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Gaining State Support for Social Accountability

Harry Blair

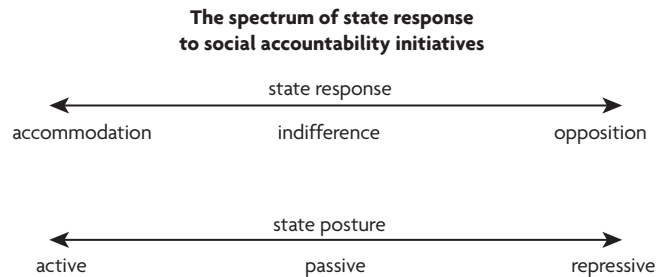
If social accountability is to be successful in enabling ordinary citizens and civil society organizations to hold public power holders responsible for their actions,¹ then the state must support—actively or passively—the mechanisms to be used in exacting it.² This chapter will explore the sources of that support and what those sources require to underpin the social accountability mechanisms (SAMs) that depend on them. I will argue that the types of state support vary across a whole spectrum from intensely active to extremely reluctant, covering a wide range of mechanisms, all of which foster social accountability in some fashion. Accordingly, international donor agencies and programmers face a great variety of choices in selecting particular mechanisms to assist.

The chapter begins with a brief glance at the entire spectrum of state response to citizen demands for social accountability, which range from enthusiastic support to repressive opposition. I then zero in on the more positive part of that spectrum in detail and look at various degrees of positive support with examples. The following section, focusing on the sources of state support, asks what induces the state to respond to SAMs. The final part offers a brief look at several patterns emerging from the analysis.

The Spectrum of State Response

Citizens asking the state for social accountability can be met with a variety of responses, as indicated in figure 4.1. At the most positive extreme, a city mayor might respond with such enthusiasm to a citizen delegation demanding better sewage and garbage removal that he or she sets up an elected

Figure 4.1. The Spectrum of State Response to Social Accountability Initiatives



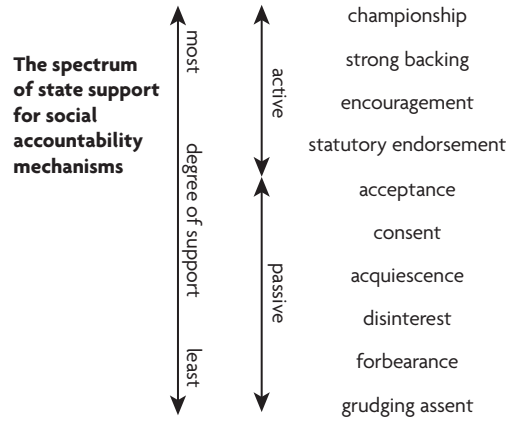
Source: Author.

board to superintend city sanitation services with powers to sanction inadequate performance. At the most negative extreme, a state executive might respond to public demonstrations seeking greater government accountability by bringing in military troops to fire on the demonstrators.³ Between these two opposites of embracing and suppressing lies a neutral zone of indifference, in which the state neither encourages nor discourages mechanisms through which citizens exercise accountability. For example, a government might allow newspapers to publish whatever they wished, while neither supporting them (such as by subsidizing their delivery by mail) or opposing them (such as through censorship). Another way to look at these three responses would be to consider them as state postures that are active, passive, and repressive, as shown in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.2 provides a more finely grained depiction of the left two-thirds of the spectrum in figure 4.1, as it turns the axis on its side to give a greater sense of the rank ordering from most to least degree of support. In addition, the state's support for SAMs is divided into active (indicating positive action of some sort on the part of the state) and passive (in which the state essentially takes no action to support or oppose citizen efforts to exercise accountability). The resulting figure with its attempted rank ordering then hopefully matches up with the mechanisms and examples shown in table 4.1.⁴

In table 4.1, I have tried to sort out 15 mechanisms for exercising social accountability by placing them in a descending rank order according to the degree of state support they receive. For each mechanism is shown its "source of authority" (how it got introduced to the political system), the essential requirements for its success (what it will take for it to function successfully as a SAM), whether it requires significant state financing, and whether it operates at a national or local level. A capsule discussion of each mechanism follows, progressing by the levels shown in Table 4.1, beginning with mechanisms getting the most active state support and proceeding to those receiving the most passive support. The better known SAMs, such as elections or civil society, will be just presented abstractly, and brief examples will be provided for those that are likely to be less familiar.

Figure 4.2. The Spectrum of State Support for Social Accountability Mechanisms



Source: Author.

When the State Takes an Active Posture

State as champion: A justifiably well-documented initiative, *participatory budgeting* (PB), originated during the early 1990s in the southeastern Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, under the leadership of its mayor at the time, Olívio Dutra. In the PB process, annual neighborhood meetings determine municipal investment priorities and elect delegates to district meetings that consolidate the proposals and feed them into a city-wide system that through a transparent allocation algorithm translates them into actual investments. District delegates elected to a city-level council consolidate the budget and monitor its implementation, at which point the next year’s cycle begins. Widely adopted in Brazil and numerous other countries, PB has transformed a patron-client structure in which upward citizen loyalty was traded for top-down political largesse into one based around citizen priorities as its main input into budgetary decision making.⁵ The key to PB’s success was the leadership and commitment provided by Mayor Dutra and his successors, without which it would surely have quickly failed.

Decentralization of state authority: Decentralization is a second mechanism in which the state must play an ongoing role as champion for reform to ensure any success. Real devolution of authority can bring decision making and accountability closer to affected citizens and, by directing investments where they are most needed, act as a powerful force for poverty alleviation. Intruding as they do into the basic structure of a country’s governance, decentralization initiatives require legislative (perhaps even constitutional) action and executive implementation. Moreover, in many countries, they also require displacing parliamentarians accustomed to deploying central expenditures as patronage tools in their constituencies and bypassing bureaucrats habituated to siphoning off a large portion of central funds passing through their hands on the way

A better version of this chart appears on the next page.

Table 4.1. Social Accountability Mechanisms and Their Origins

State posture	Mode of state support	Mechanism	Source of authority	Requirements for success	State financing?	National/Local	
Most → Active ← Least	Championshship	Participatory budgeting (Porto Alegre, Brazil)	Executive leadership	Executive commitment	Y	L	
	Strong backing	Decentralization program (many examples)	Legislative act + implementation	Political will	Y	L	
		Ombudsman (Philippines)	Legislative act + implementation	Ombudsman authority to redress	Y	N	
	Encouragement	Statutory oversight board (Vigilance Committees, Bolivia)	Executive leadership + legislative act	Citizen competence, executive commitment	Y	L	
		Citizen review board (Rationing Committee, Mumbai)	Executive leadership + citizen activism	Citizen competence, executive cooperation	N	L	
		Citizen report cards (Bangalore, India)	Civil society	Citizen competence, executive responsiveness	N	L	
	Statutory endorsement	Elections (many examples)	Constitution	Outside monitoring	Y	L	
		Legislative oversight (African parliaments)	Constitution	Legislative autonomy + abandoning patronage orientation	Y	N	
	Least → Passive ← Most	Acceptance	Civil society advocacy & lobbying (many cases)	Openness to civil society	Genuine pluralism & competition	N	N or L
		Consent	Public interest law suits (Delhi air pollution case)	Constitution	Independent judiciary	N	N
Media (many cases)			Constitution	Executive restraint	N	N	
Disinterest		Privatization (market exercises accountability—many cases)	Executive decision and/or legislative act	Market competition	N	N	
		Human rights organizations (Amnesty Intl; Human Rights Watch)	International pressure	Executive restraint + independent media	N	N	
Grudging assent		Corruption report card (Mymensingh, Bangladesh)	Civil society activism	Executive restraint	N	L	
		Demonstrations (Estrada ouster; Orange Revolution)	Citizen movements	Executive restraint	N	N or L	

Source: Author

Social accountability mechanisms and their origins

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		Public interest law suits (Delhi air pollution case)	Constitution	Independent judiciary	N	N
Acquiescence	Media (many cases)	Constitution	Executive restraint	N	N	
	Privatization (market exercises accountability – many cases)	Executive decision and/or legislative act	Market competition	N	N	
Disinterest	Human rights organizations (Amnesty Intl; Human Rights Watch)	International pressure	Executive restraint + independent media	N	N	
	Corruption report card (Mymensingh, Bangladesh)	Civil society activism	Executive restraint	N	L	
Grudging assent	Demonstrations ++ (Estrada ouster, Orange Revolution)	Citizen movements	Executive restraint	N	N or L	

Mode of state support



Championship

Strong backing

Encouragement

Stat endorsement

Acceptance

Consent

Acquiescence

Disinterest

Forbearance

Grudging assent

down to lower levels. Thus it is not surprising that many decentralization initiatives founder and wither as they run up against these elements. Equally daunting, when authority really does pass downward, local elites may simply seize control of the devolved power and use it to their own advantage. In short, an immense political will is needed to make decentralization succeed.⁶

State providing strong backing: Many countries have *ombudsman* institutions, which can act as powerful mechanisms for social accountability.⁷ One particularly impressive example comes from the Philippines, where the ombudsman can investigate and prosecute any public official for malfeasance, whether on a complaint or acting on his own accord, and can mandate any official to perform any legal act or prevent any illegal one (TAN 2002). Theoretically, the ombudsman's scope extends even to the president of the country. More typical is the Croatian ombudsman, who can report official misbehavior to the parliament and publicize findings to the media but cannot take any legal action against wrongdoers (Blair and others 2007). Clearly the ombudsman's scope of authority is key here. Also critical, however, is the support the state provides to his office and the integrity shown by the incumbent. Historically, the Philippine ombudsman office has been so starved of resources that it has become enfeebled, and occupants of the office have been tainted with serious charges of corruption and cronyism.⁸ The ombudsman can be powerful indeed as an engine of social accountability, but it needs both full authority and strong support from the state to be effective.

As part of its Popular Participation Law reforming local governments in the mid-1990s, Bolivia set up a *statutory oversight board* in each of its 311 municipalities. These *comités de vigilancia* (CVs or vigilance committees), whose members were selected from some 13,000 territorially determined traditional organizations (most often peasant associations), were intended to act as a check on the new elected municipal governments. The CVs were charged with preparing local investment plans, monitoring the elected council's implementation of investment, and lodging actionable complaints when they observed malfeasance. The law was pushed through by a president determined to enfranchise the country's majority indigenous population, who until then were largely excluded from governance. Although somewhat hobbled by lack of capacity for their new tasks, the councils and CVs did bring a significant measure of accountability to local governance in Bolivia.⁹

Citizen review boards: These can likewise be effective instruments when given strong state backing. All too often, citizen monitoring boards are captured by the institutions supposedly being monitored, but sometimes strong executive leadership and independently minded citizens can impose a degree of accountability. A good example comes from Mumbai, India, where in the early 1990s a nongovernmental organization (NGO) called Rationing Kriti Samiti (Rationing Action Committee) set up groups of local consumers to monitor shops in the public distribution system, which were widely reported to gouge on prices, stint on quality, and siphon off public food grain supplies

to private channels. Backed by the government bureaucrat then in charge of rationing, these vigilance committees were able to pressure shop owners to post prices publicly and offer samples for consumer inspection, while periodically reporting their findings to the city government.¹⁰

State encouragement: In 1994 the Public Affairs Centre, an NGO in Bangalore, India, launched a *Citizens Report Card* initiative, which surveyed some 1,140 households to assess their views of public service providers in such sectors as water and energy supply, transport, telephones, and hospitals. Not surprisingly, respondents voiced rather pessimistic opinions. A second survey in 1999 found matters improved, though less so than had been hoped. Municipal officials did take notice, however, and—especially after the second survey—undertook serious reforms to improve transparency and responsiveness in service provision. These efforts appeared to have paid off in a third survey taken in 2003, which showed among other things that citizen satisfaction with electricity provision had increased from 6 percent in 1994 to 94 percent nine years later. Similarly, satisfaction with water supply improved from 4 percent to 73 percent and with government hospitals from 25 percent to 73 percent.¹¹ The report card effort bears some similarities to the Mumbai ration shop initiative presented in the previous paragraph (for example, both were conceived and implemented by NGOs and involved no direct costs to the state), but in the Bangalore case the critical factor on the state's part was not executive leadership but rather state responsiveness to the report card findings. Thus although the state encouraged the experiment by being responsive to the first two reports, it did not actively support the Public Affairs Centre in its work.

Statutory endorsement: The ultimate accountability mechanism in a democracy, of course, is the genuinely contested national *election*, when the leaders and parties in power must receive judgment from the voters as to whether they should continue or be replaced by others.¹² The authority for elections does not emanate from executive leadership, legislative acts, or citizen activism, however, but rather from a country's constitution. Thus they occur whether the incumbent president/prime minister (who may fear losing at the polls) wants them or not, and whether political parties (which may lose majorities) or civil society groups (which may lose special preferences) are eager or not. The machinery of the state is required constitutionally to furnish all support necessary for elections to take place. In addition, especially in new democracies, outside monitoring is often needed to ensure that an election is truly "free and fair." Elections, however, are at best exceedingly crude mechanisms of accountability. Voters can give only the widest approval or disapproval, at most delivering a mandate on one or two broad issues, such as ending a war or rolling back a welfare state. To exercise accountability on anything more detailed requires other mechanisms.

Legislative oversight: This provides a horizontal check on the executive and offers many opportunities for exercising social accountability. Parliamentary

committees have statutory authority in many countries to investigate virtually any executive behavior and legislate corrective action if needed. For this kind of oversight to function, however, legislatures and legislators must move beyond the patronage orientation that presently characterizes so many of them.¹³ Politicians who see their main interest as nurturing neopatrimonial linkages rather than pursuing a larger public interest are unlikely to employ this powerful tool.

When the State Takes a Passive Posture

The mechanisms discussed so far all require some degree of positive state action to function, but numerous others rely on citizen activism of one sort or another, with the principal requirement for the state being that it passively permit these engines to work. Another way to look at the active/passive difference is that the active mechanisms count on the state exercising a *supply* function, whereas the passive ones depend on *demands* being made on the state.

State acceptance: Although *civil society advocacy* has been recognized as a fundamental component of democracy at least since Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, it cannot by definition be a state-sponsored activity.¹⁴ Civil society organizations do require acceptance by the state, however, which can amount to formal recognition/registration, special privileges (such as tax deduction status for donations), and in some cases even state financial support.¹⁵ But once these steps have been taken (or in the case of informal organizations, even in the absence of such measures), the principal role of the state is to be open to civil society's demands and to respond to its advocacy efforts, which comprise a huge range of activity, from requests for information to lobbying state officials and legislators to large demonstrations.

In the end, it is hard to overestimate the importance of civil society as a social accountability tool, for after elections it constitutes the main mechanism through which citizens hold the state to account for what it does and does not do. Equally important, whereas elections form a very blunt instrument for determining who will manage the state, civil society inputs can be as finely honed as the situation requires (for example, neighborhood citizens demanding that a town council repair the water distribution system in their part of town). But civil society does not form a social accountability tool just by existing, for it is all too easy for a small group of elite voices to dominate inputs to state decision making. To be effective, civil society must be genuinely pluralistic and competitive, so that all can participate.

State consent: Many legal systems, especially those in the common law tradition, allow *public interest lawsuits*, in which a citizen can bring legal action to compel the state to implement what it is statutorily required to do. In allowing such suits, the state has given its consent for citizens to launch efforts to demand accountability but otherwise does not assist them; the burden is on the

citizen to make a credible case that the state has not fulfilled what the law requires it to do. A good example comes from Delhi, India, where a small NGO consisting mainly of a very determined lawyer, fortified by an environmental think tank and a media eager to publicize stories of municipal malfeasance, brought suit against the city government to compel it to implement laws long on the books regarding air pollution. The group's efforts took more than five years, but eventually the national Supreme Court ordered the city to phase out leaded gasoline, require two-cycle engines to use premixed (less polluting) fuel, and buy buses using compressed natural gas as their fuel. Collectively, these measures produced a dramatic impact, reducing carbon monoxide by 32 percent within several years and sulfur dioxide by 39 percent. In addition to a tireless environmental lawyer, requirements here were a truly independent judiciary and a free media.

Acquiescence: By publicizing state corruption, wrongdoing, and incompetence and in the process generally spreading embarrassing as well as personally harmful and even untrue stories about those managing state affairs, *independent media* are a constant thorn in the side of any government.¹⁶ But although the press may at times be irresponsible and even licentious in Tocqueville's analysis,¹⁷ independent media are critically necessary to democracy, for they make public to all what otherwise only a few insiders would know, and the publicity puts pressure on the state to account for its actions and inactions. Without independent media, the entire edifice of democracy would soon crumble; they are its *sine qua non*. If it wishes, the state may facilitate the media's ability to flourish (for example, by subsidizing postage rates, giving access to television channels, or purchasing advertisements), but its main role is simply to acquiesce in allowing the media to follow its own path, even when the results are harmful to it.¹⁸

Disinterest: *Privatization* can be considered a SAM if it is carried out so that assets previously operated monopolistically become competitive in the market place. Privatizing a decrepit public telephone system with provision for encouraging new competition such as cell phones, for example, could greatly improve and expand phone service. Competition between landline systems and multiple cell phone networks would maintain accountability through the market. Some kind of executive decision or legislative act would be needed to set the process in motion, and some sort of regulation would probably be necessary to preclude oligopolistic tendencies, but the basic state posture here would be one of disinterest.

State forbearance: With the media, the state must acquiesce in permitting bad news to emerge, but this is counterbalanced by the media's role in giving a platform to state leaders, publicizing government programs, disseminating information of state accomplishments, and alerting citizens to emergencies. *Human rights organizations* constitute another mechanism that the state must endure when they produce bad news, but here there is no counterbalancing good news: Whenever groups such as Amnesty International or Human Rights

Watch issue a report, it is unfavorable (often highly so) to the state. For its part the state in turn can be sorely tempted to respond by suppressing domestic human rights organizations and banning international ones, but both kinds draw their authority not so much from constitutions or domestic statutes but from international pressure on the state to allow them to work. The state, then, is compelled to exercise forbearance in allowing these groups to function, even when it knows the results will be unpleasant. The only real way to evade the bad news is for the state to become more attentive to human rights, that is, more accountable.

Another mechanism requiring state forbearance is the *corruption report card*. In some ways it resembles the citizen review board discussed above under the rubric of active state support for SAMs. Both are initiated by civil society organizations, involve surveys, need publicity to have an impact, require some cooperation from the state to occur, and entail no direct costs to the state. But whereas the Mumbai bureaucrat in charge of food rationing strongly backed the NGO undertaking the surveys and advocating conformity to state regulations, state officials rarely if ever welcome corruption inquiries, for obvious reasons. The Bangladesh chapter of Transparency International (abbreviated as TIB) sponsored a corruption survey in Mymensingh District during 2000, focusing on the primary education system.¹⁹ Not surprisingly, the survey did indeed find significant levels of corruption. Students reported paying unauthorized fees for admission to school, books, sporting events, promotion to the next class, and the like, all of which are supposed to be free. Many of those eligible for the state's Food for Education Program had to pay a bribe to be admitted to it and were shortchanged in the program's grain distribution. In addition, almost half the teachers surveyed reported having to pay bribes to officials at higher levels.²⁰ Local advocacy groups founded by TIB then held press conferences and met with education officials to present the findings and urge improvements. Whether the education system will improve remains to be seen, but citizen awareness of its shortcomings has certainly increased.

Grudging assent: In some circumstances the right to protest publicly can mushroom into mammoth *demonstrations* threatening the state itself. There can come a time when the state has to decide whether to put down popular anti-state protests by force or accede to the demands of the demonstrators. Sometimes the state has elected to repress the demonstrators, as in Myanmar in 1990 and then again in September 2007, but in other instances it has given in, as in the two "EDSA revolutions" in the Philippines (1986 and 2001, when the military deserted the executive) or in Ukraine in 2004, when international pressure restrained the president from crushing the popular movement against him. In the latter cases, the state found itself compelled to give a grudging assent to the demonstrators and their demands.

We have now covered the entire SAM spectrum. In the next section, I will focus on where the mechanisms come from—what induces the state to support them.

Origins of State Support for SAMs

The first three origins of state support discussed below originate in the supply side of the governance equation. Ultimately, of course, they derive from demand originating in the society (for example, constitutions derive their authority from a country's citizenry), but in the present context, they create or enable SAMs to function. In other words, they deal with supply. The next two origins come more directly from the demand side of governance.

Constitution: Theoretically, the firmest source of support for a SAM lies in a country's constitution, which lays out the ultimate "rules of the game" for conducting public business. For constitutional authority to function, however, the government of the day must be committed to enforcing it. Most constitutions guarantee human rights, for instance, but few states are totally scrupulous in upholding such declarations. Constitutional assurances of free speech are also frequently abused, although less consistently than those regarding human rights. And although guarantees on elections are probably more consistently honored than those on either human rights or free speech, even these are often violated through vote rigging and similar schemes. International pressure can be helpful, as with human rights, but in the end political will at the top (in this case the will to resist the temptation to harass minorities and suppress dissent) is needed to make constitutions function properly.

Legislation: Although they are less permanent than constitutional guarantees, legislative acts may carry more strength in the short run, for they reflect the intent of the government in power. In the Philippines, for example, the Local Government Code enacted in 1991 radically reformed the country's governance at the local level and was enthusiastically implemented. Fortunately, succeeding national administrations in Manila continued to support it. In Bolivia, the Popular Participation Law of 1994 establishing an arguably more radical transformation in local governance was also vigorously implemented by the executive branch (which had initiated it in the legislature), but subsequent administrations were much less enamored of the law, and much of it languished.

Executive leadership: Even more so than legislation, executive leadership can be a powerful but temporary source of authority for SAMs. Mumbai's Rationing Kriti Samiti worked very well indeed under the patronage of a critical sympathetic bureaucrat, but eventually disaffected politicians sidelined the effort. In contrast, participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre was continued in place by several mayors succeeding its originator, but it depended on their goodwill and backing to endure. Without it, the program would fold up quickly.

Civil society: Unlike the supply-side sources of authority presented so far, civil society is rooted in the demand side of governance. Advocacy campaigns for women's rights or disabled children will go on as long as civil society organizations continue to back them, for although their success depends in significant measure on the responsiveness of state institutions, their authority comes from their constituencies.

International pressure: Human rights organizations also depend on demand-based, non-state sources of authority but of a different kind. For here, certainly in the difficult cases, their existence is based on external demand from the international community. The post-election Nigerian government surely knew that the human rights team roaming around the country in 2007 would release very embarrassing findings about violations relating to the January voting, but the government also knew it would be even more embarrassing to prevent the team from gathering its data, so the research was allowed to proceed. The report was indeed extremely critical (Polgreen 2007).

Deciphering the Spectrum

In the spectrum I have assembled (as shown in figure 4.2 and table 4.1), four modes of active state support exist for SAMs and six modes of passive support, with eight specific types of mechanisms spread over the active modes and seven over the passive modes.²¹ Several observations can be made.

The most important mechanisms are not those where state support is most active: Of all the mechanisms presented in table 4.1, the most fundamental are *elections*, *civil society*, and the *media*. Without periodic free and fair elections, freedom for civil society advocacy, and an independent media, liberal democracy cannot endure, even in the short run.²² Of these three SAMs, only elections are included in the active half of the spectrum, and even here, actual state support is minimal, essentially comprising the routine of operating the machinery for voting and counting. With civil society and the media, the state's main task is to refrain from interfering with the mechanisms in play.

A majority of mechanisms exist independent of state financing: Of the 15 mechanisms listed in table 4.1, fully nine essentially function with no state funding. Moreover, this assertion pertains to two (civil society and media) of the three (these two plus elections) specified in the previous paragraph as most critical to the sustainability of democratic governance. Thus although all our mechanisms are dependent on the state in some way or other, financial support is not in most cases one of those ways.

The level of state funding and level of state support are not tautological: At first blush it might seem that state funding and state support must mean basically the same thing, for funding after all is arguably the strongest form of support: If the state seriously wants something, it will pay for it. A glance down the financing column of table 4.1, however, shows that all the "Y's" are not at the top of the table, and of the two most expensive mechanisms—local government and elections—the second one is in the middle. For the state does not show its support for SAMs mainly through financing them but through the qualities running from championship through grudging assent that primarily involve commitment to democratic norms. To put it another way, state support for SAMs is not necessarily costly in budgetary terms (though, of course,

it will be costly in terms of what the state will have to do in being accountable; after all, that is what accountability means).

All authorities for SAMs are contingent on other actors' support: Constitutions must be enforced, legislation must be implemented, executive officers must lead, civil society actors must advocate (and their constituencies must hold), and the international community must demand entry for human rights organizations. None of these sources will continue in place on their own; all must be continuously attended to.

National and local levels mainly require different mechanisms: In the last column of table 4.1 it will be noted that a couple SAMs (civil society advocacy and popular demonstrations) come at both national and local levels, but the others are relevant only at one or the other. For the most part, macro- and microlevels require differing mechanisms of social accountability.

Notes

1. This formulation sums up the definition in widespread use at the World Bank (Malena et al. 2004, 2–3).
2. The “state” here includes all levels of power holders, from nation to village; “local” refers to any level below the nation.
3. Although the positive extreme is admittedly rare, examples of the latter occur more frequently, as with the response of Myanmar’s military junta to public demonstrations in late September 2007 (see Mydans 2007).
4. The attempt at rank ordering on the right-hand side of figure 4.2 and in table 4.1 should be regarded as tentative, reflecting a first trial run. The terms used here were chosen to show an ordinal gradation, but comments are most welcome. The English language provides an enormous range of nouns expressing various levels of support (significantly aiding the present exercise), but the degree of overlap between them is also very large (making the task of distinguishing between them harder).
5. Many accounts of PB have been given. Among the more insightful are Gianpaolo Baiocchi, “Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment and Deliberative Democratic Theory,” <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/Baiocchi.pdf>; Bräutigam (2004); Koonings (2004). For a summary of the Porto Alegre experience, see Blair (2008). The World Bank’s Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETSs) are somewhat similar to participatory budgeting, but PETSs deal exclusively with monitoring budgets decided elsewhere, whereas PB makes up the investment budget as well as monitors its implementation. See World Bank (n.d.), “Social Accountability Sourcebook,” http://www.worldbank.org/socialaccountability_sourcebook/.
6. The literature on decentralization is vast. For two overviews, see Manor (1999) and Blair (2000).
7. See Pope (1996, esp. 55–59) for an overview of this institution.
8. Aries A. Arugay, “From Protest to Participation? Accountability Reform and Civil Society in the Philippines,” http://web.kssp.upd.edu.ph/talastasan/papers/arugay_protest_to_participation.pdf.
9. In a sense they brought far more accountability than their sponsoring president had intended, for the opportunities they provided to indigenous leadership inspired the formation of a coca growers’ party that within a few years grew to become Bolivia’s dominant political organization, ousting that same president from office and replacing him

- with Evo Morales. For a more expanded account of Bolivian local governance, see Blair (1997, 2007).
10. See Goetz and Jenkins (2001); their findings are summarized in Ackerman (2005, 16). Eventually local politicians, frustrated at the disruption of their patronage networks, were able to disable the monitoring system, and matters returned to normal, but for a while the mechanism evidently proved quite successful.
 11. Suresh Balakrishnan, "Holding the State to Account: Citizen Voice through Report Cards in Bangalore," http://www.adb.org/Governance/Pro_poor/Civil_society/PDF/Bangalore_Suresh.pdf; Public Affairs Centre 2003; Adikeshavalu Ravindra, "An Assessment of the Impact of Bangalore Citizen Report Cards on the Performance of Public Agencies," [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/24cc3bb1f94ae11c85256808006a0046/d241684df81fce2785256ead0062de10/\\$FILE/ecd_wp_12.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/24cc3bb1f94ae11c85256808006a0046/d241684df81fce2785256ead0062de10/$FILE/ecd_wp_12.pdf).
 12. Joseph Schumpeter's (1942) insistence that contestation by election is the central defining characteristic of a democracy has generally been held as sacrosanct by the political science community in subsequent decades—one of the few pieces of conventional wisdom in social science not in serious danger of attack.
 13. See, for instance, Barkan et al. (2003).
 14. "Civil society" is generally defined at present along the lines suggested by Gordon White as "an intermediate associational realm between state and family populated by organizations which are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values" (White 1994, 379). See also Tocqueville (2007 [1835, 1840]).
 15. For instance, some Eastern European countries earmark a proportion of proceeds from state lotteries to civil society or permit citizens to allocate a small part of their income tax returns to the civil society sector. For a discussion of such funding (including attendant transparency issues), see Blair and others (2005, 21–23).
 16. Witness British prime minister Tony Blair's outburst just before his leaving office in June 2007, calling the press a "feral beast, just tearing people and reputations to bits" (Cowell 2007).
 17. Tocqueville (2007 [1835, 1840], 147–54).
 18. Modern states generally subject the media to some standard of libel and slander, permitting victims to seek legal redress against malicious and damaging falsehoods spread in the media, but these constraints have not significantly impeded the media's execution of a watchdog role.
 19. Data in this paragraph are taken mostly from Shahnaz Karim, "Transparency in Education: Report Card in Bangladesh," <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001390/139031e.pdf>.
 20. These results are scarcely surprising in the Bangladesh milieu, where corruption is common. After all, the country did rank as most corrupt among all the countries included in Transparency International's yearly index from 2001 through 2005. Equally interesting, however, is that the corruptions levels reported in the education survey were not all that high. Less than 8 percent of families had to pay unauthorized fees for any particular service, and the fees involved averaged about \$0.80 (which can be a significant sum for people living on \$1 a day, to be sure).
 21. As noted elsewhere, the spectrum presented in table 4.1 is subject to modification. There may be too many categories or (less likely) too few. The ranking ordering may also need changing. Comments are most welcome.
 22. See Diamond (1999, ch. 2; also 2002) on the difference between "liberal democracy" with its safeguards ensuring accountability and lesser types such as "electoral democracy" that have fewer safeguards. One might add that without the addition of freely functioning *human rights organizations*, liberal democracy cannot endure very far beyond the short run.

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