Better Living (in a Complex World)
An Ethics of Care for our Modern Co-Existence

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Abstract

What do we mean when we say we live in a complex world? This paper characterises problems such as combating climate change, the provision of affordable access to healthy food for all, or evaluation of the possible use of nuclear energy as 'complex social problems' of which the complexity can be described by the same set of seven characteristics, and consequently reflects on what it would imply to deal with this complexity fairly. It argues why and how modern representative democracy (within the nation state), science and the market, as the three formal governing methods to produce meaning for our modern society, are unable to deal with these complex problems in a satisfactory way, 'incapable' as they are to 'grasp' their complexity. Based on this argumentation, the paper proposes 'reflexivity' and 'intellectual solidarity' as ethical attitudes or virtues for all concerned actors, to be understood from a specific ethics of care perspective 'bound in complexity'. Consequently, it proposes 'societal trust' as an overall criterion for governance, although with the specification that this trust should be generated by the governance methods we use to make sense of complexity rather than by promised or anticipated outcomes. With this focus, in conclusion, it proposes advanced approaches to democratic decision making, policy supportive research and education that would have the capacity to enable and enforce the attitudes of reflexivity and intellectual solidarity for the better of our co-existence.

Structure

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1. The Bigger Picture: the Idea of a Fair Dealing with Complexity.

1.1. Living in a complex world

It has now become trivial to say that we live in a complex world. Industrialisation, technological advancement, population growth, and globalisation 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 industrialisation and urbanisation, and consequent environmental degradation; waste of precious resources, water, food, and products; adverse manifestations of technological risk; economic exploitation; anticipated overpopulation; and derailed financial markets. All of this adds up to old and new forms of social, political, and religious oppression and conflict, and makes the world a difficult place to live for many people. 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[1] 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 waste 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)) or that of the Earth Systems Governance project[2] may give the impression that the challenge we face is that of a proper organisation 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.

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[1] Source: The World Food Programme (http://www.wfp.org/)
[2] See http://www.earthsystemgovernance.org/

1.2. A neutral but imperative characterization of complexity (of complex social problems).

Whether we speak of clearly observable unacceptable situations (e.g. extreme poverty), perceived worrisome situations or developments (e.g. climate change or population growth), or practices or proposed policy measures with a potential controversial character (e.g. the use of nuclear energy, genetically modified organisms, or a tax on wealth), the idea discussed in the following 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, 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 construction of credible hypotheses. Besides, we know that our judgements on situations, developments, practices, and proposed policy measures not only rely on available knowledge about them, but that they are first and foremost influenced by how we value them in relation to things we find important (nature, freedom, equality, protection, etc.).

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 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 combating climate change, the provision of affordable access to healthy food for all, or evaluation of the possible use of nuclear energy, may in this sense be described with seven characteristics:

A neutral characterization of complexity: 7 characteristics of a complex social problem

1.   diversified impact

–   Individuals and/or groups are affected by the problem in diverse ways (benefit vs 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 wellbeing.
–   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).

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.   the need for a 'broader' coherent approach (organizational complexity)

Due to diversified impact and interdependence, problems need to be tackled 'together' in a

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coherent, systematic and 'holistic' approach. This approach needs to take into account the following four additional characteristics of complexity:

4.   relative responsibilities

Due to diversified impact, 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 whether another actor takes responsibility or not;

-    (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, next generations).

5.   knowledge-related uncertainty (knowledge problem)

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

6.   value pluralism (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 world views;
-    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 translated unambiguously into practical responsibilities or actions;

7.   relative authorities (authority problem)

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

-    The 'individual' authority of concerned actors is relative in the sense that, due to the knowledge and evaluation problem, authority cannot be 'demonstrated' or 'enforced' purely on the basis of knowledge or judgement. 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, etc.).

-     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.

  As such, concerned actors have the opportunity to reject or question the relevance and credibility of the judgement 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, in principle, experienced by all concerned actors 'together', and not only by each actor individually.

1.3. Reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as ethical attitudes or virtues 'in face of complexity'

This text does not want to propose a manual, procedure, or instrument to solve complex social problems. 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 'deal fairly with the complexity' of those specific social problems, and of the organization of our society accordingly. The *possibility* of doing so lies 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, does not mean there cannot be any). Representing the complexity as a complexity of interpretation enables the responsibility to be described 'in face of that complexity' as a *joint responsibility* that is, as such, not divisive, which means that, *in principle*, it provides the possibility of rapprochement.

This joint responsibility 'in the face of complexity' has, at the same time, a binding and a liberating character for all concerned. Regarding the binding character, although nobody is blamed or suspected of reckless behaviour or of escaping responsibility, one could say that the characterization of complexity is imperative for all concerned. First of all, any reflection on what it would imply to deal fairly with the complexity of the problem at stake would imply the need for each concerned actor to transcend the usual thinking in terms of their own interests, and the preparedness to become

'confronted' with the way he/she rationalises their own interests within the bigger picture. At the same time, due to the knowledge and evaluation problem, every concerned actor would need to acknowledge his/her specific 'authority problem' in making sense of the complexity of that problem, taking into account that not only the way he/she rationalises the problem as such, but also the way he/she rationalises his/her own interests, the interests of others, and the general interest in relation to that problem is simply relative. That relativity is *reciprocal*, in the sense that nobody can claim higher authority based on a deeper understanding of the problem that would lead to a view on the 'solution' that all others concerned would simply need to accept. Finally, this reasoning provides us now with the possibility to argue that joint responsibility is not only binding but also liberating: as the authority of all concerned actors is relative in relation to the authority of others, it implies that all actors have the right to participate in making sense of the problem, and the right to co-decide on possible solutions to that problem.

One more thought on the idea of being jointly responsible 'in face of complexity' is relevant here. The fact that we are all jointly and equally responsible 'in face of complexity' does not necessarily require us to 'deconstruct' the political landscape down to the level of the individual citizen, in the sense that it would be meaningless or unethical for an interest group to gather around a jointly determined shared interest. In other words: the fact that specific authorities are *relative* does not mean that they cannot be *relevant*. The voice of science is relevant because of the scientific method used to formulate a specific factual finding or hypothesis. The voice of a group that gathers in order to stand stronger in its defence of a specific interest in the context of a specific problem is relevant because of that interest and because of the very fact of their gathering around it (and this counts as well for groups that represent business and industry, for groups that want to advocate the importance of a specific value (freedom, the value of nature, gender equity, …) as for citizens who, as an example, gather to protect their village against the construction of a large dam). Finally, the voice of a single citizen is relevant because of that person's right to be recognized as a citizen[3]. In other words: although, as a joint responsibility, we all would need to acknowledge the relativity of authority of our voice in face of the complexity of a complex social problem, the relevance of our specific stance, interest and argument connected to that problem would not be affected by that relativity[4].

Recalling the previous considerations on what it would imply to 'deal fairly' with the complexity of complex social problems, we could now say that the joint responsibility of all concerned can be rephrased as the joint preparedness to adopt a specific responsible attitude or to foster a specific virtue 'in face of complexity'. That responsible attitude or virtue is identical for all concerned actors

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[3] Note that the meaning of 'citizenship' remains open to interpretation and that, as characterized in (Howard-Hassmann and Walton-Roberts 2015), the 'human right to citizenship' remains a 'slippery concept'. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights states in its Article 15 that "… Everyone has the right to a nationality…" and in its Article 21 that "…Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives…" (United Nations 1948) but makes no mentioning of the notion of citizenship as such. The general understanding of the meaning of citizenship is 'the status of a person recognized under the custom or law as being a member of a state' (Wikipedia 2015) but the term is also used in broader political, social and cultural contexts.

[4] Also the 'relevance' of a specific joint political interest is a concept open to interpretation. It can be 'officialised', as in the case of an NGO officially accredited to the United Nations or become 'established', as in the case of Greenpeace, but in many other cases it needs to be defended as such, as in the case of ad-hoc citizens' movements and pressure groups.

(be it the scientist, the politician, the engineer, the manager, the entrepreneur, the expert[5], the civil society representative, the activist, or the citizen), and can be described in a three-fold manner:

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

2   (Following 1) 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; for each concerned actor, that preparedness can be reformulated as the preparedness to see 'the bigger picture and oneself in it', each with his/her specific interests, hopes, hypotheses, beliefs, and concerns;

3   (Following 2) The preparedness to seek rapprochement with other concerned actors, and this especially through specific advanced formal interaction methods in research, politics, and education that would enable sense to be made of that complexity.

The three-fold 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 other 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 rationalises the problem as such, but also the way he/she rationalises his/her own interests, the interests of others, and the general interest in relation to that problem.

For all concerned actors, as a concession towards that complexity, that reflexive attitude in face of complexity can now also be called an *ethical attitude* or *virtue*. However, given that the responsibility as suggested above would also imply rapprochement among concerned actors, one can understand that, in practice, this ethical attitude needs to be adopted in public, and that one needs specific 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/her interests, hopes, hypotheses, beliefs, and concerns 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 (e.g. extreme poverty), perceived worrisome situations or evolutions (e.g. climate change or population growth), or practices or proposed policy measures with a potential controversial character (e.g. the use of nuclear energy, genetically modified organisms, or a tax on wealth),

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[5] In the context of this text, 'expert' denotes any person with a special expertise compared with others involved. This could be a scientist in an advisory role towards a political authority, or someone who works for a regulatory commission, but also a medical doctor in relation to a patient.

concerned actors would need to be prepared to reflect openly towards each other and towards 'the outside world' about the way they not only rationalise the problem as such, but also their own interests, the interests of others, and the general interest in relation to that problem. Similar to understanding reflexivity as an ethical attitude or virtue, one can understand *the sense of intellectual solidarity* as an ethical attitude or virtue, and one could say that the second should and could be 'stimulated' by the first. In other words, a sense of intellectual solidarity implies reflexivity as an ethical attitude with respect to the own position, interests, hopes, hypotheses, beliefs, and concerns, and this in any formal role or social position (as scientist, politician, engineer, manager, entrepreneur, expert, civil society representative, activist, citizen, etc).

As a conclusion to the reasoning developed here, three more thoughts on the meaning of reflexivity and a sense of intellectual solidarity as ethical attitudes or virtues 'in face of complexity' need to be made.

Firstly, it is important to stress that reflexivity as ethical attitude or virtue should not be understood as a 'psychological state of being' of concerned individuals. The idea is that, if a sense of intellectual solidarity implies reflexivity as an ethical attitude, one may also understand that the ability to adopt this attitude requires reflexivity as an 'intellectual skill', seeing the bigger picture and yourself in it (with your interests, hopes, hypotheses, beliefs and concerns). The important thing is that reflexivity as an intellectual skill may benefit from solitary reflection but it cannot be 'instructed' or 'taught'. Neither can it be 'enforced' or 'stretched' in the same way as one can do with transparency in a negotiation or deliberation setting. For all of us, reflexivity as an intellectual skill essentially emerges as an *ethical experience* in interaction with others. That interaction may be informal, but it may be clear that the meaningful and 'logical' interactions in this sense are those of the formal methods of knowledge generation and decision making we use to make sense of our co-existence and social organization: political deliberation, scientific research and education. I will briefly comment on what this would imply for these interaction modes in the last part of the text.

Secondly, if reflexivity and a sense of 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, one could of course wonder 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 organisation in its own way? In the following part, 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 complex social 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.

Thirdly, it is important to emphasise that intellectual solidarity is not some high-brow elite form of intellectual cooperation. It simply denotes our joint preparedness to accept the complexity of co-existence in general and of specific complex social problems in particular, and the fact that no one has a privileged position to make sense of it all. Intellectual solidarity, as an *ethical commitment*, is the joint preparedness to accept that we have no reference other than each other.

2. The Comfort of Polarisation: Postmodernity and the Denial of Complexity.

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 governing methods as we know them today 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 organisation; 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 organised and legitimised '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 is 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.[6]

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[6] 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, in the reasoning developed here, education is not considered in the same way as representative democracy, science and the market. Obviously what is 'taught' in our education programmes today has been influenced by modernity as an emancipation process, but the method of education itself is not

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 today: the traditional internal logics of representative democracy, science and the market are, each in their own way, no longer able to 'grasp' the complexity of those problems and, as a result, they cannot work self-correctively. Therefore, their governing methods are no longer 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 as it 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 on 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'.

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a result of that emancipation process, and neither was it ever set up with the aim to work 'self-corrective'. 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 in part 3 of this 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 critique, but also the feeling of connectedness or alienation). What can be said, written, done and shown in culture today has of course in various ways been determined by modernity as an emancipation process, but, similar to education, culture itself is, as 'method', not a result of that modernity as emancipation process. In the same sense, it has never been set up to work 'self-corrective'. 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.

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;
- rule out labour 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 labour 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 a sense of 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 (or at least not sufficiently) 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 be tested any longer 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. Obviously an entrepreneur in the clothing business can become reflexive with respect to the miserable working conditions in his sweatshops in Bangladesh, but with his eventual individual decision to raise the salaries and improve the working conditions, he would put himself outside of the market logic and his business would decline if there would be no rigid political regulation forcing his competitors to do the same. So for the market, the preparedness to open up its method can be understood as 'only' 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 part. The idea of reflexivity and a sense of 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 an ethical framework that would follow from the general and neutral characterization of complexity of complex social problems. The idea is that this framework can consequently inspire new governance methods that would, as previously emphasised, enable a fair dealing with the complexity of our co-existence in general and with the complexity of our complex social problems in particular.

3. An Ethics of Care for our Modern Coexistence

3.1. Seeking reference - A short reflection on Western philosophy normative ethical theories

What do we talk about when we talk about ethics? Ethics are about being concerned with questions of right and wrong, but there are different 'levels' of thinking about these questions. Philosophy identifies 'meta-ethics' as that discipline or perspective that deals with concepts of right and wrong (what is rightness? what is goodness?). Next to that, philosophers speak of 'normative ethics' as the discipline or perspective that considers the references that can be used to evaluate a specific practice or conduct. In that sense, normative ethics thus refer to 'what ought to be' in absence of 'evidence' that would facilitate straightforward judgement, consensus and consequent action. That absence of evidence can as well relate to the knowledge as to the values we may want to use to evaluate that specific practice or conduct. However, absence of evidence does of course not exclude the possibility of some type of normative reference to assist that judgement. Throughout history, philosophers have tried to formulate specific rationales to defend possible references, and one can distinguish four categories of normative ethical theories in Western philosophy in that sense.[7] Since their emergence at various moments in history, all theories have been subject to academic critique with respect to their attempt to 'universalise' their approach. The theories and their critiques are summarised in the table below and briefly discussed hereafter.

Western philosophy normative ethical theories	danger / problem
→ theories that seek reference in 'universally applicable principles' *(Kantian) deontology, consequentialism (utilitarianism)*	danger: risk of overlooking the particular of specific situations
→ theories that seek reference in evaluating particular situations *'particularism'*	danger: risk of self-protective relativism (cultural, social, political)
→ theories that seek reference in virtues ('being good') *virtue ethics (Aristoteles)*	problem: virtues do not always unambiguously translate into concrete action
→ theories that seek reference in the care for human relationships *ethics of care*	problem: works for close relations with known people; unclear how it could work for distant relations with strangers

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[7] The focus on 'Western philosophy' has no other meaning than to provide a 'pragmatic' framework for the reasoning developed here. Obviously thought from 'Eastern philosophy' may be relevant here too. I see the major differences between them mainly in an historical evolutionary perspective and not caused by different ideologies or deeper insights.

Contemporary overviews of normative ethics theories – at least in the tradition of Western philosophy – recognize three general approaches to normative ethics that have a longer historical tradition: deontological ethics - emphasizing the importance of duties and rules to evaluate ethical practice, consequentialism - stating that actions need to be judged on the basis of their consequences, and virtue ethics - emphasizing the importance of virtues as qualities of the 'moral character' of the human (see, among others, Driver, Julia, "Normative Ethics", in: Jackson and Smith 2008, 31; Furrow 2005; Hursthouse 2013). The most important interpretations of deontological ethics thereby are (neo-)Kantian deontology and contractarianism[8] or social contract theory (with, in the case of the latter, the interpretation of John Rawls in particular). Utilitarianism remains the most important theoretical interpretation of consequentialism, as well in Jeremy Bentham's original interpretation, stating that '*it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong'* (Bentham 1977) as in more recent interpretations.[9] The fact that utilitarianism, Kantian deontology and contractarianism remain to seek reference for ethical behaviour in 'objective' criteria has been subject of academic inquiry since their origin, and the idea of objective reference has been both defended and criticised since then. However, the general agreement today is that they all 'fail' in their ambition as separate theories. As Julia Driver puts it:

> […] *Normative ethical theory has undergone a transformation in the last generation. Challenges have been made to normative ethical theory – particularly to the commitment to impartiality and the view that there is a single moral principle sufficient to guide action. Greater focus on relationships, virtues, and less abstract issues have transformed the major theories* […] (Driver, Julia, "Normative Ethics", in: Jackson and Smith 2008, 58)

In his particular approach to the theory of ethics, the philosopher Dwight Furrow discusses the so-called 'ethical flaws' of utilitarianism, Kantian deontology and contractarianism that emerge in formulations of practical meaning of moral duty and motivation in concrete situations. However, he insists that both their historical development and practical meaning are still relevant and meaningful today:

> […] *The strength of utilitarian, Kantian and social contract theories is that they give us a way of conceptualizing the intuition that all human beings are worthy of equal respect and concern. Historically, proponents and supporters of these theories have done much to promote the expansion of human rights.* […] *If there is such a thing as moral progress in history, the expansion of human rights and the centrality of concerns about social justice that have occurred over the past 300 years qualifies as example.* […] (Furrow 2005, 95)

The academic debate around virtue ethics is known to be more recent, although it has an early origin. In general terms, one could say that since Aristotel, the importance of virtues to inspire how

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[8] Recent academic philosophy distincts 'contractarianism' from 'contractualism'. Contractarianism considers moral principles as those principles that emerge from deliberation among 'reasonable' people. The problem is that this can still lead to arbitrary principles (e.g. the decision to kill the weakest person of the group). Contractualism situates moral authority in deliberation as well, but, in addition, follows Kant in the vision that only those principles can be legitimate that could be accepted by free and equal persons in deliberation based on mutual respect (Driver, Julia, "Normative Ethics", in: Jackson and Smith 2008).

[9] See for example Peter Singer's recent development of his concept of 'effective altruism', based on the idea that an ethical life is a life instructed by the principle of 'doing the most good you can do' (Singer 2015)

to 'be good' and to 'lead a good life' has been emphasized mainly in the context of religion, at least in Western historical context. From the same perspective, it is understood that their value diminished during the Enlightenment in favour of the more 'objective criteria' of deontological ethics and, later, those of consequentialism. The 'revival' of virtue ethics came with the formulation of the "anti-codifiability" thesis as reaction to the general theoretical vision that it is the 'task' of normative ethics to draw up a 'code' of universal rules and principles, formulated so that any non-virtuous person would be able to understand and correctly apply them (Hursthouse 2013).

In 1953, in her well-known paper *Modern Moral Philosophy*, Elizabeth Anscombe criticised modern philosophy's focus on abstract principles with potential universal character, and proposed to replace the concept of 'moral obligation' by the concept of a 'virtue' as reference for action. In addition, she argued that it remains useless to practice moral philosophy without an adequate 'philosophy of psychology' that would be able to provide us with a better understanding of virtues (Anscombe 1958). According to Julia Driver, since then, many philosophers relied on this view to underline the importance of a virtue ethics approach to the moral judgement, and she claims that research has now gathered around the following thesis:

> […] *Virtue ethics treats virtue evaluation as the "primary" mode of evaluation; thus, any account of right action that is virtue-ethical needs to define right action in terms of virtue* […] (Driver, Julia, "Normative Ethics", in: Jackson and Smith 2008, 55)

However, the essential problem with virtue ethics remains the fact that virtues cannot always be unambiguously translated into 'correct' practical action, and that the cases in which it is possible are very often of trivial nature. Next to this 'application problem', Hursthouse highlights the problem of the cultural-relative character of virtues and the problem of conflicting virtues in moral dilemmas, and concludes that virtue ethics, similar to utilitarianism and deontology, continues to struggle with the problem of justification of moral belief and action: it is not always clear which qualities of our moral character can be considered 'real' virtues, and the question remains open whether it is possible (and needed) to reduce reference in moral issues to a set of 'essential' virtues (Hursthouse 2013).

In a somewhat simplified way, one can understand the academic research and debate today as situated 'in' and 'in between' the three traditional approaches to normative ethics discussed above. The fact that the alternative 'ethics of care' theory, being the theory that grounds reference for moral judgement and ethical behaviour in the care for human interpersonal relationships, emerged from feminist philosophy may be understood as characteristic for recent history. In her famous (and still controversial) book *In a Different Voice*, the philosopher Carol Gilligan relied on her research in psychology to suggest the existence of gender differences in ethical thinking and behaviour, and she claimed that these differences are already observable from childhood on (Gilligan 1982). The idea was that 'female ethical experiences' emerge from a typical concern with the specific of the situation and from out of a 'care' for the relationships with relatives (Driver, Julia, "Normative Ethics", in F. Jackson and Smith 2008, 57). This 'ethics of care' perspective was developed further by Nel Noddings. Her book *Care: A Feminin Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* from 1984 characterized the 'justice approach' as rigid, cold and emotionless (Noddings 2003). To the extreme, feminist ethics did not criticise deontology and consequentialism for their ambition to ground

reference for moral judgement and ethical behaviour in 'reason and rationality' *as such*, but rather because of the typical male character of that ambition (Driver, Julia, "Normative Ethics", in: Jackson and Smith 2008, 57).

The context of this text does not allow further elaboration on the four main theories of Western normative ethics. The overview is presented here as a reference for the formulation of a specific ethics of care theory that could guide evaluation and action 'in face of complexity' in the context of complex social problems as characterized above. In other words, my argument is that the essence of the theory and practice of moral judgement and ethical behaviour is to be found in a perspective of ethics of care, and this not only for our personal life, but also and essentially for the organization of our co-existence. Although feminist philosophy has done important work in developing the idea of human relationships as reference for moral judgement and ethical behaviour, the argument is that it is possible to formulate an 'ethics of care for our modern co-existence' that has nothing to do with feminism as such (obviously this argument should not be understood as a judgement on the importance of the original feminist approach in the first place). The basic idea of an ethics of care approach has actually a strong consequentialist character as such: the idea that we would need to judge our actions based on the (potential) direct or indirect effect on our relations with other people, and this based on the understanding that these relations are essential for our existence, which means that we need to 'care' for them. In this sense, the ethics of care theory will not only give reflexivity and intellectual solidarity (the 'virtues' formulated in §1.3.) a more concrete meaning but also inspire in what way the advanced methods for knowledge generation and decision making would differ from the traditional ones.[10] This will be further elaborated in the next paragraph.

3.2. An ethics of care, 'bound in complexity'

The previous section elaborated on the meaning of reflexivity and (a sense of) intellectual solidarity as ethical attitudes or virtues, and on the need to adopt these attitudes or to foster these virtues *because* of complexity. In addition to that, it is possible to develop an ethical theory on how to deal fairly with the complexity of complex social problems based on the simple insight that we are all *bound in* that complexity. The idea that 'we are all in it together' informs the view that we should care for our relations with each other, not only in the sense that we need to be reflexive with respect to how our complex relations 'emerge' and 'work', but also in the sense that we *need* each other to make sense of complex social problems such as climate change, and to tackle them.

In short, the characterization of complexity as sketched above enables a formulation of an ethics of care that could work for our distant relationships with strangers. The basic idea is that the 'fact of complexity' brings along three new characteristics of modern co-existence that can be named 'connectedness', 'vulnerability', and 'sense of engagement'. Their meaning in relation to the complexity of complex social problems can be summarised as follows:

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[10] In addition, from a philosophical perspective, the idea is that both the vision on virtue ethics and ethics of care formulated here do not face the traditional problems formulated above, as they do not aim to instruct concrete practical action of concerned actors, but rather inspire specific modes of reflective and deliberative interaction among them. A further discussion on this philosophical problem falls outside of the scope of this text.

Connectedness

We are connected with each other 'in complexity'. We cannot any longer escape or avoid it. Fair dealing with each other implies fair dealing with the complexity that binds us. Given the character of the social problems we face, that connectedness has now a global 'dimension'.

Vulnerability

In complexity, we became intellectually dependent on each other while we face our own and each other's 'authority problem'. We should care for the vulnerability of the ignorant and the confused, but also for that of 'mandated authority' (such as that of 'the scientific expert', the 'teacher' or 'the elected political representative'). Last but not least, we should care for the vulnerability of those who cannot be involved in joint reflection and deliberation at all. Obviously, without wanting to make evaluative comparisons between them, these can be identified as the next generations, but also as those among us who are intellectually incapable to join (animals, children, and humans with serious mental disabilities).

(Sense of) Engagement

Our experiences now extend from the local to the global. As intelligent reflective beings, becoming involved in deliberating issues of general societal concern became a new source of meaning and moral motivation for each one of us. As citizens, we want to enjoy the right to be responsible in the complexity that binds us, although not only in our own interest. The idea I want to present here is that, for contemporary humans, the will to contribute to making sense of the complexity of our co-existence can be understood as driven by an *intellectual need* and as *a form of 'intellectual' altruism*. The contemporary human becomes frustrated and unhappy if she/he is unable to put that social engagement into practice in one way or another. According to the Buddhist thinker Matthieu Ricard, 'real' altruism is a mental attitude, motivation and intention (Ricard 2015).[11] However, one can understand that acting upon that attitude, motivation and intention will only have limited and temporal effect if at the same time the traditional governing modes of politics, science, the market and education systematically and strategically curtail our possibility to engage in practice.

We can now connect this ethics of care perspective with the idea of reflexivity, and intellectual solidarity as ethical attitudes or virtues, as elaborated above. Connectedness, vulnerability, and a sense of engagement, identified as new characteristics of co-existence, imply the need to be 'intellectually solidary' with each other in the way we make sense of complexity of co-existence and of our relations in that co-existence. This can be represented as having a sense for interaction modes that are 'confronting' or 'enabling' at the same time:

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[11] Altruism as a 'mental attitude' is of course not a typical Buddhist perspective. Since the concept was proposed by the French philosopher Auguste Comte, the meaning of altruism and the motivations for altruism as an 'attitude' have been the topic of study in philosophy as well as in (evolutionary) psychology and evolutionary biology. For the latter, see, among others, (Wilson 2015).

	connectedness, vulnerability and a sense for engagement inspire 'intellectual solidarity as a joint ethical commitment', in the sense of
connectedness	the joint preparedness to enable and participate in intellectual confrontation with respect to the ratio's we use - to defend our interests, hopes, hypotheses, believes and concerns - to relativize our uncertainties and doubts; the joint preparedness to recognize that the practical limitations to participation in deliberation cannot be used to question the principle of participation as such;
vulnerability	the joint preparedness - to acknowledge that we are intellectually dependent on each other; - to respect each other's authority problem and the vulnerability of those who cannot participate;
(sense for) engagement	the joint preparedness to enable and support 'intellectual emancipation' of others with the aim of providing every human being with the possibility of developing 'reflexivity as an intellectual skill', or thus to develop a (self-)critical sense and to be a (self-)critical actor in society.

3.3. Trust by method: intellectual solidarity in science, democracy and education.

Moving now from normative ethical thinking to applied ethical thinking, the advanced formal interaction modes to enable reflexivity and a sense of intellectual solidarity referred to above 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 complex social problems, reflexivity and a sense of intellectual solidarity as public ethical attitudes or virtues would need to inspire the method used to generate knowledge about these problems, and the method used to negotiate and make decisions related to them accordingly. So the question becomes, in what way could these virtues inspire the practice of research and decision making?

With the presentation of virtue ethics as one of the four traditional theories of ethics (of Western philosophy), it was noted that the problem with virtue ethics as a theory of normative reference is that virtues not always translate unambiguously into concrete action. First of all, virtues such as being 'good', 'honest', or 'prudent' obviously need to be considered in a practical context or situation in order to understand their practical meaning. However, even then, different virtues can come into conflict with each other, or acting from the perspective of one virtue can be complicated because of the existence of conflicting values to take into account. In the same perspective, it is true that neither reflexivity nor a sense of intellectual solidarity can unambiguously inspire concrete action of concerned actors but, perceived in the ethics of care perspective presented here, they can inspire interaction methods that would *enable and enforce* them as virtues in the interest of meaningful

dialogue. The following reasoning may clarify this. In the first part, it was said that reflexivity as an intellectual skill may benefit from solitary reflection but also that it cannot be 'instructed' or 'thought'. Neither can it be 'enforced' or 'stretched' in the same way as one can do with transparency in a negotiation or deliberation setting. For all of us, reflexivity as an intellectual skill essentially emerges as an *ethical experience* in interaction with others. That interaction may be informal, but it may now be clear that, from a joint concern to make intellectual solidarity and thus that experience for everyone possible, meaningful interactions in this sense are to be organised in (what I would call) the three formal and 'neutral' methods[12] we use to give meaning to our co-existence: scientific research, political deliberation and education.[13] In the interest of keeping this text concise, I will briefly comment on how this can be understood for all three of them.

Scientific research

As the challenge of science in making sense of complex social problems is no longer the production of credible proof but the construction of credible hypotheses, reflexivity and intellectual solidarity as ethical attitudes inspire the need to engage in advanced methods that are self-critical and open to visions from outside the traditional disciplines of science. In other words, in an advanced method of science, knowledge to advise policy is generated in a 'transdisciplinary' and 'inclusive' way, or thus as a joint exercise of problem definition and problem solving with input from the natural and social sciences and the humanities as well as from citizens and informed civil society.

Political deliberation

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'

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[12] The specification of 'formal' and 'neutral' methods is important here, in the sense that it denotes interactions that happen according to specific rules and guidelines to be agreed upon jointly in the interest of the meaning they aim to produce. This marks the difference with the other interaction modes we use to give meaning to life and our co-existence, being (in the broadest sense) 'culture' (including art), 'play', spirituality and religion. See also the next endnote.

[13] In part 2, I have characterized representative democracy, science and the market as the three formal governing methods that, each in their own way, create meaning for our society. I also said that education, despite the fact that it can be understood as another method to create meaning for our society, is not to be seen in the same perspective, as its method itself is not a result of modernity as an emancipation process, and neither was it ever set up with the aim to work 'self-corrective'. The difference between *creating meaning* for our society as *organization* and *giving meaning* to our society as *co-existence* is subtle but important. The second refers to interaction methods that give meaning via 'discursive interaction' using specific 'languages'. This is the reason why democracy, science and education belong to this category and the market not. On the other hand, also culture can be understood as an interaction method to give meaning via specific languages (literary fiction, poetry, visual art, dance, theatre, …). However, culture is not taken into account here for the simple reason that its 'methods' are obviously not determined by formal agreements, rules and laws (rather on the contrary – cultural expression should be 'free'). Also organised religion can be understood as a way to give meaning to our society as co-existence. However, given that the 'separation of church and state' is now widely recognized as a criterion for democracy, similar to 'culture', religion is not taken up in the category of 'advanced formal methods' here. Of course religious thought has the right to be taken into account in political deliberation and education (and even in science), but the idea is that it may not influence the *methods* of democracy, science and education. This is of course theory, as we know that this influence exists in many ways today (although not necessarily in more problematic ways than from out of a positivist approach to science). Because of practical reasons, a further discussion of these matters falls outside of the scope of this text.

that sees deliberation as a collective self-critical reflection and learning process among all concerned, 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. 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 open up old political methods for the good of society. At both local and global levels, politicians could organise public participation and deliberation around concrete issues, and engage in taking the outcome of that deliberation seriously.

Education

Last but not least, there is the need for a new vision on education. Fair dealing with complex social problems needs an education that cares for 'critical-intellectual capacity building'. It would be naïve to think that scientists, politicians, engineers, entrepreneurs, managers, experts, activists, or citizens will adopt the ethical attitudes of reflexivity and intellectual solidarity simply on request. The preparedness of someone to be reflexive about her/his own position and related interests, hopes, hypotheses, beliefs, and concerns can be called a moral responsibility, but it essentially leans on the capability to do so. Insight into the complexity of our co-existence in general and into our complex social problems in particular, and an understanding of the ethical consequences for politics, science, the market and education itself, need to be stimulated and fostered in basic and higher education. Education should move beyond the 19th Century disciplinary approaches and cultural and religious comfort zones, and should become pluralist, critical, and reflexive in itself. Instead of educating young people to function optimally in the strategic political, cultural, 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 for intellectual solidarity in particular.

An ethics of care perspective on our modern co-existence 'bound in complexity' provides a powerful reference to defend the value of (and the need for) these advanced interaction methods. Recognising the meaningful relations between the advanced approaches to education, research, and political decision making presented above, together they not only enable and stimulate reflexivity and intellectual solidarity based on their discursive potential, but also provide the possibility to generate societal trust with their working. That societal trust considered here is not the trust that the outcome of deliberation will be the 'correct one', but that its method has the potential to be judged as fair by everyone involved, given the complexity of the problem.

So what is the real problem with living in a complex world? 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 nuclear energy, genetically modified organisms,

or a tax on wealth), we can say that our social challenges became more complex. The real trouble with these challenges is not their complexity as such, but the traditional governance methods we use to make sense of them in politics, science, and the market. Inherited from modernity, the idea is that these methods are no longer able to 'grasp' the complexity of these social problems. In part 2, it was argued more in depth why and how these traditional governance methods are not inspired by reflexivity as an ethical attitude and intellectual solidarity as an ethical commitment, driven as they still are by the doctrine of scientific truth and the strategies of political 'positionism' and economic profit. On the other hand, it may be clear that we do not need deep utopian reform of our society to make research transdisciplinary and inclusive, and to make education pluralist, critical, and reflexive. Even in the old modes of political conflict, steered and limited by party politics and nation state sovereignty, it is possible in principle to organise public and civil society participation in deliberation around concrete issues, and to take the outcome of that deliberation seriously. So although we do not live in a society inspired by intellectual solidarity, we have the capacity to foster it and to put it in practice.

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