



## Articulating New Accountability Systems: Preliminary Integrated Framework

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The role of Work Package 3 in ResIST is to identify and analyse the emergence and workings of accountability systems that allow us to explicitly state and frame the distributional issues related to the design, development of scientific and technological resources and their capture and use by societies. Systems of accountability are the means by which the potential distributional consequences of science and policy and practices can be recognised and assessed – and potentially incorporated – by formal elements of the political system. Alternative accountability systems attuned to the needs of the disadvantaged are thus the prerequisite for reorienting scientific governance towards greater social inclusion in building S&T priorities and in distributing its products. This paper provides a preliminary framework for looking at the construction of alternative accountability systems in two contexts:

- Redistributive issues associated with the design, development, access to and use of mundane, everyday technologies;
- Experimental initiatives in capacity building and priority setting with the aim of remediating inequality.

The first section of the paper is a discussion of social science approaches to accountability. It was elaborated focusing on the notions of accountability in public, accountability of public and accountability for public, although these three areas often overlap in instances of accountability. Accountability *in* public relates to the sense in which forms of interaction are occasions of accountability. Accountability *of* public focuses more narrowly on those occasions where groups of people are rendered available to be held to account through, for example, surveillance systems (airport security, CCTV cameras, speed cameras and so on) or some other notable mechanism for accounting. Accountability *for* public refers to those actions understood as carried out, usually by an organisation, on behalf of an often unspecified mass audience. The section on accountability for public includes an extended discussion of the relationship between *transparency* and *accountability*.

The links between the discussion of the above notions of accountability and case studies on redistributive issues associated with the design, development, access to and use of mundane, everyday technologies are analysed. The research team is exploring three case studies to throw light on these issues:



*Textiles.* Clothing forms a ubiquitous aspect of consumer lifestyles in the developed world. However, often t-shirts are produced in developing countries, where questions are asked of labour conditions, safety and hours of work. Subsequent to use in the west, t-shirts are often donated to charities and shipped back to the developing world where they form the focus of emerging industries for accessing, distributing and owning such garments. How could these contexts of production, shipping, usage, shipping (again), re-distribution and usage (again) be connected through policy developments? Could a system of accountability be developed for encouraging the connectivity of these locales to be constituted in such a way as to be advantageous to the developing world?

*Vaccines.* Vaccines can form a pervasive, mundane and routine expectation within societies of the developed world (aside from questions of the reliability of MMR and questions of the availability of flu vaccines). However, the absence of, and political controversies pertaining to, vaccines in the developing world require that many aspects of day to day routine are organised around attempts (and failures) to gain access to vaccines in appropriate settings, within appropriate time frames, for appropriate sections of a population. Much of this access and routine expectation derive from vaccine development and ownership by developed societies. How might these contexts of vaccination be drawn into a connected system of accountability? How might such a system be developed in order to enhance the health and well being of those in the developing world?

*E-waste.* With the growing use and disposal of IT equipment, questions are being asked of where waste should go, how IT should be dismantled and what impacts such e-waste is having on particular locales. Currently it appears that the far-east provides the context for the development of IT, the western world provides the context for much IT use and the developing world (particularly India, China and Africa) provides the context for IT disposal. This case-study will ask: how can these contexts be drawn together through policy so that developers and users are also aware of, and perhaps more responsible for, disposal issues? What are the most appropriate ways for disposing of e-waste? Can we develop reliable mechanisms for holding to account developers, users and the contexts of disposal in order to enhance benefits of this connectivity of locales for those in the developing world?

The paper's second section designs a framework for the study of initiatives aimed at addressing issues of inequality as they are related to the active engagement of concerned actors, namely deprived population, and public bodies and institutions. This task is pursued through the identification and characterization of the procedures which allow public policies to be made publicly accountable for their effects on inequalities. In that sense, the very basic concepts of the ResIST project – equality and inequalities; science, technology and knowledge(s) and accountability – are addressed, as well as the way these concepts are linked to current debates on democracy, citizen action, accountability and the co-production of knowledge and social order. The way these discussions are connected to the identification and development of case studies on experimental initiatives in capacity building and priority setting which aim at the remediation of inequality is considered in the final part of this section. A first set of case studies are on the ways in which accountability procedures are organized and enacted in relation to public policies with constitutive attachments to specific configurations of knowledge:

*Participatory budgeting (PB).* With Brazilian origins, PB initiatives are related to democratization processes that begun in the late 1980's. These kinds of experiences are, at the present moment, spread all over the world, and imply the participation of citizens in the processes of defining budget applications, as well as in the conception of public policies. These processes allow the re-examination, and possible inversion of priorities in the application of public funds, as well as the public control of the administration. Different PB processes were studied: in Belo Horizonte, Brazil; in S. Brás de Alportel, Portugal; and in Seville, Spain.

*Health Management Councils (HMC).* Also with Brazilian roots, the HMC relate to participatory practices in the field of health. Social actors organize themselves collectively, claiming access to health as a basic right. HMCs are institutionalized fora composed of, at least, 50% representatives of citizens or citizen organisations, the other 50% including professionals and agents of administration. Their objective is to deliberate and make binding decisions on the definition of health policies and the allocation of public

resources for health care, and, in some cases, research on health. HMCs exist at the federal, state and municipal levels. The case explored in this study is that of the municipal HMC of Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

A second set of case studies, on *public health*, in Brazil, is in progress. The initiatives dealt with in these case studies engage with the effects of different forms of inequality on the generation of vulnerabilities in specific populations and on the attempts to deal with these through collective action and collaborative production of knowledge and interventions in public health.

*Environmental health and environmental justice.* The Brazilian national environmental justice network has as its main field of action the articulation of environmental struggles and social justice. A specific action will be examined in detail: the campaign against the plans to allow the import of used tyres from the European Union to Brazil.

*Programs for fighting and controlling endemic diseases.* The focus of this case study is on initiatives in health promotion inspired by the project of collective health, a brand of public health developed in Latin America and associated with a conception of health as the outcome of the intersection of, and articulation of, ecological, social, and political processes. The case study will engage specifically with the initiatives for the control of vector diseases in the urban areas of Rio de Janeiro and Recife, and, in particular, with those based on ecosystemic and ecosocial approaches.

As the project develops, the conceptual issues addressed in the first section regarding accountability will be revised in the second section in relation to these case studies of innovative procedures of public accountability. The role of S&T in these experiences will be explored as part of the broader process of generating new configurations of knowledge associated with situated responses to inequality.