



Accountability & advocacy interventions in the water sector

A review of global evidence

Part 3: Insights on gender, donor approach, government responsiveness, measuring accountability, and closing civic space
FEBRUARY 2022

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COVER IMAGE: Demonstration against the 'Transposição' hydraulic infrastructure project, Brazil. Credit: Water Alternatives, 2007.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AfW	Accountability for Water
AWM	Agricultural Water Management
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
COWSO	Community Owned Water Supply Organisation
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSC	Community Scorecard
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GPSA	Global Partnership for Social Accountability
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
JMP	Joint Monitoring Programme
O&M	Operation & Maintenance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSF	Open Societies Foundation
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAM	Social Accountability Mechanism
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SJC	Social Justice Coalition
SIWI	Stockholm International Water Institute
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WRM	Water Resource Management
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIN	Water Integrity Network
WWI	Water Witness International

Key to symbols

i. Executive Summary

Strengthening of accountability for water resource management (WRM) and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services has emerged as an important opportunity to accelerate delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The global review of evidence on accountability for water conducted by the authors (Hepworth et al. 2020) analysed the available evidence on the outcomes of accountability and advocacy interventions for improved water service delivery, water resource management and water governance, and the factors which determined their performance. It found that a significant majority of included articles (80%) associate positive outcomes for water sector governance with accountability and advocacy interventions.

This supplement to the main report responds to the knowledge needs of the Accountability for Water partners and a wider group of local and global stakeholders in government, utilities, regulators, communities, civil society organisations, NGOs and bilateral and multilateral donors. It presents a detailed analysis of the evidence available on five priority themes:

- ◆ Gender
- ◆ The role of donors
- ◆ What makes governments listen?
- ◆ Measuring accountability
- ◆ Closing civic space

Each chapter explores the evidence available on how each theme interacts with community and governance dynamics, and the enabling environment to subdue or strengthen accountability for water, and concludes with insights that can inform future policy, practice, intervention design and further research. Summary findings include:

Gender equity is one of the main factors that shapes the performance of accountability interventions on water. Eighteen papers explored the relationships between gender and the performance of accountability interventions across fourteen countries. These shed light on the processes through which gendered labour, cultural beliefs, and social practices influenced outcomes for improved water governance and services. Gender was analysed in relation to equitable WASH access, sustainable water withdrawals, and trust in WRM institutions. Ten papers suggest that patriarchal governance structures and cultural norms have resulted in the systemic exclusion of women from decision-making spaces and processes (e.g. SOPPECOM 2009; UNDP-SIWI 2017). Several sources show how and why this exclusion can be costly, for example Masanyiwa (2014) shows how women’s involvement in water committees was limited to more

passive secretarial or treasury roles, with their ability to speak up and influence outcomes constrained by limited education, their low-status occupations, religion, household duties, unwillingness to engage in political and power bargaining, and the domineering or sexist attitudes of men. This led to very few women in leadership roles on water committees. Holvoet et al. (2016) found that information sharing around water was divided along gender lines, with men prioritising irrigation over women’s needs for domestic water use. Several papers emphasise the need for interventions to be led by women’s knowledge, experiences and preferences, through sharing their knowledge of services (Holvoet et al. 2016; SOPPECOM 2009). Approaches including gender-responsive budgeting, targeted funding, and external support to women’s groups have been shown to positively influence performance of accountability interventions. For example, in Nass et al. (2018) and Pieterse (2019a, 2019b) these approaches led to better outcomes in WASH budgets, spending priorities, and municipal planning decisions. Opening up space for information sharing to give women the confidence to claim their rights and make complaints against relevant authorities improved access, equity, and affordability of WASH. There is evidence that prioritising gender in accountability interventions can transform social attitudes, triggering a reassessment of whose knowledge counts (Ali 2010; Nass et al. 2018; Sahu 2010; UNDP-SIWI 2014, 2017). However, several authors identify the complex structural settings which subdue gender equity which need to be addressed at a society-wide scale rather than in sectoral interventions (Masanyiwa 2014; SOPPECOMM 2009; Velleman 2010). Overall, the available evidence illuminates how gender equity in the water sector access is strongly correlated with educational and economic opportunities, culturally defined gender roles, and the influence of feminist movements in society at large.

Donors can play a constructive role if they do not determine the agenda. Thirty papers investigated how external donors influenced water accountability across twenty-six countries. Of these, twenty-one focused on strengthening citizens’ voices and the dialogue process. This evidence suggests that donors must work sensitively, responsively and with adequate contextual knowledge, to achieve the correct balance between risk-taking and maintaining trust and legitimacy. For example, Ballesteros (2012) shows how donor requirements for discrete, measurable, quantitative outcomes stifled more transformative work that could emerge through an open-ended, experimental, subjective process. Laurie and Crespo (2006) and Suileman (2011) present evidence from Bolivia and Ghana that demonstrates how donor conditionalities to privatise WASH services were disruptive because they failed to secure consent from citizens before pursuing reforms. The reforms provoked fierce resistance and resulted in a breakdown in

relations with civil society. Without care, external funding can misalign with local priorities and reinforce local power hierarchies: in Pakistan, a programme to introduce Community Boards received substantial donor funding, but more than two thirds of the budget remained unused because the capacity building was not well-targeted to village needs (Ali 2020). At a water user committee in Tanzania, donors compounded inequalities by entrusting unaccountable local elites to disburse material resources (Boesten et al. 2011). There is compelling evidence for the positive and constructive role that donors can play, through providing secure, reliable funding streams for innovative programmes, and through training, and capacity building to support an independent civil society (Pieterse 2019a, 2019b; Romano 2012; Sneddon and Fox 2007). The evidence also shows how donors can amplify the voices of community accountability champions and use their position as external funders to pressure governments to protect human rights and civic space (Pieterse 2019a, 2019b; Tincani and Mwaruvanda 2016; Water Witness 2020). Overall, the available evidence emphasises the importance of understanding the political economy of water at multiple scales to support the design of effective interventions, and regular consultation and participatory review processes that allow for input from citizens.

Governments listen when there is a political cost to inaction. Sixty-one papers investigated government responsiveness to accountability interventions on water across fifty-five countries. There were fifty-six examples of statutory accountability mechanisms including public interest litigation (Bolin et al. 2008; Cantor 2016; Haglund 2014), citizen oversight panels (Casely 2006; Lande and Fonseca 2018; Maponya 2018), and formal audit and disclosure (Jimenez et al. 2018; Tropp et al. 2017) triggering action from government officials to resolve outstanding issues of contention. Several authors point to the importance of matching the accountability mechanisms to the political culture and governance system in place. For example, the organised peasant and labour movements that have been able to extract policy concessions through mobilising political forces and stimulating public debate across Latin America (Borgias 2018; Laurie and Crespo 2006; Romano 2012) do not have an obvious equivalent in post-Soviet Ukraine, where Kvartiuk (2016) observed much weaker associational and civic ties, and therefore a reduced propensity for collective action. Similarly, the centralised state of China is less amenable to grassroots pressure than India’s federal system, with a different set of incentives for public officials (Lu and Tsai 2017; Sahu 2017).

Fifty-eight studies found evidence that research and analysis, and debate and dialogue processes, were important in three areas of accountability. They increase access to information, make water issues visible, and generate political buy-in, which in turn has led to governance reforms to

extend WASH coverage, improve affordability, and better manage rates of abstraction in watersheds (Bolin et al. 2011; Garrick et al. 2017; Grönwall 2016; Padawangi 2017). However, for governments who refused to listen or respond to evidence-based advocacy, public interest litigation, formal grievance mechanisms, and more adversarial forms of public protests were influential in bringing about change (Cantor 2012; Romano 2012; Sahu 2010). Overall, the findings show the importance of evidence-based advocacy, often deployed with statutory accountability mechanisms, as tactical levers to trigger a government response.

Measuring accountability is not easy. Accountability is relational and dynamic. The performance of accountability mechanisms is predicated on their ability to shift the balance of power and increase the capabilities of rights holders to shape the behaviour of duty bearers. Eighty papers across fifty-nine countries investigated outcomes related to monitoring and reporting or considered how factors such as access to data and government protocols influenced water outcomes. Simplistic numerical measures of ‘pipes and pumps’ installed fail to capture the complexity of water governance related to quality, equity in access, or responsibilities for the maintenance and upkeep of water infrastructure (Fogelberg 2013). Open data sharing between governments and NGOs, multidimensional performance indicators, longitudinal analysis, and prioritising local knowledge can be combined to capture a complete picture of how accountability mechanisms perform in diverse settings (Carlson and Cohen 2018; Dundon and Jaleta 2013; Faehndrich and Nhantumbo 2012; Flores et al. 2013). Overall, the available evidence signals the need for ongoing research and analysis to evaluate what accountability mechanisms can be deployed most effectively in a given context, and what combination of interventions can sustain meaningful long-term transformation in the relationships between rights holders and duty bearers.

Closing civic space poses a threat to the accountability practice and interventions which have been shown to benefit sector performance. Seventeen papers investigated closing civic space across twenty-eight countries, with fourteen focusing on how to strengthen citizens’ voice. Evidence shows how increasing restrictions on civil society, punitive laws, the delegitimisation of social activism, and the repression of dissent have hampered the ability of citizens to raise their voice or exercise their rights. For example, in Ethiopia and Tanzania, governments introduced bans that prevented donors and CSOs from engaging in interventions based on the improvements of rights (Pieterse 2019a, 2019b). In Chile, a legal structure inherited from the Pinochet dictatorship limited formal opportunities for civil society to register their opposition to a hydropower dam (Borgias 2018). In the Mekong basin, opposition to large dams from

environmentalists and indigenous groups was at best ignored, and in other cases met with harassment, threats, and violence (Sneddon and Fox 2007; Dore et al. 2013), while a global review by Lande and Fonseca (2018) demonstrates an increasing trend towards excluding civil society from participation in global governance arenas and informally monitoring progress towards SDG6. Limits to public debate and dialogue processes entrenched inequalities in WASH provision, with governments in Chile and the Mekong seeking to discredit and deny the legitimacy of CSOs, for example by maintaining a narrow definition of what constituted valid ‘use value’ of water resources, and elevating market values over socio-cultural and ecological concerns (Borgias 2018; Dore et al. 2013). There is strong evidence that the protection of autonomous and open civic spaces, social movements, and alliances of environmental and social advocates spanning from the local to the national and international scale are paramount to securing a fair water future. For example, Romano (2012) demonstrates the positive role an active social movement had in transforming Nicaragua’s national water policy and increasing affordability and access, while in Turkey, Kadirbeyoglu (2017) highlights the impact of rural water user committees and member participation in social movements as an effective measure to combat inequalities in irrigation access. Overall, the available evidence highlights the imperative to protect and maintain civic space if measures to strengthen accountability are to flourish.

Key Research Questions:

Research to date has concentrated on the WASH subsector and social accountability interventions. This report recommends investigation into different subsectors and intervention types and identifies key research priorities for each thematic area:

- ◆ Gender: how to incentivise and strengthen women’s leadership in key decision-making arenas, including water committees, water utilities, and other water authorities.
- ◆ Donors: how to cultivate trust and legitimacy, empower communities, and avoid elite capture in programme design.
- ◆ Government: how to stimulate greater state responsiveness and promote awareness of the relationship between rights holders and duty bearers.
- ◆ Measurement: how to better track and capture accountability relationships over time, incorporating participatory monitoring and analysis.

- ◆ Civic space: how citizens can undertake strategic advocacy to navigate unfavourable political terrain and hold authorities to account under conditions of authoritarian repression.

The evidence presented here provides a robust foundation to inform policy choices and priorities of government, donors, and civil society. It demonstrates how accountability structures can strengthen institutions, improve spending decisions, and maximise participation from citizens in their respective countries. Overall, the report's findings offer cause for optimism, with transformative implications for the water sector if the findings are adopted and mobilised in policy. Future research can address knowledge gaps and stimulate further engagement from stakeholders.

ii. Introduction

This report shows what evidence is available on accountability and advocacy interventions in the water sector relating to the following five priority themes:



Hepworth et al. 2020 presented the methods and overall results of a global review of evidence on the outcomes of accountability and advocacy interventions for improved water service delivery, water resource management and water governance, and the factors which influence their performance.¹ This supplementary report uses the same dataset to investigate five priority themes identified by the Accountability for Water programme. It presents a detailed analysis of the research base and summarises each theme's key sources and insights.

For each theme, we present findings in four sections.

Section 1 The dashboard - Provides a visual summary of the evidence, including the type, sector, and geographic focus of the available evidence.

Section 2 What does the evidence tell us? - Provides a summary of key papers. For each paper, the summary is followed by details of how the paper covers the theme. The full papers are available at: <https://www.accountabilityforwater.org/data-search>.

Section 3 Emerging insight - Reflects on the emerging insights from the evidence presented. This section summarises how the thematic evidence relates to community accountability dynamics, the enabling environment for accountability, and governance dynamics.

Section 4 Research priorities - This concluding section highlights knowledge gaps and identifies priorities for future research.

¹ For details of the methodology see: Hepworth, N.D., Brown, B.D. and Brewer, T. 2020. Accountability and advocacy interventions in the water sector: a review of global evidence. Part 1. Overview and Summary Results. Water Witness International, Edinburgh, UK

The Global Evidence Review used a search strategy that included literature published since 1999. The inclusion criteria allowed all papers that described their methods but did not assess the papers according to criteria for quality, to present as inclusive and comprehensive a summary of relevant research as possible.

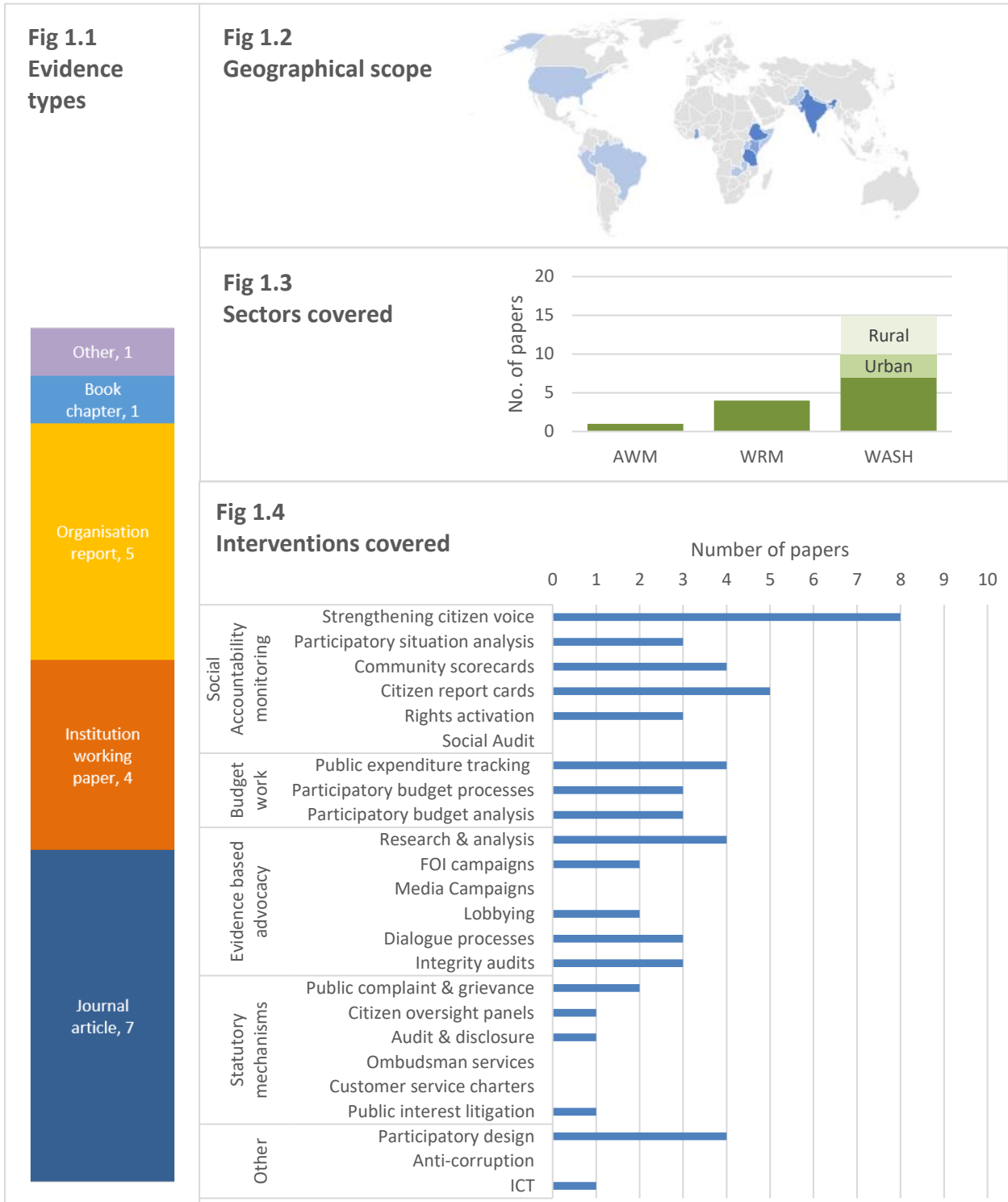
This supplement is a reference for those interested in the themes presented rather than a single narrative. The chapter navigation makes it easy for the reader to find the information they need within each theme. Each chapter contains an overview of the research landscape (section 1), details of the available literature (section 2), key findings about accountability within the theme identified (section 3) and suggestions for further research (section 4).

The structure of the key findings reflects the three elements of accountability identified in the Global Evidence Review – the community and government dynamics of accountability, and the enabling environment (Hepworth et al. 2020, p.46). They can help the reader identify strategic factors likely to influence the success of accountability interventions within the theory of change structure (Hepworth et al. 2020, p.11).

The summaries offered here are limited to the existing research at the time of the evidence review. The analysis draws from literature published before the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, the available literature does not fully capture the scale and severity of the climate and ecological crisis. Nevertheless, these summaries are a useful entry-point to understanding the current state of knowledge on each theme. Although Covid-19 is absent from the literature, research priorities for each section reflect the impact it has had on the sector.

1. Gender

1.1. Evidence dashboard



1.2. What evidence is available?

This section outlines what evidence is available about gender and water accountability, based on the coding of the global evidence in the sector (as set out in Hepworth et al. 2020a).

Of the final dataset of 151 papers, eighteen papers were coded as relating to gender, spanning from 2009 to 2019. This set mainly comprises peer-reviewed journals (7) and organisation reports (5), followed by working papers (4), book chapters (1) and conference notes (1).

Four papers discuss gender as their principal analytical focus (Masanyiwa et al. 2014; Moraes and Rocha 2013; Nass et al. 2018; SOPPECOM 2009). The others identify gender dynamics as a relevant factor determining water accountability outcomes.

The majority of papers concern the WASH subsector (16) and Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM) interventions (twenty-three examples discussed), with more limited evidence relating to budget analysis (10), evidence-based advocacy (14), and statutory accountability mechanisms (5).

SAM interventions that strengthen citizens' voice were the most frequent (8), followed by citizen report cards (5). As the map shows, evidence was clustered in East Africa and South Asia, with Tanzania, Ethiopia and India receiving the most coverage.

1.3. What does the evidence tell us?

This section summarises the key papers identified during the evidence review as having substantive insights into how gender is related to accountability. A summary of the paper is followed by insights relating to gender dynamics.

Acacia Consultants 2010



Programme Evaluation Report, Somalia Programme Activities in Gedo, Puntland and Mogadishu

SUMMARY: A programme evaluation report of Norwegian Church Aid’s (NCA) activities. It reviews the effectiveness of humanitarian and development interventions relating to WASH and other sectors in Gedo and Puntland, Somalia. The report considers the accountability of NCA staff in designing and implementing a multi-dimensional emergency response, development and advocacy programme. It concludes that the activities were relevant, appropriate, and effectively adapted to shifting local needs following war and drought.

DETAILS: The report illustrates how gender-sensitive training and educational resources can result in greater gender balance in representation on decision making in water and sanitation committees and in access. The training was part of capacity building activities educating on Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) in 175 water management committees and hygiene promoters in Puntland. NCA’s integrated approach combined emergency interventions targeted at hardware such as improvements to water supply infrastructure, alongside ‘software’ components such as hygiene and sanitation education, gender training, and peacebuilding.

Ali 2010



Can we improve accountability through participation? Practical Action’s Learning

SUMMARY: Collates experiences from the NGO Practical Action to evaluate how citizen participation is conceived of by donors, policymakers, and other development actors. Community groups contributed to effective representation and opened channels for improved accountability with municipal governments and other institutions, strengthening

the planning process. However, external priority setting by donors sometimes caused a misalignment with local needs and poor policy implementation.

DETAILS: Provides evidence from Bangladesh and Nepal illustrating how the formation of community groups, including mothers and pregnant women, was important to communicating collective needs to municipal governments. This improved communication resulted in action to improve WASH service provision, attending to local women's specific and differentiated needs. However, there was no conclusive evidence that community organisations always helped improve and sustain municipal accountability. The paper stressed that accountability relationships could be cultivated and sustained most effectively when groups had a clear project or purpose, such as managing savings or joint funds for water infrastructure operation and maintenance.

Holvoet et al. 2016



Look Who's Talking. Explaining Water-Related Information Sharing and Demand for Action Among Ugandan Villagers

SUMMARY: Examines the role of information sharing on water accountability in rural Uganda. Uses regression analysis to correlate socio-economic characteristics, water-related issues and political attitudes of community members in a Ugandan village. The paper finds a correlation between information sharing and demand for action to remedy water-related problems.

DETAILS: Explains how gender norms determine responsibilities for household water provision. It examines homophily, the tendency to form connections with others of similar age, gender, education, race, ethnic identity. It shows the important role this played in information sharing and demand for action. Since water supply responsibilities for household-related and productive activities are often divided by gender, the authors predict that demands for greater accountability will emerge from groups with a shared social experience. The data shows that citizens who use the same water source are almost twice as likely to share information as those who do not. People of the same sex are 2.2 times more likely to share water-related information. There are two reasons for this:

- firstly, people using the same water source face similar problems of water accessibility and quality;

- secondly, fetching water is a daily activity often performed by women in a group.

Water provision remains a highly gendered practice. Women fetch water for daily household activities by walking together, while men in the village often use bicycles and are more involved in water provision for irrigation. Information contributes to higher levels of accountability overall, but gender segregation limits information flows to certain groups.

Kelly et al. 2017



The role of social capital and sense of ownership in rural community-managed water systems: Qualitative evidence from Ghana, Kenya, and Zambia.

SUMMARY: Presents a multi-country, qualitative analysis of community water systems in Zambia, Ghana, and Kenya to understand the role of social capital in the performance of water management systems. The paper shows how citizen participation, and engagement with accountability processes, is linked to dense community networks and a strong sense of ownership over water systems.

This multi-country study highlights the importance of women’s participation in information sharing as a mechanism to ensure that those responsible maintain community water systems. The paper argues that social capital and a sense of ownership are critical to accountability in rural community-managed water systems. It documents how community networks organised to achieve shared goals (“structural social capital”) facilitated the election of a skilled and gender-inclusive water committee. The authors found that strong ties between the committee and community women were the key determinant of good water systems’ operations and maintenance (O&M) functions. Women assumed responsibilities for carrying out frequent maintenance tasks. Such ties were vital to system rehabilitation, as women reported system breakdowns more frequently than men. The authors suggest that external support actors assess and build on the social strengths of rural communities and encourage female leadership. Women interact most with the water system, undertaking daily water collection, O&M tasks, information sharing and resource mobilisation. However, their participation in governance processes is frequently tokenistic and superficial. The authors recommend giving women increased representation and executive positions on the water committee.

Masanyiwa et al. 2014



Gender perspectives on decentralisation and service users' participation in rural Tanzania

SUMMARY: Investigates how decentralisation has strengthened citizens' voice and participation in rural water service delivery through questionnaires and interviews with communities in the Dodoma region. The paper discusses both active and interactive forms of participation. Active participation entails formal representation on village councils or committees. Interactive participation relates to voice, political influence and leadership. The paper argues both are necessary to promote gender equality and accountability in water governance. It concludes that while it is not difficult to increase women's participation in public meetings and committees, it is much more difficult to increase their influence on outcomes.

DETAILS: The article identifies factors that constrain or encourage women's participation and influence. Findings show that decentralisation created space for greater participation by women. However, their roles remain largely 'passive', with their ability to speak up and influence outcomes constrained by cultural norms around gender. Disabling factors included lack of education, illiteracy, low-status occupations, religion, household duties, unwillingness to engage in political and power bargaining, and the influence of patriarchal structures. Consequently, very few women held leadership positions on committees and were mostly limited to secretarial or treasurer roles. However, the authors also observed high variability by location in these factors and that female leaders were emerging. Conclusions caution against focusing narrowly on practical needs based on the household division of labour. Instead, the paper emphasises the importance of striving for 'strategic' gender equity, concerning equal organisational and structural relationships between men and women. Gender advocates could achieve this through government and NGO programmes, economic and educational activities.

Mbilima 2019



Extractive industries and local sustainable development in Zambia: The case of corporate social responsibility of selected metal mines.

SUMMARY: Examines the practices of mining companies operating in northwest Zambia, discussing the limits of voluntary environmental monitoring and auditing due to unequal power and economic disincentives. Analyses qualitative and quantitative data from regional stakeholders to investigate the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development (including water quality) at a Zambian mine. It analyses the extent to which voluntary monitoring and self-disclosure activities can function as water accountability mechanisms and considers the function of CSR initiatives to deflect from the environmental impact of mining operations.

DETAILS: The paper argues that CSR commitments to gender equality can be superficial, and companies must back a robust, multi-dimensional understanding of sustainable development. Kanshasi Mines embraced gender equality and women's empowerment as part of their CSR strategy, establishing programmes to promote entrepreneurship and economic opportunities for local women. Although such programmes could help combat rural gender inequalities, the impact of mining operations on women in particular and their effects on local water practices, were not addressed. Meaningful stakeholders' engagement required understanding of the environmental changes caused by mining, but the technical and inaccessible presentation of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports and measures deterred local level participation and engagement on these issues. The paper proposes further inquiry should include analysis of benefits accruing to women and investigating gender and labour relations at extraction sites.

Moraes and Rocha 2013



Gendered waters: the participation of women in the 'One Million Cisterns' rainwater harvesting program in the Brazilian Semi-Arid region.

SUMMARY: Examines the participation of women in the 'One Million Cisterns' rainwater harvesting program in the Brazilian Semi-Arid region. The paper shows how the participation of women in local water commissions and capacity building processes had a significant effect on the lives of women and their communities, opening several possibilities for growth, knowledge exchange and even political power.

DETAILS: There is a tight web of connections between access to education and training, strengthened citizens' voice, and greater confidence in participating in decision-making. As

women received training to build water cisterns, they started participating more actively in water-related discussion spaces that were previously the exclusive domain of men. Women’s involvement in local water commissions and capacity building processes left a lasting impact on their lives, opening new possibilities for growth, knowledge exchange and political power. The construction of cisterns improved the quality of sanitation services in rural Brazil, with women’s participation contributing to a more equitable environment in access to water services.

Nass et al. 2018



Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Ethiopia’s Country-wide Social Accountability Program.

SUMMARY: The paper evaluates Ethiopia’s donor-funded Social Accountability Program, which introduced gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) to influence service delivery budgets across kebeles (sub-districts) in over two hundred woredas (districts) from 2012-2015.

DETAILS: The paper evaluates the impact of GRB and finds that participatory GRB translated abstract equality principles into forms that were meaningful and relevant to communities. It shows the transformative impact gender-responsive budgeting can have across programmes if sustained pressure, proper explanation, and training is provided. In this case, it “brought abstract gender equality policies to life” (p.33) and provided both men and women, service providers, and policymakers practical tools to reduce gender inequalities in services, including water utilities.

The authors conclude that gender-responsive accountability mechanisms had a dramatic impact in transforming public attitudes and political priorities. With the necessary training and leadership championing gender budgeting, both men and women participated and enthusiastically embraced it. After gender policy analyses by experts and consultants, there was greater buy-in from government staff. The result was an upgrading of sector action plans, with revised budget allocations to recognise the specificities of women’s and girls’ needs and experiences.

Pieterse 2019a



Accountability for improved services and governance in Ethiopia: a review of context, practice and research priorities. (report draft).

SUMMARY: Discusses the challenge of implementing accountability programmes under an authoritarian political regime in Ethiopia that severely restricts the activities of civil society. It highlights the political barriers that water accountability advocates must navigate to scale up and institutionalise accountability mechanisms.

DETAILS: Reviews literature on water accountability in Ethiopia to argue for dedicated spaces that are responsive and relevant to women’s lived experience, where they can speak freely without men dominating the conversation and priority-setting. Time use surveys reveal the large burden of domestic work carried by women. Social accountability programmes must therefore be “cognizant with women’s lives” by, for example, holding shorter meetings closer to participants’ homes. Action research conducted with communities to improve the use of GRB demonstrated the importance of gender awareness training and women-only focus groups. Women could express their voice more clearly and gain greater community respect. Cultural norms that discourage women from speaking at public gatherings attended by men constrain efforts to include women in large public gatherings. To overcome this, they suggest working through locally embedded groups who understand local social norms but share a desire to bring women’s voices to the fore.

Pieterse 2019b



Accountability for improved services and governance in Tanzania: a review of context, practice and research priorities. (report draft)

SUMMARY: Surveys the available evidence to identify what factors stimulate or sustain conditions for improved water outcomes in Tanzania. Recommends identifying local accountability champions, building on existing regulatory frameworks, and protecting civic spaces for free expression and dissent.

DETAILS: The paper argues for dedicated spaces that are responsive and relevant to women’s lived experience, where they can speak freely without men dominating the conversation and priority-setting. The literature review highlights how many gender-focused water initiatives have followed the efforts of other sectors to strengthen citizen engagement, increasing access to WASH services in alignment with existing legal entitlements. As Tanzanian water sources are used primarily by women, communities can achieve better outcomes when women are actively engaged in designing, implementing and governing WASH interventions.

Such changes require dedicated spaces for women’s empowerment. When interventions create space for female dialogue and priority-setting, village action plans differed from those prepared jointly in mixed ‘gender blind’ settings and reflected women’s views and priorities better.

Rautanen and White 2006**Portrait of a successful small-town water service provider in Nepal's changing landscape.**

SUMMARY: Provides qualitative evidence to link high-performance outcomes of the Murgia Water Users Association with efforts to ensure equitable representation by gender and ethnicity. Since its inception, the project cultivated an inclusive culture of governance that generated high levels of local pride and trust.

DETAILS: Drawing on extensive community interviews in Nepal’s Terai plains, the authors highlight gender equality measures as a contributing factor to the success of a robust and responsive participatory governance institution, the Murgia Water Users’ Association. The authors demonstrate high performance in the quality of the water supply and the association’s responsive and transparent mode of operation. They attribute this to the emphasis on representation and social inclusion, which has generated local pride and trust in the scheme. The project adopted a gender-sensitive approach to social mobilisation, ensuring women’s equal representation at every stage from planning to implementation. This approach strengthened accountability and community buy-in. This experience contrasts with schemes elsewhere, where social exclusion has bred resentment and led to the sabotage of water infrastructure.

Sahu 2010**Transparency, accountability in water service delivery, problems and prospects: A case of Brahmapur city in Orissa, India.**

SUMMARY: Discusses how civil society have successfully deployed citizen report cards and urban corruption surveys as accountability mechanisms in informal settlements of Berhampur City, India. These interventions spurred corrective measures on behalf of political representatives to deliver improved WASH services.

DETAILS: Emphasises the importance of women’s groups in advocacy for improved water services due to their domestic responsibilities for water collection and familiarity with household water needs. The gendered burden of domestic labour means that women residing in informal settlements face additional barriers to participation in political decision-making. Women are required to fetch water loads up to twenty kilograms and walk four to six kilometres in a day, losing valuable time by waiting in queues for the intermittent water supply to flow in urban slums. This time burden limits girls’ access to education and women’s ability to earn a wage or grow food. Community groups, including Residents’ Welfare Associations, women’s groups and youth groups, play a vital role in highlighting the difficulties experienced and demanding improved services. Non-state and informal institutions created space for civic engagement that could build pressure on the government for responsive WASH service delivery.

SOPPECOM 2009



Situational Analysis of Women Water Professionals in South Asia.

SUMMARY: Provides a detailed situational analysis of women water professionals in South Asia. The report highlights how a sexist professional culture downplays the expertise of women and excludes them from both career opportunities and positions of power. The report emphasises the need to shift away from ‘techno-centrism’ and incorporate social science perspectives.

DETAILS: While much literature focuses on water consumers, it often overlooks policy formulation in the upper echelons of government bureaucracies, NGOs and research institutions. This multi-country study reports how gender shapes opportunities and knowledge formation in the South Asian water sector. Reviewing the testimony of water professionals from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, the report identifies how sexist professional cultures limit women's professional participation in decision-making, creating distortion and gender bias in knowledge production around water governance. Overall, ‘techno-centrism’ dominates. Technical and administrative capabilities are privileged over social science perspectives and expertise. Cultural power dynamics prevent the emergence of prospective water champions and inhibit the perspectives that might permit greater responsiveness to the needs of women and girls. Consequently, male professionals overlook

measures that recognise the details of women’s experience and prioritise more equitable water practices.

Thomas and Aslam 2018



Citizen Engagement in the Water Sector - A Guidance Note

SUMMARY: This guidance note, prepared for the Global Partnership for Social Accountability, reviews citizen engagement in selected World Bank projects on water service delivery. It evaluates the effectiveness of social accountability mechanisms as tools to increase state responsiveness and address outstanding issues in project implementation.

DETAILS: The note highlights gender as a determining factor in water accountability outcomes. Authorities now provide gender inclusion training to new water committee members, but this has not fixed gender disparities in water outcomes. Women’s participation in water governance remains much lower than men’s, and water authorities place greater value on men’s opinions despite the greater exposure of women to issues around water use and access. The guidance note urges explicit integration of the gendered aspects of water access, uses and conditions.

UNDP-SIWI 2014



Regional Capacity Building Programme Promoting and Developing Water Integrity in Sub-Saharan Africa Stock Taking Programme Report

SUMMARY: This UN report discusses the importance of international cooperation at transnational summits and meetings to share ‘best practices’ around integrity in water policy.

DETAILS: The report included a participatory situation analysis of regional meetings on water integrity in East Africa. It finds that UN institutions did not achieve the initial goal of parity between female and male participants in water integrity training sessions. In East Africa, there is “a very male-dominated sector,” where men tend to deal with the ‘hardware’ component of water development (p. 30). The report argues that women would make better ambassadors for championing water integrity since the provision of domestic water is usually the responsibility of women. However, women who attended training sessions were reluctant to join in discussions. Their reluctance resulted in new targeted training to

encourage women’s active participation, organised by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission, which organisers praised as a success. Participants cited the duration of gender training as a limiting factor, stating that previous training had been too short.

UNDP-SIWI 2017



WGF Report 6 - Developing capacities for water integrity: Reflective review of approach and impact of training courses.

SUMMARY: This multi-country report focuses on the need for dedicated platforms explicitly designed to spotlight gender as a factor within integrity and corruption issues in the water sector.

DETAILS: The report notes the underrepresentation of women in water-related decision-making and their less active participation in discussions. For example, in the Regional Water Integrity Programme in sub-Saharan Africa, only one in three participants were women. Adopting a gender perspective in capacity development improved gender representation. Gender-sensitive trainers encouraged both women and men to identify the gender-specific aspects of corruption, transforming awareness and attitudes. Two pieces of training on gender and water integrity in Burundi and Kenya illustrated these findings. The training in Burundi, which only had two male participants, saw the active participation of all participants regardless of gender. The training in Kenya had a more even gender balance but focused on gender issues concerning water integrity. It became evident that the men were uncomfortable discussing gender issues. Such moves demonstrated the importance of creating dedicated platforms to explicitly consider these topics.

Velleman 2010



Social accountability Tools and mechanisms for improved urban water services

SUMMARY: Outlines various social accountability tools included in a WaterAid discussion paper. Discusses both the ‘long route’ of accountability via state institutions and electoral politics and the ‘short route’ to accountability that seeks to bypass institutions through direct interactions between users and water providers.

DETAILS: The paper identifies gender as one potential element of social exclusion that can deter poor citizens from making demands. It argues for maintaining a ‘long route’ to accountability alongside the ‘short route’ of direct contact between users and service providers. Community mapping processes highlight gender disparities in water access. Community mapping involves participatory activities to map and number dwellings, then profile each dwelling according to age, sex, occupation, services, education level, health status, land tenure, water points and sanitation. This process can highlight water and sanitation links to public health, gender and land tenure issues that affect access to services.

1.4. Emerging insights

1.4.1. Community dynamics

There is a need for appropriate education and training on gender inequalities at a community level, with specific, gender-focused, and targeted women-only sessions. For example, evaluations by the UNDP-SIWI (2014, 2017) in their Africa stock-taking and integrity reports found that men outnumbered women by three to one at water integrity sessions across the region. Additional training organised by the East African Community Lake Victoria Basin Commission (EAC-LVBC) successfully increased women’s participation and contributions through dedicated workshops that highlighted how gender inequality, the balance of power and unethical practices were interrelated. This open space allowed for both subjects to be tackled together from different angles (UNDP-SIWI 2014, 2017). Women are often motivated to participate but silenced or excluded due to structural factors that impede their participation, including lower rates of education and the domination of decision-making spaces by men. For example, a report investigating advocacy to improve municipal service provision in Pakistan highlighted how female literacy was as low as eight per cent in some areas of the country (Pervais et al. 2011). In Ethiopia and Tanzania, change came through strategic interventions that worked with locally embedded groups who understood local social norms but shared a commitment to amplify the voices of women and girls (Pieterse 2019a, 2019b).

According to multi-country evidence compiled in a WaterAid discussion paper, community mapping and spatial analysis can help explain how gender impacts access to water services

locally. These activities build cohesion in communities and serve an educational role, for example highlighting gendered disparities to water points. This can spur communities to demand more equitable access to WASH services (Velleman 2017). Uneven access to services is reflected in the tendency for citizens of the same gender to associate and share information based on the gendered divisions of labour around water provision. Different conversations around water occur between men and women, creating information asymmetries. In rural Uganda, women are responsible for domestic consumption while men maintain the irrigated water required for agriculture (Holvoet et al., 2016).

Evidence from Bangladesh and Nepal highlighted how organised women's groups enhance accountability and promote gender equality in water outcomes. Mothers and pregnant women formed their own associations to raise collective priorities with municipal governments. This stimulated a response from authorities, but they needed further resources to sustain the work (Ali 2010).

1.4.2. Enabling environment

Economic, social and cultural barriers impede women's participation and contributions to accountability initiatives. Evidence from India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and the Lake Victoria Basin highlighted the importance of sustained and reliable funding streams to resource grassroots women's groups and feminist organisations, as well as gender and water integrity training. This created space for women to identify common priorities and advocate on collective needs such as the proximity of water points, access to WASH in informal settlements, and safety during water collection (Ali 2010; Sahu 2010; UNDP-SIWI 2014, 2017).

Mitigating or compensating the burden of unpaid domestic labour can ensure women have time to participate in decision-making. Evidence from informal settlements in Orissa, India, revealed that the significant time spent collecting water from distant water points reduced women's capacity to participate in accountability discussions, but targeted support enabled greater advocacy to demand improved WASH services. External support equipped women with information and data that could be mobilised when contacting duty bearers including local politicians and public officials (Ali 2010; Sahu 2010).

Patriarchal domination is constantly reproduced through politics and culture, requiring interventions that break down patterns of bias and discrimination. Multi-country evidence from East Africa and South Asia found that more weight tended to be placed on the opinions of men, even while women had more direct exposure to problems around water use and access. This

distorted key decision-making priorities. However, removing structural barriers (e.g. promoting women to senior positions, funding training that validated women’s experiences, and reforming institutions to shift the balance of power) was necessary to strengthen women’s professional participation in the water sector (SOPPECOM 2009; Thomas and Aslam 2018; UNDP-SIWI 2014, 2017).

1.4.3. Governance dynamics

Sexist professional cultures impair decision-making and priority-setting, with men dominating discussions and privileging a “techno-centric” focus at the expense of social science perspectives. This was evident in the results of a survey of women water professionals in South Asia (SOPPECOM 2009), as well as multi-country reviews from the World Bank (Thomas and Aslam 2018) and UNDP-SIWI (2014, 2017). Multi-country evidence compiled by WaterAid demonstrates how the ‘short route’ to accountability through direct contact between users and service providers was insufficient. It highlighted the need for a complementary ‘long route’ involving democratic institutions: elections opened space for women to articulate their needs and preferences around water as a political constituency, influencing the priorities of those in public office (Velleman 2010).

Evidence from Somalia and Ethiopia confirmed that Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is an effective tool to alert both communities and policymakers to women’s specific and differentiated needs, and how this should inform the disbursement of material resources. Following GRB interventions, sector action plans were updated and education around sanitation and hygiene was introduced alongside upgrades to water supply infrastructure (Acacia Consultants 2010; Nass et al. 2018). Evidence correlated more accessible and responsive WASH services to building trust in water governance institutions through improved representation and social inclusion. This was the case at a flagship water user committee in Nepal, where proactive efforts to facilitate a representative and balanced committee membership increased its legitimacy and the willingness of women to put themselves forward for positions (Rautanen and White 2006).

1.5. Research priorities

This concluding section highlights knowledge gaps and priorities for future research. Gender remains an overlooked and neglected aspect of water accountability, with only one in ten articles including a gender focus in their analysis. The evidence is clear that improved gender representation has a positive effect on water outcomes (Masanyiwa et al., 2014; Moraes and

Rocha 2013; SOPPECOM 2009), but more knowledge is needed on how to incentivise and strengthen women’s leadership in decision-making arenas, including water committees, water utilities, and other water authorities.

Building on SOPPECOM’s (2009) situational analysis of women water professionals in South Asia, scholars should conduct similar profiles of women water professionals in other regions and the factors that enable or constrain their influence over (or participation in) water governance. Evidence also indicates that practitioners require a better understanding of how statutory accountability mechanisms can improve gender equality in WASH access (Sahu 2010; UNDP-SIWI 2014, 2017). Future research can build on promising evidence on the role of gender-responsive budgeting (Nass et al. 2018) and public complaint and grievance mechanisms (Pieterse 2019a, 2019b; Thomas and Aslam 2018) to investigate how gains in gender equality can be institutionalised and mainstreamed across the public and private sectors. There is limited evidence addressing how gender intersects with statutory interventions such as citizen oversight panels, formal audit and disclosure, and ombudsman services. Greater attention to how such accountability mechanisms can consider the specific needs of women and non-binary people would bring insights into their overall relevance and accessibility to communities.

Evidence must respond to a rapidly evolving political, economic, and socio-cultural context. While research has clearly established how access to WASH is experienced differently by men and women, corrective action has not been theorised in relation to accountability tools and processes. There are many areas where accountability in access to WASH holds particular relevance to women and girls, including WASH provision in factories with a gender-unbalanced workforce (such as textiles), menstrual hygiene management, and harassment or sextortion.² These are knowledge gaps that must be urgently addressed to improve the health and wellbeing of millions of people.

Social, political and economic changes triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic raise further questions around gendered water practices and participation in decision-making. Research could investigate how this new context has influenced how women engage in water advocacy processes or learn about accountability mechanisms. To what extent has the pandemic exacerbated gender inequalities around WASH access and water governance, considering factors such as changing work patterns, care burdens, and mobility? Are social accountability

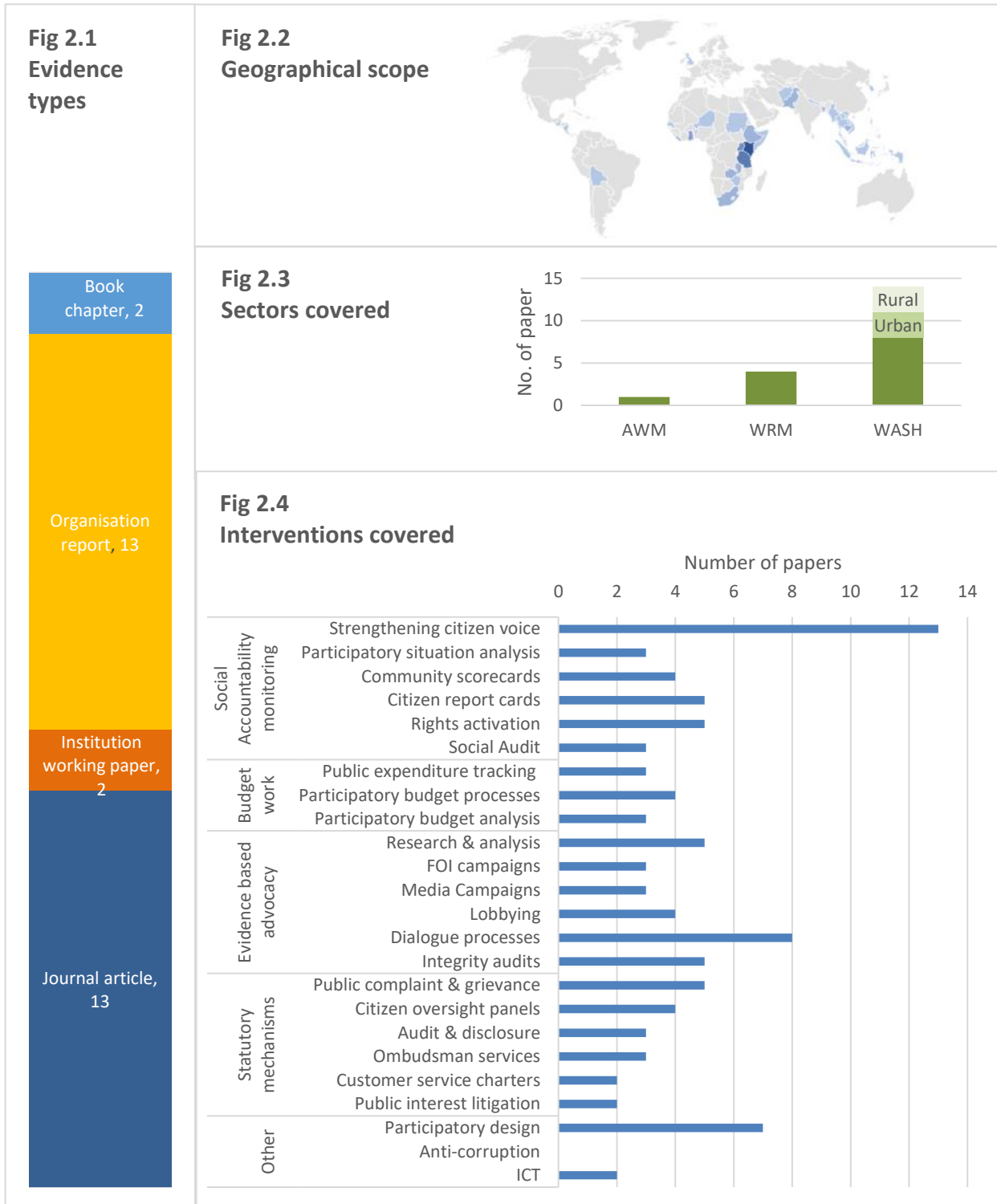
² Since the publication of the Global Evidence Review in 2020, Accountability for Water partners KEWASNET have undertaken investigations on this theme. See: <https://kewasnet.co.ke/sextortion-story-under-the-shadow-of-covid/>



mechanisms undermined by pandemic restrictions? And what are the gendered implications of this on efforts to strengthen citizens' voice, increase state responsiveness, and build trust between rights holders and duty bearers?

2. The role of donors

2.1. Evidence dashboard



2.2. What evidence is available?

This section discusses evidence relating to how donors influence water accountability outcomes. It draws on globally available evidence in the sector, as outlined in Hepworth et al. 2020. Both ‘external/donor support’ and ‘funding and financial support’ were identified as determining factors relating to the enabling environment in which accountability interventions occurred. Relationships with external donors and funding arrangements informed both the types of accountability interventions selected and contributed to the success or failure of water sector outcomes.

Of the final dataset of 151 papers, 30 were identified through coding and analysis, dating from 2005 to 2020. These comprised mostly peer-reviewed journals (13) and organisation reports (13), with a smaller number of working papers or book chapters (two each).

Most cases concern the WASH subsector (22), divided evenly between urban and rural cases. Social accountability and evidence-based advocacy interventions were the most frequently described (33 and 28 examples, respectively), followed by statutory accountability mechanisms (19). SAM interventions that strengthen citizens’ voice were the most popular intervention (13), followed by public hearings, debates, and dialogue processes (8).

2.3. What does the evidence tell us?

This section summarises the key papers identified during the evidence review as having substantive insights into how the role of donors is related to accountability. It excludes papers where the role of donors was covered superficially or without elaboration. A summary of the paper is followed by specific insights relating to the role of donors.

Acacia Consultants 2010



Programme Evaluation Report, Somalia Programme Activities in Gedo, Puntland and Mogadishu.

SUMMARY: A programme evaluation report of Norwegian Church Aid’s (NCA) activities. It reviews the effectiveness of humanitarian and development interventions relating to WASH and other sectors in Gedo and Puntland, Somalia. The report considers the accountability of NCA staff in designing and implementing a multi-dimensional emergency response, development and advocacy programme. It concludes that the activities were relevant, appropriate, and effectively adapted to shifting local needs following war and drought.

DETAILS: Highlights the positive supporting role external donors can play through ongoing monitoring and strengthened local partnerships to increase the legitimacy and relevance of interventions. Donors can play a constructive role when their approach is responsive, adaptable to dynamic local conditions, and accountable to aid recipients through regular updates and reviews. The report details how ongoing monitoring, reporting and analysis identified accountability deficits and strengthened intervention mandates. NCA partnered with local organisations rather than implementing programmes directly. NCA then undertook routine monitoring visits to ensure activities were completed as planned and provided backstopping support to the implementing partners. Such ‘integrity audits’ functioned to deliver confidence in project activities and ensure programmes were responsive to the needs of their intended beneficiaries.

Ali 2010



Can we improve accountability through participation? Practical Action’s Learning.

SUMMARY: Collates experiences from the NGO Practical Action to evaluate how citizen participation is conceived of by donors, policymakers, and other development actors. Community groups contributed to effective representation and opened channels for improved accountability with municipal governments and other institutions, strengthening the planning process. However, external priority setting by donors sometimes caused a misalignment with local needs and poor policy implementation.

DETAILS: Highlights how accountability interventions are often framed from above, restricting local autonomy and agency in decision-making. External priority setting can detract from bottom-up approaches to identify and resolve problems in water service delivery. Citizen participation was recognised as an important component by large donors such as the Asian Development Bank but not reflected in how the bank implemented its policies on the ground. Rather, bureaucrats viewed the realisation of participatory goals as a tick-in-a-box exercise, and responsibility for key decisions was shifted to national governments rather than incorporated into their operations. International donors are ill-equipped to understand local realities or power hierarchies. Experiences from Jessore, Bangladesh, showed how the dominance of external funders in programme design and service delivery caused a misalignment of priorities. Municipal forums such as ward committees discussed water problems at the grassroots level but had limited ability to influence key decisions on budget spending, monitoring and analysis. Another programme to introduce Community Boards to villages in Pakistan received substantial donor funding and support. However, nearly 70% of the budget remained unused because the capacity building was not well-targeted to needs. Although some donors' efforts to devolve and ring-fence budgets for community groups were more successful, programmes often failed due to incompatibility with the local government systems, elite capture, corruption and a lack of technical capacity.

Ballesterio 2012



Transparency Short-Circuited: Laughter and Numbers in Costa Rican Water Politics.

SUMMARY: Uses the case of Costa Rican water politics to illustrate how metrics of project success may differ between donors and implementing agents. The author contrasts more narrow and conventional visions of success against more open-ended experimental approaches, which pose greater risks for donors but potentially yield more innovative and

transformative results. The paper encourages critical reflection of the role of donors in designing accountability interventions. It suggests that a willingness on the part of donors to take risks and maintain flexibility could open up valuable space for more innovative and experimental approaches and interventions.

DETAILS: Describes how asymmetrical relationships with external funders can create constraints that limit possibilities, stifling innovative work that might occur as the need to chase and secure funding takes over. The author identified the differing priorities of donors and local actors as a source of potential tension. The donor required discrete, measurable, quantitative outcomes. This contrasted with the local preference for a more open-ended, experimental, subjective process. This tension highlighted the differing conceptual languages and approaches between donors and grassroots organisations. In this context, local organisations felt constrained by a sense of inferiority, disempowerment and lack of legitimacy since they lacked the ability to “speak in numbers” (p.223) and present quantitative outputs. The simplified visions of politicians and aid workers failed to capture complexities and local nuances on the ground. These failures led to efforts to bypass donor requirements, subverting monitoring and reporting logics.

Boesten et al. 2011



Service delivery on the cheap? Community-based workers in development interventions.

SUMMARY: This article examines the performance of community-based WASH workers in Tanzania and South Africa. It explores the relationship between participatory models of WRM, performance on accountability, and outcomes for inclusive development. The qualitative methodology used long-term observational case studies and institutional tracking supported by in-depth interviews. It aimed to test the widely held assumption that community-based workers or volunteers are more accountable and effective than professionals because they are closer to the populations they serve. Most donors presume that they will share an understanding of needs and tend to reach more people with equitable services. The article shows how donor support can skew accountability away from local people to the donor and how this undermines progress. They argue that much more thought – and action – is needed to strengthen the accountability of workers employed in water management institutions.

DETAILS: The ideological framework of funders and financial donors may conflict with implementing appropriate interventions. The dominance of donors can shift accountability to them rather than to intended beneficiaries. Funders often misinterpret local community dynamics, entrenching class inequalities. The limited availability of external resources strengthened local patronage systems, handing significant power to elite members of the water users associations donors entrusted with disbursing resources. Elite members felt accountable only towards themselves, their families, and the donor agency responsible for funding. For example, the Uchira Waters Users’ Association disregarded the difficulties chronically poor households had obtaining water. They only agreed to discuss these concerns following donor interest in the issue. External donors had a poor understanding of how their requirements interacted with community relationships and power dynamics. A comparison of the three Tanzanian water cases shows that a successful and sustainable drinking-water supply required professional expertise that was often unavailable locally. This was also a condition of donor support for such projects. In the water users’ association, it was necessary to employ a professional water manager because the community-management board did not have the expertise or experience to operate the system. There are thus unresolved tensions in the relationships between paid professionalism, volunteering professionalism, and unskilled community work.

Cavill and Sohail 2005



Improving Public Urban Services Through Increased Accountability.

SUMMARY: This paper draws on interviews and questionnaires from service providers and users, document review, and direct observation. It considers how accountability mechanisms can be applied to improve urban services (including WASH) using case studies from the UK, Bangladesh, South Africa, and South Korea. Highlights the importance of strong collaborative partnerships and information sharing to deliver positive outcomes.

DETAILS: Urban service provision is complex, and this paper emphasises that collaborative partnership and communication, including with external funders, are crucial. In deprived areas where many respondents reported multiple intersecting needs, effective service delivery could only be met by cooperation. No single agency held exclusive responsibilities,

especially in repairing, replacing or upgrading critical infrastructure, and sharing collective expertise improved water outcomes.

Driel et al. 2017



Social Accountability and WASH Service Delivery: A Case from Ethiopia.

SUMMARY: This report reviews the impact of social accountability mechanisms on WASH outcomes in Ethiopia and identifies concerns arising from the country’s autocratic rule. It identifies how Ethiopia’s autocratic government compromised WASH social accountability programmes. Civil society was severely constrained by punitive and repressive laws, limiting its ability to hold the government to account.³

DETAILS: Examines how participatory and transparent budgeting mechanisms can reduce corruption, drawing on data gathered by Woreda WASH teams from the Water Integrity Network (WIN). The report provides an overview of the regulatory context and evaluates the effectiveness of SAMs based on interviews and focus group discussions. It finds that long-term donor engagement, operating in the region for nearly twenty-five years, fostered local trust and confidence in the programme. Another NGO programme in the area contributed to better community awareness of rights and duties in communities. However, political unrest and constraints on civil society activities acted as disabling factors in the efforts to secure improved WASH services. High participation rates indicated that users embraced the new approach. Regular committee elections enhanced overall legitimacy, increasing a sense of ownership and shortening the project implementation period.

Jimenez et al. 2018



Global assessment of accountability in water and sanitation services using GLAAS data.

SUMMARY: Analyses quantitative survey data from the UN to provide a picture of global progress towards WASH targets and examines the effectiveness of accountability tools for achieving these goals. While donor support has contributed to the rise of coordinated approaches and sector reviews, responsible and equitable use of funds remains challenging.

³ However, civic freedoms have improved since the passage of the Civil Society Organizations Agency Proclamation No. 1113/2019 by Ethiopia’s Peoples House of Representatives (Freedom House, 2019).

DETAILS: Reviews quantitative data from Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS), a regular report prepared for UN-Water. Analyses how accountability mechanisms influence the performance of WASH services across 94 countries. The paper highlighted how external agencies have encouraged coordinated approaches in recipient countries. Over three-quarters of respondent countries now have national coordination mechanisms and sector reviews in place incorporating evidence-based decision-making, agreed indicators, and working to a sectoral framework or plan. Of the 25 countries included in a recent study of joint sector reviews in donor-dependent countries, nineteen had conducted WASH sector reviews. However, external support agencies encountered challenges balancing their desire to use and strengthen national systems in recipient countries against the need to maintain high integrity standards in the use of funds. The survey revealed that donor funds are unevenly distributed and clustered in particular regions, while criteria guiding the channelling of funds remained unclear. Although CSOs made efforts to develop a standard methodology for tracking WASH expenditure, this was not available at the date of publication.

Larsen 2014



Towards ‘hybrid accountability’ in EU biofuels policy? Community grievances and competing water claims in the Central Kalimantan oil palm sector.

SUMMARY: The EU’s biofuels policy incorporates ‘hybrid accountability’ mechanisms, referring to private-public partnerships that combine state regulation with voluntary certification. This paper discusses how they influence distributional water politics. The paper draws on qualitative fieldwork conducted at oil palm plantations in Central Kalimantan. Biofuel production in the region has triggered complaints from villagers over changes to water access, pollution, and flooding risks related to land-use change.

DETAILS: Considers the promise of voluntary multi-stakeholder sustainability standards as a mechanism to uphold accountability in bioenergy markets and complement weak public sector regimes. It questions whether the standards adopted strengthened accountability. The paper argues that the design and implementation of the EU’s market certification scheme have not effectively safeguarded local livelihoods and water resources. Externally designed accreditation measures demonstrate a ‘water blindness’ in their criteria that perpetuate injustices in rural water allocation and the pollution of water sources. Affected

communities cannot articulate their complaints effectively, and the scheme’s design failed to resolve user conflicts transparently and robustly. Overall, the mechanisms applied reductive criteria and did not solve underlying structural problems or power imbalances.

Laurie and Crespo 2006



Deconstructing the best-case scenario: lessons from water politics in La Paz–El Alto, Bolivia.

SUMMARY: Examines the water politics of municipal water service provision in El Alto-La Paz, Bolivia. The paper applies a mixed-method approach combining discourse analysis, long-term fieldwork, and analysis of water company contracts to interrogate donor claims. The paper researched a municipal water concession granted to a private company with contractual requirements to deliver pro-poor infrastructure upgrades to residents. Although celebrated by international donors as a ‘pro-poor’ concession, the government terminated the contract early following public protests. The article concludes that privatised water provision failed on key accountability metrics.

DETAILS: The preferred service delivery model combined private sector involvement with contractual commitments to pro-poor infrastructure upgrades. In the 1990s, the World Bank simultaneously promoted measurable anti-poverty targets such as new water and sewerage connections with templates for utility privatisation. The World Bank promoted this model in El Alto-La Paz. Contracts mandated extension to the coverage area and combined ‘participatory’ dimensions with user involvement to keep installation costs down. However, the company did not attend to the needs of poor users. Instead, contradictory regulatory regimes and blurred stakeholder roles left an accountability vacuum. Claims of increased service coverage were manipulated, based only on the service area rather than the full concession. The World Bank had a conflict of interest in assessing and promoting this model, management because the International Finance Corporation (its investment arm) held a stake in the operating company awarded the concession. There was a need for independent verification of claims about water coverage and greater regulatory control over private companies.

Pieterse 2019b



Accountability for improved services and governance in Tanzania: a review of context, practice and research priorities. (Report draft).

SUMMARY: Reviews a range of experiences relating to water accountability in Tanzania, surveying the available evidence to identify what factors stimulate or sustain conditions for improved water outcomes. The paper proposes a range of recommendations for strategic advocacy, especially on the need to identify local accountability champions, build on existing regulatory frameworks, and undertake accountability work within unfavourable and restrictive political contexts.

DETAILS: Highlights the enabling role of donors, whose activities opened entry points for civil society to interact with government and external funders. In Tanzania, donors supported the improvement of water, sanitation and irrigation through citizen-focused CSO activities intended to complement government-implemented WRM. Activities included DFID's 'Pay for Results' scheme, which allowed citizens to engage directly with district officials to prioritise water point repair and construction. It also included the national government's Joint Water Sector Review, which provided opportunities for donors, CSOs and communities to exchange views. Such interventions could result in 'win-win-win' situations where an NGO's water governance goals, a community's improved access to clean water and district bonus opportunities all aligned. Interactions between donors and CSOs often generated constructive dialogues that advanced thinking around common priorities.

Rahman et al. 2007



Accounting and the move to privatize water services in Africa.

SUMMARY: Interrogates how governments and financial institutions adopt the logic and language of accountancy to create a narrow accountability metric. The paper examines Ghana's neoliberal water policy, showing how the use of accountancy framing rationalises and legitimises water privatisation in the face of popular resistance.

DETAILS: Uses archival data and interviews to generate a history of water privatisation in Ghana. The paper argues that the privatisation agenda of external agencies has hindered local accountability and triggered a public backlash against unfavourable concessionary arrangements. International agencies like the World Bank have encouraged techniques of

financial governance – accounting, financing, accountability and auditing mechanisms – to justify otherwise unpopular policies. Consequently, relationships between external donor agencies and recipient countries continue to be shaped by colonial legacies and the dominance of European administrative structures. Policies preferred by donors often diverge significantly from local priorities, with implications for democratic accountability and public consent. Conclusions recommend rejecting the neoliberal model imposed by international donors, instead prioritising greater downward accountability and responsiveness to local demands.

Romano 2012



From Protest to Proposal: The Contentious Politics of the Nicaraguan Anti-Water Privatisation Social Movement.

SUMMARY: Examines how the demands of Nicaraguan protest movements against water privatisation translated into national policy and transformed regional water governance. It highlights accountability improvements to strengthen existing representative government institutions and create extra-institutional democratic spaces and practices. The article demonstrates the positive role external donor support can play in nurturing the formation and development of democratic institutions.

DETAILS: The article draws on long-term fieldwork and extensive interviews to highlight the positive role external donors can play in building the capacity of civil society and improving democratic capabilities. In the Nicaraguan case study, funding from multi and bilateral agencies (USAID; Norwegian Aid) helped establish and connect community WASH committees, strengthening their links with urban NGOs. Such activities created new opportunities for democratic mobilisation. Despite their initial reliance on donor support, they developed into key institutional vehicles for citizen accountability and sustainable water practices. Semi-autonomous WASH committees emerged as powerful social movement actors and became key channels for citizens to demand accountable water governance.

Smet et al. 2010a, 2010b



A. Case of wash accountability at the district level. Improved WASH Governance in West Nile through Local Dialogue.

B. Achievements of the West Nile WASH Accountability Project.

SUMMARY: Provides evidence supporting face-to-face dialogue exercises to stimulate improvements to water service delivery and build trust in local government. The article shows how devolved state authorities were unresponsive and evasive until the local government agreed to introduce dialogue sessions and allow direct communication with users. This intervention increased the rate of cases resolution.

DETAILS: Explains how the scale of political engagement can determine the effectiveness of state responses to service delivery issues in rural Uganda. Community water users previously reported disagreements about water committee decisions (for example, the time for opening and closing boreholes) directly to the District Water Office. They bypassed the sub-county leadership, which citizens viewed as unresponsive and evasive. In response, district officers organised dialogue sessions and allocated new funds. Technocrats and politicians agreed to use action research tools and methodologies to enhance social accountability. The measures resulted in growing confidence in local government to solve problems, with an increased number of cases resolved and a reduced number sent to district level arbitration. Involving all stakeholders at public gatherings and speaking to each other was viewed as particularly important given the low levels of literacy in the region. Success depended on the commitment of technocrats to listen to community concerns and build trust at different levels of water service delivery.

Sneddon and Fox 2007



Power, Development, and Institutional Change: Participatory Governance in the Lower Mekong Basin.

SUMMARY: Undertakes a case study analysis to understand how power operates at multiple scales of water governance in the Mekong River basin. The article draws on extensive fieldwork and stakeholder interviews in the region to expose underlying tensions that pose obstacles to creating and sustaining accountable water governance systems.

DETAILS: Historical colonial inequalities framed the context of development interventions and prevented the full embrace of policies perceived to be imported from elsewhere then imposed from above. Whereas donors were inclined to favour participatory approaches to WRM, Mekong River basin governments resisted these changes. Governments reluctantly

engaged with participatory exercises to secure donor approval and access funds and were not viewed as an innovation to improve efficiency, equity, or sustainability in water outcomes. The conclusions show that making donor aid conditional on the embrace of participatory measures may, paradoxically, discredit such approaches in the eyes of recipient governments. There remains a need to find ways to secure genuine ‘buy-in’ to the social accountability agenda from governments.

Suleiman 2011**Civil society: A revived mantra in the development discourse.**

SUMMARY: Challenges assumptions about the role of civil society in promoting ‘good governance’ through a critical analysis of their participation in governing the main water utility of Accra, Ghana. This focused on building a ‘managed consensus’ for privatisation over transparent access to information and strengthened democratic decision-making process.

DETAILS: Highlights how external donors sought to influence policy favouring water privatisation through a controversial public consultation process. This process was presented as open and transparent by donors and the government. But trade unions and CSOs argued it was a superficial consultation that withheld critical information from Ghanaian citizens, a ‘cosmetic’ process to help legitimise unpopular privatisation policies. NCAP-Water (a movement resisting privatisation) accused the UK government of using aid to bribe the national government and promote privatisation. The author contends that neither the government, the donors, nor the civil society groups were concerned about representing existing public perceptions about water policies. Donors sought the introduction of neoliberal reforms while NCAP-Water was primarily concerned with defending its ideological interests. The influence of external donors led CSOs to participate in ‘managing consensus’ around privatisation, rather than opening space to design democratically legitimate and locally accountable governance arrangements.

Tanzanian National Institute for Medical Research 2015

Outcome and impact monitoring for scaling up Mtumba sanitation and hygiene participatory approach in Tanzania.



SUMMARY: Draws on interviews, focus groups and household surveys to assess and monitor Tanzania’s Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach. Strengthened citizens’ voice improved representation and inclusion outcomes. However, a lack of collaboration between stakeholders impeded local accountability, as multi-scale power struggles took the focus away from local priorities.

DETAILS: The evaluation found that representation and inclusion improved and increased access to information. Different latrine designs were demonstrated at sanitation centres, accommodating the needs of different groups of people. Assessments recognised these sanitation centres as central knowledge hubs for improved latrines, designs, and approaches. However, the lack of a multi-sector, collaborative approach, and the power of external donors to set priorities, were negative factors that impeded accountability. Key district departments were not effectively involved, and there was unfavourable competition between health and water departments on water, sanitation, and hygiene issues. Consequently, district authorities did not allocate funds to support the initiative. Without a clear entry point to contribute to the project, local NGOs survived on tenders to carry out certain activities in their jurisdiction without the opportunity to identify their priorities.

Tincani and Mwaruvanda 2016



Final Evaluation of the Fair Water Futures Project (Uhakika wa Maji) in Tanzania.

SUMMARY: Evaluates Shahidi Wa Maji’s Social Accountability Monitoring programme, outlining the factors contributing to improved WRM and WASH outcomes. The evaluation attributed success to a well-designed, multi-level advocacy strategy that garnered awareness and support through repeated political and media engagements.

DETAILS: Evidence from Shahidi Wa Maji’s Social Accountability Monitoring programme demonstrates how to secure better WRM/WASH outcomes through open communication and data sharing between donors, governments, and communities. Interview testimony and document review highlight the importance of joint planning and liaison between government and donors from the project design stage onwards. It also highlights the importance of sharing data about donor commitments and disbursement of resources. Open communication delivered better results. Donors can respond to emerging insights from social

accountability work, while stakeholder dialogues can allow for the frank exchange of views to strengthen programme design.

Tropp et al. 2017



Water Integrity: From Concept to Practice.

SUMMARY: Advises donors on how they can better target support for water integrity and anti-corruption. The authors raise concerns that political elites will co-opt institutions for personal gain if their regulatory independence is not embedded from the outset. There is a need to couple interventions that strengthen citizens' voice with effective audit and compliance procedures. Donors can best achieve this through 'horizontal and holistic' governance (p.194) that works collaboratively with stakeholders across sectors.

DETAILS: Outlines the limitations of anti-corruption measures demanded by donors. The authors draw on their sectoral experience to argue that national anti-corruption commissions, anti-corruption prosecutors and ombudsmen have not improved WASH outcomes. Policymakers and implementing agencies have lacked ownership of such institutions, and governments have misused them as a device to discredit political opponents while deflecting from the need for more deep-seated reforms. Authors identified a lack of independence from the government, limited budgetary support and investigative powers, and unclear procedures as key priorities for improvement. The authors recommend that external support agencies broaden efforts to combine social accountability mechanisms with formal regulatory institutions to sanction bad actors. They also identify challenges for NGOs developing and implementing SAMs in the water sector. NGOs initially rely on external assistance but aim to develop their credibility, local legitimacy, and independence. Therefore, donors must commit to long-term support that helps to develop autonomous, self-sustaining organisations.

Water Witness 2020



Accountability for Improved Water Services and Governance in Kenya: A review of context, practice and Research Priorities.

SUMMARY: Reviews a range of experiences relating to water accountability in Kenya, surveying the available evidence to identify what factors stimulate or sustain conditions for



improved water outcomes. The paper concludes that the performance of the water sector has been poor overall and proposes a range of recommendations for strategic advocacy. It identifies the need to develop a human rights-based approach, improve regulatory compliance, and pursue full implementation of the 2016 Water Act.

DETAILS: Highlights how a lack of transparency and openness from external donors can hinder learning and limit accountability for end-users in Kenyan WASH programmes. Following the implementation phase of WASH projects, many private foundations did not prioritise evaluations. When evaluations did occur, donors did not share the results widely. There was a particular disincentive to share results when it reflected poorly on the performance of WASH services. The review recommends using a WASH donor accountability scorecard to encourage donors to disclose the results of evaluations. It proposes that donors embrace a human rights-based framing of WASH service as universal entitlements and fund awareness-raising projects that adopt this approach.

2.4. Emerging Insights

2.4.1. Community dynamics

Evidence from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Tanzania indicates that cultural power hierarchies and elite capture will obstruct equitable water outcomes unless mitigating measures are in place. In Pakistan, funding sent from a development bank to Community Citizens Boards ended up with local elites and did not reflect the priorities of more marginalised groups regarding the operation, maintenance and management of water supply systems (Ali 2010). Similarly, in Tanzania and South Africa, Boesten et al. (2011) take the example of voluntary community-based workers in potable water provision to show how ‘service delivery on the cheap’ allowed for the concentration of knowledge and resources among community members already familiar with the logic of donors. Practitioners must factor this representational challenge into ‘community-based’ approaches from the design stage onwards, balancing participation and inclusivity with proper training and professionalism. It is important to adopt a socially inclusive approach, involving patient and sustained engagement with those of differing knowledge levels, reaching out to district authorities, and working without stigma (Tanzanian National Institute for Medical Research 2015).

Donors must also be flexible and responsive to locally determined priorities and evaluations of success, which may not be easy to measure or align with their perceptions. In Costa Rica, Ballestero (2012) shows how the auditing techniques of donors failed to capture the beneficial effects of a ‘human right to water’ programme in terms of increasing a sense of empowerment and political agency experienced by community members. Water policies imposed from above and perceived as illegitimate often result in social unrest and protest, as anti-privatisation struggles in Bolivia, Ghana, and elsewhere have demonstrated. Funding tied to structural adjustment programmes have provoked backlash from trade unions, indigenous groups, and urban dwellers animated by concerns around WASH affordability and access (Laurie and Crespo 2006; Rahman et al. 2007; Suleiman 2011).

2.4.2. Enabling environment

The overarching context for donor engagements continues to be shaped by colonial legacies and European administrative structures that can act as a constraint on policy vision (Ballestero 2012; Rahman et al. 2007). In Ghana, Rahman et al. (2007) point to accounting techniques and financial vocabularies employed by creditors such as the World Bank. They argue that these allow

creditors to present privatisation as a generic solution to diverse problems while diminishing the experience and expertise of communities, who are not equipped to articulate their concerns in such terms. Such structures can trigger a backlash from popular movements seeking to uphold democratic sovereignty, especially when anti-imperialist sentiment shapes discussion on resource control (Laurie and Crespo 2006; Sneddon and Fox 2007; Suleiman 2011). Donors should consider how the global political economy structures aid relationships and frames perceptions of accountability interventions associated with NGOs.

Uneven access to education, skills and professionalism in recipient countries can also limit the scope of accountability interventions, especially in rural areas with low literacy rates (Boesten et al., 2011; Smet et al., 2010). Public access to reliable and trusted information was an enabler in the uptake and effective deployment of accountability mechanisms (Smet et al. 2010; Tincani and Mwaruvanda, 2016). In this respect, donor support can itself act as an enabler, bridging between different CSOs and committing funding to sustain dialogue processes (Romano 2012).

2.4.3. Governance dynamics

International donors and development agencies are most likely to influence water outcomes through their interactions with national governments. The evidence demonstrates how donor funding and resource allocation can influence government priorities and political will to act, with both positive and negative consequences. For example, (Ali 2010; Sneddon and Fox 2007; Tropp et al. 2017; Water Witness 2020).

For donors to play a constructive role, there is a need for regular feedback and exchange of views between donors and implementing partners (Acacia Consultants 2010; Pieterse 2019). This connects with trust-building exercises that generate genuine political ‘buy in’ and constructive alliances between partners and communities (Sneddon and Fox 2007). However, donors should be aware of political dynamics between state agencies and think carefully about whether the harmonisation of policy agendas is possible or even desirable (Cavill & Sohail 2005).

External donors need to recognise and leverage their power to ensure governments protect human rights and maximise space for an autonomous civil society while respecting popular sovereignty and exercising restraint in entering domestic policy debates (Rahman et al. 2007; Laurie and Crespo 2006; Suleiman 2011; Water Witness 2020). Donor scorecards have been proposed as a device to encourage greater transparency and data sharing, incentivising donors to disclose the results of internal evaluations for improved sectoral learning (Water Witness 2020).

3.5. Research priorities

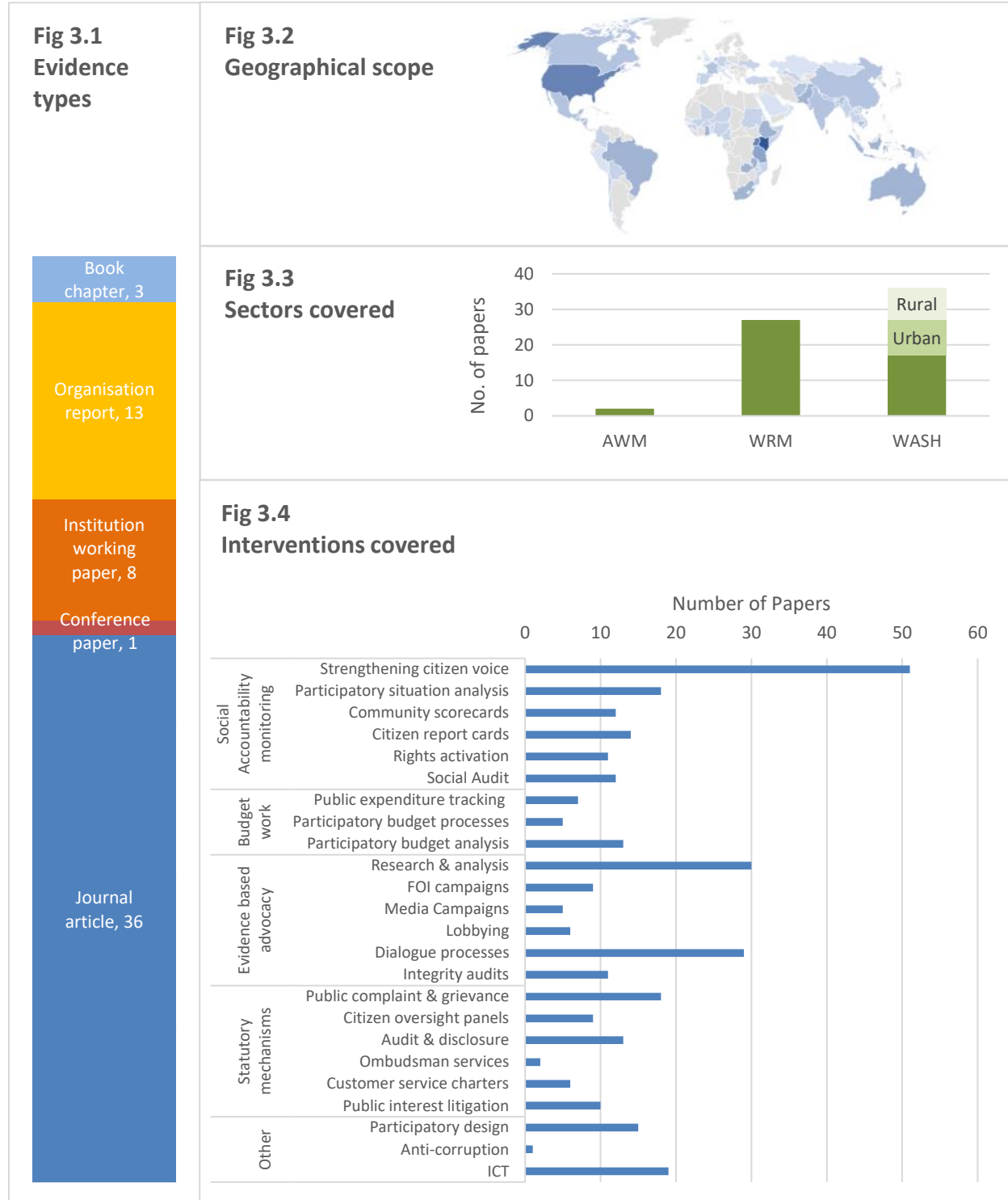
One in five papers considered within the evidence review examined the role of donors or external funders in their analysis. This included both multi/bilateral aid agencies and international financial institutions such as the World Bank (Laurie and Crespo 2006; Romano 2012; Suleiman 2011), as well as grants from private funders and foundations (Acacia Consultants 2020; Boesten et al. 2011; Smet et al 2010; Water Witness 2020). Future research should investigate the specificities of each, considering the reach and influence they carry with different constituencies. Priority areas include trust and legitimacy, community empowerment, and elite capture in programme design.

Practitioners need further evidence on the enabling conditions that allow external donors to play a constructive role, stimulate dialogue and nurture long-term trust. A better understanding is needed of how to establish appropriate donor relationships, prevent donor overreach, and ensure that implementing agencies prioritise downward accountability to ‘beneficiaries’ over upward accountability to external funders (Boesten et al., 2011). Mindful of the charge that ‘civil society is influenced by donors not to challenge the status quo but to build social consensus to maintain it’ (Hearn 2001, quoted in Suleiman 2011), future research should examine how donors can create an enabling environment for civil society to act as disruptors and stimulate popular participation in water governance. How can donors respond to calls for decolonisation of the aid sector and ensure their legitimacy? Future research should consider what strategies can best empower marginalised sectors of civil society to act with greater autonomy and be supported to design their own projects and programmes.

Furthermore, political economy analysis that interrogates which interests are served in the conditionalities attached to aid and development funds can ensure external funders are sensitive to concerns around political sovereignty. Following Larsen’s (2014) work on sustainability standards, further research could investigate whether voluntary standards and accreditation schemes are sufficient in their current form and if improved design can address accountability gaps and inequalities in water outcomes. Donors need a better understanding of how external funds can support accountability at different scales; through robust budget monitoring and tracking of global financial institutions, and companies entering the WASH sector in conjunction with trade unions and domestic CSOs.

3. What makes governments listen?

3.1. Evidence Dashboard



3.2. What evidence is available?

This section outlines the evidence about what makes governments listen. The papers were selected where ‘policy and law – adjusted or implemented’ and ‘political recognition/will’ were coded as significant water accountability outcomes. Various salient factors were also identified and incorporated into the analysis. These included:

- Political perception
- Institutional responsibilities (clear/ambiguous)
- Inter-agency accountability
- Leadership/champions
- Government capacity

These codes also informed the selection of papers discussed in the next section.

Of the final data sample, sixty-one papers are available, dating from 2011 to 2020. They comprise a majority of journal articles (36), followed by organisation reports (13), working papers (8), book chapters (3), and conference papers (1). Out of this subset, WASH was still the more common sub-sector (56%), but a greater proportion of the literature focused on WRM compared to other topics (44%). Strengthening citizens’ voice (23) and dialogue processes (15) were the most frequent interventions related to this theme.

3.3. What does the evidence tell us?

This section summarises papers identified as having priority relevance to this theme. It presents sixteen papers illustrative of the variety of mechanisms and strategies identified across the literature. A summary of the paper is followed by the specific insights relating to what makes governments listen.

Acey 2019



Silence and Voice in Nigeria’s Hybrid Urban Water Markets: Implications for Local Governance of Public Goods.

SUMMARY: Draws on field research and stakeholder interviews to investigate the hybrid nature of water and sanitation provision in Nigeria’s urban water markets. It sets out to examine the intersection between formal and informal modes of water provision and access, considering how informal service provision is both unsanctioned and made possible by the state, resulting in the ‘co-production’ of water provision.

DETAILS: Discusses the informality and hybrid nature of Nigeria’s urban water markets. It considers how strengthened citizens’ voice is necessary to ensure improved household water supply in cities with limited network infrastructure. Informality is produced and sanctioned by elite segments of society, permitting state neglect of insecure and poor urban residents. Informal networks become ‘shadow state activities’, facilitating exit from the state as residents cannot make their voices heard to access basic services. In the face of unresponsive government water providers, consumers dissatisfied with their water services ‘exit’ through the refusal to pay water bills and the establishment of self-help groups. Such actions hold the potential to stimulate greater reflexiveness on behalf of the state.

Ban et al. 2008



The Political Economy of Village Sanitation in South India: Capture or Poor Information?

SUMMARY: This World Bank report applies linear regression analysis to demonstrate how elite capture can occur within a context of limited public education and access to information. The report investigates how access to information impacts the quality of sanitation infrastructure in rural South India. It argues that an informed citizenry, equipped with vital

information about the delegation of responsibility in local government, is a necessary precondition of improved accountability outcomes.

DETAILS: Low public awareness about the government’s responsibilities to provide basic services (as set out in the Indian constitution) allows officials to siphon off resources. A lack of clarity around the devolution of state functions to panchayats (village councils) confuses citizens. Poorly defined standards and inadequate performance monitoring exacerbate the situation. Uncertainties of funding for local governments make it difficult for citizens to hold representatives accountable, and local representatives lack understanding of their respective tasks. The findings suggest that the village electorate is more responsive to visible public goods such as roads than the less tangible benefits of public health and sanitation. Local politicians act accordingly to win their votes. The report recommends educating citizens and policymakers on sanitation and public health, to stimulate citizen participation and government monitoring. Improved sanitation outcomes rely on greater public awareness of both public health benefits, and local government’s responsibilities to citizens.

Bolin et al. 2008



Fate of the Verde: Water, environmental conflict, and the politics of scale in Arizona’s central highlands.

SUMMARY: Undertakes a qualitative, political ecology analysis of political conflict over groundwater in Arizona’s Verde River watershed. The case study illustrates how citizens can use accountability interventions to seek to secure concessions from governing authorities. It interrogates the ways political cultures, prevailing power structures, and historical patterns of water consumption can legitimise or discredit competing claims to water resources in the eyes of public officials. The paper highlights differing decision-making processes at different scales of governance, limiting the efficacy of formal accountability mechanisms.

DETAILS: Examines how states manage trade-offs between jurisdictions and considers how claims to the water are strengthened and contested at different scales. Ideological biases of politicians lead them to privilege the views of established groups and resist big policy changes. However, authorities will also respond to citizen pressure under certain political conditions. In this case study, organised campaigning and coalition-building shifted public opinion. Citizens used various accountability mechanisms. One CSO employed the threat of

public interest litigation to increase public pressure. Media campaigns also effectively shifted the terms of debate, invoking federal environmental laws and scientific/hydrological studies to support their claims. The case illustrates some trends unique to US political culture, with its preference for laissez-faire regulatory approaches and hostility to federal mandates. However, it also attends to common challenges relating to an unequal political economy, which prevent grassroots groups from being heard or accessing decision-making power

Cantor 2016



The public trust doctrine and critical legal geographies of water in California.

SUMMARY: Examines the circumstances in which citizens can successfully apply the legal principle of Public Accountability Trust Doctrine to protect lakes and ponds in California. The paper analyses how the state balances, interprets, and implements political, cultural, economic, and environmental values of water. It argues that the strategic framing of environmental advocates influences the outcomes.

DETAILS: Discusses how Public Trust Doctrine has been invoked as a legal principle to protect water bodies in California. The author uses a comparative political ecology approach to demonstrate how the discourse of legal institutions projects a specific representation of nature. Such assumptions shape how state institutions respond in their implementation of legal protections. Clean water advocates successfully implemented the Public Trust Doctrine at Mono Lake, setting a new legal precedent in challenging prevailing water rights arrangements. Legal recognition protected instream water flows. However, the doctrine failed to protect the Salton Sea, a saline lake facing similar threats because of water transfers. The paper emphasises the importance of Public Trust Doctrine as a dynamic legal principle. It gives insight into the calculations of state authorities in balancing, interpreting, and implementing different values around water.

Garrick et al. 2012



Environmental water governance in federal rivers: Opportunities and limits for subsidiarity in Australia's Murray-Darling River.

SUMMARY: Provides a positive account of decentralised governance along Australia's Murray-Darling River basin. It demonstrates how the 'subsidiarity principle', which devolves

powers to the lowest level practical, reduced institutional fragmentation. Subsidiarity increased responsiveness and accountability to water users.

DETAILS: Growing frustration at fragmented institutional authority resulted in the 2007 Water Policy, which increased the coherence of water management decision-making at different scales. A parliamentary inquiry considered community consultation efforts by the Murray–Darling Basin Authority. Stakeholders, including agencies, water users, and academics, embraced the subsidiarity principle as a response to desires for greater localism. Stakeholders demanded greater clarity over institutional responsibilities and community involvement. When combined with the visibly deteriorating condition of basin ecosystems, this strengthened political will to develop a regional water planning process. After an eighteen-month consultation process, the strategy identified objectives to assign responsibilities across all levels of government. Outcomes included better information gathering and reporting, strengthened community engagement, and increased monitoring. This ultimately produced a nested governance system, devolving power while ensuring complementary arrangements for coordinating activities that spanned multiple levels. Evidence suggests that, in this instance, state authorities responded to institutional failings by listening to stakeholder voices and championing a new approach. The outcome was a recovery in the quality and condition of basin ecosystems. Authors identify strengthened accountability at different government scales as an outcome of subsidiarity.

Gillet et al. 2014



Moving from local to State water governance to resolve a local conflict between irrigated agriculture and commercial forestry in South Australia.

SUMMARY: Identifies how responsibilities shared across multiple levels of governance can dilute accountability, especially where information dissemination by public interest media is weak. The paper proposes that different accountability mechanisms may be more effective levers of change at different levels of governance.

DETAILS: Focuses on conflict between irrigated agriculture and commercial forestry as part of the Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation plan in South Australia. The paper investigates the differing response of the state at local, federal and state levels. Quantitative and qualitative content analysis determines the allocation of water across competing legal,

economic and administrative boundaries. State legislative debates were unclear to communities not directly involved in the process, as newspapers failed to disclose the facts needed to make informed decisions. This also resulted in inter-departmental confusion. The paper highlights the importance of regional media and public discourse influencing governments. Media narratives that mobilised social justice principles gained greater political buy-in and secured better water outcomes.

Grönwall 2016



Self-supply and accountability: To govern or not to govern groundwater for the (peri-) urban poor in Accra, Ghana.

SUMMARY: Considers groundwater governance and the peri-urban poor in Accra, Ghana. The article identifies ambiguous institutional responsibilities and a weak evidence base as obstacles to sustainable and reliable water provision. It concludes that better monitoring and assessment can harmonise institutional approaches and produce a reliable evidence base for policy decisions.

DETAILS: The paper posits a causal link from ambiguous institutional responsibilities to poor accountability outcomes and inadequate service provision. Drawing on fieldwork in Accra, the author demonstrates that parallel bodies tasked with water provisioning and governance result in a lack of reliable data, concealing the reliance on wells and boreholes among poor (peri-) urban users and leaving state authorities unresponsive to strategic planning requirements. The patterns of informal water use are not captured in aggregate statistics, resulting in poorly evidenced decision-making and limited political will to act. Findings conclude that governments will listen when there are clear chains of accountability and institutional authority, when robust monitoring occurs, and when presented with reliable and comprehensive evidence.

Hong 2017



What are the areas of competence for central and local governments? Accountability mechanisms in multi-level governance.

SUMMARY: Draws on quarterly data collected from South Korean water supply services to propose that different approaches may be necessary to gain the attention of local or central

governments. Formal accountability mechanisms in the form of election campaigns and performance management systems continue to be important to secure affordable, accessible water services. It cautions that trade-offs may occur due to balancing participatory and technocratic approaches.

DETAILS: Quantitative regression analysis is applied to compare customer complaints and water supply efficiency at different levels of implementation. Evidence shows that, at a local level, elections are more effective at shifting bureaucratic attitudes and behaviours. Local elections positively influence the responsiveness and conduct of politicians and local bureaucracies. However, internal performance monitoring can trigger more positive WASH service delivery outcomes at a central government level. Outside of election cycles, voters lack the resources for robust monitoring, and internal practices are not observable for citizens. Results showed that citizen complaints were higher when service delivery duties shifted from local to central government, but water supply efficiency increased. This was considered a trade-off since new investments in infrastructure to reduce leakage were financed by increasing the price of services.

Huntjens et al. 2011



Adaptive Water Management and Policy Learning in a Changing Climate: A Formal Comparative Analysis of Eight Water Management Regimes in Europe, Africa and Asia.

SUMMARY: Undertakes a comparative analysis of eight watersheds in Europe, Africa and Asia to study policy learning in water management regimes over time. The article argues that better integrated, cooperative governance structures and information sharing between stakeholders can enhance the performance of water management regimes in the face of growing uncertainty.

DETAILS: Comparative analysis shows how top-down, command and control governance regimes delivered worse WRM outcomes than those adopting more flexible, responsive, and participatory methods. Regional water boards and management authorities who displayed a commitment to joint or participatory information production performed better than their counterparts when dealing with floods, droughts, and other hazards. A lack of consensual knowledge could hinder cooperation, especially when dealing with uncertainty and change. There was a need to ‘open up’ space for policy learning. Collaborative, information-sharing

practices ensured greater preparedness against the growing complexities, conflicts and future uncertainties of climate change. Water governance outcomes were positively linked to broad communication between stakeholders, open/shared information sources, and flexibility and openness for experimentation - an iterative process of ad hoc problem solving described as 'double loop' learning.

Kuhlike et al. 2016



Reputational risks and participation in flood risk management and the public debate about the 2013 flood in Germany.

SUMMARY: Examines politicised processes surrounding citizen participation in flood risk management. The article discusses how the media and politicians blamed citizens for state failures to prevent or mitigate flooding risks. The public highly valued participatory governance. However, this allowed scapegoating by politicians to occur following poor decisions around floor protection. The article exposes gaps in the chain of accountability between voters, elected officials, and the media.

DETAILS: Analysis draws on empirical observations and interviews with citizens and experts to explain how politicised stakeholder participatory processes generated a backlash following damaging floods across Saxony, Germany. Planning decisions required a Planfeststellungsverfahren (a public approval process), but while there was a general perception that public participation was good, in the aftermath of severe flooding events, blame shifted to citizens who had objected to the government's flood management policy. The institutional setting permitted only limited participation in decision-making but enabled responsible administrations to deflect responsibility for failures onto other stakeholders.

Maponya 2018



Towards an incentive-driven local government customer management policy: Lessons learnt from piloting of the CSIR's CARRS system.

SUMMARY: Outlines the transformation of local government responsiveness following the introduction of customer care systems at a municipal water provider in Durban, South Africa. This improved communications and interactions with citizens. Findings demonstrate the

importance of incentives and rewards for those providing high levels of customer care in WASH service delivery.

DETAILS: The misalignment of priorities and lack of communication between communities and local government triggered citizen protests over poor water service provision. Unrest pushed the national government to introduce new policies and systems, including the establishment of a new communications platform through which communities could interact with municipal officials. The platform mandates public servants to regularly consult with customers, taking corrective action for failures and mistakes. The new platform resulted in improved operation, maintenance, monitoring and reporting. As part of the new Corrective Action Request and Report System (CARRS) platform, task teams were recruited, appointed and trained to report incidents on behalf of communities. Data revealed that seven in ten incidents were subsequently resolved.

Meissner 2016



Coming to the party of their own volition: Interest groups, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase 1 and change in the water sector.

SUMMARY: Analyses the role of political interest groups in shaping policy outcomes in the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, an IWRM infrastructure scheme between Lesotho and South Africa. The article identifies the formation of political interest groups, which mobilised transnationally to influence and shape government policy, as playing a decisive role in strengthening WRM outcomes.

DETAILS: Interest groups played an oppositional role in IWRM processes, identifying shortcomings and drawing attention to overlooked socio-ecological impacts of dams and engineering schemes. This positively influenced water outcomes relating to organisational performance, representation and inclusion and political will/policy change. Political activism spurred changes to the project's institutional framework and technical infrastructure. There were several occasions where interest groups were key players resolving stakeholder conflicts. Unlike catchment management agencies, interest groups participated in governance processes voluntarily. They mobilised at the transnational level and at a distance, building coalitions that could reach across multiple policy arenas.

Nare et al. 2011



Framework for effective community participation in water quality management in Luvuvhu Catchment of South Africa.

SUMMARY: Undertakes an extensive review of development frameworks governing water policy to assess the efficacy of participatory approaches in South Africa. Participatory institutions are insufficient when there is no strong link between the water quality management framework and community development structures. Passive involvement and limited monitoring mean that governments are unlikely to reformulate their prevailing approach.

DETAILS: Despite the comprehensive policy, legal and institutional frameworks in Luvuvhu Catchment, communities only participated passively in water quality monitoring and management. The promotion of legislation such as the Access to Information Act and the National Water Act did not motivate community engagement. Although nine out of ten respondents acknowledged monitoring of their water supplies, less than one in ten said communities were actively involved in the monitoring. The paper concludes that the formation of Catchment Management Agencies and Water User Associations has not translated into effective participation by local communities because there is no link between the national water quality management frameworks and community-based development structures. This institutional failure weakened the political will of governments to act.

Padawangi 2017



Building Knowledge, Negotiating Expertise: Participatory Water Supply Advocacy and Service in Globalizing Jakarta.

SUMMARY: Investigates participatory water supply advocacy in Jakarta, interviewing multiple stakeholders to understand how the process of building knowledge and expertise could impact accountability in water management systems. The article evaluates tools for generating an alternative knowledge base and expertise to shape policy advocacy in urban water management.

DETAILS: The author interviewed multiple stakeholders to understand how building knowledge and expertise could impact accountability in urban water management systems.

Service-focused and advocacy-focused participatory organisations played a role in bottom-up knowledge production, democratising knowledge around water management and piped water access to the marginalised population. However, ‘participatory’ mechanisms were also applied to legitimise a dysfunctional system without effectively challenging Jakarta’s dominant urban water management paradigm. The author concludes that “service-oriented participation indirectly endorsed the operation of private water utilities through collaboration.” (Padawangi 2017: 87), as negotiated monopolies of expertise by private-sector water providers and the state tended to remain dominant in urban water supply systems.

Romano 2012



From Protest to Proposal: The Contentious Politics of the Nicaraguan Anti-Water Privatisation Social Movement.

SUMMARY: Examines how the demands of Nicaraguan protest movements against water privatisation translated into national water policy. Citizen pressure improved water governance through improving the inclusiveness and accountability of existing institutions of government and through creating extra-institutional democratic spaces for collaboration and discussion.

DETAILS: Social movements' creation of extra-institutional spaces can translate into a legislative and policy agenda for government. Public pressure successfully pushed the National Assembly to suspend the bidding process by multinational corporations and delivered a mandate for a new progressive water policy. The wave of protest ensured that water privatisation became an election issue, and coalitions built around the cause ensured it was a political priority for the incoming government. Networks formed through these social struggles also strengthened mass democracy through deliberative processes. In addition to strategies emphasising the public’s access to information, anti-privatisation organisations also brought marginalised sectors into the law development process as consultants on alternative water law proposals. Alliance-led consultations drafted a new general water law with members of Municipal Councils, Development Commissions, and stakeholder organisations. The proposal reflected community priorities by emphasising the ‘public character’ of water services. The anti-privatisation movement cemented new and dynamic

horizontal and vertical linkages among rural water committees, NGOs, multilateral organisations, and local government.

Sahu 2010



Transparency, accountability in water service delivery, problems and prospects: A case of Berhampur city in Orissa, India.

SUMMARY: Discusses how citizen report cards and urban corruption surveys have been successfully deployed as accountability mechanisms in informal settlements of Berhampur City, India, spurring corrective measures on behalf of political representatives to deliver improved WASH services. Politicians are most responsive when citizens are equipped with information and can develop broad coalitions with champions of accountable water policies.

DETAILS: Analysis draws on questionnaires, workshops and project assessment to investigate if dissatisfaction with irregular, poor quality services could translate into a meaningful political response. It finds that social accountability tools created a general awareness among communities and stimulated them to organise and demand better services. Citizen participation triggered an improvement in services in slums where lack of drinking water was a long-running issue, extending municipal water provision to informal settlements. Previously, the uptake of social accountability tools by marginalised groups had been slow due to fear of generating disfavour from the public agency and elected representatives. However, improvements came in the wake of the Indian Right to Information law, which was celebrated for strengthening the power of citizens and improving the openness and credibility of service agencies. Cross-class coalitions enrolled the ‘louder’ voices of the middle and upper classes into advocacy. This helped to brand the demands of low-income groups as ‘user-oriented’ rather than ‘poor-oriented,’ eliminating stigma and building credibility with politicians. Constructive engagement between accountability champions, service providers and citizens was key to success. Improved WASH outcomes reflected concerted efforts by activists to develop dialogues with interested and sympathetic government officials.

3.4. Emerging insights

3.4.1. Community dynamics

At a community level, evidence suggests that water accountability and advocacy is most effective when accountability champions undertake work to build networked, socially diverse political coalitions. Such formations can mobilise to amplify the interests of underserved and marginalised groups lacking formal political representation. In Arizona’s Verde River watershed, various NGOs and community groups came together to resist a planned pipeline that would divert groundwater to more affluent regions. The coalition employed a combination of public interest litigation, media campaigns, and debate & dialogue processes to successfully shift public opinion, forcing the federal government to reassess how groundwater was managed and regulated (Bolin et al. 2008). In Nicaragua, an alliance between rural water committees, urban NGOs, and allies in local government successfully elevated water policy as a wedge issue in national elections, subsequently influencing the new government’s water policy to prioritise affordability and universal access (Romano 2012). In India, cross-class coalitions enhanced the credibility of low-income citizens’ claims in the eyes of politicians, and advocacy resulted in the extension of municipal WASH to informal settlements that were previously denied such services (Sahu 2010).

Community awareness of government responsibilities and citizen entitlements is critical to mobilising and engaging citizens in accountability initiatives. A study of village sanitation in South India showed that information about the delegation of responsibilities in local government was a necessary precondition for the uptake of accountability mechanisms by citizens (Ban et al. 2008). There were similar findings in the East Indian state of Orissa, with increased citizen uptake of social accountability mechanisms following the introduction of the Right to Information law (Sahu 2010). In Lesotho, where interest groups were motivated to influence policy around a highland water project (Meissner 2016); and in Nicaragua, where the formation of ‘extra-institutional’ democratic spaces created an entry point for citizens to learn about their rights and raise their voice in the political arena (Romano 2012). Dedicated spaces for communities to exchange knowledge can strengthen the relationships between rights holders and duty bearers, but false listening exercises could weaken accountability and damage public trust. This occurred in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, where bottom-up knowledge production increased citizen involvement, but participatory measures ultimately failed to improve urban water management (Padawangi 2017), and in Saxony, Germany, where a public approval process for flood

management plans resulted in antagonisms over conflicting views on how best to protect communities (Kuhlick 2016).

3.4.2. Enabling environment

The media landscape was a significant determinant of political will on water and sanitation issues. Accountability and advocacy mechanisms were most impactful when media outlets accurately reported on problems highlighted by citizens, triggering corrective policy reforms. In Australia, a local newspaper's detailed reportage on water allocation plans increased the public's awareness of the topic. This media attention prompted greater involvement of the federal government to resolve the conflicts between irrigated agriculture and commercial forestry (Gillet et al. 2014). In Nicaragua widespread reporting on protests against water privatisation during an election campaign resulted in water policy emerging as a key plank of the winning party's political platform (Romano 2012). Conversely, poor quality or misleading coverage could deflect responsibility away from perpetrators and weaken accountability. This occurred in Saxony, Germany after local officials blamed a public approval process for the failure to effectively prepare and respond to floods (Kuhlick et al. 2016).

Governments were most inclined to listen in contexts where there was a political culture of democratic civic engagement and greater trust in institutions (Bolin et al. 2008; Garrick et al. 2012; Huntjens et al. 2011), and when robust legal protections and an independent judiciary could constrain the powers of the government (Cantor 2012; Sahu 2010). Political will increased in response to evidence-based advocacy when persistent, escalating demands from citizens drew attention to the visibly deteriorating condition of river basin ecosystems (Garrick et al., 2012).

3.4.3. Governance dynamics

The overlap of river basins and aquifers with administrative and political areas means that governance for water resource management is heavily influenced by the structure of state power. Specifically, the extent to which power is centralised, the shape and powers of subordinate levels of government, and the extent to which communication and cooperation occur across internal and international borders to manage water resources. Evidence shows how, by jumping between different levels of government, environmental advocates could increase their influence, reach new audiences, and bypass hostile or disinterested public officials (Ban et al. 2008; Bolin et al. 2008; Maponya 2016; Meissner 2016).

Dynamic horizontal and vertical linkages among water committees, NGOs, multilateral organisations, and local government amplified citizens' voices and influenced the outcomes of national elections (Romano 2012). Evidence from South Korea suggested that the most appropriate strategies for shifting bureaucratic attitudes and behaviours to improve WASH service provision differed depending on scale, with national and local governments responding to different accountability mechanisms and incentives. While local elections increased contact and strengthened accountability relationships with councillors, internal performance monitoring was a greater determinant of the behaviour of officials in central government (Hong 2017).

Evidence on decentralisation was mixed. The use of the 'subsidiarity principle' helped to stimulate political will and leadership in Australia, clarifying institutional roles and responsibilities while bringing the locus of political authority closer to the communities with a greatest stake in the decision-making outcomes (Garrick et al. 2012). Similarly, multi-country evidence from river basin management in central Asia, East Africa, and central Europe highlighted how more open, flexible, polycentric approaches maximised space for policy learning. Such approaches were more adaptive and sensitive to emerging evidence on water quality (Huntjens et al., 2011). Elsewhere decentralisation diluted accountability and facilitated elite capture at a local level (Acey 2019; Ban et al. 2008; Nare et al. 2011).

Clear roles and responsibilities are important to eliminating overlapping functions and institutional ambiguity. This was evident in both Ghana and Nigeria, where the denial of urban water services to poor urban residents produced a hybrid model of governance where informal modes of water provision came to dominate. This consolidated power in local elites and allowed ongoing neglect on the part of public officials (Acey 2019; Gronwell 2016). Similarly, there was a need for clear channels for communications with communities and service providers; studies from South Korea and South Africa found that dedicated, well-trained teams for customer care were beneficial to this end, incentivising a rapid response to problems arising in WASH service delivery (Hong 2017; Maponya 2016). Accountability mechanisms were most effective when backed by water accountability champions both in and outside state structures (Sahu 2010). Governments will listen when robust monitoring occurs, presenting decision-makers with reliable and comprehensive evidence (Gronwell 2016).

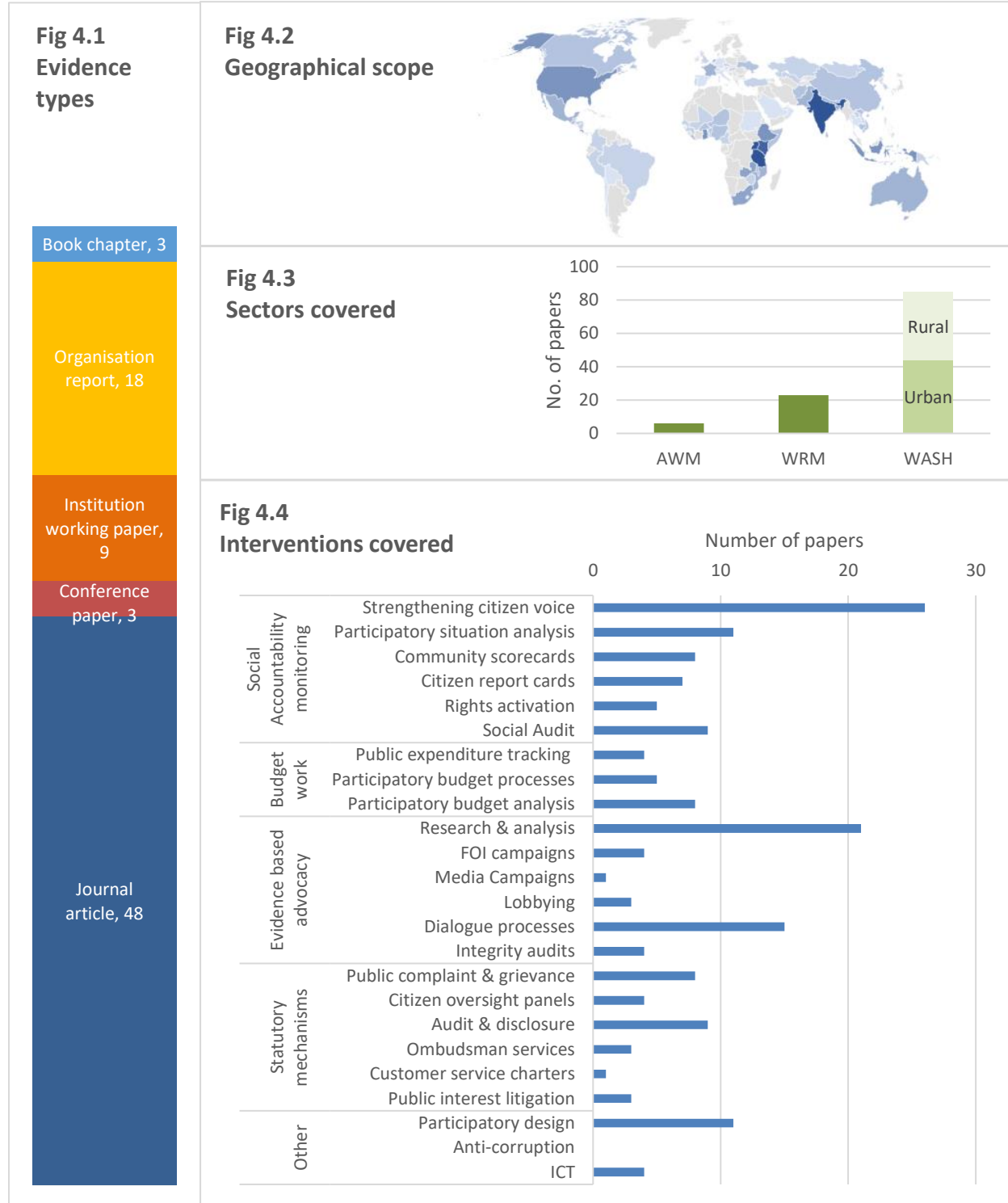
Two studies found that community and public ownership models provided better water access, equity, and inclusion than the private sector. The institutional design of public utilities was often more responsive to the needs of low-income groups than under private shareholder models (Bolin et al. 2008; Romano 2012).

3.5. Research priorities

Future research can investigate how to stimulate greater state responsiveness and promote awareness of the relationship between rights holders and duty bearers. A better understanding is needed of how accountability mechanisms can expose conflicts of interest, shift the behaviour of key voter blocs or political constituencies, or motivate/incentivise politicians to champion water policy reforms. Research should build on Pieterse (2019a, 2019b) in investigating strategic advocacy interventions under authoritarian or restrictive political contexts. Detailed case studies of examples where governments have radically revised or reformulated their approach can provide valuable lessons. What accountability interventions work in different political contexts, considering dominant political and religious ideologies, prevailing ethnic and class structures, and resistance from authorities? Is there a relationship between the ownership status of water utilities (public/private) and the extent to which governments listen to citizen concerns over WASH? And, building on scholarship on decentralisation (Acey 2019; Ban et al. 2008; Garrick et al. 2012; Nare et al. 2011), under what conditions will decentralised governance strengthen statutory accountability? Practitioners require a better understanding of the opportunities decentralised governance can create for accountability champions.

4. Measuring accountability

4.1. Evidence Dashboard



4.2. What evidence is available?

This section outlines what evidence is available on measuring accountability. Papers were selected if they were coded as any of the following:

- ◆ ‘Improved operational maintenance, monitoring, and reporting’ with ‘positive water accountability outcomes’;
- ◆ ‘Access to data/information’ with ‘positive water accountability outcomes’;
- ◆ Factors including ‘strong evidence/science base’, ‘strategic design/implementation model,’ and ‘alignment with government systems and protocols’.

Out of the final data sample, eighty papers are available dating from 2004 to 2020. Over half of these were journal articles (48), followed by organisation reports (18), and a much smaller number of working papers (9), book chapters (3), and conference papers (3). Most literature has tended to focus on interventions to strengthen citizens’ voice (26), dialogue processes (15), or undertake evidence-based advocacy through research and analysis (21). The focus on research and analysis reflects the need to identify tools to measure and evaluate accountability processes.

4.3. What does the evidence tell us?

This section summarises the key papers identified during the evidence review as having substantive insights into measuring accountability. It presents a sample of eleven papers with the most substantive content relating to this theme. A summary of the paper is followed by specific insights relating to measuring accountability.

Ballestero 2012



Transparency Short-Circuited: Laughter and Numbers in Costa Rican Water Politics.

SUMMARY: Uses the case of Costa Rican water politics to illustrate how metrics of project success may differ between donors and implementing agents. The author contrasts narrow and conventional visions of success against more open-ended experimental approaches, which can pose greater risks for donors but potentially yield more innovative methods and transformative results. The paper encourages critical reflection of the role of donors in designing accountability interventions. It suggests that a willingness on the part of donors to take risks and maintain flexibility could open up valuable space for more innovative and experimental approaches and interventions.

DETAILS: Describes how asymmetrical relationships with external funders can create constraints that limit possibilities, stifling innovative work that might occur as the need to chase and secure funding takes over. The paper identified the differing priorities of donors and local actors as a source of potential tension. In contrast to the local preference for a more open-ended, experimental, subjective process, the donor required discrete, measurable, quantitative outcomes. This tension highlighted the differing conceptual languages and approaches of donors and grassroots organisations. In this context, local organisations felt constrained by a sense of inferiority, disempowerment and lack of legitimacy, since they could not ‘speak in numbers’ (p. 223) and present quantitative outputs. The simplified visions of politicians and aid workers failed to capture complexities and local nuances on the ground. Disagreements led to efforts to bypass donor requirements, subverting monitoring and reporting logics.

Carlson and Cohen 2018



Linking community-based monitoring to water policy: Perceptions of citizen scientists.

SUMMARY: Examines the results of community-based water monitoring in Canada and provides evidence to support its expansion. Community monitoring offers a means of increasing the spatial coverage and temporal frequency of water data monitoring to inform government policy decisions.

DETAILS: Reviews the results of a cross-country survey of over 100 community-based water monitoring organisations involved in collecting water quality data across Canada. The expansion of Community Based Management (CBM) filled data gaps, allowed governments to rapidly increase the spatial coverage and frequency of water monitoring, and created an opportunity for communities to make informed decisions based on scientific data. However, structural barriers included a lack of multi-year funding, inconsistent protocols, and poor communication. Findings suggest that while policymakers celebrate participatory processes in the abstract, data collected by citizen scientists is not always viewed as valid or incorporated into policymaking. Despite following ‘standardised and credible’ monitoring protocols, fewer than half the CBM organisations reported that the government used their data to inform water policy at any level of the state. Although municipalities, regional districts, and provincial governments had loaned monitoring equipment, provided data storage, and supported program planning and coordination, cooperation and data sharing were limited due to government mistrust.

Dundon and Jaleta 2013



The Benefits of Shared Measurement Systems: Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning in the MWA Ethiopia Program.

SUMMARY: This report is an impact assessment and programme evaluation of the Millennium Water Alliance (MWA) Ethiopia programme. A survey of 2,000 households showed how NGOs delivered the project, completed across a diverse stretch of the country and over a long timescale. Evidence indicates that water access has improved due to efforts to strengthen monitoring and auditing practices. Project partners introduced a common framework and shared set of indicators, making it easier to scrutinise and evaluate programme performance.

DETAILS: External assessors deemed the project a success. According to the baseline survey, project partners increased access to safe water sources for over 500,000 rural Ethiopians

over nine years. The monitoring strategy enabled project partners to identify gaps, solicit remedies, and prepare mitigation plans in consultation with user community representatives. Findings suggest that regular audit and review process is integral to the success of accountable WASH sector programmes. The internal dynamics of programme activities were another important factor, demonstrating the value of a collaborative approach. Initially, the lack of a unified approach and separate monitoring programmes limited the generation of a reliable evidence base and obstructed joint data collection. Project partners then decided on common indicators and a monitoring framework. Minimum standards and common indicators provided a suitable framework for measuring accountability, and partners were better equipped to evaluate their work across diverse contexts.

Faehndrich and Nhantumbo 2012



Do More Empowered Citizens Make More Accountable States? Power and Legitimacy in Legal Empowerment Initiatives.

SUMMARY: Devises indicators to monitor public opinion and participation across Mozambique’s *Conselhos Consultivos* (CCs), political spaces designed to stimulate public debate and dialogue, and measure their impact on water accountability. The authors use a variety of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to capture the dynamic socio-political processes at play as accountability mechanisms are applied.

DETAILS: Evaluates the efficacy of CCs as invited spaces for debate and dialogue in Mozambique, presenting robust, multidimensional measures to assess accountability outcomes. The methodology aims to measure accountability in different forms. It uses three indicators: one for the public accountability of the CC, assessing its transparency and performance; one for the public accountability of local government, used as a proxy to assess the answerability and enforceability of the relevant government layer; and one for social accountability, exploring citizen-led initiatives to improve local governance. The study also sought to evaluate activities of the development agency PROGOAS relating to capacity building, radio programmes, and local governance self-assessments, measuring how many people participated and had a positive opinion of its effect on accountability. Findings analyse how an external intervention was shaped by internal factors relating to functionality, representation and participation. Although CCs created a training ground for authorities and

citizens to practice dialogue for the first time, they were manipulated and co-opted by the ruling party. Without safeguards, such institutions could become a vehicle for the government to capture and control civil society dissent.

Flores et al. 2013



Monitoring access to water in rural areas based on the human right to water framework: a local level case study in Nicaragua.

SUMMARY: Proposes a methodology for monitoring access to WASH services in rural areas of Nicaragua using a human rights framework. The paper demonstrates how a supply of consistent information can deliver improved water accountability.

DETAILS: Presents an indicative framework to measure and assess water outcomes based on human rights approaches. The methodology aims to strengthen accountability through alignment with international covenants and legal principles. Drawing on survey data and structured interviews with rural households and water committees, the study devises a composite measure based on availability, accessibility, affordability, quality, participation and access to information, and non-discrimination. The authors argue that water sector monitoring indicators should be:

- Easily accessible at the local level
- Accurately defined, standardised and internationally applicable
- Scalable
- Periodically updatable.

The combination of indicators and data sources could better capture the complex relationship between rights holders and duty bearers compared to existing data. Insight on resource allocation could improve the measurement of ‘progressive realisation’ of human rights to water. The results could be used to support resources allocation and priority setting, improving policy development at different levels. They also recognise the need to capture more subjective dimensions, such as perceptions of security at water points. This was often a sensitive or taboo topic, with several polled families refusing to answer questions on this topic and limited available evidence on water access.

Fogelberg 2013



Measuring more than pipes and pumps: The evolution towards levels of service and sustainability monitoring at Water For People.

SUMMARY: Drawing on field reflections from the NGO Water for People, this paper addresses shortcomings associated with prevailing accountability metrics. It proposes expanding from a singular focus on measuring access to WASH infrastructure - ‘pipes and pumps’ - to consider WASH service and sustainability data, assessing the quality and durability of water services over longer timeframes.

DETAILS: Quantitative data suggested that the world had met the Millennium Development Goal for water ahead of schedule. However, this data focused on counting increased WASH infrastructure as a proxy for household water access, which missed qualitative dimensions of service levels and the sustainability of the infrastructure in question. The article stresses the need for long-term monitoring and measurement with tools such as Akvo FLOW, a post-construction monitoring system put in place to consider infrastructure functionality and use over time. Akvo FLOW created a multi-dimensional reporting platform combining financial data, including co-finance, programmatic outcomes, customer feedback, and narrative from staff, partners, and consumers. This broader dataset revealed that the main reasons for the increased sustainability of water systems in the region were a drop in the number of significant problems reported, more readily available spare parts, and review of financial records.

Himley 2014



Monitoring the impacts of extraction: Science and participation in the governance of mining in Peru.

SUMMARY: Provides a critique of community-based water quality monitoring at mining territories in Peru, highlighting the uneven social effects that may flow from privileging particular knowledge systems and administrative rationalities within resource governance frameworks. Proposals for water accountability must ensure technical expertise is made ‘legible’ for participants and coupled with everyday citizen knowledge.

DETAILS: Draws on in-depth fieldwork and analysis of archival documents to develop an argument that scientific knowledge and participatory monitoring is deployed as a ‘knowledge-fix’ to avoid directly addressing the tensions and contradictions of capitalist resource extraction. The paper acknowledges difficulties in generating reliable data to monitor the impact of mining activity and hold companies accountable. However, it shows how the water committee privileged an expert framework for knowing and judging water quality, disempowering area residents. The conclusions signal that technical expertise must be made legible and coupled with everyday citizen knowledge.

Huntjens et al. 2011



Adaptive Water Management and Policy Learning in a Changing Climate: A Formal Comparative Analysis of Eight Water Management Regimes in Europe, Africa and Asia

SUMMARY: Undertakes a comparative analysis of eight watersheds in Europe, Africa and Asia to study policy learning in water management regimes over time. The article argues that better integrated, cooperative governance structures and information sharing between stakeholders can enhance the performance of water management regimes in the face of growing uncertainty.

DETAILS: Comparative analysis shows how top-down, command and control governance regimes delivered worse WRM outcomes than those adopting more flexible, responsive, and participatory methods. Regional water boards and management authorities who displayed a commitment to joint or participatory information production performed better than their counterparts when dealing with floods, droughts, and other hazards. A lack of consensual knowledge could hinder cooperation, especially when dealing with uncertainty and change. There was a need to ‘open up’ space for policy learning. Collaborative, information-sharing practices ensured greater preparedness against the growing complexities, conflicts and future uncertainties of climate change. Water governance outcomes were positively linked to broad communication between stakeholders, open and shared information sources, and flexibility and openness for experimentation - an iterative process of ad hoc problem solving described as ‘double loop’ learning.

Roncoli et al. 2016



Who counts, what counts: representation and accountability in water governance in the Upper Comoé sub-basin, Burkina Faso.

SUMMARY: Draws on extensive stakeholder interviews and fieldwork to highlight how what counts as legitimate knowledge shapes perceptions of accountability. The article discusses how the establishment of local water-user committees in Burkina Faso's Upper Comoé sub-basin strengthened accountability outcomes, using local knowledge to challenge expert assessments.

DETAILS: The government established local water-user committees to strengthen accountability for decentralised water governance in the Upper Comoé sub-basin. For the first time, water users were represented in decision-making alongside elected officials. Through their negotiation, arbitrary water use by powerful stakeholders was replaced by formal recognition of all users' claims. Rural users could uphold their claims through social mobilisation and used local knowledge to challenge expert assessments. Farmers defended their water rights through public demonstrations at politically sensitive times, such as during visits by high-level officials or donors. Although considered a success story, local water committees lacked regulatory and enforcement powers around water allocations in the basin.

Sharmeen 2014



The Politics of Irrigation: Technology, Institution and Discourse among the Munda in Barind, Bangladesh.

SUMMARY: This article draws on empirical data to show how new irrigation technology supported small-scale farmers in Bangladesh. It examines how the power of landlords intersects with religious and ethnic cleavages to distort water outcomes in irrigated agriculture. While landlords sought to maintain dominance and control over water resources, a democratised institutional framework improved accountability and allowed small-scale tenant farmers to negotiate fairer water use arrangements. The Regional Development Authority introduced a prepaid metering system to track pump operating hours, strengthening the farmers' claims.

DETAILS: Water acquisition became the most important determinant of productivity in dry season agriculture, provoking competition and conflict between predominantly Muslim landowners and small-scale Munda tenants. With the support of NGOs, smallholder farmers and sharecroppers began to demand that authorities improve the terms and conditions of water access during the dry season and embarked on negotiations with large landowners. Landlords resisted this pressure and tried to reassert dominance by organising new water user groups around the old system of status and rank, maintaining their privileged access to material and symbolic resources. However, the Barind Multipurpose Development Authority established new rules and institutions to promote fairness and equity. Following these changes, the Authority introduced a prepaid card system for farmers to obtain water for their fields. This provided detailed information on pump operating hours and allowed monitoring to prevent landlords from consuming a disproportionate share of the water available. The new irrigation governance arrangements did not make conflict disappear but enabled more equal water access negotiation between the powerful and landless.

Wester et al. 2011



Assessment of the development of aquifer management councils (COTAS) for sustainable groundwater management in Guanajuato, Mexico.

SUMMARY: Discusses how a shift from state to self-regulation following the introduction of collective groundwater management by water users in Mexico has been less successful than expected, pointing out how, despite better user data, an improved knowledge base alone is insufficient to deliver accountable water outcomes. Additional requirements are better enforcement of laws concerning well permits and pump volumes, and mechanisms to ensure the legitimacy and accountability of user representatives.

DETAILS: Outlines how collective water management replaced previous governance methods based on privileges and political affinities. This was enabled by the introduction of various measures and monitoring tools. Following the establishment and development of Consejos Técnicos de Aguas (COTAS), led by users and interest groups, self-regulation became the norm. However, the longitudinal analysis indicated that the COTAS initiative was insufficient to deliver sustained reductions in groundwater extractions or trigger a shift towards water users' improved governance of groundwater resources. Analysts assumed that the problem was that groundwater users were not sufficiently aware of the damage they were causing to

their aquifers. If well informed, users would be motivated to collectively define mechanisms and agreements to reduce groundwater use. However, evidence showed the problem was not only a lack of information. Perverse incentive structures pushed users to maximize groundwater withdrawals and recover their high capital investments. A clearer delegation of tasks, better enforcement, and a stronger mandate for groundwater user organisations were all identified as necessary preconditions to strengthen accountability.

4.4. Emerging insights

4.4.1. Community dynamics

At a community level, there are often different interpretations of what constitutes an ideal-type model for accountability relationship between rights holders and duty bearers. A lack of clarity or consensus over definitions of good practice or agreed behavioural norms can undermine trust with communities, with the views of marginalised community members easily crowded out by more powerful entities. For example, a study by Ballestero et al. (2012) highlights the challenge of reconciling differing metrics of ‘success’ as understood by donors, communities, and implementing agencies. The authors identify the struggle of a local water CSO in Costa Rica to “speak in numbers” (p.223) and articulate goals within the quantified assessment criteria demanded by external donors. This resulted in a sense of inferiority despite on-the-ground satisfaction from participants. It also caused disagreements that resulted in efforts to bypass donor requirements, subverting their monitoring and reporting logics. Similarly, in Burkina Faso’s upper Comoe Basin, Roncoli et al. (2016) highlight how, in the face of limited information access and technical capabilities among water committee members, rural farmers upheld their claims through reliance on local knowledge which was not formally codified or recognised by authorities. Greater success was observed in the Swiss-funded Governance, Water and Sanitation Programme (PROGOAS) in Mozambique, where composite indicators were devised to capture subjective elements and measure respondents’ satisfaction and perceptions relating to the programme (Faehndrich and Nhantumbo 2012).

Evidence from Nicaragua cautions that robust measurement might be hindered by limited or unreliable data at a community level. Following a detailed survey investigating access to water in rural areas, the authors discuss how households were reluctant to disclose relevant information because of cultural stigma, taboos or the threat of violence (Flores et al. 2013). Investment and training in citizen science and community water monitoring can increase a sense of community ownership and fill data gaps to increase the spatial coverage of water quality monitoring (Carlson and Cohen 2019; Himley 2014). In cases from Bangladesh and Mexico, introducing new technologies, such as prepaid metering and monitoring systems for irrigation and pump volume, was found to better track water consumption, equalise access in communities, and strengthen accountability relationships between users. However, governments must back such systems with regulatory enforcement to be effective (Sharmeen 2014; Wester et al. 2011).

Overall, evidence affirms the multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of accountability relationships; practitioners must measure the impact of interventions in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the experiences, attitudes and priorities of communities. Practitioners can achieve this by challenging narrow and inflexible measurement criteria displayed in some external assessments and incorporating local and indigenous knowledge that deepens understandings of how water is used and valued within communities (Himley 2014; Roncoli et al. 2016).

4.4.2. Enabling environment

The evidence emphasises the need to go beyond monitoring WASH infrastructure as a proxy for accountability in programme spending, to consider overall levels of service and sustainability over time. For example, a multi-country review of the water sector Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) by Fogelberg (2013) emphasises the need for sufficient time and resources to complete robust and effective evaluation. According to this analysis, designing interdisciplinary methodologies for assessment could remedy measurement problems and bring about better results. This will require both developing a timescale for monitoring and assessment, and synthesising baseline, action-plan, and follow up analysis to measure functionality and use over time.

Evidence shows how standardised assessment techniques that abstract data from its broader cultural and historical context can provide an incomplete or misleading picture. For example, Sharmeen (2014) highlights how historical hierarchies of caste and class between predominantly Muslim landowners and small-scale Munda tenants is important to explaining patterns of inequitable water use and the attendant accountability failures in water user groups, while Roncoli et al. (2016) brings a focus to how institutional design reflects longstanding tensions between techno-scientific and local knowledge.

A lack of available data can cause uncertainties around patterns of water use, generating confusion and weakening the ability of citizens to hold duty bearers to account. For example, in Burkina Faso, there was no independent source of information about actual amounts of water stored in reservoirs or diverted into pipelines, and there was a corresponding lack of data on water consumption from downstream riparian farmers. This made it difficult to hold authorities as water consumers accountable even when there was generalised recognition of inequitable water use (Roncoli et al. 2016) However, well-resourced evaluations can improve measuring

capabilities. This requires appropriate tools to evaluate and diagnose different interventions (Flores et al. 2013).

4.4.3. Governance dynamics

Open data sharing between and at different levels of government can enable improved measurement for different accountability mechanisms (Fogelberg 2013; Pieterse 2019) and a commitment to joint or participative information production (Huntjens et al. 2011). Similarly, pooling resources and ensuring consistency of approach based around agreed principles and protocols can stimulate more accurate measurement and data collection (Carlson and Cohen 2018; Dundon and Jaleta 2013; Faehndrich and Nhantumbo 2012). Indicators for monitoring the performance of WRM and WASH service delivery should be easily accessible at the local level, accurately defined, standardised and internationally applicable, scalable and periodically updatable (Flores et al. 2013).

Policymakers should broaden technocratic modes of assessment and evaluation, appreciating how the uptake of accountability mechanisms interacts with political power structures at different scales (Ballesteros et al. 2012; Faehndrich and Nhantumbo 2012; Roncoli et al. 2016). Reviews of social accountability programmes to improve water outcomes in Ethiopia and Tanzania highlight the challenges of measuring accountability in contexts where authoritarian political regimes prevail, since this can control and restrict the flow of sensitive and embarrassing information (Pieterse 2019a, 2019b). Secure outlets for whistle-blowers to release information in the public interest and expose bad practice by duty bearers should therefore take precedence in programme design.

4.5. Research priorities

Effective measurement techniques are critical to understanding ‘what works, where, and why’ for accountability interventions. Yet there is little consensus over the most appropriate tools to realise this. Research should prioritise investigating how to collate and systematise the variety of anecdotal, informal and inchoate reports of accountability failures in the water sector. A better understanding is needed of how this data can be organised and harnessed to effect changes in the behaviour, attitudes and practices of stakeholders in the water sector. Future methodological concerns include considering how data can be collected, synthesised, and placed in context to build up a more complete picture of the macro and micro-dynamics at play.

The effects of some accountability mechanisms may be easier to measure than others. For example, those targeted at time-bound and specific goals of expanding the coverage of water services or repairing infrastructure may be easier to measure than interventions that aim to shift norms and cultivate a broader culture of accountability and government responsiveness in public life. Future research could track the impacts of accountability processes over longer timescales, using longitudinal analysis to examine if changes can trigger sustained shifts in water governance practices (Wester et al., 2011).

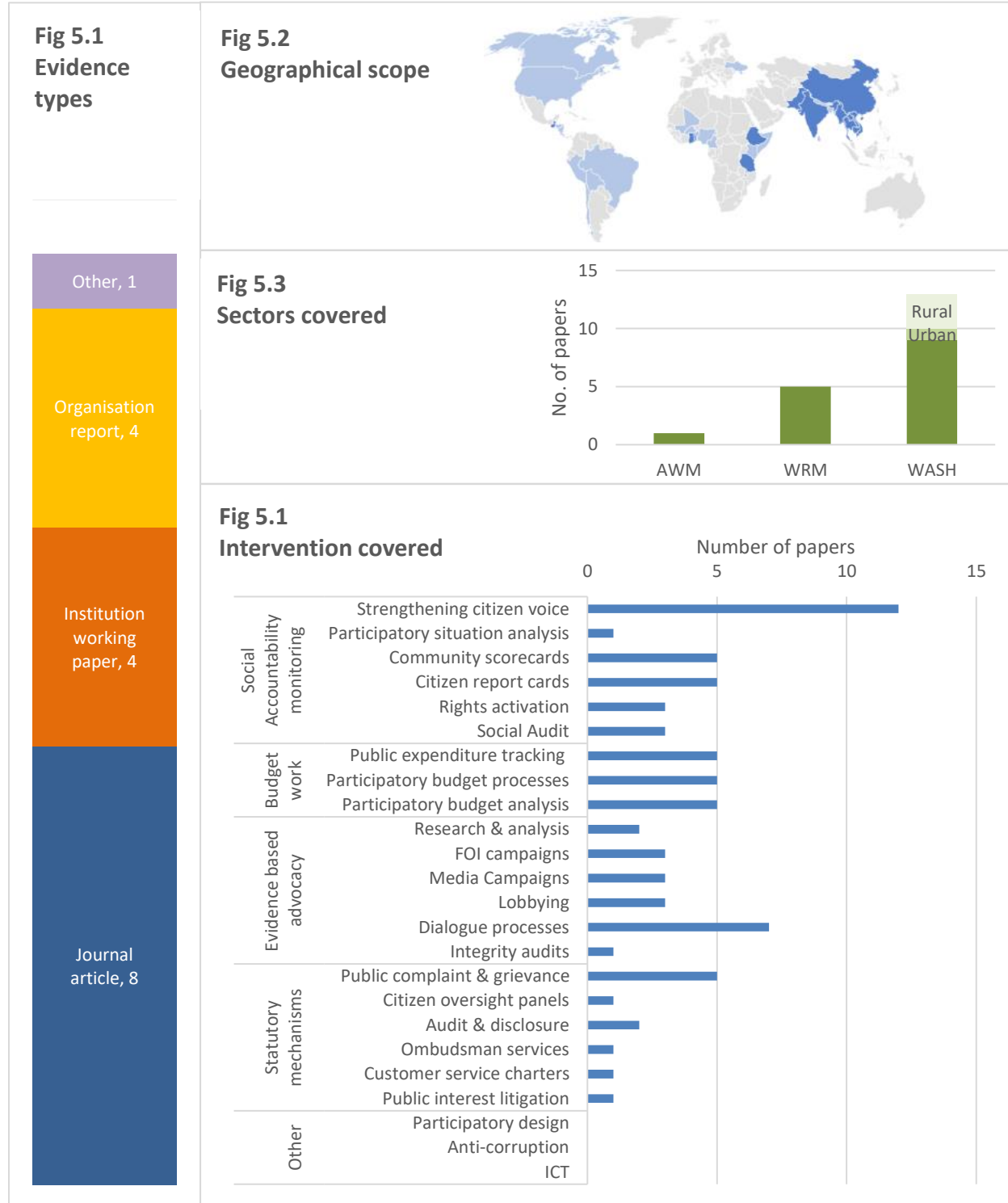
Recognising how the impacts of accountability mechanisms rely on a set of socio-political assumptions, the ‘thick description’ of ethnographic research may prove beneficial to understanding the cultural forces that may drive accountability relationships across different contexts (cf. Holloway 1997: 194). Future research should address how assessments of water sector performance can incorporate participatory approaches that take water users’ words, perspectives, and lived experiences as a starting point. How can assessments and evaluation be better designed to capture the complex, diverse and often contradictory views of water users, relating to perceptions of trust, transparency, accountability, and political responsiveness.? Such insights can bring greater depth to analyses of water sector performance and the subjective dimensions of accountability, complementing quantitative and scientific modes of measurement.

Developing on promising evidence supporting open data portals for citizen science and cross-sector collaboration (Dundon and Jaleta 2013; Himley 2014; Huntjens et al. 2011), research should consider how to promote a culture of transparency, open data sharing, and common benchmarks and indicators between different stakeholders working within the same watershed, community or political territory. What are the constraints or enabling factors that can stimulate such pathways during programme design?



5. Closing civic space

5.1. Evidence Dashboard





5.2. What evidence is available?

This section outlines what evidence is available on closing civic space and water accountability, based on coding and analysis of global evidence in the sector (as set out in Hepworth et al. 2020a). The data subset was selected from literature where ‘closing civic space’ was coded as an external factor influencing water outcomes.

Out of the final data sample, seventeen papers are available dating from 2007 to 2019, predominantly comprising journal articles (8), followed by an even number of institutional working papers and organisation reports (4 each), and one ‘other’. The majority focus on WASH – mixed (9), rural (3), and rural (1) - followed by WRM (5), and one discussing agricultural water management (note: the total number is higher than the number of papers as some discussed multiple water contexts). Interventions to strengthen citizens’ voice remain the most popular in this category (12). This is perhaps unsurprising, as it included protest and dissent outside of institutional structures. Other significant accountability mechanisms included dialogue processes (7), followed by public complaint and grievance mechanisms, community scorecards, citizen report cards, and the budget processes listed (5 each, respectively).

5.3. What does the evidence tell us?

This section summarises the key papers identified during the evidence review as having substantive insights into how closing civic space is related to accountability. For clarity and simplicity, it excludes papers where closing civic space was covered superficially or without elaboration. The chapter presents a sample of seventeen papers with the most substantive content relating to this theme. A summary of the paper is followed by specific insights relating to the role of donors.

Boldbaatar et al. 2011



Improved resource governance through transparency: Evidence from Mongolia.

SUMMARY: Discusses how Governments and CSOs have applied formal audit and disclosure to mining companies operating in Mongolia under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Two types of contracts are analysed: water usage agreements and community benefit-sharing agreements. The paper argues that citizen mobilisation and empowerment is needed to translate contract transparency into improved water governance.

DETAILS: Identifies the crucial role of civil society in transparency monitoring and audit processes linked to the water use of extractive industries. The article argues that despite Mongolia's relatively strong democracy and civil society participation, civil society and media monitoring activities failed to influence corporate and government decision-makers. Information from mining contracts is made available to citizens, but there is limited uptake for advocacy in the water sector. This lack of 'mobilised disclosure' of information shows how the mere presence of civic space was insufficient. Disclosure on its own is not likely to stimulate greater operational accountability; this requires additional efforts to develop civil society capacity, government attention, and broader participation by media and citizens.

Borgias 2018



Subsidizing the State: The political ecology and legal geography of social movements in Chilean water governance.

SUMMARY: Investigates how Chile’s recent political history shapes the context of civil society engagement in water struggles. Although violent suppression has reduced since the end of the Pinochet dictatorship, efforts to discredit and deny the legitimacy of civil society have continued. Policies and laws maintain a narrow conception of water ‘use,’ without provisions for communities to defend their interests. Without recourse to legal mechanisms, civil society activists resort to more confrontational tactics.

DETAILS: Argues that the adversarial tactics adopted by anti-dam protestors in Chile are a response to the free-market model and political repression that was ushered in under the Pinochet dictatorship. Civil society relations with the state were restructured within the legal framework of the ‘new institutional order’ installed during the dictatorship. This framed subsequent interventions to hold developers accountable over new dam constructions. Civil society actors face major legal constraints in defending their interests. These include narrow definitions of what constituted a valid ‘use’ of water resources and prioritising market values over socio-ecological concerns. Activists consequently resorted to more confrontational tactics to be heard. Despite not facing the same levels of violent suppression endured under the military regime, civil society activists are shamed in public settings and accused of undermining the country’s efforts to move forward with national development. Pinochet’s legacy has continued to limit the opportunities for Chilean civil society to formally participate in water policy and realise accountable governance.

Dore et al. 2013



A framework for analysing transboundary water governance complexes, illustrated in the Mekong Region.

SUMMARY: Presents a framework for analysing transboundary water governance complexes through a case study in the Mekong Delta. The article links context, drivers, arenas, tools, decisions and impact to identify the most strategic mechanisms for accountable water governance. It considers the use of deliberation, technical and advocacy tools. The paper highlights how structural power imbalances can constrain the participation of NGOs and CSOs in water governance, especially in their ability to influence decision-making and amplify marginalised voices. The role of information sharing on water accountability in rural Uganda. Uses regression analysis to correlate socio-economic characteristics, water-related issues and political attitudes of community members in a

Ugandan village. The paper finds a correlation between information sharing and demand for action to remedy water-related problems.

DETAILS: Discusses the case of the Save the Mekong campaign, which effectively mobilised citizens in Thailand against large dam construction. The campaign succeeded in highlighting risks to ecosystems and livelihoods and pressuring governments to act on these concerns. NGOs and grassroots peoples' movements advanced advocacy goals through strategic research and analysis, dialogue processes, and media campaigns. However, shrinking civil society space constrained the ability of citizens to hold authorities to account, with powerful actors using suppression to enforce or overturn decisions. Development projects fuelled conflict and violence, including at the Pak Mun dam in Thailand and the Tarpein Dam in Myanmar, where violence erupted between the Kachin militia and government forces. Foreign and local environmentalists seeking accountability faced targeted smear campaigns, increasing the risk of speaking out against destructive development projects. NGO and CSO participation in transboundary water governance simultaneously improves state responsiveness to social and ecological challenges, while provoking violent repression and conflict.

Driel et al. 2017



Social Accountability and WASH Service Delivery: A Case from Ethiopia.

SUMMARY: This report reviews the impact of social accountability mechanisms on WASH outcomes in Ethiopia and identifies concerns arising from the country's autocratic rule. It identifies how Ethiopia's autocratic government compromises WASH accountability programmes. Civil society is severely constrained by punitive and repressive laws, limiting its ability to hold the government to account.⁴

DETAILS: The authors note how political unrest and constraints on civil society activities were disabling factors in the quest to secure improved WASH services. A nationwide state of emergency law placed sweeping restrictions on freedom of expression and undermined basic democratic rights. The introduction of the 2009 "Charities and Societies Proclamation" had a

⁴ However, civic freedoms have improved since the passage of the Civil Society Organizations Agency Proclamation No. 1113/2019 by Ethiopia's Peoples House of Representatives (Freedom House, 2019).

similar effect, stifling the voice of civil society, limiting foreign or external funding to CSOs and hindering their ability to participate in accountability initiatives.

Hepworth 2016



Social accountability for a water-secure future: knowledge, practice and priorities.

SUMMARY: Provides a comprehensive overview of the knowledge, practice, and priorities around social accountability for water, with specific attention to the disabling impact of closing civic space on realising these goals.

DETAILS: Draws on a literature review of social accountability in the water sector to warn of an increasingly restrictive financial and political environment facing independent civil society. The article urges donors and aid programmes to build, maintain and protect the space where communities can engage with social accountability mechanisms. In the face of authoritarian laws and restrictions on freedom of information, the article highlights the importance of sustained, proactive support and funding for CSOs to secure lasting impacts.

Kadirbeyoglu 2017



The Impact of Power and Civic Engagement in the Decentralized Management of Natural Resources: The Case of Turkey.

SUMMARY: Investigates how the relationship between decentralisation and democratisation shapes irrigation management in Turkey. The article discusses the impact of power and civic engagement in decentralised water user committees, arguing that civic engagement can generate “countervailing power” to overcome the negative impact of local power inequalities.

DETAILS: Evaluates the effectiveness of decentralised water user committees in achieving equitable and sustainable water access and deepening democratic participation. The paper argues that local contextual factors such as power asymmetries constrain the potential of decentralisation to equalise decision-making in water management. Inequalities in land distribution, feudal and hierarchical tribal structures, and an absence of horizontal ties between citizens all limit space for citizen activism and collective action (such as the formation of farmer cooperatives). Outcomes can also be determined by whether previous

civic engagement has empowered groups in society. In the 1970s, smallholder farmers mobilised against land usurpation, winning concessions despite military repression. This experience had a lasting impact on the sense of empowerment felt by farmers concerning formal institutions. It increased their willingness to exercise political capabilities and improved water access in some areas. Under certain circumstances, decentralisation can open civic space for meaningful participation in water governance. However, this depends on the extent to which marginalised citizens can be brought into institutions, learn about their rights and responsibilities, and develop skills to demand their rights in the face of resistance from landed power. Previous civic engagement, through membership in non-traditional organisations or participation in social movements, is the most important determinant of equitable water access.

Kvartiuk 2016



Participation and Local Governance Outcomes: Evidence from Ukraine.

SUMMARY: Analyses survey data from participants in various community-based organisations (CBOs) to investigate how community participation influences governance and water supply outcomes in rural Ukraine. The quality of the water supply improved following increased involvement from CBOs. These institutions strengthened accountability by articulating citizen concerns and increasing pressure on local elites.

DETAILS: The paper draws attention to the role of civil society in Ukraine's post-Soviet transition. CBOs improved the quality of water supplies in some circumstances, despite a challenging cultural and political context. In most cases, civic activism was limited and local government was underfunded. Governance was hierarchical, with decision making often distant and rigid. As jurisdictions between tiers of government are vaguely defined, this could foster centralised patronage-type structures. The article identifies the positive effects of both 'disciplining' and 'co-production' functions where civic activism was effective. 'Disciplining' refers to the pressure exerted over political elites following increased opportunities to strengthen citizens' voice. 'Co-production' refers to greater participation and ownership of public goods by community members, who have higher incentives to invest in operation & maintenance costs as the end-users of such services. As in the Chilean context described by Borgias (2018), the political legacies and cultural memories of previous governance regimes

shape and constrain collective action by citizens, even in cases that have transitioned to a more open political system.

Lande and Fonseca 2018 - IWP



Global Review of National Accountability Mechanisms for SDG6.

SUMMARY: This multi-country report provides a comprehensive, global review of accountability mechanisms for achieving SDG6 (‘Clean Water and Sanitation for All’) across twenty-five countries. Drawing on interviews, questionnaires and grey literature, it identifies a pattern of systemic exclusion of CSOs from decision-making. Such exclusion has limited progress towards improving the equity, efficiency, sustainability, quality and access of WASH services.

DETAILS: Despite a stated commitment to guarantee civil society participation, governments have systemically excluded CSOs from decision-making arenas by governments. Accountability mechanisms have not made sufficient progress to achieve SDG6 by 2030. Progress is failing on key indicators around monitoring and reporting. Only superficial, one-off stakeholder groups have been convened to date, with few opportunities for meaningful engagement. CSOs are not invited to key meetings, relevant information for participation is not shared or is hard to find, and there are unequal opportunities to participate in accountability mechanisms. This results in ambiguous institutional responsibilities and a lack of awareness, knowledge and capacity among CSOs on what monitoring implementation means. The report finds that:

- Few countries had incorporated complaint, grievance and enforcement mechanisms
- Only some countries had independent monitoring and verification of data
- Few countries mentioned human rights mechanisms to hold the government to account.

Lu and Tsai 2017



Signal and Political Accountability: Environmental Petitions in China.

SUMMARY: Explores how accountable water systems can be realised within China’s centralised and authoritarian political system, applying regression analysis to investigate the



effects of environmental petitions to influence state action on water pollution. Rigid and hierarchical state structures severely constrain citizens' ability to influence decision-making. However, petitions create an outlet for environmental advocacy tolerated by the ruling Communist Party.

DETAILS: Describes how the cadre management system of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) provides sufficient incentive for politicians to adhere to centrally set goals. The Party controls Cadre management through a system of promotions and demotions. The CCP controls procedures for elite recruitment and personnel management, so local officials have greater incentives to respond to dictates of the Central Committee over the preferences of citizens or civil society. Political constraints mean that environmental NGOs in China tend to focus on environmental education rather than influencing government policies. Nevertheless, the number of environmental petitions is positively associated with provincial governments' investments in pollution mitigation. Officials rationalise petitions as a way for the government to absorb dissent rather than solve practical ecological challenges. However, they do provide a limited mechanism for public complaints and grievances. This permits some accountability while maintaining social stability for the broader political system.

Moraes and Rocha 2013



Gendered waters: the participation of women in the 'One Million Cisterns' rainwater harvesting program in the Brazilian Semi-Arid region.

SUMMARY: Examines the participation of women in the 'One Million Cisterns' rainwater harvesting program in the Brazilian Semi-Arid region. The paper shows how the participation of women in local water commissions and capacity building processes had a significant effect on their lives and communities. The experience opened several possibilities for personal growth, knowledge exchange and increasing political power.

DETAILS: Examines how a supportive political environment enabled the participation of women in local water commissions and capacity building processes. This opened space for civil society initiatives to flourish. As women were trained to build water cisterns, they started participating more actively in water-related discussion spaces that were previously the exclusive domain of men. Women's involvement in local water commissions and capacity building processes left a lasting impact on their lives and self-confidence, opening new

possibilities for personal growth, knowledge exchange and political power. The programme benefited from favourable political conditions, which encouraged participatory democracy and recognised how access to water was crucial for a fair and sustainable society. Watershed Committees created in Brazil were open to civil society participation. The government made funds available to support programmes that aimed to spark social and ecological transformation.

Pieterse 2019a/b



Accountability for improved services and governance in Ethiopia: a review of context, practice and research priorities.

Accountability for improved services and governance in Tanzania: a review of context, practice and research priorities.

SUMMARY: Discusses the challenge of implementing accountability programmes under authoritarian political regimes in Ethiopia and Tanzania that severely restrict the activities of civil society. Highlights the political barriers water accountability advocates must navigate if they wish to scale up and institutionalise accountability mechanisms.

DETAILS: Identifies closing civic space as a key disabling factor in two NGO reports designed to evaluate experiences of social accountability and water service delivery in Tanzania and Ethiopia. Drawing on data collected by donor-funded programmes, the reports show how each country's restrictive political context constrained social accountability programmes. In Tanzania, there was a trend towards greater political centralisation and increasing denial of expression to political opposition, civil society, and the media. The government has introduced new laws to undermine CSO activities with restrictions on civil liberties, including the freedom of assembly, reduced transparency, and fewer parliamentary broadcasts. In Ethiopia, an authoritarian political culture deterred open discussion around 'good governance'. The state effectively banned all donors and CSOs from engaging in interventions based on the improvements of rights, even if these were rights to basic public services and enshrined in universal laws.⁵

⁵ These findings relate to political conditions under the previous Ethiopian government, and new legislation under the early part of the current administration reversed some of these trends.

Both reports emphasise the importance of political economy analysis and strategic advocacy, considering how efforts to expose corruption may be interpreted as a political statement and provoke a hostile backlash. In Tanzania, this limits opportunities to engage with national oversight institutions. However, by identifying common areas where there is a willingness from the state to engage or advance its policy agenda, CSOs could still influence water policy. This required detailed knowledge of the operational context. In Ethiopia, bilateral donors provided significant budgetary support through Woreda block grants. This gave them leverage to insist on introducing social accountability instruments such as scorecards, access to information, and public complaint mechanisms. CSOs must therefore revise their approach to secure gains in water quality and service delivery.

Rautanen and White 2006



Portrait of a successful small-town water service provider in Nepal's changing landscape.

SUMMARY: Drawing on extensive community interviews in Nepal's Terai plains, this study shows how the Murgia Water User's Association's proactive efforts to ensure equitable gender, ethnic, and class representation stimulated investment in the O&M of water infrastructure. The inclusive governance culture generated high levels of local pride and trust, resulting in high-quality water services.

DETAILS: The authors highlight how a vibrant and open civic culture contributed to the success of a robust and responsive participatory governance institution, the Murgia Water Users' Association. The association demonstrated high performance outcomes relating to the quality of the water supply and the association's responsive and transparent mode of operation. Findings showed that the emphasis on representation and social inclusion generated local pride and trust in the scheme. Since its inception, the project adopted a socially inclusive approach from planning to implementation, aiming to build self-reliance. This contrasts with the experience of schemes elsewhere, where social exclusion has bred resentment, leading to the sabotage of pipes and taps. The limited civic space evident elsewhere in the Tarai, a product of civil war and political violence, was found to have limited social cohesion and slowed progress towards national sanitation goals. Water committees faced heavy interference from the political parties and pressure for donations, sometimes collected in a 'violent fashion' (p.93). However, the Murgia water user's association took

steps to combat this and retain independence. They refused to give donations, and elected members through a general assembly.

Romano 2012



From Protest to Proposal: The Contentious Politics of the Nicaraguan Anti-Water Privatisation Social Movement.

SUMMARY: Examines how the demands of Nicaraguan protest movements against water privatisation translated into national policy and transformed regional water governance. It highlights accountability improvements to strengthen existing representative government institutions and create extra-institutional democratic spaces and practices. The article demonstrates the positive role external donor support can play in nurturing the formation and development of democratic institutions.

DETAILS: Draws on long-term fieldwork and extensive interviews to highlight the positive role external donors can play in building up the capacity of civil society and improving democratic capabilities. In the Nicaraguan case study, funding from multi and bilateral agencies (USAID; Norwegian Aid) helped establish and connect community WASH committees, strengthening their links with urban NGOs. This created new opportunities for democratic mobilisation. Despite their initial reliance on donor support, they developed into key institutional vehicles for citizen accountability and sustainable water practices. Semi-autonomous WASH committees emerged as powerful social movement actors and became key channels for citizens to demand accountable water governance. Networks formed through these social struggles strengthened mass democracy through deliberative processes. In addition to strategies emphasising the right to information, anti-privatisation organisations also brought marginalised sectors into the law development process. The proposal for a new general water law was drafted through alliance-led consultations with members of Municipal Councils, Development Commissions, and stakeholder organisations. It reflected community priorities by emphasising the ‘public character’ of water services.

Sneddon and Fox 2007



Power, Development, and Institutional Change: Participatory Governance in the Lower Mekong Basin.

SUMMARY: Undertakes a case study analysis to understand how power operates at multiple scales of water governance in the Mekong River basin. The article draws on extensive fieldwork and stakeholder interviews in the region to expose underlying tensions that pose obstacles to creating and sustaining accountable water governance systems.

DETAILS: Outlines how critical voices from civil society are silenced or excluded by governments, limiting their ability to influence water governance systems. The article argues that despite the introduction of participatory watershed management in the Mekong, most real power continues to be vested with existing institutional bodies of the Mekong Water Commission, excluding more critical voices opposed to the prevailing development agenda. National representation and interaction by riparian states is through narrowly focused bureaucratic bodies rather than “through civil society or publics convinced that the MRC exists to represent the common good” (p.2176), due to previously contentious relationships with governments. NGO and advocacy groups, who have been at the forefront of demands for greater levels of participatory development in the Mekong, are thus excluded from multi-stakeholder participation.

Thomas and Aslam 2018



Citizen Engagement in the Water Sector - A Guidance Note.

SUMMARY: This guidance note reviews citizen engagement in selected World Bank projects, evaluating how dialogue processes around water policy have affected the quality, access, and reliability of WASH service delivery. It cautions that participatory mechanisms can entrench existing power relationships by elite capture. Even when this is not the case, the “loudest voices” (p. 13) can drown out the views of more marginalised citizens. Citizens can use social accountability mechanisms to increase state responsiveness, but projects must be designed for adaptive learning to understand local political dynamics.

DETAILS: Highlights how civil society's limited technical, analytical and organisational capacities constrain the effective implementation of participatory programmes. Authors identify the absence of a capable civil society as a key constraint on broad-based citizen participation that would reflect priorities around water service affordability, reliability, and quality. According to field observations, low political capacities to mobilise citizens limited effective implementation of citizen engagement approaches. Projects failed to build alliances

across multiple jurisdictions, limiting space for coordinated action to improve water infrastructure sustainability.

UNDP-SIWI 2014



Regional Capacity Building Programme Promoting and Developing Water Integrity in Sub-Saharan Africa. Stock Taking Programme Report.

SUMMARY: This UN stock-take report on capacity building and water integrity in Sub-Saharan Africa finds it important for international cooperation at transnational summits and meetings to share ‘best practice around integrity in water policy. It considers how “integrity ambassadors” can champion accountability, ensuring that investments in water are well spent and not diverted to corrupt officials.

DETAILS: Identifies the participation of informed stakeholders and a strong civil society as key driving forces for integrity in Africa, especially in exposing corruption in the water sector. The report highlights the role of community dialogue and mass media as tools to maintain integrity and disseminate information. Correspondingly, the report emphasises the importance of protecting whistle-blowers from political or hierarchical pressure. It advises that the next phase of the programme should also target those actors, such as media and regulators, who have provided this leverage effect.

World Bank 2010



Water and Sewerage Services in Karachi: Citizen Report Card—Sustainable Service Delivery Improvements.

SUMMARY: Discusses how public complaint and grievance mechanisms introduced at the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board failed to translate into meaningful reforms at the level of policy, planning or implementation. This fostered alienation and distrust among citizens and consumers, limiting support for action against illegal connections.

DETAILS: Civil society groups have historically had little say in policy making, planning, and implementing schemes and projects in the city’s water sector. Karachi’s urban municipality recognised the problem and took steps to address it, creating a civil society liaison cell with the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board and a centralised Consumer Services Centre.

However, meaningful interactions between the water utility and citizens or civil society remained close to non-existent. The cell existed only ‘on paper’, and the Consumer Services Centre only registered complaints without incorporating feedback into policy, planning or implementation. Without recourse to substantive dialogue or complaint mechanisms, ineffective communication and a lack of responsiveness alienated consumers and citizens, who continued to rely on poor quality and inappropriate services. This lack of trust hampered efforts to mobilise public support for action against illegal connections.



5.4. Emerging insights

5.4.1. Community dynamics

Evidence shows how previous experiences of the state and its cultural legacy influence the extent and form of civic association within communities. For example, experiences of repression under the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile (Borgias 2018), political mobilisations for agrarian reform in Turkey (Kadirbeyoglu 2017), and centralised political patronage during the post-Soviet transition in Ukraine (Kvartiuk 2017) have all influenced levels of civic participation and the uptake of accountability mechanisms by citizens. Past exclusions generated by civil war and conflict are liable to breed mistrust and resentment, deterring the participation of minority ethnic and social groups. The experience of Water Users and Sanitation Committees (WUSCs) in Nepal’s Tarai plains provides an illustrative example. The Murgia WUSC successfully instilled a sense of social inclusion and civic pride, but a failure to achieve this elsewhere in the region resulted in the sabotage of pipes and taps (Rautanen and White 2006). A lack of trust can weaken the legitimacy of water authorities and make it more difficult to mobilise public support for water sector reforms (Laurie and Crespo 2006; World Bank 2010).

There is some evidence to suggest that decentralisation can foster new civic spaces and enable citizens to develop democratic skills and practices, but only if local level power imbalances are identified and addressed from the outset (Kadirbeyoglu 2017). Access to information and awareness of rights positively influence citizen participation, as happened in Ethiopia following the introduction of community scorecards to rank service providers (Pieterse 2019a), or in India following the introduction of the Right to Information law (Sahu 2010).

5.4.2. Enabling environment

The most effective accountability interventions will adapt to varying political conditions, starting from citizens’ existing lived experiences of civic activism. The legitimacy of political institutions, concerns over safety and the threat of violence, and levels of social solidarity are all determining factors that influence the impact of accountability mechanisms (Borgias 2018; Kadirbeyoglu 2017; Kvartiuk 2017; Rautanen and White 2006). Open civic spaces for public discussion and dialogue contribute constructively towards democratic practice but require sustained, proactive support and adequate funding to protect and sustain their capacity (Hepworth 2016; Lande and Fonseca 2018; Pieterse 2019a; Rautanen and White 2006; UNDP-SIWI 2014). Limited technical,

analytical and organisational capacities of civil society otherwise hinder their ability to mobilise citizens and build multi-level alliances (Thomas and Aslam 2018).

Free and independent media must be able to report on accountability initiatives of civil society and disseminate knowledge (Romano 2012; Garrick et al. 2014). Those who wish to support civil society must provide the resources needed to protect and ensure the safety of activists and whistle-blowers exposing corruption, malfeasance and poor practice (UNDP-SIWI 2014).

5.4.3. Governance dynamics

Across the world, many governments have silenced or excluded civil society participation from key decision-making arenas. A global review of national accountability mechanisms for SDG6 lists several barriers including governments not inviting CSOs to key meetings, not sharing relevant information for participation or making it hard to find, and geographically unequal opportunities to participate in accountability mechanisms. (Lande and Fonseca 2018). This follows past precedents of governments being reluctant to open up processes of transnational water governance. A study by Sneddon and Fox (2007) shows how the Mekong River Commission promised to institutionalise public participation following pressure from international donors in the 1990s. In practice the new arrangement allowed riparian states to exercise ultimate control and divided up stakeholder participation, ensuring that the ‘invited spaces’ would continue to reflect riparian states’ dominant development aims. More centralised and authoritarian regimes are the least favourable to contributions from civil society, with state officials prioritising ‘upwards accountability’ to a central government over downwards accountability to citizens. This requires creative or strategic interventions to circumvent restrictions on the flow of information, create public embarrassment through the media, or find common ground with the state (Dore et al. 2010; Lu and Tsai, 2017; Pieterse, 2019a).

Evidence highlights the importance of strengthening regional and international alliances between CSOs to protect and defend civic spaces against the threat of repressive laws and state violence. In some cases, this can best be achieved by building counter-power from below and shifting from ‘invited’ to ‘claimed’ spaces (Borgias 2018; Hepworth 2016; Kadirbeyoglo 2017; Pieterse 2019a, 2019b). In others, it occurs by navigating strategic openings and mobilising tactical alliances to advance the accountability agenda (Lu and Tsai 2017). Movement building that strengthens collaborative relationships between rural water committees, NGOs, multilateral organisations, and local government can help translate extra-institutional demands into a legislative and policy agenda (Romano 2012).



CSOs can achieve the most influence over water policies when there is good faith engagement from governments and service providers, incorporating citizen feedback at all stages of policy, planning and implementation (Lande and Fonseca 2018; Sneddon and Fox 2007; World Bank 2010).

5.5. Research priorities

This concluding section highlights knowledge gaps and identifies potential priorities for future research.

As Lande and Fonseca (2018) make clear, more research is needed on how to secure meaningful opportunities for citizen engagement in key sectoral decisions on SDG6. Evidence is weak on the extent to which statutory accountability mechanisms, including public complaint and grievances mechanisms, audit and disclosure, customer service charters, and ombudsmen services, are effective in empowering citizens and enforcing human and environmental rights. Following on from the work of Pieterse (2019a, 2019b), further knowledge is required on strategic advocacy, and on how civil society coalition-building can occur under conditions of political repression and the stifling of dissent. This could consider how to build countervailing power and external pressure to prevent further descent into authoritarian rule.

Future research could investigate how media interacts with CSOs to strengthen citizens' voice, and how water advocates can mobilise information effectively in the public domain. The Covid-19 pandemic illustrates how governments can use moments of crisis to usher in political repression. Research should therefore consider how to strengthen and protect the enabling environment in which CSOs operate. More evidence is needed on the most effective strategies to defend civil liberties from political attack, protect the autonomy of civil society, and ensure the safety of citizens speaking out against poor water governance.

Appendix 1. Accountability and advocacy interventions of interest

Accountability mechanism	Definition	Examples
<i>Social Accountability monitoring and initiatives</i>		
<i>Strengthening citizens' voice</i>	Tools and practices that strengthen the ability of citizens to express their preferences and to be heard by the state, either through formal or informal channels. For the purposes of this report, public protest was included within this category as a mechanism to amplify issues of social concern.	Feruglio 2017; Madrigal-Ballesteros et al. 2010, 2011, 2013; Nganyanyuka et al. 2017; Roncoli et al. 2016.
<i>Participatory situation analysis</i>	A comprehensive and holistic analysis to understand and characterise socio-economic and environmental contexts, barriers and opportunities for change, and better understand social dynamics within a given context.	Connick and Innes 2003; Moraes and Rocha 2013; SOPPECOM 2017
<i>Community scorecard</i>	A participatory monitoring and evaluation tool that enables citizens in a community to assess and rank the quality of public services.	Pieterse 2019a; Ramachandrudu and Snehathatha 2010; Sirker et al. 2010.
<i>Citizen report card</i>	Participatory community surveys recording user perceptions regarding the quality, adequacy and efficiency of public services.	Public Affairs Foundation 2015; Salim and Wangu 2014.
<i>Rights activation</i>	The active translation of economic, social, cultural or political rights into tangible and meaningful citizen claims.	Lande and Fonseca 2018; Lobina et al. 2007; Mwihaki 2018
<i>Social audit</i>	A participatory review or monitoring of government (or other) records and documentation of programmes, projects and expenditure at the community level to hold the government agencies accountable. It should ideally be a collaborative process where the government uses knowledge made available to it by local communities to validate official records and data.	Pare and Robles 2006; Public Affairs Foundation 2009; Storey 2014.

Budget analysis, tracking, and reporting		
<i>Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS)</i>	Surveys designed to track the amount of funds received at each point in the chain of public service delivery, allowing citizens to monitor for instances of corruption or misuse of funds.	Thomas and Aslam 2018; Nass et al. 2018; Pieterse 2019a, 2019b.
<i>Participatory budgeting processes</i>	Budgeting processes that directly involve citizens in decision-making over public spending priorities and allow for meaningful consultation over how public funds are used.	Danida 2012; Nass et al. 2018; Pieterse 2019a, 2019b.
<i>Participatory budget analysis & expenditure review</i>	Participatory processes that allow citizens to scrutinise, review, question, and comment on public spending.	Fierro et al. 2016; Tincani & Mwaruvanda 2016.

Evidence-based advocacy		
<i>Research and analysis</i>	Preparation of accurate, reliable and policy-relevant evidence to inform strategies and programme activities.	Acacia Consultants 2010; Lobina et al. 2007; Nare et al. 2011; Pervais et al. 2009; Tincani and Mwaruvanda 2016.
<i>Freedom of information campaigns</i>	Organised campaigns to build public pressure for greater transparency and the release of information in the public interest.	Mbilima 2019; Romano 2012; Sahu 2010.
<i>Media campaigns</i>	Organised campaigns mobilising media to engage the public and advocate for policy changes.	Dore et al. 2012; Meissner 2016; Romano 2012; UNDP 2013.
<i>Lobbying</i>	Direct targeting of public officials and lawmakers via meetings, letter writing etc., to influence policy positions and secure commitments to change.	Gondwana Watch 2014; Pental and Schmidt 2011; Romano 2012.
<i>Public hearings, debates, and dialogue processes</i>	Public forums for different stakeholders, including citizens, service providers and state officials, to interact, respond to questions and exchange views.	Dewachter et al. 2018; Faehndrich & Nhantumbo 2012; Kovacs et al. 2016;

		Van Campenhout et al. 2017.
<i>Integrity audits</i>	Formal examination process to ensure organisational integrity and identify incidents of corruption or malfeasance.	Gonzalez et al. 2009; Kerstens et al. 2016; Leclert et al. 2016.

Statutory accountability mechanism		
<i>Public complaint & grievance mechanisms</i>	Formal mechanisms for citizens to register complaints or articulate grievances.	Casely 2006; Feruglio 2017; Lee et al. 2018.
<i>Formal audit and disclosure</i>	Formal monitoring process to ensure compliance with laws and regulations, with results publicly disclosed to ensure transparency and accountability,	Uhlendahl et al. 2011; UNDP 2013; Willets et al. 2013.
<i>Ombudsman services</i>	Independent, government-appointed arbitration service supporting citizens to pursue dispute resolution.	Tropp et al. 2017; UNDP 2013.
<i>Customer service charters</i>	A document specifying the standards a service provider commits to uphold.	Cavill and Sohail 2004; Public Affairs Foundation 2014, 2015; Summerhill et al. 2012.
<i>Public interest litigation</i>	Legal action to secure justice on behalf of the public.	Cantor 2016; Flanagan and Zheng 2018; Haglund 2014.

Other		
<i>Participatory planning/mapping</i>	Spatial mapping and design tools (e.g. participatory GIS) that involve citizens to embed local understandings of space and plan according to local priorities.	Ali 2010; Cinderby et al. 2011; Hendricks et al. 2018; Mukhtarov et al. 2018; Simms et al. 2016.
<i>Corruption survey, Participatory Corruption Appraisal, performance benchmarking</i>	Participatory tools to identify and deter instances of corruption or poor standards of service.	Gonzalez et al., 2009.
<i>ICT performance monitoring + payment systems</i>	ICT based tools include mobile apps and surveys for data crowdsourcing and transparent, automated water payments.	Ball et al. 2013; Dandida 2012; Krowilowski 2014.

Appendix 2. Definition of Terms

Term/Phrase	Review Definition
Accountability	‘the ability of one actor to demand an explanation or justification of another actor for its actions, and to reward or punish that second actor on the basis of its performance or its explanation.’ (Rubin 2006); Social accountability, a subset of accountability, is defined as ‘civic engagement, in which citizens and civil society organizations participate in exacting accountability through a proactive process of institutional performance monitoring and open deliberation in the public domain’ (see Malena et al. 2004; Fox 2014). The map and review will include studies spanning social accountability and its tools (such as PETS, citizen report cards, social audits, community monitoring etc.) and more formal, statutory modes of accountability.
Advocacy	‘the organised attempt to change policy, practice and attitudes by presenting evidence and arguments for how and why change is needed, OSF, 2010). A systematic and strategic approach to influencing governmental and institutional policy and practice change’ (Ross 2013). ‘Work done to influence the policies and actions of governments, international institutions and the private sector to achieve positive change. Advocacy encompasses research and policy analysis, lobbying, communications and public campaigning and can be focused on securing formal policy changes; driving implementation; or creating an enabling environment for change.’ (Save the Children, 2019)
Advocacy/ accountability interventions	An ‘intervention’ is an act or strategy intended to resolve a difficulty or improve a situation (OED, 2019). In this context, an accountability or advocacy intervention is a discrete action, programme, project or reform which seeks to strengthen or enact accountability or generate and deliver advocacy. Usually but not exclusively led by an NGO or civil society organisation. Joshi (2013) defines accountability interventions in service delivery by drawing on Schedler (1999) and sets out four elements: setting standards, getting information about actions, making judgements about appropriateness and sanctioning unsatisfactory performance. An advocacy intervention can be considered as the use of evidence generated by accountability monitoring, budget analysis and tracking to advocate for positive change in sustainable water resource management and the provision of WASH services.
Improved service delivery	We define service delivery in the water sector as the delivery of basic services of water supply, sanitation and hygiene in line with accepted norms and definitions as set out by the Joint Monitoring Programme

(JMP) of UNICEF/WHO. 'Improved' service delivery refers to positive changes in, or greater levels of equitable access to:

- **Availability:** water supply must be sufficient and continuous for personal and domestic uses. Availability of sanitation depends on the presence of a latrine, as well as, crucially, adequate systems for the collection, treatment, and disposal or reuse of wastes. Availability includes concepts of 'reliability' and 'continuity'.
- **Accessibility:** water should be available within or near the home, and water sources must be accessible to everyone, including people who face specific barriers to access, such as persons living with illness or disability, older persons and children. For sanitation, access within the home is essential for health, privacy, security (particularly for women and children) and dignity. Water and sanitation services must also be accessible to people when they are not at home, including at work, at school, in public places and in places of detention.
- **Quality:** The WHO Guidelines for drinking-water quality define recommended limits for chemical and biological substances and are set to maximise water safety for human beings. Full compliance with these guidelines or incremental improvements in key parameters. On sanitation, 'quality' toilets must be hygienic to use and to maintain, and waste matter must be safely contained, transported, treated and disposed of or recycled.
- **Affordability:** Affordability standards and targets are essential to ensure that people can pay for their water and sanitation services, as well as afford access to other human rights, such as food and housing.
- **Acceptability:** If services are to be used hygienically and sustainably, and if everyone is to be able to use the services without discrimination or stigma, services must be acceptable to the intended users.
- **Sustainability:** Water and sanitation must be provided in a way that respects the natural environment and the rights of future generations and that ensures a balance among the different dimensions of financial, social and environmental sustainability. Standards and targets must consider the operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of services, as well as the financial and human capacity to manage services, whether this is carried out by the government, service providers or civil society actors. In those countries or areas of countries where water is scarce or at risk of natural disasters such as earthquakes and flooding, resilience planning to reduce the risk to water and sanitation facilities must be in place.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hygiene: availability and adequacy of handwashing facilities with soap is a key factor in improved health and wellbeing outcomes.
Improved water governance	<p>Water governance is the set of rules, practices, and processes (formal and informal) through which decisions for the management of water resources and services are taken and implemented. Stakeholders articulate their interests and decision-makers are held accountable (OECD, 2015). Drawing on the OECD Water Governance principles and indicator framework, improved water governance can be considered as changes in: roles and responsibilities; appropriate scale; policy coherence; capacity; data and information; financing; regulatory frameworks; innovative governance; integrity and transparency; stakeholder engagement; trade-offs across users and generations; monitoring and evaluation. Improved water governance can also be defined via its public good outcomes and impacts such as enhanced water quality and water balance/flows; increased levels of enforcement and compliance; efficiency savings and reduced transaction costs; protection of priority uses and ecosystems; enhanced equity; reduced conflict and mitigation of impacts of floods, droughts and pollution. Ultimately improved water governance leads to greater water security, defined as the reliable availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for production, livelihoods, health and ecosystems, coupled with an acceptable level of risk from hazards including droughts, floods, pollution and conflicts (Grey and Sadoff, 2007)</p>
Water sector	<p>We are interested only in activities focused on improved performance on water, but note that this incorporates the provision of WASH, water resource management, management of floods and droughts, and agricultural water management.</p>
Theory of change analysis	<p>An evaluation of the influencing or controlling elements, circumstances and causes - the determinants of performance for water advocacy or accountability mechanisms. We are interested in factors that are barriers and facilitators of performance to understand the effectiveness of different approaches.</p>
Causal Chain	<p>The specific linking mechanisms within a theory of change: “the chain of causal assumption that link programme resources, activities, intermediate outcomes and ultimate goals” Popay et al. 2006</p>

Appendix 3. Factors codebook

Internal factors	Inclusion criteria (positive)	Inclusion criteria (negative)
<i>Constructive/ no malice</i>	<p>Interactions between stakeholders within a community or project were characterised by positive intent and a solutions-oriented approach; when differences of opinion occurred or interests clashed, stakeholders could work constructively to identify a mutually acceptable resolution.</p> <p>e.g. Ali 2010; Dore et al. 2012; Feruglio 2017; Jacobson et al. 2010; Lieberherr and Ingold 2019; Rautanen and White 2018.</p>	<p>Reference to malicious, uncooperative, or selfish attitudes, behaviours and practices within communities or organisations as a negative determinant of water accountability outcomes. Stakeholder intent was not solutions-oriented and preoccupied with blame attribution over conflict resolution.</p> <p>e.g. Krowilowski 2014; Maponya 2018; Romano 2012.</p>
<i>Strong evidence/ science base</i>	<p>Stakeholders had access to and relied on robust and scientific knowledge and data; evidence-based decision-making generated improved water accountability outcomes.</p> <p>e.g. Ali 2010; Baldwin and Uhlmann 2010; Bellaubi and Vischer; Cinderby et al. 2011; Flanagan & Zheng 2018; Huntjens et al. 2011; Public Affairs Foundation 2009.</p>	<p>Limited, incomplete or unreliable (anecdotal, partial, biased) evidence obstructed accountability outcomes. There was insufficient evidence available to guide and inform project/programme activities.</p> <p>e.g. Carlson and Cohen 2018; Grönwall 2016; Himley 2014; Jetoo 2018.</p>
<i>Public communication, engagement and outreach</i>	<p>Efforts were made to ensure openness and transparency, relaying information to affected communities and involving them in the water accountability process.</p> <p>e.g. Aslam and Yilmaz 2011; Cinderby et al. 2011; Dewachter et al. 2018; Kelly et al 2017.</p>	<p>Closed, opaque, and internally focused organisational structures prevailed, with little or no effort to involve communities. Project or programme staff were reluctant to share plans, proposals or findings, or consult with the public. Alternatively, efforts to engage the public or reach out to communities backfired and were negatively received.</p>

		e.g. Bolin et al. 2008; Cavill and Sohail 2004; Gillet et al. 2014; Jiménez et al. 2018.
<i>Convening and dialogue processes</i>	Processes that fostered the free exchange of knowledge, views, and perspectives prevailed, with opportunities for discussion and input from multiple stakeholders. e.g. Ballesterro 2012; Driel et al. 2017; Feruglio 2017; Jacobson et al. 2010; Kvartiuk 2016; Pare and Robles 2006.	Either limited opportunities existed for beneficial dialogue processes to be opened, or processes that did occur had a detrimental impact on accountability outcomes. e.g. Dewachter et al. 2018; Tattersal 2010.
<i>Collaborative/partnership approach</i>	Activities were characterised by cooperative behaviours and practices, with stakeholders engaging with each other on an equal footing. e.g. Acacia Consultants 2018; Adams and Boateng 2018; Connick & Innes 2003; Dundon and Jaleta 2013.	Little effort was invested in fostering partnership between stakeholders; collaborative endeavours did not proceed as envisaged or ended in failure, with competitive or individualistic instincts prevailing. e.g. Newborne 2008; Pakizer and Lieberherr 2018; Smet and Achiro 2010; SOPPECOM 2017.
<i>Approach to external/donor support</i>	Stakeholders cultivated a stable and effective working relationship with external donors and were able to effectively channel donor resources towards strengthening accountability outcomes. e.g. Driel et al. 2017; Gondwana Watch International 2014; Pervais et al 2009; Pieterse 2019; Sirker et al. 2010.	Antagonistic or challenging relations between external donors and beneficiaries inhibited accountability outcomes. e.g. Boesten et al. 2011; Laurie and Crespo 2007; Rahman et al. 2007; Suleiman 2011; Tincani and Mwaruvanda 2017; Tropp et al. 2017; Water Witness 2020.
<i>Training, human resources, skills and professionalism</i>	Positive contributions of highly skilled and qualified personnel, who were well equipped and sufficiently prepared to address challenges of particular contexts.	Poorly trained, under-prepared and/or ill-informed staff inhibited accountability outcomes; attitudes, behaviours and practices did not meet standards of professionalism required to carry out tasks effectively.

	e.g. Acacia Consultants 2010; Danida 2012; Dore et al. 2012; Gonzalez et al. 2009; Madrigal-Ballesteros 2010; Ndaw 2015; Roncoli et al. 2016.	e.g. Angelstam et al. 2017; Ban et al. 2010; Imoro et al. 2016; Ramachandrudu and Snehalatha 2010; Sneddon and Fox 2007.
<i>Strategic design/ implementation model</i>	The design or implementation model of projects/programmes was alert to dynamic and changing contexts, underwritten by careful planning and strategic vision. e.g. Public Affairs Foundation 2015, 2016; Sahu 2010; Water Witness/WIN 2020.	Project/programme design or implementation models were of a generic nature and did not cater to the specificities of particular contexts. e.g. Nare et al. 2011; Roncoli et al. 2016; Thomas and Aslam 2018; Welle et al. 2015, 2016.
<i>Longevity</i>	The duration of the programme or intervention positively influenced the success of final outcomes; explicit reference made to the duration of the project or programme allowed for sustained improvements in the water sector. e.g. Borgias 2018; Hong 2017; Leclert et al. 2016; Pare and Robles 2006;	An inability to track and monitor long-term changes inhibited the efficacy or appropriateness of accountability interventions. Short-term gains were not sustained over longer periods. e.g. Summerhill et al. 2015; Uhlen Dahl et al 2011; UNDP 2013;
<i>Gender sensitivity</i>	Organisational or programme design recognised and responded to the gendered roles and responsibilities in water provision/governance; gender analysis informed decision-making; explicit efforts were made to tackle persistent gender inequalities or promote the empowerment of women and girls. e.g. Nass et al. 2018; Masanyiwa et al. 2014; Moraes and Rocha 2013; Pieterse 2019; Rautanen and White 2018; Velleman 2010.	Gender blind approaches predominated, failing to recognise or combat sexist attitudes, behaviours and practices; project or programme activities upheld patriarchal structures or compounded gender inequalities. e.g. Flores et al. 2013; Hill 2015; Pieterse 2019; SOPPECOM 2017.

Interface factors	Inclusion criteria (positive)	Inclusion criteria (negative)
<i>Low public awareness/interest</i>	<p>Increased public awareness of, or interest in, projects/programmes in the water sector strengthened accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Dewachter et al. 2018; Driel et al. 2017; Kelly et al. 2017; Sahu 2010.</p>	<p>Limited public awareness of, or disinterest in, projects/programmes in the water sector weakened accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Lande and Fonseca 2018 Moraes and Rocha 2013; Sambo 2018; Thomas and Aslam 2018; UNDP-SIWI Water Governance Facility 2017.</p>
<i>Funding and financial resource</i>	<p>Sufficient funding and financial resources were available to deliver or accelerate water accountability initiatives.</p> <p>e.g. Baldwin & Uhlmann 2010; Danida 2012; Flores et al. 2013; Nare et al. 2011.</p>	<p>Intermittent, insecure or limited funding constrained accountability outcomes.</p> <p>e.g. Alba et al. 2016; Ban et al. 2010; Kvartiuk 2016; Lande and Fonseca 2016.</p>
<i>Community capacity - incentives</i>	<p>Communities were well resourced/supported and motivated to participate in initiatives holding service providers, implementing agencies, and government authorities to account.</p> <p>e.g. Moraes and Rocha 2013; Pendall and Schmidt 2011; Rautanen and White 2018; Tigabu et al. 2013.</p>	<p>Due to additional pressures (external or internal), communities lacked the capacity or incentives to participate in water accountability projects and programmes.</p> <p>e.g. Mbilima 2019; Simms et al. 2016; Well et al. 2015, 2016; Wester et al. 2011.</p>
<i>Trust and legitimacy</i>	<p>High levels of trust and legitimacy between stakeholders prevailed, strengthening accountability ties and programme participation.</p> <p>e.g. Ali 2010; Boesten et al. 2011; Casely 2006; Garrick et al. 2012; Lu & Tsai 2017; Romano 2012; Sharmeen 2014.</p>	<p>Distrust, cynicism and suspicion typified relationships between stakeholders and informed their response to interventions, weakening accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Faehndrich & Nhantumbo 2012; Kadirbeyoglu 2017; Larsen et al. 2008; Scott et al. 2008; Sneddon and Fox 2007; Suleiman 2011.</p>

<p><i>Community, culture, and power dynamics</i></p>	<p>Community relationships were collaborative and not significantly impeded by social inequalities. The overall balance of power was amenable to water accountability, with marginalised social groups. Cultural norms and attitudes had a positive effect on accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Cantor 2016; Flanagan & Zheng 2018; Kelly et al. 2010; Madrigal-Ballesteros et al. 2013; Rautanen and White 2018.</p>	<p>Oppressive or exploitative power structures, with one social group dominating decision making or exercising control at the expense of another, further stratifying racial, class, or gender inequalities. Cultural norms and attitudes had a detrimental effect on accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Alba et al. 2016; Bolin et al. 2008; Faehndrich & Nhantumbo 2012; Sneddon and Fox 2007; SOPPECOM 2017; Water Witness 2020; Wesselinke et al. 2015.</p>
<p><i>Scale of engagement</i></p>	<p>The scale at which stakeholders engaged with water governance or services (e.g. local, regional, national, transnational) was appropriate and conducive to strengthening accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Angelstam et al. 2017; Borgas 2018; Cinderby et al. 2013; Jetoo 2018; Laurie and Crespo 2007; Meissner 2016; Van Campenhout et al. 2016.</p>	<p>The scale at which stakeholders engaged with water governance or services (e.g. local, regional, national, transnational) was inappropriate or challenging and constrained accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Barau and Hoseni 2015; Bolin et al. 2008; Jetoo 2018; Pieterse 2019; Roncoli et al. 2016; Uhrendahl et al. 2011.</p>
<p><i>Alignment with government systems and protocols</i></p>	<p>Activities and practices of implementing agencies were closely aligned with government systems and protocols.</p> <p>e.g. Danida 2012; Fogelberg 2013; Independent Evaluation Group 2017; Maponya 2018.</p>	<p>Activities and practices of implementing agencies deviated from government systems and protocols.</p> <p>e.g. Baldwin & Uhlmann 2010; Boldbaatar et al. 2019; Carlson and Cohen 2018; Kuhlike et al. 2016; Leclert et al. 2016.</p>
<p><i>Decentralisation</i></p>	<p>Efforts to devolve administrative and political power to the local level strengthened accountability, for example, by increasing local democracy and bringing decision-making closer to citizens.</p>	<p>Efforts to devolve administrative and political power to the local level weakened accountability, for example, by deflecting statutory responsibilities onto local governments.</p>

	e.g. Aslam and Yilmaz 2011; Ban et al. 2010; Dewachter et al. 2018; Holvoet et al. 2016; Masanyiwa et al. 2014.	e.g. Bellaubi & Vischer 2010; Grossman et al. 2018; Holvoet et al. 2016; Kadirbeyoglu 2017.
<i>Leadership/champions</i>	<p>The presence of community, civil society, or political leaders championing the accountability agenda through vocal and proactive efforts to explain, introduce and implement accountability mechanisms.</p> <p>e.g. Gonzalez et al. 2009; Haglund 2014; Hendricks et al. 2018; Madrigal-Ballesteros et al. 2010, 2011, 2013.</p>	<p>The presence of community, civil society, or political leaders championing the accountability agenda was insufficient or counterproductive to accountability efforts.</p> <p>e.g. SOPPECOM 2017; Wester et al. 2011.</p>

External factors	Inclusion criteria (positive)	Inclusion criteria (negative)
<i>Political perception (jobs vs environment)</i>	<p>Economic and ecological concerns were perceived to be in alignment and presented as a ‘win-win’ scenario in political discourse and decision-making.</p> <p>e.g. Gondwana Watch 2014; Romano 2012; Sambo 2018.</p>	<p>A perceived dichotomy pitting jobs and economic growth against the environment prevailed in political discourse and decision making, and this antagonism constrained accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Bolin et al. 2008; Rahman et al. 2007; WaterAid 2011; Wegerich 2008.</p>
<i>Shrinking civil society space</i>	<p>Regardless of the political context, civil society organisations were able to maintain an active presence and mount effective political claims, strengthening accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Dore et al. 2012; Rautanen and White 2018; UNDP 2013; World Bank 2010.</p>	<p>An authoritarian and restrictive political context prevailed, limiting the ability of civil society to exercise its right to protest, defend minority interests, or criticise authorities.</p> <p>e.g. Borgias 2018; Driel et al. 2017; Kvartiuk 2016; Lu and Tsai 2017; Moraes and Rocha 2013; Pieterse 2019a, 2019b.</p>
<i>Media quality/performance</i>	<p>The media landscape was characterised by high journalistic standards and ethics, relaying reliable and accurate information</p>	<p>The media landscape was characterised by low levels of journalistic integrity and ethical conduct, spreading inaccurate or</p>

	<p>to citizens. Editorial independence and diverse forms of ownership allowed the media to maintain a ‘watchdog function’, which was observed to play a positive role in strengthening accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Feruglio 2017; Flanagan and Zheng 2018</p>	<p>misleading information to citizens. Concentrated or tightly controlled media ownership had a stifling effect, limiting its ability to hold powerful or vested interests to account.</p> <p>e.g. Khulike et al. 2016; Mwhiki 2018.</p>
<i>Environment and water use context</i>	<p>Attributes of the overall water use context and ecosystem in which interventions took place enabled greater water accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Baldwin & Uhlmann 2011; Pendall and Schmidt 2011; Sharmeen 2014; Sneddon and Fox 2007.</p>	<p>Attributes of the overall water use context and ecosystem in which interventions took place presented additional obstacles that constrained water accountability.</p> <p>e.g. Acacia Consultants 2010; Grönwall 2016; Jackson and Barber 2015; Wester et al. 2011.</p>
<i>Rates of literacy/education</i>	<p>High levels of literacy and education prevailed, equipping citizens with the necessary skills to hold service providers and authorities accountable.</p> <p>e.g. Kadirbeyoglu 2017; Madrigal-Ballestero et al. 2013; Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research 2012.</p>	<p>Low levels of literacy and education prevailed and limited the extent to which citizens could play an active role in holding service providers and authorities accountable.</p> <p>e.g. McCormick 2007; Pares and Robles 2006; Sambo 2018; Tattersal 2010; UNDP 2013</p>
<i>Ambiguous institutional responsibilities</i>	<p>Roles and responsibilities between institutions were well defined, with clear and distinct mandates between institutions.</p> <p>e.g. Smet et al. 2010.</p>	<p>Roles and responsibilities were poorly defined. Institutional performance was hindered by confused and overlapping mandates.</p> <p>e.g. Acey 2019; Dore et al. 2012; Garrick et al. 2012; Lande and Fonseca 2018; Maponya 2018.</p>
<i>Inter-agency accountability</i>	<p>Chains of accountability between implementing agencies were robust and effective.</p> <p>e.g. Hong 2017; Sirker et al. 2010; WaterAid 2011.</p>	<p>Chains of accountability between implementing agencies were weak or non-existent.</p> <p>e.g. Alba et al. 2016; Cavill and Sohail 2005; Gillet et al. 2014; Lee</p>

		et al. 2014; Lieberherr 2019; Newborne 2008.
<i>Absence/Presence of sanctions and standards of service – clear rules</i>	<p>Clear rules and regulations were in place to delineate the standards of service citizens could expect from authorities, with sanctions for non-compliance.</p> <p>e.g. Adams and Boateng 2018; Ball et al. 2013; Davis 2004; Haglund 2014.</p>	<p>Rules and regulations were absent or lacked clarity over their scope. There was no penalty if standards of service were inconsistent and unreliable.</p> <p>e.g. Acey 2019; Cavill and Sohail 2004; Jimenez et al. 2018.</p>
<i>Government capacity</i>	<p>Governments were sufficiently well resourced (money, staff, time etc.) to undertake their duties effectively.</p> <p>e.g. Fogelberg 2013; Hong 2017; Pieterse 2019; Sambo 2018.</p>	<p>Governments lacked the resources (money, staff, time etc.) to undertake their duties effectively.</p> <p>e.g. Grossman et al. 2018; Imoro et al. 2016; Rahman et al. 2007; Tincani & Mwaruvanda 2016.</p>

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