



Taking scale into account for Transparency, participation & accountability strategies

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Why think about scale?

- To get beyond fragmented, one-off projects
- Scale suggests *impact* (more X, bigger Y)
- How does this relate to the field of transparency, participation & accountability (TPA)?
- It turns out there are *multiple* ways of thinking about scale
- Just as there are many ways to think about impact...
- Key for TPA: How can “taking scale into account” inform practical strategies for *power shifts*?

Context: Tactical or strategic approaches?

- Tactical approaches focus on tools & address one link in longer causal chains
- Strategic approaches take a more systemic approach
- Context: Donor-funded TPA initiatives have been dominated by *tactical* approaches
- SPARK proposes “doing TPA differently” by being more *strategic*

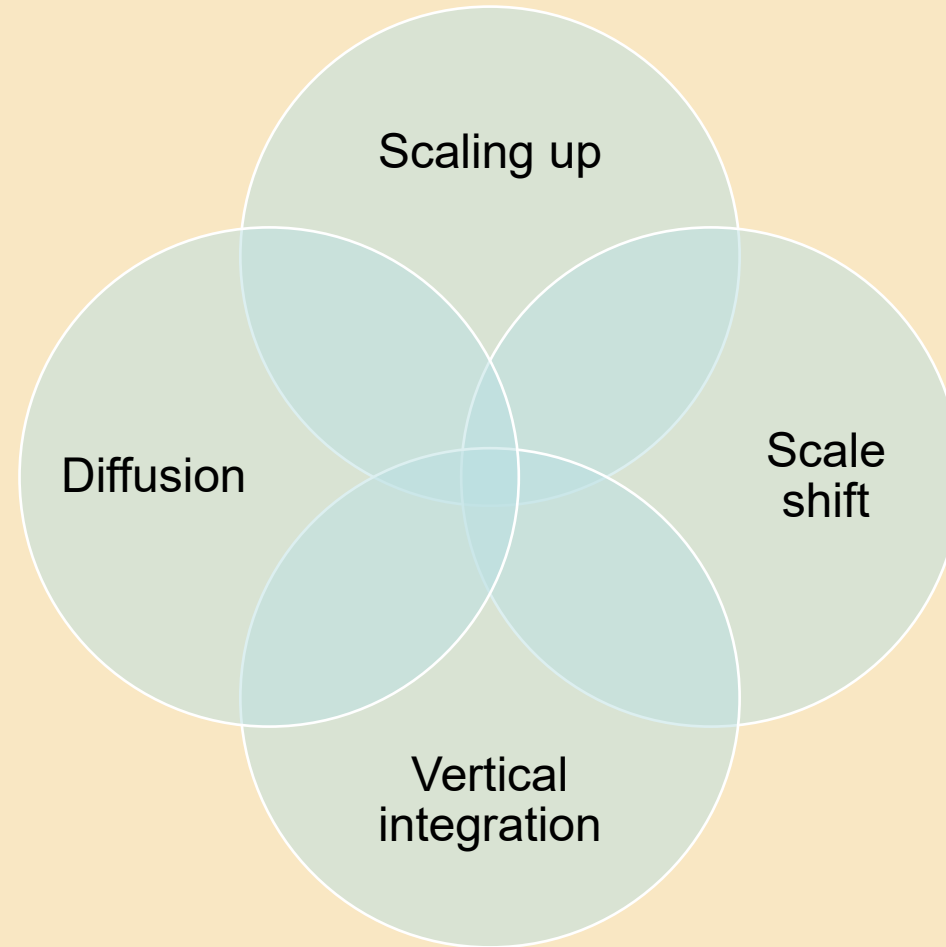
Tactical approaches to TPA:

- **Fundamentally *tool-led*, bounded interventions (e.g., citizen report cards, interface meetings, national budget analysis)**
- **Information alone is expected to inspire collective action or to trigger accountability mechanisms**
- **Citizen voice expected to have sufficient power to influence public sector performance**
- **Exclusive focus either on local or national arenas**
- **Designed to be measurable to satisfy donor “does it work” questions**

Strategic approaches to TPA:

- **Informed by power analysis**
- **Multiple, coordinated tactics reinforce each other**
- **Focus on enabling environments for collective action**
- **Take the accountability ecosystem into account**
- **Link citizen voice to governmental reforms that bolster public sector responsiveness (voice plus teeth)**
- **Seek synergy between monitoring and advocacy**
- **Link advocacy across multiple levels of governance**
- **These processes are iterative, contested and therefore uneven & therefore measuring impacts requires fresh approaches**

Taking scale into account: Four approaches



1. *Scaling up*

- Do more of X, or reach more people with Y
- Yet transitioning from promising pilots to large programs & policies is easier said than done
- Managerial approaches predominate
- Scaling up more appropriate for service delivery than for TPA strategies, which involve power shifts
- Plus, beware: Evidence shows that as “participatory” programs scale up, “invited spaces” often get watered down or captured

2. Diffusion: Scaling across?

- “Spread or flow of an innovation across actors in a social system”
- For spread of *empowerment* processes, social movement analysis focuses on diffusion of *collective action*
- For spread of *pro-accountability* institutional change, policy diffusion analysis focuses on how *policy innovation* is taken up from one government to another (at subnational or national levels)
- For example, consider now large lit on diffusion of participatory budgeting... how does PB change in the process?

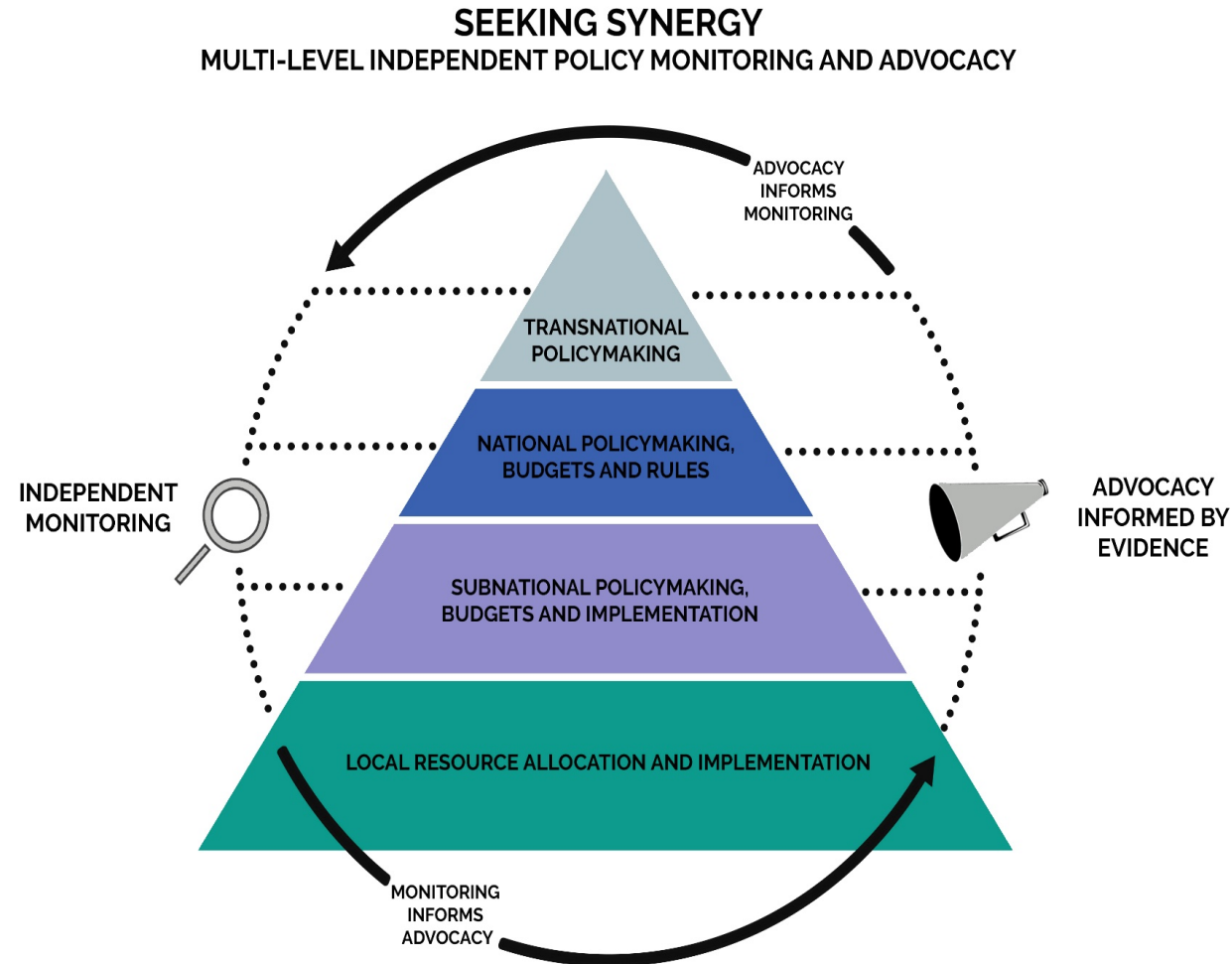
3. *Scale shift*

- **“Change in number & level of coordinated collective actions, with new range of actors, targets & claims”**
- **Scale shift - can go upwards or downwards**
 - **Local => national or global (“boomerang strategy”)**
 - **Global or national => local**
- **Mechanisms: Cross-cultural interlocutors key**
- **Plus lateral diffusion broadens the social/civic base grounding scale shift**

4. Vertical integration

Scale differs here because it connects the dots:

- Public interest oversight efforts linked across levels
- Independent monitoring & advocacy inform each other
- Even “partial” vertical integration can add leverage (e.g, linking just two levels)



Vertical integration & advocacy challenges

- **How to address causes, not just symptoms of accountability failures?**
- **How can strategies address the often vertically integrated nature of anti-accountability power structures?**
- **How to address “squeezing the balloon” & identify where public sector decisions are really made? (follow the money)**
- **How can broadening the civic base w social inclusion bolster multi-level advocacy? (diffusion plus scale shift)**
- **For multi-actor advocacy initiatives to gain leverage, how can the whole become greater than the sum of the parts?**

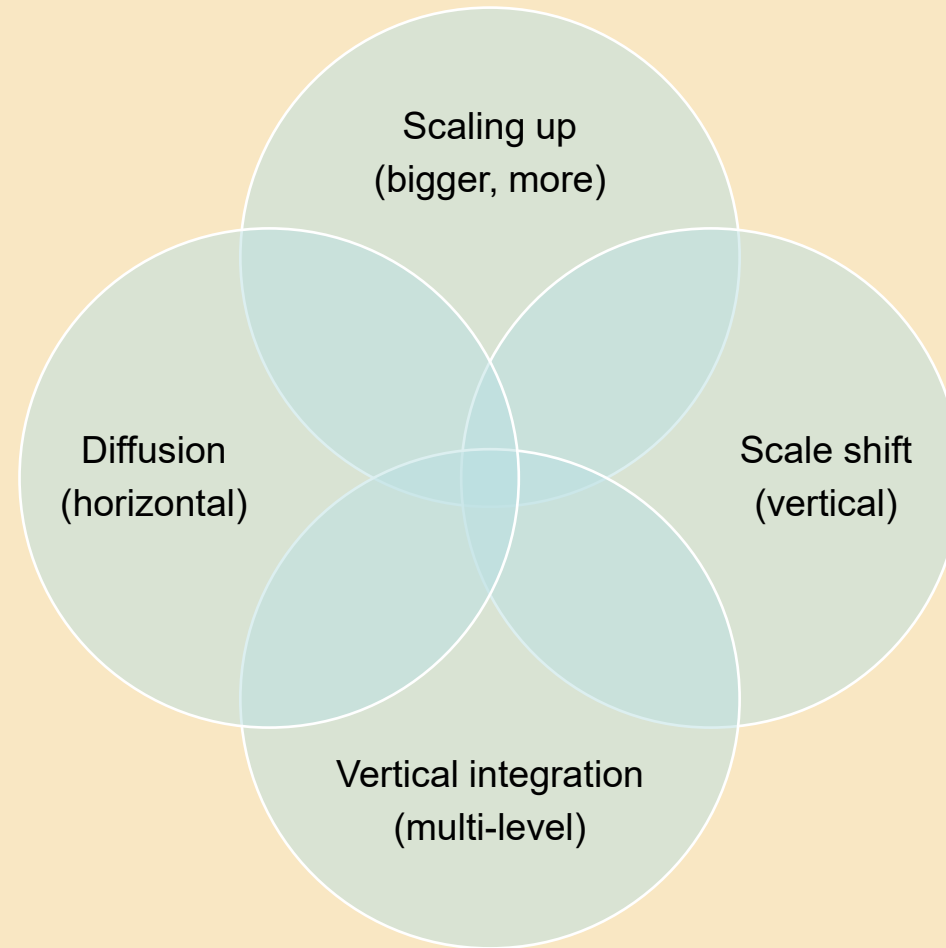
Cases of vertical integration

- [Philippines](#) – Textbook Count (monitored full “supply chain”)
- [Ghana](#) – CSO Platform on IMF Bailout
- [Nigeria](#) – Anambra state (links community to state govt advocacy)
- [India](#) – SATHI (grassroots clinic monitoring & state advocacy)
- [Guatemala](#) – CEGSS – (municipal-district health system monitoring)
- [Mexico](#) – Community Food Councils
- What other cases come to mind?

Recap: Taking scale into account from four directions

- 1) *Scaling up*: Bigger can be better – or can get watered down**
- 2) *Diffusion*: Innovations can travel across both state and society – though may get transformed in the process**
- 3) *Scale shift*: Change strategies adapt by shifting levels of action to find new targets**
- 4) *Vertical integration*: Monitoring & advocacy builds on scale shift when it's multi-level, & builds on diffusion when it broadens social base with social inclusion**

Threading the *E&A* needle



To sum up: How to bring together power & scale?

- 1) Scaling up: Implicitly promoted from above, more focused on activities than power**
- 2) Diffusion: Can broaden the social/civic base & be promoted either from above, below or laterally**
- 3) Scale shift: Contests power by targeting bottlenecks**
- 4) Vertical integration: Connects the dots to inform & target causes, not just symptoms of accountability failures**



Comments welcome - thanks

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