Open (Government) Data for *Economical and Institutional Transparency*

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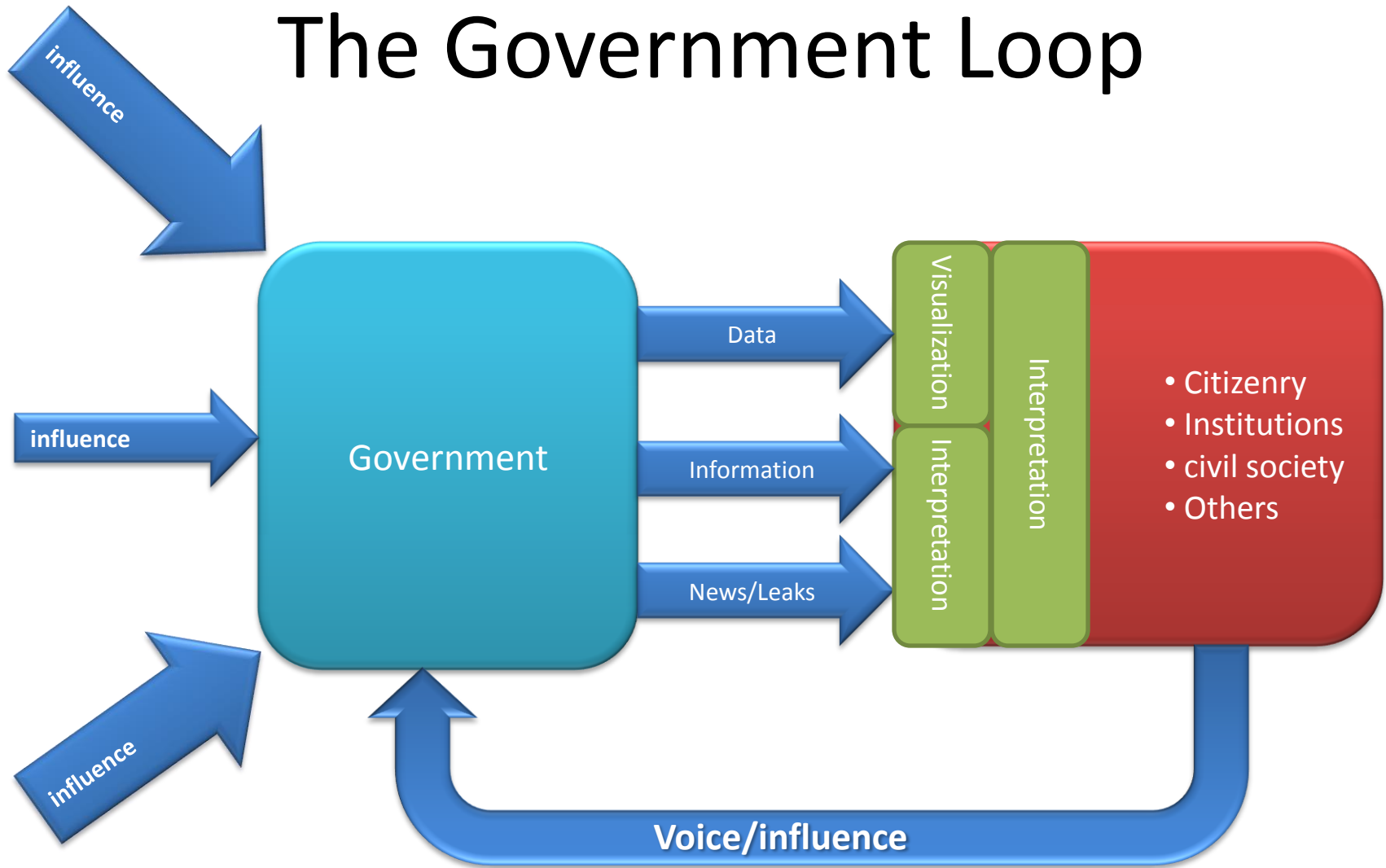Data Connectivity for Rural Areas Initiative (IEEE)
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The Government Loop

influence

influence

influence

Government

Data

Information

News/Leaks

Visualization

Interpretation

Interpretation

Interpretation

- Citizenry
- Institutions
- civil society
- Others

Voice/influence

Recent research [1] has found that transparency is not enough for the reduction of corruption. Important necessary conditions, **publicity** and **accountability**, must also be present:
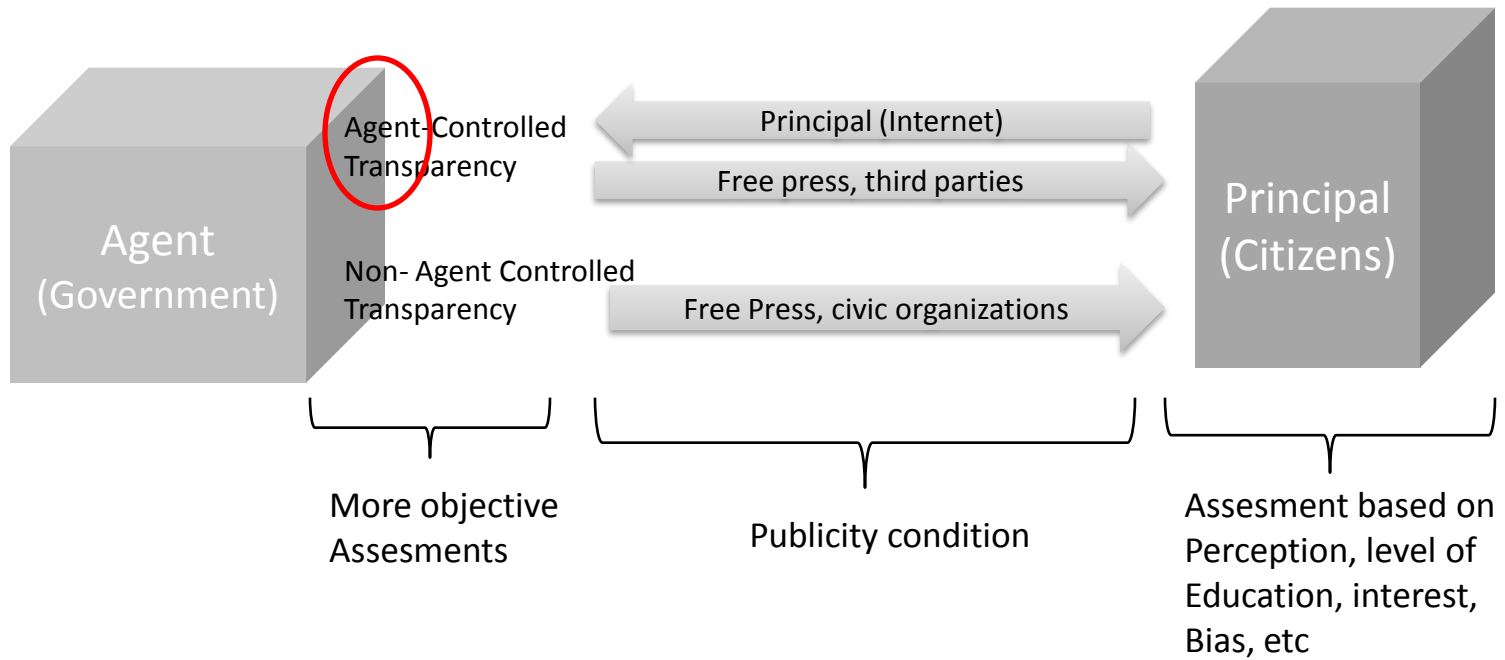
Publicity
- Citizen must be able to receive available information

- Different audiences can understand such information

Accountability
- A mechanism must exist to hold the government accountable (i.e. free and fair elections and other checks and balances, generally present in democratic systems)
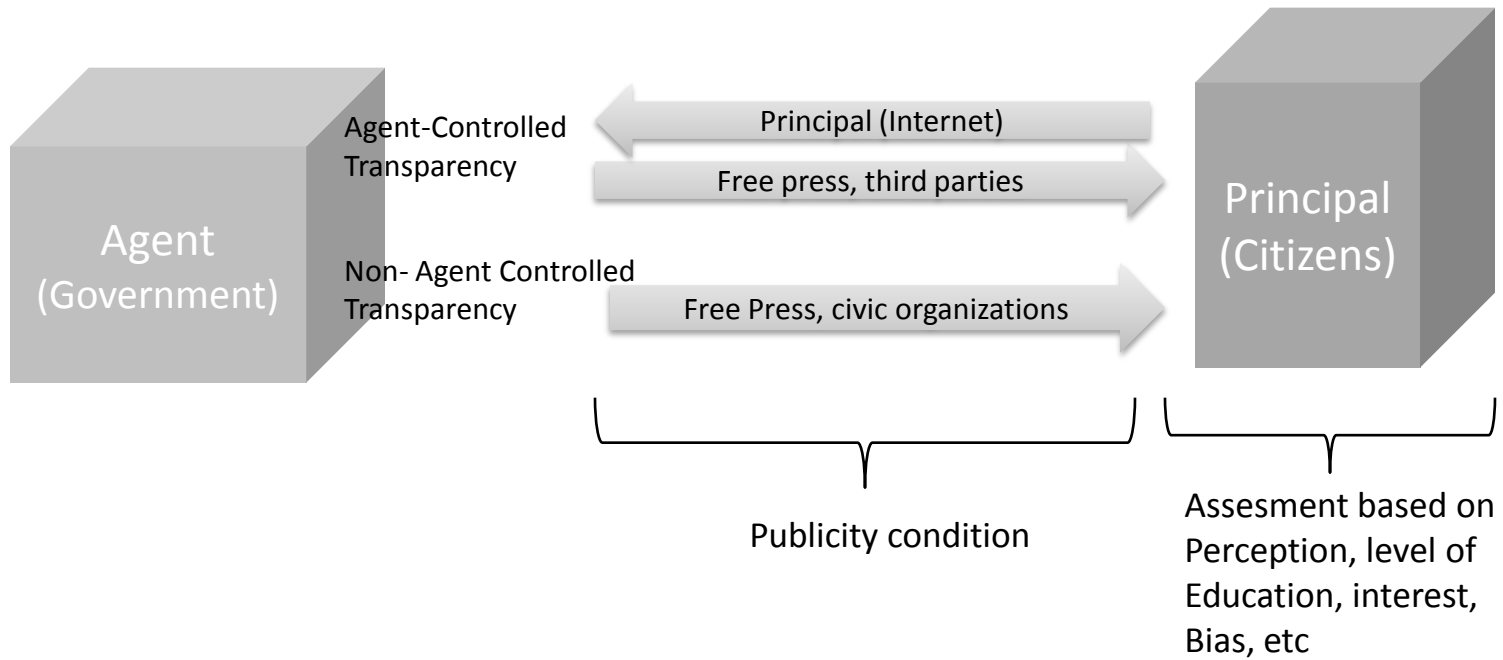
Transparency has been **generally measured through proxies** that evaluate **perception of transparency** [2,3,4]. The use of portals for the release of information **demands a more objective approach** for measuring E&IT [5,6]

Agent (Government)

Agent-Controlled Transparency

Non-Agent Controlled Transparency

Principal (Internet)

Free press, third parties

Free Press, civic organizations

Principal (Citizens)

More objective Assesments

Publicity condition

Assesment based on Perception, level of Education, interest, Bias, etc

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Characteristics of government transparency [7,8]	Corresponding Principles of Government Data Openness [9]
Information must be shared publically	Availability; Facility to find; Relevancy of location
Information must be timely	Timeliness; Facility to find; Relevancy of location
Information must be reliable	Existence of Specific FOI policy
information must be accurate	Primariness
Information must be understandable	Availability of a Representation tool; Machine readability
Information must be internationally comparable	Machine readability

Table 1. Relationship between characteristics of transparency and principles of GDO.

E&IT Measured areas in this study [10,11,12,13]

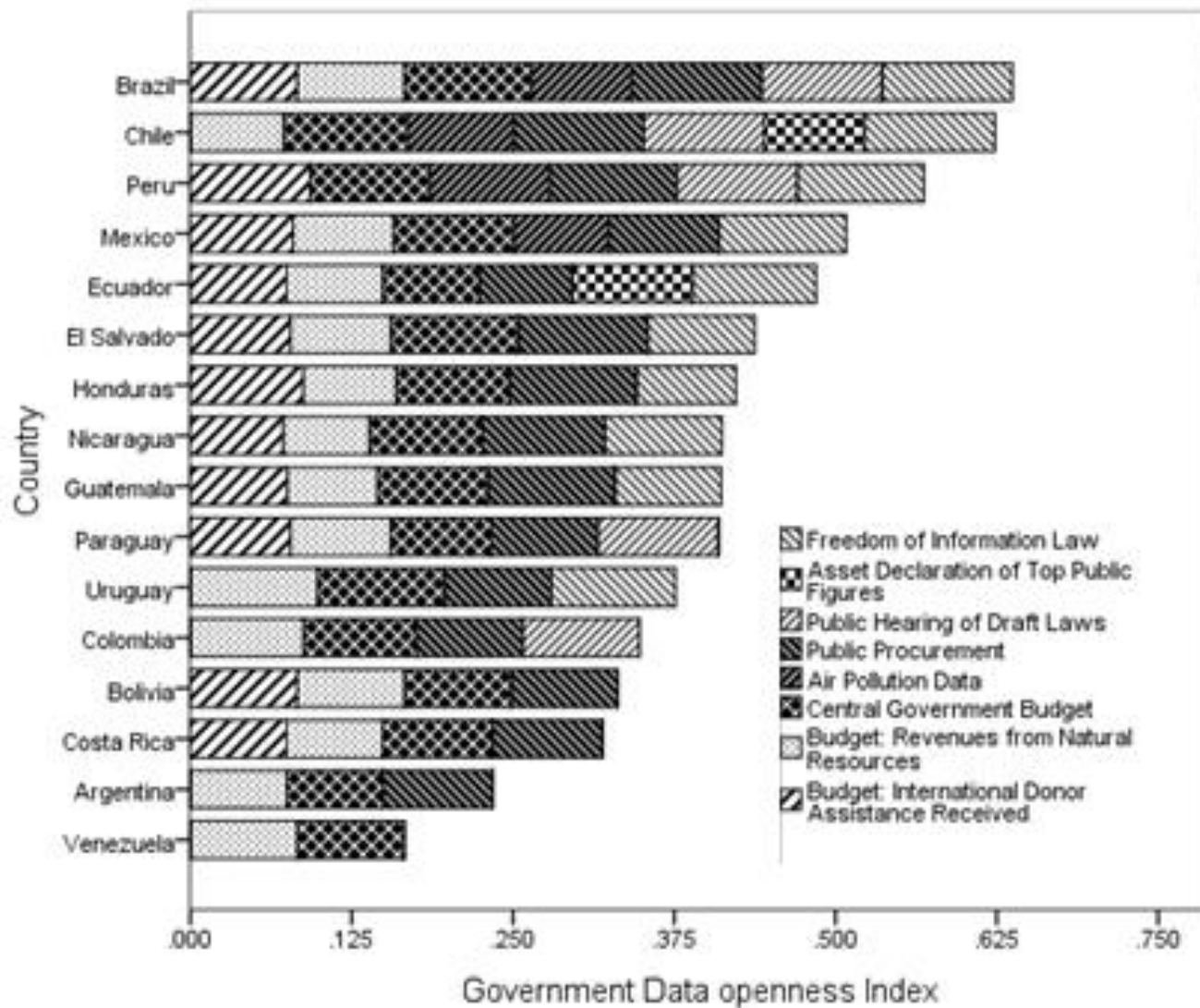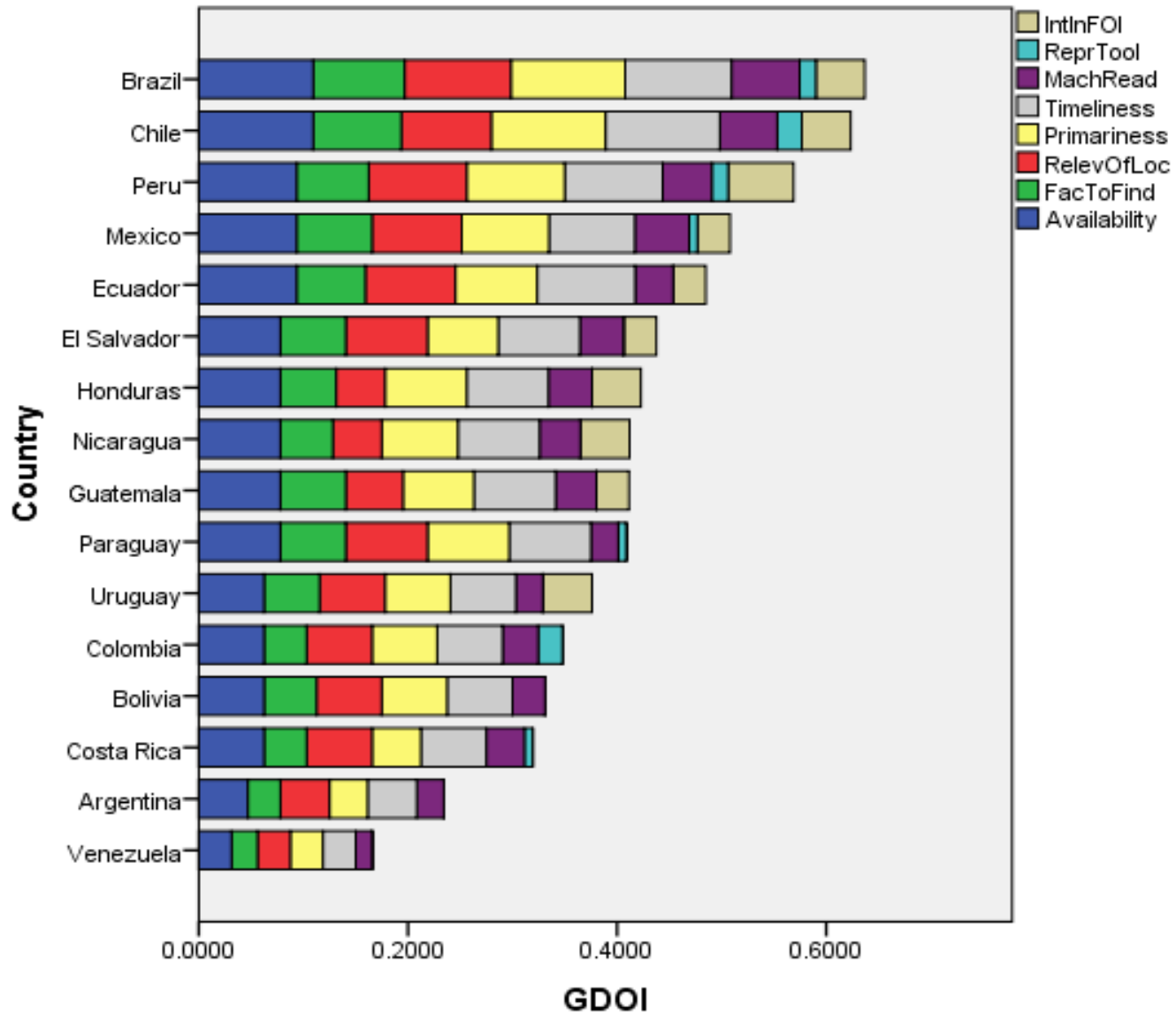| |
|---|
| Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation |
| Public hearing of draft laws |
| Asset declaration of top public figures |
| Public procurement |
| Central government Budget |
| International aid received |
| Revenues from natural resources |
| Air pollution |

Figure: Government Data openness Index by Country, showing horizontal stacked bars for Brazil, Chile, Peru, Mexico, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Paraguay, Uruguay, Colombia, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Argentina, and Venezuela. The x-axis ranges from .000 to .750. Legend categories: Freedom of Information Law; Asset Declaration of Top Public Figures; Public Hearing of Draft Laws; Public Procurement; Air Pollution Data; Central Government Budget; Budget: Revenues from Natural Resources; Budget: International Donor Assistance Received.

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Important findings and conclusions (1)

1. There's **statistical significant correlation** between the overall **perception** of economical and institutional transparency (WB) [14] and **GDIO**. (Pearson R of 0.535 and a 2-tail test of .033).

2. High correlation between **explicit mention** of Internet in FOI legislation and the **availability of data of an area**. (Pearson's r of 0.775 and t test (2-tailed) of 0).

Important findings and conclusions (2)

3. The **low levels of machine readability** and **representation tools** imply minimum/negligible contribution of technology to the **Publicity Condition**, thus, so far **technology and OGD not living to expectations** in relevant areas of central government transparency of central governments in LAC nations.

4. **Open data portals** generally **exclude important areas that are relevant to the reduction of corruption**. Reasons can be: appropriate policy, lack of standards, universal agreement on what transparency is, too much focus on technology and not enough focus on transparency, others.

Important findings and conclusions (3)

5. Lack of representation tools create a bias of access or "data divide" [6,15,17]. Information/OGD (as it happens with data connectivity) is mainly benefitting eestablished organizations and **individuals with resources, knowledge, skills, means and tools to interpret information and data**, thus **increasing knowledge divide**. Thus technology is not living up to expectations and it is **not being a tool to reach the least empowered**. In these nations only 48% are Internet users (note that macro indicators hide realities of individual nations and rural areas.)

Important findings and conclusions (4)

6. It is hoped that the opening of data "processes" will primarily change the "inner machinery" and "culture" of governments towards more transparency and accountability; it will be then that the offering of data will have real meaning; otherwise the thousands of datasets will be limited to other issues minimally related to transparency [15].
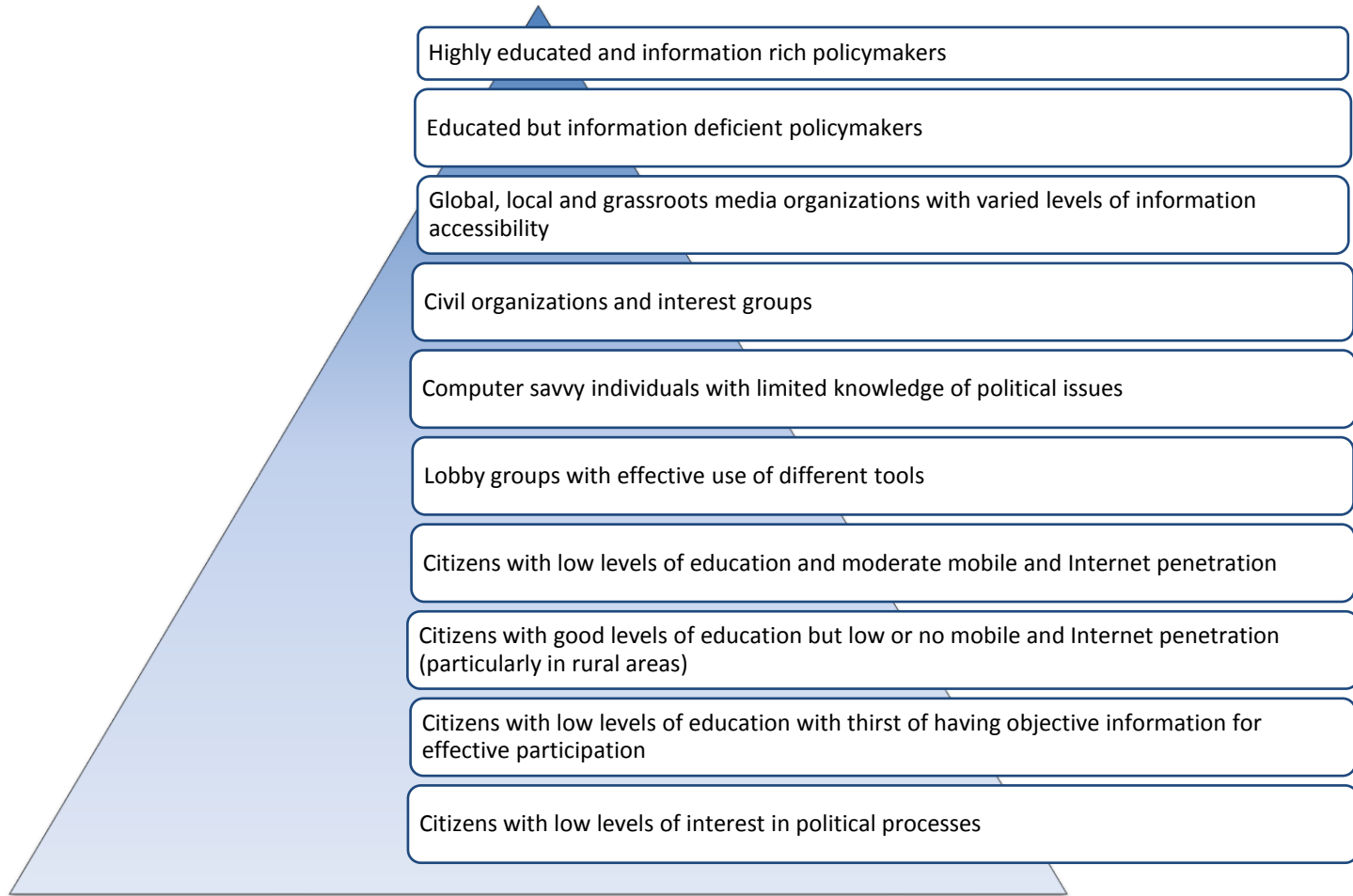
7. Sustainable initiatives will need to be deeply ingrained to the desire of transparency, otherwise it will be just a **show of technical powers** that will minimally contribute to central government transparency and **will create a hypercharged version of the "unstransparent" and knowledge/ empowerment divided real world** [15,16].

Important findings and conclusions (5)

8. Broader citizen participation "is hindered by barriers of expertise, resources, and motivation" [15].

9. "The existing architecture of online transparency allows agencies to retain control over regulatory data and thus withhold information that is essential for public accountability purposes; prioritizes quantity over quality of disclosures; and reinforces traditional barriers of access to information" [15].

Who are the customers?

Highly educated and information rich policymakers

Educated but information deficient policymakers

Global, local and grassroots media organizations with varied levels of information accessibility

Civil organizations and interest groups

Computer savvy individuals with limited knowledge of political issues

Lobby groups with effective use of different tools

Citizens with low levels of education and moderate mobile and Internet penetration

Citizens with good levels of education but low or no mobile and Internet penetration (particularly in rural areas)

Citizens with low levels of education with thirst of having objective information for effective participation

Citizens with low levels of interest in political processes

Thank you.

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"A computer does not substitute for judgment any more than a pencil substitutes for literacy. But writing ability without a pencil is no particular advantage."—Robert S. McNamara [15]