Global governance as ethical commitment
A new vision on solidarity for sustainable development

A discussion paper[1]
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Structure

Abstract

Following the sketch of the actual happening of global governance as 'pragmatic accommodation', the paper formulates a critique on that form of global governance by emphasizing an inherent contradiction in its rationale. Consequently, it proposes an ethical understanding of global governance based on a specific characterization of complexity of our complex social problems, and suggests that 'reflexivity' and 'intellectual solidarity' would be the necessary public ethical attitudes to deal with that complexity in a fair way. This reasoning is then used to further elaborate on the meaning of 'global governance as ethical commitment' and on the consequences for the working of democracy, science, the market and education. Finally, in conclusion, the paper briefly reflects on the idea of capacity building for global governance as ethical commitment in relation to current understandings of human rights.

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See http://www.academia.edu/12126039/Sustainability_Global_Issues_Global_Perspectives

/   Introduction - the need for a new understanding of global governance

Global governance is a concept that, on the one hand, vaguely denotes '… *the multi-level collection of governance-related activities, rules and mechanisms, formal and informal, public and private that exist in the world today* …' (Karns and Mingst 2009) and that, on the other hand, is subject of the deepest political disagreements of our contemporary times. In the following text, I will briefly sketch the meaning of global governance as it happens today and the actual landscape of critical views related to it, although without wanting to be comprehensive with respect to the variety of understandings and their historical evolution. Rather, put against my conception of the happening of global governance as 'pragmatic accommodation' organized around the 'fact' of state sovereignty, I propose to consider the possibility of an ethical understanding of global governance that is initially not bothered with the issue of state sovereignty. My idea is that there is a need for an engaged thinking and deliberation about global governance that is initially not worried with 'political complexity', or thus with the question of whether world politics should be directed by nation states or not, but that, alternatively, could start from an assessment of the character of complexity of the various social problems and challenges we face, in order to enable an evaluation of what would be a 'fair way' of making sense of that complexity in the first place. As an alternative to the various visions on (what I like to call) 'global governance as pragmatic accommodation', I thus propose to take a step back in order to enable a blank start in making sense of the why and how of 'global governance as ethical commitment'. Based on the insight that global governance essentially concerns a complex 'exercise' of governing interlinked social, economic, industrial and technological practices of which the justification and assessment as such is complicated by various knowledge-related uncertainties and value pluralisms, I propose to understand the *ethics* of global governance as the concern with a 'fair dealing with complexity' in the *politics* of global governance. The motivation for this approach is in the fact that it would enable to formulate a rationale on capacity building for fair and effective global governance that could essentially be grounded in a human rights perspective and that, at the same time, could provide a view on the 'nature' of that needed political form of global governance, namely as a form of deliberative democracy.

Following the sketch of the actual happening of global governance as 'pragmatic accommodation' in the first part, the second part will formulate a critique on that form of global governance by emphasizing an inherent contradiction in its rationale. Consequently, in part three, I propose an ethical understanding of global governance based on a specific characterization of complexity of our complex social problems, and suggest that 'reflexivity' and 'intellectual solidarity' would be the necessary public ethical attitudes to deal with that complexity in a fair way. This reasoning will be used to further elaborate on the meaning of 'global governance as ethical commitment' and on the consequences for the working of democracy, science, the market and education. Finally, in conclusion, I will briefly reflect on the idea of capacity building for global governance as ethical commitment in relation to current understandings of human rights.

1.   The why and how of global governance.

1.1.   Global governance as a newly recognized imperative.

Global governance denotes a political activity, but there exist various answers among theorists and practitioners of that activity to the questions of why some form of governance would be needed at the global level and in what sense it would actually differ from government. In a historical perspective, the need for global governance may said to have been inspired by an awareness that the 'global community' had to responsibly deal with a historically evolved situation, and that taking up this responsibility would require some form of cooperation between nation states as the main political entities at the global level. The situation was that of a confrontation with the negative 'side effects' of modern progress: industrialization, economic development and new applications of science and technology apparently not only brought forth practical comfort and well-being but also threats to that well-being in the shorter and longer term. The awareness was not only of a steadily evolving deterioration of our ecosystems and of a growing dependence of citizens and local communities on dominating global market powers, but also of the fact that modern progress apparently did not benefit every human being of that global community to the same extent. In the first issue of the journal *Global Governance*, the then UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali saw global governance as

> '*a newly recognized imperative*' to democracy, taking into account the '*internationalization of problems of human rights and democracy, previously thought of as issues for states to deal with within their own boundaries*'(Boutros-Ghali 1995a).

The recognition of that imperative, it is known, did not come in a time lapse of enlightenment, but slowly built up throughout the second half of the 20th century. It is also known that the voices of concern were primarily not those of nation states representatives, but rather those of non-governmental critical groups and individuals. An important 'act of consolidation' of the recognition of the need to take action was the agreement on an 'agenda for the 21st century' during the United Nations Conference on Environment & Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992:

> *Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being. However, integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them will lead to the fulfillment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future. No nation can achieve this on its own; but together we can - in a global partnership for sustainable development.* (United Nations 1992a, Agenda 21 Article 1.1.)

While originally global governance was thus seen as a way of 'joining forces' in taking up responsibility to tackle emergent global disorder and crisis, it can now be understood as the way to regulate our global socio-economic practices with the aim to improve their effectiveness and to anticipate and avoid disorder and crisis. In other words, in a future oriented perspective, global governance is now generally perceived as a form of international politics that not only wants to resolve urgent matters but that, more systematically and sustainably, aims to pragmatically deal with a situational 'political complexity' in function of a higher good ('sustainable development'). A good account of that complexity is given by Weiss and Takur in their book *Global Governance and the UN*. Their reasoning advances on the following question:

> *How is the world governed even in the absence of a world government to produce norms, codes of conduct and regulatory surveillance and compliance instruments? How are values allocated quasi-authoritatively for the world, and accepted as such, without a government to rule the world?* (Weiss and Thakur 2010, introduction – 1)

The answer, according to the authors, lies in '*global governance*', but they acknowledge that (their understanding of) global governance is not only needed '*in normal periods of calm, stability, order and predictability*', but that it also should anticipate and deal with '*periodic bouts of market volatility, disorder and crisis*'…

1.2.   How it happens today: global governance as 'pragmatic accommodation'.

So paraphrasing Agenda 21, we could say that we have come to a defining moment in history, as there is today a general consensus among political 'practitioners' (politicians, civil society representatives, activists, …) and academia that complex social problems such as climate change or extreme poverty now have global dimensions, and that, consequently, some form of 'governance at the global level' is needed to tackle them. But while the meaning of the *global* is rather unambiguous in its sense of 'encompassing everything and all in this world', what is then the meaning of *governance* as a political activity 'in the absence of a world government'? The Commission on Global Governance, an organization established in 1992 with the support of the then United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, is today known for having provided a 'standard' definition of governance. In its report *Our Global Neighborhood*, published in 1995, the Commission wrote

> *Governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co- operative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest.* (The Commission on Global Governance 1995)

The report of the Commission on Global Governance was one of four publications that appeared in the same period and that are said to have been most influential in the emerging global governance discourse at that time, and especially on the debate on the role of the United Nations and on the issue of state sovereignty (Barnett 1997, 526). The other publications were Boutros Boutros-Ghali's own *Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali 1995b), the book *Cooperating for Peace* by Gareth Evans (Evans 1994) and the *Report of the Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations* (United Nations 1995). While the definition of governance presented by the Commission on Global Governance might seem to be the most neutral (and vague) description of governance one can imagine, the report in which it served caused a stir among political theorists and practitioners. The reason was not necessarily the fact that it was original in its recognition that not only the search for peace and security in a post-Second World War era but also the emergent environmental threats and challenges of globalization brought on the need for a '*global civic ethic*' based on '… *a set of core values that can unite people of all cultural, political, religious, or philosophical backgrounds…'*. What was controversial was that its view on governance could be understood as suggesting that, given the nature of the challenges ahead, the sovereignty and power of nation states is not (anymore) absolute. Although the report aimed to appease pro-state sovereignty voices by stressing that global governance '… *does not imply world government or world federalism*...', it was criticized by those voices for the fact that it promoted the reform of the United Nations with the aim to increase its power (see f.i. (Lamb 1996)). Indeed, as Michael Barnett wrote about the report,

> '… *Our Global Neighborhood is less constrained by or committed to the idea of state sovereignty than is Evans, who is unapologetically statist, or Boutros-Ghali, who as secretary-general of an interstate organization is also committed to sovereignty. Indeed, the vision of global governance in Our Global Neighborhood situates states alongside international and regional organizations, nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations, and other transnational actors* … ' (Barnett 1997, 532)

The vision on governance proposed and elaborated by the Commission on Global Governance describes best the global political situation of today: sovereign states are asked to 'cooperate' with the aim to organize our global socio-economic practices in a fair and effective way and to tackle (and further prevent) disorder and crisis, and international and regional organizations, nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations and 'other' transnational actors are there to monitor, criticize and/or facilitate that cooperation[2]. In practice, of course, cooperation on specific issues is not voluntary but determined by way of multilateral agreements that are the result of negotiation among those sovereign states. And it is known that the issue of state sovereignty does not figure itself as an element of concern in those negotiations. Given that this global political situation is that of a historically evolved setting wherein nation

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[2] Intergovernmental organisations also regulate cooperation of their member states, but these regulations are of course agreed by the member states of the organisation itself, and not enforced 'from outside'.

states 'accommodate' to cooperate in a situation of urge although they were never meant to do so when they came into being, we could call this form of global governance a form of 'pragmatic accommodation'. But the fact that global governance happens this way today doesn't mean that the discussion on the why and how of global governance is settled, on the contrary. There remain to exist deep disagreements among academia and in civil society over what would be the desired global political and economic order and over how complex social problems should best be tackled at the global level. Despite these disagreements, we are able to sketch in a neutral way how 'global governance as pragmatic accommodation' is happening today. I will make that sketch here and return to the essential critical visions on the form of global governance in §1.3.

The scope and practical limitations of this text do not allow an extended elaboration on how global governance is happening today. On the other hand, the comprehensive overviews and deep analytical reflections on the topic done by other authors would make that attempt here rather superfluous. A good entry is the articulation of global governance in terms of its 'pieces' and motivations as done in (Karns and Mingst 2009). They characterize the pieces of global governance as "*the multilevel collection of governance-related activities, rules and mechanisms, formal and informal, public and private*" as they exist in the world today:

Pieces of global governance (adapted from (Karns and Mingst 2009, 5))
- *International structures and mechanisms (formal and informal)*   *International Governmental Organizations, global, regional, other*   *Non-Governmental Organizations*   - *International rules and laws*   *Multilateral agreements; customary practices; judicial decisions;*   *Regulatory standards*   - *International norms or 'soft law'*   *Framework agreements; selected UN resolutions*   - *International regimes*   - *Ad hoc groups, arrangements, and global conferences*   - *Private and hybrid public-private governance*

In their book, Karns and Mingst embark on a detailed analysis of these pieces, and this based on their observation that '… *Post-Cold War liberalism and globalisation have brought clear changes in who makes collective decisions over various parts of the international community and in the authority under which those decisions are made* …' (Karns and Mingst 2009, 4). They further remark that '… *Although states still exercise coercive power, global, regional and transnational governance increasingly rests on new bases of authority* …' and quote Adler and Bernstein in their analysis that '… *the decoupling of coercive force and legitimate rule is the most striking feature of*

contemporary global governance ... ' (Adler, Emmanuel, and Steven Bernstein, "Knowledge in Power: The Epistemic Construction of Global Governance", in Barnett and Duvall 2005, 294 – 318). Among these pieces, Karns and Mingst recognize the United Nations, being an International Governmental Organization in itself, as 'the centerpiece of global governance'. It may not be a surprise that a vast amount of global governance literature indeed focuses on the role and form of the United Nations as 'facilitator' of or 'mediator' in global governance, and it may neither be a surprise that these voices not always line up to praise the UN in taking up that role[3].

If global governance, as 'the multilevel collection of governance-related activities, rules and mechanisms, formal and informal, public and private' is still a somewhat elusive concept, then its topics of concern (and the motivation for its very existence) can be outlined in more concrete fashion. In their book, Karns and Mingst distinct four topics of which now everybody agrees that they have 'global dimensions' and consequently need to be tackled at the global level:

1 -   The search for peace and security
2 -   Protecting Human Rights
3 -   Promoting Human Development and Economic Well-Being
4 -   Protecting the Environment

Obviously these are also topics of concern for local policy and politics within the nation states, and groups of states that 'cluster' for specific reasons, such as the European Union (with its policy of regional cooperation and integration) or the G8 and the G20 (with their specific economic interests) may also have specific visions on these topics. But the essential reason why these topics of concern need to be tackled through global governance is the fact that they either need an intergovernmental organization that can take up a neutral mediating role in international affairs (as in the case of topics 1 and 2) or that has the authority to bring the collectivity of states together and to facilitate their negotiations (as in the case of 3 and 4). Indeed, specific states that are implicated in conflict or nuclear security issues or that are suspected of violations of human rights will never accept other states to interfere in their affairs but may eventually accept the United Nations, as a 'neutral' authority 'representing the whole of the world', to take up a mediating role[4]. Combating climate change or ensuring fair global markets, on the other hand, are global problems that cannot be dealt with by way of an 'aggregation' of

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[3] A comprehensive overview of critical assessments of the role and functioning of the United Nations and its organs, programs and special agencies in global governance is beyond the scope of this text. A good entry to the various topics of concern is https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_the_United_Nations.
[4] The fact that the UN Security Council, due to historical reasons, has five permanent members with veto power (China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States) and ten non-permanent members (elected by the General Assembly for a two-year term) makes it for specific cases of course not totally 'neutral'. A critique on this issue and on the working of the Security Council in general falls outside of the scope of this text, but good entries in this sense are (Malone 2004) and (Prantl 2006).

eventual voluntary national policies and measures but that, alternatively, need an authority that motivates all states to come together to negotiate and take proper action. It is in both senses of *mediator in* international politics and *facilitator of* international politics at the global level that the United Nations acquired authority since its conception after the Second World War, but the very existence of a 'network' of states such as the G20 that organizes 'its own' politico-economical affairs may be a sign that this authority is of course also relative. The United Nations lists[5] its main tasks or activities as

- Maintaining international peace and security
- Promoting sustainable development
- Protecting human rights
- Upholding international law
- Delivering humanitarian aid

If we compare these with the list of topics proposed by Karns and Mingst we notice some interesting differences. First, the UN lists two extra topics not mentioned by Karns and Mingst (upholding international law and delivering humanitarian aid). Also, the UN does not aim to 'search' for peace and security but to 'maintain' it. More important, what is proposed by Karns and Mingst as separate topics, namely 'promoting human development and economic well-being' on the one hand and 'protecting the environment' on the other hand seems in the UN case to be combined under the topic of 'promoting sustainable development'. This observation gives us an important insight into how the theory and practice of global governance evolved over time. All UN tasks except for the topic of sustainable development can be understood as preventing, controlling or restoring 'misbehavior' of nation states. The topic of sustainable development, on the other hand, is a 'positive' and forward looking activity in which the UN wants to engage all those nation states. We could say that 'global governance' started after the First and especially after the Second World War in a mood of shock, disgust and mistrust ('this should never happen again'). Since then, there emerged a global governance dynamic driven by a positive mood and sincere motivation to really do something about enduring poverty and environmental degradation. Sustainable development is now seen as the 'all encompassing' normative rationale for global governance and, while they would never admit it in public, many of the protagonists of that formal dynamic hope that ensuring sustainable development will at the same time also make the other UN tasks superfluous. In 2015, the UN launched the 17 Sustainable Development Goals[6]. In the words of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, these goals comprise a set of concrete proposals that aim to set our global society on 'the road to dignity by 2030', and this by 'ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet' (UN Secretary General 2014). Goal 16 of that set aims to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'. In part 2 of this text, I

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[5] Source: http://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/index.html
[6] Source: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.html

will argue that there is an inherent contradiction in the happening of 'global governance as pragmatic accommodation' that hinders Goal 16 to ever come true in reality and that, by this very fact, also endangers the fulfillment of all other goals. In order to situate my critique in the current spectrum of critical visions on the why and how of global governance, I will briefly sketch that spectrum in the next paragraph.

1.3.   Critical visions on the why and how of global governance.

Whatever the perception of the motive and form for global governance, there is today a general consensus among political 'practitioners' (politicians, civil society representatives, activists, …) and academia that complex social problems such as climate change or extreme poverty now have global dimensions, and that, consequently, some form of 'governance at the global level' is needed to tackle them. Signifying and deliberating the global dimension of societal problems and solutions, and of possible understandings of global ethics and global justice in that respect, have now become an essential element of the 'global governance discourse'. At the same time, there is the logic that normative visions on global governance need to take into account the 'reality' of the political and economic order of today. Although recent history saw the emergence of thousands of international institutions and non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, we don't need political theory to understand that nation states are still the primary actors in any political dynamic 'at the transnational level'. They not only take the political lead in negotiating global affairs, also the legitimacy and formal power of non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations and international institutions depends on them. Secondly, there is the observation that, although globalization 'happens' and is 'experienced' in different ways (migration, growing possibilities of communication and transport, the global expansion of the market, intensified cultural interchange, …), an understanding of globalization is often politically conceptualized and expressed as the dynamics of a 'global economic order' steered by the standard categories of actors (nation states, private companies, international institutions). Opposed to these 'realist' visions that see nation states and the global market as the motor of global governance are the many voices from civil society and academia that question the importance and even the relevance of state sovereignty as a central value in actual global governance processes and that advocate a reform to a 'pragmatic' world order wherein strong international organisations take over part of the political power of nation states. These voices often (but not always) align with the critical views that thinking well-being in economic terms is not a strength but rather a typical ill of our contemporary society, and that arguing for well-being needs to start from ethical and/or spiritual thinking. The realist versus 'utopian' landscape of views from civil society and academia on the form of global governance is obviously not a black and white picture. The discourse is characterized by often strong opposing views, but also by dialectical considerations that elaborate theories on 'realistic' global reform (see for example (Scheuerman 2011)). A deeper analysis of the spectrum of views is, however, beyond the scope of this text. Instead, I want to point at an inherent contradiction in the way global governance is done today and formulate a critique on why and how this contradiction is overlooked or strategically denied by the

main players of global governance. Consequently, advancing from that critique, I will formulate a new understanding of solidarity for sustainable development and argue why and how it would need to inspire global governance as ethical commitment.

2.   Global governance as pragmatic accommodation: the inherent contradiction

2.1.   The missing goal: a new global governance for sustainable development

One of the results of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as presented in the outcome document entitled "The future we want" (United Nations 2012), was a mandate for the UN to establish an open working group to develop a set of sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. The document further specified that the sustainable development goals should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. The work of the open working group, organized in 13 interactive sessions with participation of member states and civil society between March 2013 and July 2014, resulted in the document entitled 'Open Working Group Proposal for the Sustainable Development Goals'[7]. Looking at the set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, we can say that 'the intentions are good', and one can discuss whether specific targets are too ambitious or not ambitious enough, but the striking thing is that there is not a single reflection in the goals about an eventual need for political reform to ensure fair and effective governance towards the realization of these goals. In other words: the assumption is that the Sustainable Development Goals can be reached without a need to reform the way we do politics on the global and national level today.

2.2.   The inherent contradiction

In this text, I want to develop the argument that a serious critical political self-inquiry and consequent reform for fair and effective global governance is needed, and I will consequently propose an alternative vision on what needs to be done. Many politicians, entrepreneurs, academia and activists will state that the goals are clear, and that the only danger is in a 'lack of political will' to realize them in practice. That critique is too simple, however, as it overlooks the inherent contradiction in the way global politics is done today, and that contradiction is determined by four problematic ideologies that endanger global governance as such. The first is the ideology that sees global governance as a pragmatic negotiation process between nation states that, all in their own specific way, came into being through a process of independency and that, in this historically determined political setting, were never meant to cooperate in a situation of urge. As already introduced in the previous part, in this ideology of 'global governance as pragmatic accommodation', nation states privilege themselves (and each other) to still focus on preserving national integrity and on enabling strategic alliances in

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[7] The Full report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals is issued as document A/68/970, available at http://undocs.org/A/68/970.

a global market 'despite' the fact that they have to cooperate for a higher good. The sense for this privilege of sovereignty drives as well developed as developing nations, and all of them profit from the fact that, in this setting, they can only be indirectly hold accountable for their local politics. The second is the ideology of the competitive market and economic growth as drivers for prosperity and well-being. While now even die-hard liberals would recognize the need for minimum regulation, in general that regulation is still seen as a way to enable the liberal game of competition and to correct 'eventual' socially adverse effects of that game, and not as an instrument of democracy to a-priori enforce the ethical boundary conditions and rules of that game. The third is the ideology of democracy as conflict, or thus the ideology that sees democracy within the nation state as a form of organized conflict between political parties that profile themselves towards the citizenry by way of strategic interpretations of the general interest and of consequent societal needs. On a global level, the 'national position' of a nation state is consequently the position of the political party or coalition that 'won' the competition in the latest elections, which gives their 'national view' on global issues an ad-hoc character in the context of global negotiations. Last but not least, there is the often overlooked ideology of scientific truth as a driver for political action. While the global challenges we face are typically marked by uncertainty due to incomplete and speculative knowledge, more and more, science comes under pressure to deliver evidence at the service of strategic positioning and competition in politics and the market.

Taking into account the practical manifestations of these ideologies, the contradiction in the way we do global politics today becomes clear: global governance as pragmatic accommodation pretends to aspire to global social and economic justice and environmental protection, although from the vision that one has to 'pragmatically accept' that we live in a world driven by the strategies of conflict, competition and self-preservation. If we take the Sustainable Development Goals serious, than we have reasons to believe that global governance towards their realization is bound to fail if done through these modes of conflict, competition and self-preservation. The central argument I will develop to underpin this critique is that, while these modes do not obstruct the formulation of good intentions per se, it is their very existence and working that hinders their fulfillment, as their 'internal logic' is unable to deal with the complexity of our global social problems in a fair and effective way.

Following on the description of global governance done in the first part of this text and based on the critique sketched above, I propose to consider the possibility of an ethical understanding of global governance that does not hide itself behind the diplomacy of pragmatic accommodation in a world of conflict, competition and self-preservation but that, alternatively, could start from an assessment of the character of complexity of the various social challenges we face, in order to enable an evaluation of what would be a 'fair way' of making sense of that complexity in the first place. As an alternative to global governance as pragmatic accommodation, I thus propose to take a step back in order to enable a blank start in making sense of the why and how of global governance. My argument is that we cannot reach the Sustainable Development Goals or any other

vision on global social and economic justice and environmental protection without a new vision on solidarity. That solidarity is not the pseudo-solidarity that would tolerate global governance as a pragmatic accommodation from out of the comfort zones constructed around strategic political and economic interests, but an intellectual solidarity that would allow new modes of decision making and knowledge generation that would have the potential to be fair and effective at the same time. In the following part, I will elaborate this vision in more detail.

3.   Global governance as ethical commitment

3.1.   The idea of a fair dealing with societal complexity

The idea of complexity

It has now become trivial to say that we live in a complex world. Industrialization, technological advancement, population growth and globalization have brought 'new challenges', and the global political agenda is now set by issues that burden both our natural environment and human well-being. Sketching what goes wrong in our world today, the picture does not look very bright: structural poverty, expanding industrialization and urbanization and consequent environmental degradation, spill of precious resources, water, food and products, adverse manifestations of technological risk, economic exploitation, anticipated overpopulation and derailed financial markets, all this adding up to old and new forms of social, political and religious oppression and conflict, make the world for many of us a hard place to live. The stakes are high and the need to take action is manifest…

What do we mean when we say that we live in a complex world? The need to tackle the problems listed above is clear, even so as the picture of the world we want: we envision a world free from poverty and conflict and in which humans live in a healthy relation with their natural environment. Humans, whether in their private life or as 'citizens' share interests that are self-evident in their practical necessity (food, water and shelter) or in their universal desirability (happiness, well-being). And 'in between' the practical concern of survival and the universal desire for happiness and well-being are a variety of things we find important and a variety of visions on how to organize our coexistence accordingly. While happiness may have a rather 'relative' character, the question of survival is a fairly absolute one. And many of the injustices in that respect seem to be rather absurd. As an example: today, about one in nine people on earth does not have enough food to lead a healthy active life[8] but the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations tells us that even today there is actually enough food to feed everyone adequately. Is it only a matter of a proper distribution and of reducing spills in production and consumption or is the problem more complex than that? Theoretical perspectives such as the World Systems Theory (see, among others (Wallerstein 2004))

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[8] Source: The World Food Programme (http://www.wfp.org/).

or that of the Earth Systems Governance project[9] may give the impression that the challenge we face is that of a proper organization of our society, in the sense of a complex engineering problem. There is indeed some logic in the claim that, in the interest of making sense of fair and effective global governance, it is important to first try to understand and assess 'the system' of the interlinked social practices and their relations with the natural and technological environment. The reasoning is that, once we acquire this understanding, it would be possible to 'fix the system' and to 'get the balance right'. The problem however is that this 'earth-society system' is not a neutral given 'out there'. It is not only subject to interpretation, it is also and essentially 'unimaginable', and this can be understood by taking a closer look at the character of the problems we face.

A neutral but imperative characterization of complexity

Whether we speak of clearly observable unacceptable situations (such as extreme poverty), perceived worrisome situations or evolutions (such as climate change or population growth) or practices or proposed policy measures with a potential controversial character (such as the use of genetically modified organisms or a tax on wealth), the idea is that we can characterize them all as 'complex social problems' with the same set of characteristics. If science has a role to play in making sense of these problems, then it will typically face the fact that it has to deal with factual uncertainties and unknowns, which implies that its challenge in a socio-political context is not the production of 'credible proofs' but rather the production of credible hypotheses. In addition to that, we know that our judgments on situations, evolutions, practices and proposed policy measures as characterized above not only rely on available knowledge about them, but first and foremost influenced on how we value them in relation to things we find important (nature, freedom, equality, protection,). Taking that into account, I want to propose a specific characterization of complexity of complex social problems that, I believe, will support the insight that fair and effective global governance is initially not a matter of proper organization but essentially that of a fair dealing with its complexity. The complexity of a complex social problem such as climate change or that of providing affordable access to healthy food for all may in this sense be described with seven characteristics:

Seven characteristics of a complex social problem
1.   diversified impact
-       Individuals and/or groups are affected by the problem in diverse ways (benefit versus adverse consequence, diverse 'degrees' of benefits or adverse consequences).
-       The impact can be economic or related to physical or psychic health or individual or collective social well-being.
-       The character and degree of impact may evolve or vary in a contingent way in time.
-       The impact may also manifest later in time (with the possibility that it manifests after or during several generations);

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[9] See http://www.earthsystemgovernance.org/

2.   interdependence

-    The problem is caused and/or influenced by multiple factors (social, economic, technical, natural) and relates itself to other problems.
-    Interdependence can change in time.
-    The context of concern becomes global.

3.   need to integrate it in a coherent approach (organizational complexity)

Due to the diversified impact and interdependence, problems need to be tackled 'together' in a systematic, coherent and 'holistic' approach. This approach needs to take into account the following four additional complexities:

4.   relative responsibilities

Due to the diversified impact and interdependence and the organizational complexity, responsibility cannot be assigned to one specific actor. Responsibilities are relative in two ways:
-    (1) mutual: the possibility for one actor to take responsibility can depend on the responsibility of another actor;
-    (2) collective: our collective responsibility is relative in the sense that it will need to be 'handed over' to a next 'collective' (a new government, the next generations).

5.   knowledge problem

Analysis of the problem is complicated by uncertainty due to speculative, incomplete or contradictory knowledge, and this as well with respect to the character and evolution of impact and interdependence as with respect to the effects of the coherent and holistic approach;

6.   evaluation problem

Evaluation of diversified impact, interdependence and organizational complexity and of subsequent relative responsibilities is complicated due to

-    the knowledge problem,
-    the existence of different visions based on different specific values and general worldviews,
-    the existence of different interests of concerned actors;
-    the fact that it is therefore impossible to determine in consensus what would be the 'real' problem or the 'root' of the problem;
-    the fact that 'meta-values' such as 'equality', 'freedom' and 'sustainability' cannot be unambiguously translated into practical responsibilities or actions;

7.   authority problem

The authority of actors who evaluate and judge the problem and rationalize their interests and responsibilities related to it in a future-oriented perspective is relative, and this in two ways:

-    The 'individual' authority of concerned actors is relative in the sense that, due to the knowledge and evaluation problem, that authority cannot be 'demonstrated' or 'enforced' purely on the basis of knowledge or judgment. As a consequence, that authority needs to lean on 'external' references (the mandate of the elected politician, the diplomas and experience of the scientific expert, the commercial success of the entrepreneur, the social status of the spiritual leader, the appeal to justice of the activist),
-    The 'collective' authority of concerned actors who operate within the traditional governing modes of politics, science and the market is relative, as these governing modes cannot rely on an objective 'authority of method': the systems of representative democracy (through party politics

and elections) and the market both lean on the principle of competition while science is faced with the fact that it needs to deal with future-oriented hypotheses,

Due to this, concerned actors have the opportunity to reject or question the relevance and credibility of the judgment of other actors and consequently to question the legitimacy of their authority.

Characteristics 1, 2 and 3 are characteristics of a 'factual complexity' and 5, 6 and 7 refer to a complexity of interpretation as a consequence of that factual complexity. Number 4 (relative responsibilities) might be described as a 'combination' of a factual complexity and a complexity of interpretation: the fact that a concerned actor does (not) act according to his responsibility may have practical consequences for other actors, also in terms of their own ability to act responsibly. On the other hand, the actor's motivation to act according to his responsibility is of course also dependent on his interpretation of the situation and of arguments of others with respect to his responsibility.

Due to their factual complexity, complex social problems are social problems that 'create themselves' uncertainty and ambiguity related to what is at stake and what is to be done. The complexity of interpretation may thus be understood as a complexity of making sense of the problem. As this complexity also includes 'the authority problem', the complexity of interpretation of a complex social problem can be understood as a complexity that is experienced by all concerned actors 'together', and not only by each actor individually.

Returning to the example of the food problem, that complex social problem can now be described in terms of the seven characteristics listed above. More concrete, the characterization helps us to understand that the problem of providing affordable access to healthy food for all is more than an engineering problem. First of all, the problem affects people in dramatically unequal ways and it relates itself to the complex problem of climate change and unsustainable agriculture. In terms of the knowledge problem, it is difficult to assess how agricultural planning may directly benefit those in need, if only for the fact that phenomena such as extreme droughts, crop diseases or plagues of insects are hard to predict and control. In addition, the contribution of genetically modified organism technology to make crops more resistant to diseases and plagues is controversial, and science is unable to mediate, as its hypotheses with respect to potential adverse human health effects cannot be convincingly proven (and this due to the long term character and stochastic nature of these effects). Another aspect of the evaluation problem is the fact that there exists different visions on the role of markets and international trade agreements in providing affordable food for all. Then there is the observation that our habit of eating meat does not only put a serious burden on our environment, but that it is also counterproductive to solving the food problem. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, taking the energy value of the meat produced into consideration, the loss of calories by feeding the cereals to animals instead of using the cereals directly as human food represents the annual calorie need for more than 3.5 billion people (UNEP 2009, 27). And finally, besides for

fruit and vegetables, society is even in doubt over the question of what is healthy food after all, and that issue obviously concerns us all, and not only the poor…

This text does not want to propose a manual, procedure or instrument to solve complex social problems such as the food problem. Rather, the characterization of complexity is meant as an incentive and a basis for *ethical thinking*, as it opens the possibility to reflect on what it would imply to 'fairly deal with the complexity' of those specific social problems and of the organization of our society in general. The possibility of doing so is in the fact that the characterization of complexity in the form of the seven proposed characteristics can be called a 'neutral' characterization, in the sense that it does not specify wrongdoers and victims as such (which of course doesn't mean there can't be any). Representing the complexity as a complexity of interpretation enables at first instance to describe the responsibility 'in face of that complexity' as a *joint responsibility* that is accommodating and not dividing. However, although nobody is blamed or suspected of reckless behavior or of the evasion of responsibility, this characterization of complexity is in its way also imperative for all concerned. First of all, any reflection on what it would imply to fairly deal with the complexity of the problem at stake would, for each concerned actor, imply the need to transcend the usual thinking in terms of the own interest. At the same time, due to the knowledge and evaluation problem, every concerned actor would need to acknowledge his specific 'authority problem' in making sense of the complexity of that problem. Indeed, looking again at the brief analysis of the complexity of the food problem, we must recognize that no political, scientific, economic, activist or citizens voice would have authority in making sense of that problem and of eventual solutions.

Reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as ethical attitudes

Taking all this together, we could now say that the complexity of complex social problems implies a specific responsible attitude in face of that complexity for all concerned. That responsible attitude is *identical* for each of the concerned actors (being it the politician, the scientist, the entrepreneur, the activist or the citizen) and can be described in a threefold way:

1   The preparedness to acknowledge the complexity of complex social problems and of the organization of our society as a whole;

2   The preparedness to acknowledge the imperative character of that complexity or thus to acknowledge the own authority problem – in addition to the knowledge- and evaluation problem – in making sense of that complexity;

3   Based on the acknowledgement of the own authority problem, the preparedness to seek accommodation with other concerned actors, and this through specific advanced interaction methods in research and politics that would enable a joint making sense of that complexity.

The threefold preparedness suggested here can be considered as a 'concession' to the complexity as sketched above, and it may be clear that, with these reflections, we now enter the area of ethics. A first simple but powerful insight in that sense is the idea that if nobody has the authority to make sense of a specific problem and of consequent solutions, then concerned actors have nothing else than each other as equal references in deliberating that problem. In his book 'The Ethical Project', the philosopher Philip Kitcher makes a similar reflection by saying that 'there are no ethical experts' and that, therefore, authority can only be the authority of the conversation among the concerned actors (Kitcher 2014). From the perspective of normative ethics, we can now (in a metaphorical way) interpret the idea of responsibility towards complexity as if that complexity puts an 'ethical demand' on every concerned actor, in the sense of an appeal to adopt a reflexive attitude in face of that complexity. That reflexive attitude would not only concern the way each actor rationalizes the problem as such, but also the way he rationalizes his own interests, the interests of others and the general interest in relation to that problem

The responsible attitude considered here can thus be described as a reflexive attitude in face of complexity, and, as a concession towards that complexity, that attitude can now also be called an 'ethical attitude'. However, given that the responsibility as suggested above would also imply a mutual accommodation among concerned actors (politicians, scientists, entrepreneurs, activists and citizens), one can understand that, in practice, this responsible attitude needs to be adopted *in public*, and that one needs advanced formal interaction methods to make that possible. The joint preparedness for 'public reflexivity' of all concerned actors would enable a dialogue that, unavoidably, will also have a confrontational character, as every actor would need to be prepared to give account of his interests, beliefs and uncertainties with respect to the problem at stake. That joint preparedness can be described as a form of 'intellectual solidarity' as, in arguing about observable unacceptable situations (such as extreme poverty), perceived worrisome situations or evolutions (such as climate change or population growth) or practices or proposed policy measures with a potential controversial character (such as the use of genetically modified organisms or a tax on wealth), concerned actors would need to be prepared to openly reflect towards each other and towards 'the outside world' about the way they not only rationalize the problem as such, but also their own interests, the interests of others and the general interest in relation to that problem. In this sense, intellectual solidarity is not some high-brow elite form of intellectual cooperation. It simply denotes our joint preparedness to accept the complexity of coexistence and the fact that no one has a privileged position to make sense of it. Intellectual solidarity is the joint preparedness to accept that we have no reference other than each other.

Moving now from normative ethical thinking to applied ethical thinking, the advanced formal interaction modes to enable reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as public ethical attitudes can be given a name and a practical meaning. Taking into account the knowledge problem and the evaluation problem as the central characteristics of the complexity of making sense of complex problems, reflexivity and intellectual solidarity

as ethical attitudes naturally would need to inspire the method we use to generate knowledge about these problems and the method we use to negotiate and make decisions related to them accordingly.

The problem however is that, today, our methods of knowledge generation and decision making are not inspired by reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as ethical attitudes. In the following paragraph, I will elaborate the idea that the strategies of conflict, competition and self-preservation not only undermine the possibility of intellectual solidarity among nation states, but that they also determine the working of the traditional governing modes of politics, science and the market we inherited from modernity. As a consequence, I will argue, these governing modes are not able to 'grasp' the complexity of complex social problems but rather stimulate strategic simplification of that complexity. Fair and effective global governance would not only require intellectual solidarity in international politics, but also an essential reform of the formal ways we use to make sense of the complexity of social organization and a new pragmatic vision on what the social responsibility of the market can mean in reality. Developing that argument is the topic of the next chapter.

3.2.   Intellectual solidarity as ethical commitment in the organization of society

In the last chapter, I developed a vision on what it would imply, from an ethical perspective, to fairly deal with the complexity of our complex social problems. I argued that reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as ethical attitudes in face of that complexity would motivate advanced methods for knowledge generation and decision making that would enable a fair dealing with that complexity. However, one could of course ask the question in which way our traditional methods of democracy and science would (not) be able to take up that role. And why would the market system not be able to fairly deal with the complexity of social organization in its own way? In the following, I will briefly sketch in which way, I believe, our traditional workings of politics, science and the market are unable to fairly deal with the complexity of our global problems today. In conclusion, I will elaborate an understanding of reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as ethical attitudes in relation to the governing modes of democratic politics, science and education on the one hand and in relation to the market on the other hand and argue what, in that sense, the consequences would be for each of them.

The context of this text does not permit broad reflections on the argument of why our traditional workings of politics, science and the market are not able to fairly deal with the complexity of our global problems today, but the essential reasoning is presented hereafter. In somewhat abstract terms, one could understand modern representative democracy (within the nation state), science and the market as the three formal governing methods to produce meaning for our modern society. Representative democracy can be seen as the governance of our collective and personal interests, executed by an authority that received its mandate through elections in which different political-ideological parties competed, and the policy pursued by that authority can be seen as the produced meaning for society. Science is the governance of knowledge

generation, and its intended meaning consists of the fundamental and general knowledge at the benefit of society on the one hand and the applicable knowledge at the service of politics and the market on the other hand. The market, in its turn, can be understood as the governance of the production and consumption of products and services, and the functional and aesthetical benefits that come with these products and services can be considered as the intended meaning. All three of them are typical products of enlightenment and modernity, and we can say that their emergence and formation *in modernity* was, for each in its own specific way, the result of an emancipation process characterized *as modernity*. As emancipation processes, all three of them have developed a system with an own 'internal logic' to produce their meaning for society, and the basic principles of those systems can be called essential accomplishments of the enlightenment and modernity: for politics, these are the principles of representative democracy, being the formal possibility to elect our political representatives, the formal possibility of negotiations among different and equally valuable political visions and the formal possibility of a mandated authority and its opposition; for science, it concerns the necessity of independence and objectivity in the generation of knowledge meant to inspire and direct our coexistence and social organization; for the market, it concerns the possibility of innovation and of the variation and quality of products and services thanks to the freedom and competitiveness of that market. However, because of their emergence through emancipation processes, one can understand that the actors in (and protagonists of) representative democracy, science and the market were not concerned with their own 'problem of authority' in generating that meaning, in the sense that they saw no reason *to give account to society* with respect to their own working in producing that meaning. The simple idea was that the internal logic of their system – in the sense of their own *method of evaluation* with the production of their meaning – was *self-corrective* and that, in this way, their produced meaning was societally *relevant*, *credible* and *justified* and therefore also 'authoritative'. For representative democracy, that self-corrective internal logic is the idea that it is the formally organized and legitimized 'battle of opinions' between representatives of the distinct ideological parties that determines what is societally relevant, credible and justified policy; for independent and objective science, that logic is the idea that it is the scientific method and the system of 'peer review' that determines what societally relevant, credible and justified knowledge for policy; for the market, that logic is the idea that, while the market is the motor for innovation, society will in the end decide for itself which products and services are desirable and which not[10].

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[10] Note that also 'education' can be considered as a formal governing method to produce meaning for society (the systematic and programmatic way to provide humans with 'capabilities', and this by way of teaching them general and specialised knowledge, skills and competences). However, I do not include education in this perspective as its method has not undergone a similar emancipation process. Obviously the role of education is crucial in a reasoning on a better dealing with the complexity of our social problems, so I will highlight that role further down in the text. Also 'culture' in its different expressions can be considered a method to produce meaning for society (with possible meanings such as aesthetics and social ciritique, but also the feeling of connectedness or alienation). I neither include culture, although for a different reason:

The idea, however, is that, taking into account the character of complexity of our contemporary complex social problems, that internal logic is bound to fail: the traditional internal logics of representative democracy, science and the market are, each in their own way, not (longer) able to 'grasp' the complexity of those problems and, as a result, they cannot work self-corrective. Therefore, the idea is that their governing methods are not able to generate relevant, credible and justified meaning for society. For each of them, this idea can be made more explicit in the following way:

Representative democracy within the nation state

The working of representative democracy inspired by the ideology of 'democracy as organized conflict' and practiced through the system of elections and party politics hinders a deliberate analysis of (the complexity of) complex social problems and is unable to represent the diversity of visions and interests in relation to those problems.

Analysis of complex problems is strategically prepared (to match party ideologies) and causes polarization. In addition, the system tends to stimulate populism and political self-protection and allows strategic interpretation of the possibility and necessity of public participation. In the case of complex problems that require deliberation on a global level, formal democracy remains restricted within the nation state while nation states profile themselves internationally according to the national political vision that happens to be in power that moment.

As interests of nation states with respect to a specific complex problem that requires the global as the context of concern do not essentially differ with respect to the nature of that problem, in global politics, the proclaimed central value of nation state sovereignty tends to rather hinder than facilitate global governance of that problem.

Science

Science that aims to foster 'objectivity' when dealing with complex social problems sees itself confronted with the necessity to work with future oriented hypotheses that cannot be proven.

Given that situation, and taking into account an enduring spirit of positivism in the academy that now also tends to affect the social sciences, one can notice that political and commercial pressure on science to deliver 'usable evidence' tends to stimulate tailor-made knowledge brokerage and scientific consultancy, expertise adapted to political preferences, political 'science shopping' and thin interpretations of the 'knowledge economy'.

The Market

A 'self-corrective' and 'innovative' free and competitive market is apparently not able to determine its own ethics, in the sense that its internal market logic is unable to

- determine the limits to economic growth;
- prevent conflicts of interest with politics;
- deal with the justification of controversial products or services;

culture does not function according to an internal 'self-corrective' logic the same way as democracy, science and the market do. Last but not least, I need to note that the idea of a self-corrective logic does of course not apply to the human sciences, as their statements about reality do not *necessarily* need to be empirically tested.

- rule out labor exploitation;
- prevent environmental pollution;
- justify the relevance of financial speculation;
- determine what would be a correct 'use' of animals;
- care for the needs of next generations.

In evaluating the working of politics, science and the market, there is one criterion that is identical for all three of them and of which the legitimacy is supported by as well the critics as their subjects of critique: societal trust. Trust of citizens in politics, of laypersons in scientific expertise and of consumers in the market, is seen by politicians, scientists and entrepreneurs respectively as the ultimate criterion to evaluate their working. While society perceives this criterion of trust as a way to judge whether those politicians, scientists and entrepreneurs do not misuse the 'authority' it 'delegates' to them, those same politicians, scientists and entrepreneurs are today still convinced that trust is automatically guaranteed by the so-called self-corrective internal logic of the systems wherein they function. Not only consistent critical analysis from academia and civil society, but also the daily news feed about detached and populist politics, conflicts of interest among politics and the private sector, contradictory scientific advice on controversial risk-inherent technologies such as genetically modified food and nuclear energy, child labor and horrible working conditions in sweatshops, unbridled financial speculation, indecent CEO bonuses, etc. may serve as support for the observation that politics, science and the market are no longer able to generate trust based on their own internal logic.

In the previous chapter, I argued that, in the interest of a fair dealing with the complexity of our complex social problems, concerned actors would need to be prepared to adopt reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as public ethical attitudes in face of that complexity. In practice, this would require then to openly reflect towards each other and towards 'the outside world' about the way they not only rationalize the problem as such, but also their own interests, the interests of others and the general interest in relation to that problem. The previous considerations may support the argument that the traditional methods of representative democracy, science and the market do not stimulate and enable reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as described above. Their internal logic is not self-corrective but self-protective, and this leads us to a conclusion. By emphasizing the problem of authority and adding it as a third dimension to 'the complexity of interpretation' (and thus to the classical knowledge – values problem), the idea of a fair dealing with complexity of complex social problems *informs in itself the need of critique* towards any 'rational' attempt to make sense of that complexity. In other words: if there are no privileged positions to make sense of complexity or thus to 'rationalize' complexity (no specific political-ideological positions, no specific scientific positions, no market logic), then a fair dealing with complexity would simply be a 'joint' making sense of complexity among all those concerned. If the legitimacy of the basic principles of democracy, science and the market remain unquestioned but the relevance, credibility and justification of the meaning they produce at the service of society cannot longer be tested by the internal logic of their method, then the only way to generate societal trust with the meaning they produce is

by opening up these methods for the possibility of critique by society, and by ensuring the capacity of society to engage in that critique. And from this point, the similarity between politics and science on the one hand and the market on the other hand disappears. While politics and science that open up their method towards society would become reflexive and thus more responsible forms of politics and science, a market cannot become 'reflexive', as it needs to follow its rigid logic of creating profit as return on investment. So for the market, the preparedness to open up its method can be understood as the preparedness to create transparency in its internal working and to accept that the rules of the game are set by politics and science in agreement with society.

This conclusion brings us to the end of this chapter. The idea of reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as proposed ethical attitudes needed to fairly deal with the complexity of complex social problems, together with the critique that our traditional methods of representative democracy, science and the market do not stimulate or enable that reflexivity and intellectual solidarity, provide us now with the necessary elements to sketch the idea of global governance as ethical commitment as opposed to the strategic form of global governance as pragmatic accommodation. In the last chapter of this text, I will sketch that idea by suggesting a new science, democracy and education for global governance. Finaly, as an epilogue, I will suggest how the idea of global governance as ethical commitment can be related to a new perspective on human rights.

3.3.   Trust by method: a new science, democracy and education for global governance.

A fair dealing with the complexity of social organisation implies for all involved actors to be prepared to engage in intellectual confrontation with regard to the rationales they use to defend their interests. We may conclude from the previous considerations that intellectual confrontation in this sense needs to be organised in science as well as in democracy.

As the challenge of science in making sense of complex social problems is not any longer the production of credible proofs but the construction of credible hypotheses, reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as ethical attitudes inspire for science the need to engage in advanced methods that are self-critical and open to visions from outside of the traditional discipline of science. In other words: knowledge to advice policy would need to be generated in a 'transdisciplinary' and 'inclusive' way, or thus as a joint exercise of problem-solving with input from the natural and social sciences and philosophy as well as from citizens. It may be clear that we do not need deep reform to make that new form of science possible today.

An advanced method of political negotiation and decision making inspired by the ethical attitudes of reflexivity and intellectual solidarity would be a form of 'deliberative democracy' that sees deliberation as a collective self-critical reflection and learning process among citizens, political mandatories, scientists, entrepreneurs and activists,

rather than as a competition between conflicting views driven by self-interest. Political deliberation liberated from the confinement of political parties and nation states and enriched with opinions from civil society and citizens and with well-considered and (self-)critical scientific advice would have the potential to be fair in the way it would enforce actors to give account of how they rationalise their interests from out of strategic positions, but also in the way it would enable actors to do so from out of vulnerable positions. And it would be effective as it would have the potential to generate societal trust based on its method instead of on promised outcomes. While the utopian picture sketched here would imply a total political reform on all levels, intellectual solidarity can already now open up old political methods for the better of society. As well on local as on global level, politicians could organise public participation and deliberation around concrete issues and engage in taking the outcome of that deliberation serious. In addition, one could already now envision global governance as a 'cosmopolitan democracy', a conception of democracy that, according to David Held, is based on the continuing significance of nation states, although with '… *a layer of governance (in the form of democratic institutions at regional and global levels) to constitute a limitation on national sovereignty* …' (Held 2006).

Last but not least, there is the need for a new vision on education. It would be naïve to think that politicians, scientists, entrepreneurs, activists and citizens will adopt the ethical attitudes of reflexivity and intellectual solidarity simply on request. Insight into the complexity of our complex social problems and an understanding of the ethical consequences for politics, science and the market need to be stimulated and fostered in basic and higher education. Instead of educating young people to optimally function in the strategic political and economic orders of today, they should be given the possibility to develop as a cosmopolitan citizen with a (self-)critical mind and a sense for ethics in general and intellectual solidarity in particular. It may evenso be clear that we do not need deep reform to make that new form of education possible today.

/   Epilogue – global governance as ethical commitment: a human rights perspective.

In this text, I argued that we cannot reach the Sustainable Development Goals or any other vision on global social and economic justice and environmental protection without a new vision on solidarity. As said, that solidarity is not the pseudo-solidarity that would tolerate global governance as a pragmatic accommodation from out of the comfort zones constructed around strategic political and economic interests, but neither is it some high-brow elite form of intellectual cooperation. Intellectual solidarity simply denotes our joint preparedness to accept the complexity of coexistence and the fact that no one has a privileged position to make sense of it. That preparedness would be the prerequisite to enable, foster and use our human intellectual capital in this world, not as a mean for competition (there are no other creatures humanity should compete with) but as a mean for cooperation, in the interest of the self-preservation of humanity as a whole and the respect for the dignity of everyone of its individual human beings. It is in this sense that capacity building for fair and effective global governance through a

new science, democracy and education can be grounded in a human rights perspective. In his book *The idea of Human Rights*, Charles Beitz interprets the doctrine of human rights as '… *the articulation in the public morality of world politics of the idea that each person is a subject of global concern* …'. While that is an essential perspective, one can understand that this concern can in principle still be articulated from out of the comfort zones constructed around strategic political and economic interests. These comfort zones can only be deconstructed if we are prepared to think human rights also in a subversive way. In global governance, we must be solidary in the way we hold each other accountable, but also in the way we give each other the right to be responsible. Enabling this equal 'right to be responsible' for every human is therefore the essential form of intellectual solidarity in global governance as ethical commitment.

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