive Chief Minister was elected – coordinating teeth with voice (Paul 2006). This issue underscores one of the missing links in the discussion of the "short route" to accountability – it often needs the "long route" of accountable elected authorities to work. On e-governance initiatives in Bangalore, see Ranganathan (2012).

[56] Robert Putnam made a similar observation about social capital (1993).

[57] Thanks to Rosie McGee for suggesting this clarification (Institute for Development Studies, email communication, June 18, 2014).

[58] At the World Bank, social accountability practitioners have recognized the dynamics of scale more than most researchers. See Agarwal, Heltberg and Diachok (2009) for a useful overview of scaling up efforts.

[59] See Zimmerman (2014) for extensive theoretical and empirical analysis of the dynamics of corruption displacement effects.

[60] For the initial formulation, developed in the context of independent CSO monitoring of World Bank projects, see Fox (2001). For the International Budget Partnership''s related concept of "stratified advocacy," see Garza (2013). Specific examples of fully vertically integrated CSO oversight of public service delivery include the work of SEND-Ghana (Dogbe and Kwabena-Adade 2012), Textbook Count in the Philippines (Guerzovich and Rosenzweig 2013), and the work of the Slum/Shackdwellers International (d'Cruz et al 2014), as well as a national education monitoring pilot in India that had federal government backing (CPR 2014).

[61] See, for example, Brown and Fox (1998), Gaventa and McGee (2010), Gaventa and Barrett (2012), among others. The political sociology concept of "scale shift" as a social movement strategy is very relevant (e.g., Tarrow 2010).

[62] Relevant work on state-society synergy includes, among others: Ostrom (1996), Evans (1996), Fox (1992, 1996, 2004, 2007), Tendler (1997), Goetz and Jenkins (2001), Heller (2001), Borras (2001), Avritzer (2002), Ackerman (2004), Houtzager and Moore (2005), Isunza Vera and Olvera (2006), Abers and Keck (2009), Gaventa and McGee (2010), Baiocchi, Heller and Silva (2011), DRC (2011), Gaventa and Barrett (2012), Tembo (2013), O'Meally (2013), Schommer et al (2013).

[63] The sandwich strategy would describe two of the largest-scale SAcc strategies now under way in the global South, Indonesia's PNPM rural village development program (formerly known as KDP) and India's National Employment Guarantee Program social audits in the state of Andhra Pradesh (Guggenheim 2006, Friedman 2013, Aiyar, Kapoor Mehta and Mehta 2013, Maiorani 2014). Mexico's Community Food Councils also pursued this strategy for almost three decades (Fox 1992, 2007b), and their broad-based, vertically integrated social oversight constituencies survived for many years. The councils' autonomy eventually eroded after the purge of their allies within the state, reducing their scope to a few regional enclaves.

[64] India's pilot community monitoring of new children's rights reforms pursued this virtuous circle approach (CPR 2014). For a rare study of anti-corruption agency efforts that analyzes how they become empowered through an implicit lens of state-society synergy, see Kuris (2014).

[65] The environmental policy metaphor of "end-of-the-pipe" refers to the difference between "source reduction" - reducing the use and emissions of toxics - vs trying to clean up the pollution after it has been generated – as in the case of putting scrubbers on smokestacks. This is analogous to the medical distinction between treating the symptoms vs. the disease. In SAcc terms, for example, this would point to the difference between monitoring service providers' absenteeism in order to sanction non-compliance, vs transforming service providers' relationships with the community they are supposed to serve – as well as changing the hiring, training and firing process in order to hire motivated service providers in the first place.

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