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Reflexive Governance in the Public Interest

Global Public Services

Reflexive Governance, public goods and sustainability – conceptual reflections and empirical evidence in agricultural policy

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Reflexive Governance, public goods and sustainability – conceptual reflections and empirical evidence in agricultural policy

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Introduction

The concept of “reflexive governance” has gained much attention in the discussion about sustainability governance (Voß, Bauknecht and Kemp 2006), network governance (Rhodes 1997) and multi-level decision-making (Lenoble 2005; Rogowski 2006). Through all its different uses, it carries connotations of policy-learning, non-hierarchical decision-making and soft regulation. At the same time, underlying the concept is the notion that learning processes can be directed or inhibited by social institutions and knowledge structures. “Reflexivity” then implies awareness to structural barriers to learning as well as to the mutual interaction of these structures and processes that might change them. An institutional approach to reflexive governance and its contribution to the provision of global public goods will therefore link structural analysis with an investigation of how institutional rules influence the normative and cognitive preferences of actors.

In policy analysis, the concept of reflexivity is closely linked to interpretive approaches (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006; Yanow 2007) and comes with an interest in framing and alternative frames of issues on which learning processes can draw (Laws and Rein 2003; Hajer and Laws 2006). This interest has an empirical and a pragmatic angle: Empirically the question is if re-framing occurs in a policy arena, and if so, to what degree the process of reframing is “reflexive” rather than the result of economic calculation or power relations. The pragmatic question is how the policy process can be organised to improve the capacity for articulating, reflecting and evaluating alternative policy frames in a way that improves decision-making.

These questions are especially important when it comes to global public goods (Kaul, Grunberg and Stern 1999; International Task Force on Global Public Goods 2006). The very notion of a global public good implies the call for a new, global layer of governance. This raises the question how that would be related to existing national, transnational and sub-national governance structures, and how to deal with multiple policy approaches that are grounded in those utterly diverse policy arenas. In contexts of multi-level governance, “reflexive governance” is often associated with institutional arrangements where the upper level sets guidelines, principles and sometimes policy aims and the lower level decides about the precise programmes and instruments (Lenoble 2005; Rogowski 2006). One especially interesting example of multi-level decision-making is the “community method” (Devuyst 1999) the European Union (EU). While vaunted for its capacity to allow member states to

develop common interests, to balance autonomy and community interest, it is at the same time criticised for its sectorally fragmented governance structure which tends to create narrow-minded policies (Wallace and Wallace 2000). An especially striking case has been the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) with its problematic global and environmental impacts. “Reflexive governance” would mean that over time such policies are reframed to allow consideration of a wider set of norms, values and objectives.

In this chapter I will first argue that the notion of “global public good” requires a thorough consideration of the economic, political and moral communities implied. I will then review conceptual contributions to the “reflexive governance” debate which are based on theories of structural differentiation, reflexive modernity, ecological economics and deliberative democracy. As a result, “reflexivity” appears as a normative-practical concept that circumscribes a mode of governance that helps to overcome structurally embedded ignorance of specialised organisations and institutions about the external effects of their own operation. The interest in responsible consideration of long-term and far away causation links “reflexive governance” to sustainability, and in the third part I will relate the moral grammar of the sustainability principle to the structural problems exposed in the discussion on reflexive governance. In the final section, I will discuss how shifts in the CAP display a move toward “reflexive governance” in order to explore the usefulness of different notions of the concept.

1. Some implications of the concept of a global public good

The notion of global public goods (International Task Force on Global Public Goods 2006) carries the temptation to assume, presuppose or pretend the existence or emergence of a global political community that is immediately supposed to care for them. But the notion of a public good is itself a theoretical construction in the shifting and contested borderland between analytical and normative analysis. Its purpose is to justify collective action and state activity (Musgrave and Musgrave 1973) as well as to analyse the depletion of certain types of goods, among them many environmental resources (Hardin 1977; Ostrom 1990).

In mainstream economic thinking public goods are defined through technical characteristics: their use is not competitive and/or not exclusive – the classical example being the lighthouse. However, most textbook examples for public goods – like transport infrastructure, parks and forests or cultural institutions – are of a more or less local or regional nature in the sense that the users are physically situated in spatial proximity, including visitors of an area that use public infrastructure or enjoy a beautiful landscape. In these cases the group of users more or less matches existing political communities based on territory. Up to the level of many nation states, in the provision of public goods (including the protection of nature and environmental goods) the community of users and beneficiaries typically co-extends with an existing political entity and an imagined political community. With the concept of a

global public good the idea of such a match becomes hazy. The notion of a global public good presupposes a global *economic* community to which the costs and benefits of the depletion, conservation or provision of the good can be ascribed, and of a global *political* community which is imagined or constituted as the principal on behalf of which collective action is taken. Underlying this is a notion that constitutes one of the peculiarities of a global public good: that it in some *moral* sense constitutes a global community of moral obligations and political solidarity.

One of the interesting questions implied in the normative connotations of the concept is if the notion of a public good is meant to justify or to require action; or in other words: Is there a moral obligation to protect or provide global public goods, if possible, or is there an ethical discretion whether to follow or not the justification for action that the concept implies? And who would be the addressee of such an obligation?

If we indeed suppose that there is an obligation to protect or provide public goods, the next issue would be how to distribute costs and benefits. If we assume that for example the possible benefits from a light tower not only justify but require action: what are the criteria for a just distribution of the costs of the project? Only users of the waterway will benefit directly, and others like traders and consumers of goods delivered by sea indirectly, albeit to a different extent. While the Pareto principle according to which no one should be worse off as the result of a certain measure is often considered as a minimum requirement, it neglects the value people may give to

their relative position in a society. Another question that is especially important when it comes to environmental goods is what to do if actors claim to have a right to a certain activity that others think compromises the public good, e.g. emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere or spraying chemicals on agricultural land. Does the Pareto principle then allow for uncompensated interdiction and intermittence to prevent environmental pollution or exploitation of the commons, or is compensation required? Conclusively answering these questions presupposes that we have a clear notion of the economic, moral and political community which can ask and answer these questions.

In an economic terminology the notion of a global public good comes with the idea that the good in question is in a certain sense 'owned' by mankind, as is for example implied in the common-heritage-of-mankind-principle under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Using a distinction from the theory of property rights allows us to understand that this notion means that the good in question should not be used up (*abusus*), but does not answer the question who is entitled to benefit from its use (*usus fructus*). As long as we understand the community to which the notion of a global public good refers to as an *economic* one, the maintenance of the good (e.g. the rainforest) depends on the proof that there is a net benefit (based on the calculation of costs and benefits), on addressing questions of distributional justice, and on finding institutional mechanisms that solve the problem of transaction costs (Williamson 1975; 1985). The globality of a global public good is then based on

the assumption that it is on a global scale that this good can be most effectively or most efficiently be preserved.

If we understand the owners of a global public good as a *moral* community, additional motives come into play. In a moral discourse the very notion of “ownership” and the language of utilitarianism will probably be questioned. One can instead hold the conviction that mankind has a moral obligation to preserve global public goods or to care for these goods because they have intrinsic value (cf. Anderson 1993). The globality of a global public good is then not constituted by ideas about the effectiveness or efficiency of institutional mechanisms but by the moral standing of the good itself. In practice such a moral understanding of the concept of a public good does not necessarily interfere with the economic understanding of the concept, but the economic perspective will rather become instrumental than forming the basis for justification.

In any case, as Wildavsky (1987) has argued, the technical character of a good is not sufficient to make it the object of a public policy. Since there are many candidate goods there will always be a political process of selecting which of the many technically public goods are actually to be provided through public policies, and to what extent. If the technical character of a public good constitutes a justification or obligation to provide or protect it, the necessary actions still must be weighed against trade-offs with other public or non-public goods and goals. Moreover, the preferences of the public that are met by the provision of a public good are partly

constructed through the institutions and organisations that provide them. The prevention of global warming for example has not been a preference to many until scientists, civil society groups and politicians have come up with evidence of an anthropogenic climate change under way and a conclusive account of the causal mechanisms, thereby constructing climate as a global public good. While environmentalists have long been making the *moral* argument, based on the idea of humankind as a moral community with obligations to each other and future generations, the Stern review (Stern 2006) has probably been most clear in providing the *economic* argument. However, the constitution of the *political* community that is needed to design and implement policies that protect the public good of climate stability is unclear, contested and unstable.

The limitation of the economic argument as the single motivation for action to provide or protect global public goods is that costs and benefits of e.g. minimising climate change are unevenly distributed. Those who can do the most are not those who will probably suffer the most in case of inaction. Hence, in addition to the economic argument some notion of moral or political obligation and solidarity is necessary to justify costly action. This requires a clarification of the underlying moral and ethic considerations and principles. Now, when it comes to global public goods, there is a plurality of ethical traditions and perspectives involved, based e.g. on different religious traditions and cultural contexts, so that no one set of moral concepts can just be taken as applicable to all without further consideration. Different

notions of moral communities come into play. Two aspects stand out: first, different understandings of the nature of an imagined global moral community; second, clarification of the obligations of partial ethical communities toward both other ethical communities and mankind when it comes to the costs for providing global public goods. In any case, the understanding of the public good as the governance object will be affected by the different ethical concepts, and its constitution will be part of the on-going constitution of the ethical communities involved.ⁱ Hence, a reflexive stance is needed with regard to ethical implications of the notion of a global public good. I will turn to this in the next section.

Another, albeit not completely unrelated notion of reflexivity comes into play when we consider Wildavsky's observation that public goods are constructed in the context of institutional setting and political processes. With a plurality of such contexts, policy-makers and scholars who want to make the case for global public goods are confronted with a plurality of social constructions of the governance object. In the next section I will argue that while such multi-referentiality is not specific to global public goods, it carries a certain tendency toward partial perception and neglect which can have far-reaching implications for any kind of governance, including that of public goods. In the context of the general scholarly debate on governance, corresponding notions of reflexivity have emerged to which I now turn.

2. Concepts of reflexive governance

In the context of recent discussions on governance and societal steering the concept of reflexivity and reflexive governance has gained attention in the discussion about governance for sustainable development. Specifically a number of scholars have been discussing the meaning of reflexive governance for the governance for sustainable development (Voß, Bauknecht and Kemp 2006). Several theoretical approaches can be discerned. I will discuss them briefly and derive conclusions for the study of reflexive governance and global public goods.

2.1. Theories of functional differentiation

Sociologists have heavily drawn on the observation that in modern society individual specialisation on certain activities is one of the most prominent organising principles. While early sociologists like Durkheim (1893) have explained this phenomenon through the principle of division of labour, mid 20th century sociologists like Talcott Parsons had a closer look at the functionalities that might be implied. Parsons in his famous AGIL model claimed that any society needed to ensure that the four basic functions of adaptation, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance are maintained, which in modern societies would be the task of four society wide functional sub-systems: the economic, political, social and cultural system for each of the functions respectively (e.g. Parsons 1966).

Basically, the theory of functional differentiation (Rueschemeyer 1974; Luhmann 1977) assumes that modern societies are structured in a specific way that separates them from pre-modern societies. While traditional societies were mainly divided into clans or families, and the main structural dividing line was kinship, feudal societies of early modernity were stratified, i.e. the main structural principle were the different societal strata like nobility, clergy and peasantry. Modern societies, however, are mainly functionally differentiated. They are composed of specialised subsystems like law, science, economy, sports etcetera. An important instance of these subsystems is the establishment of professional communities like lawyers, economists, or engineers. Each of the subsystems produces special goods and values which system theorists take great effort to portray in a somehow stylised manner. According to Luhmann (1986; 2000) the political system produces collectively binding decisions, the scientific system produces truth, and so on.

In the Luhmann type of differentiation theory, society is mainly understood as communication. According to this view, communication in the subsystems is highly specialised and focussed on the goods and values the subsystem is expected to deliver. These goods define specific criteria of relevance which structure the systemic communication. In the most stylised version of the theory of differentiation, Luhmann (1986) holds that systemic communication is binary coded. For example, in the economic subsystem, information is processed with regard to the code

revenue/expenditures, in the legal subsystem the binary code is legal/illegal, in the political system power/no power. Hence, an event contains information for the economic system only if it has an impact on revenues or expenditures somewhere in the system, for the legal system only if it implies a norm violation or norm compliance. For example spill-over of the waste water treatment of a chemical production plant will be observed in the legal system only if it constitutes a norm violation, and in the economic system if this violation possibly results in a fine or if users of the affected waters, e. g fishermen, suffer from financial losses. However, the incidence will be ignored by the political system unless issues like lenient control procedures by state agencies or legal loopholes enter the agenda. In any case, the incidence will be completely irrelevant for the sports or the arts subsystems and not be noted at all in their communication. As this example illustrates, functionally specialised subsystems communicate according to their different relevance criteria, and as a result they produce different kinds of knowledge. Knowledge in this theoretical framework is understood as “any operational schema applied in order to observe and describe the world, including the observing episteme itself” (Bora 2006, p. 6). Highly specialised knowledge results in increased performance and narrowed perception. Since events can only be observed if they fit into their relevance criteria, subsystems regularly neglect side-effects of their operation – side-effects in terms of the sub-system’s own relevance criteria. Hence, functionally specialised communication tends to follow narrowly defined instrumental rationalities (cf.

Habermas 1981). Since functional subsystems tend to ignore the influence of their observational schemes on what they observe, they are in need of “supervision” (Willke 1997). However, as long as the analysis remains on the level of multiple, society wide subsystems with incompatible schemas of observation, it is difficult to achieve more than a somehow stylised analysis that limits itself to explain one reason for plurality in modern societies.

However, subsystems are only one layer of societal structure. If we conceive organisations and the actors that take roles in them as another – or two other – layers, following the line of argument developed by Renate Mayntz and her colleagues (Mayntz et al. 1988; Braun 1993; Mayntz and Scharpf 1995), we gain a more complex and pragmatic picture. According to their concept of “actor centred institutionalism”, subsystems provide actors with evaluative criteria (e.g. profit, power or truth) and select the types of goals they want to achieve to fulfil role expectations, while the organisational context specifies the normative expectations (rights and duties) and the resources that come with specific roles actors may take. This multi-layer concept allows to describe the phenomenon that while the “logic of action” (March and Olsen 1989) in an organisation is usually constituted along one guiding functionally specified rationality and the evaluative criteria that come with it, organisations often incorporate sub-units that mirror other functionally specified logics. E.g., business corporations usually include a legal unit the task of which is to observe the legal

environment of the organisation as well as the organisation's activities with regard to their relevance to legal criteria, and to deal with external legal interventions that are based on the corporation's activities being observed in the operational scheme of knowledge of law. That is, even inside functionally specialised organisations peculiar fields of "multi-referentiality" (Bora 2006) can be found in which multiple types of knowledge meet and intermingle.

Multi-referentiality becomes even more pertinent when it comes to the organisational fields or networks in which multiple organisations interact (Kenis and Knoke 2002). While this meso-level concept depicts the more stable features of inter-organisational constellations, the concept of governance situation rather focuses on the situational instances. From the point of view of differentiation theory, governance situations are at the cross of the observation of one or more functionally differentiated systems. The question how this plurality of observational schemas is taken into account and becomes effective is then at the heart of the quest for reflexive governance.

In the context of this debate, Stirling (2006, p. 226-229) discerns three types of governance situation: unreflectiveness, reflection and reflexivity. "Unreflectiveness is [...] a governance situation in which representations, understanding and interventions are effectively restricted to whatever are held to be the most obvious operational, or instrumentally pertinent attributes of the object under attention"

(Stirling 2006, p. 226). In the context of differentiation theory, the strictly mono-functional operational mode of subsystems would qualify as unreflective. System theorists hence see a need to make subsystems reflect on their effects on other subsystems. Japp (1997) for example calls for “inter-systemic discourses”.

The desired effect is that in a certain governance situation consideration would be given to a plurality of perspectives. This would constitute reflectiveness: “Reflection, or reflectiveness, by contrast [to unreflectiveness], refers to a mode of representation, understanding and intervention by governance systems in which attention extends to a ‘full range’ of whatever are held to be broadly salient attributes of the object in question” (Stirling 2006, p. 227).

Yet governance problems arise not only from multiple representations of the governance object, but also from differences in the operational modes of the governing and the governed system. Steering theories based on differentiation theory stress that if the target system’s operational logic differs from the steering system’s one, steering efforts are doomed to be either irrelevant, to over-regulate or to trigger excessive side effects. The theory of “reflexive law” (Teubner 1989) hence concludes that steering efforts need to relate to processes of self-steering in the target system to achieve the desired effects (Rogowski 2006). Reflexivity thus demands more than taking into account different viewpoints. With reflexivity, “attention simultaneously

encompasses and helps constitute both subject and object”, it constitutes a “recursive mutual contingency of subjective representations and interventions” (Stirling 2006, p. 229).

Processes of this kind are difficult to describe in the terms of the theory of functional differentiation. However, this perspective provides us with a caveat that some sectors of society have rigid internal schema of observation, along with highly selective relevance criteria, often tightened through the establishment of professional communities (Abbott 1988). Another important aspect is that in functionally differentiated societies everyone is a layperson in most fields of life and has to rely on expert judgements. Hence, trust in expertise and in experts is a precondition for the acceptance of expert judgements (Giddens 1990). If expertise becomes contested, trust needs to be restored through procedural provisions.

2.2. Theory of reflexive modernity

According to Ulrich Beck’s theory of reflexive modernisation reflexivity and consideration of effects can be and are indeed enforced through the politicization of “side-effects” (Beck, Bonss and Lau 2003). Institutions and practices of the “first modernity” work toward the standardisation of agents and objects. They presuppose the existence of core institutions: the nation state, individualisation, employment societies, exploitable nature, instrumental control and functional differentiation

(Beck, Bonss and Lau 2003). Under conditions of second modernity, the institutions of first modernity are weakened and questioned as a result of their own success. For example, in the field of agriculture, it is exactly the success of the modernist paradigm of productivism that undercuts the ecological foundations of production. In the transition to second modernity the environmental side-effects are no longer accepted. Food safety crises have shattered the trust that modernist farming has the expertise to provide safe and healthy food (Wilkinson, Lowe and Donaldson 2007). While change was part of life in first modernity, we now face what Beck calls “meta-change”.

John Grin (2006) argues that the institutions of first or simple modernity (parliaments, agricultural research centres, farmers’ organisations) are increasingly complemented by institutions of reflexive modernity. Model projects, participatory arrangements, stakeholder bodies, research programmes for system transition management or trans-disciplinary advisory boards are expected to bring new ideas to established practices. To achieve effectiveness, they need to take into account the plurality of actors’ logics. They open up hybrid places where for example farmers, consumers and environmentalists meet and create new approaches and solutions. To gain legitimacy under conditions of network governance, they turn to reflexive arrangements that do not prescribe certain outcomes but make sure that different views are taken into consideration.

These arrangements also take into account the plurality of internal organisational logics. For example, the meaning of sustainable development has to be spelt out differently for small organic farmers and for large-scale specialised holdings. These differentiations are also necessary to address problems of legitimacy. However, reflexivity is no easy task. Power and vested interests still are in place. Grin admonishes us that it is the “tension between the normative ambition of new modes of governance and the perception of actors in the field and the knowledge and norms implicit in their practices which limit the acceptance of new modes of governance”.

2.3 Evolutionary economics

A third approach to the discussion of reflexive governance is formulated by Tom Dedeurwardere (2005). Building on ideas from evolutionary economics and criticising shortcomings of transaction cost economics, he addresses the problem that policy instruments which are designed to protect public goods often have the reverse effect when established in the context of specific local logics of action. For example, under the United Nations Convention for the Protection of Biodiversity access and benefit sharing schemes were implemented to provide incentives for protecting biodiversity in countries of origin. However, in practice they had the effect to crowd out intrinsic motivations to preserve natural resources. The new benefit schemes redefined these resources as private goods, and the communities lost their

motivation to treat them as public on the basis of mutual trust and social control. The main question would then be how “reflexive governance” can contribute to the formation of collective preferences and the generation of knowledge for (global) public goods such as biodiversity and climate change.

2.4 Deliberative democracy

The theory of deliberative democracy as developed by Juergen Habermas offers another road to understand reflexive governance. Habermas’ original intention was a critique of technocratic policy-making and planning. This he staged as a critique of instrumental rationality that optimises means to given ends without reflecting the rationality of the ends. Optimising agricultural productivity under conditions of over-production would be a good example. But also value rationality (cf. Weber 1922) falls short of what is needed if the value reflection is limited to the normative horizon of one particular community or one functional sub-system while effects concern others.

Habermas (1981) introduces the concept of communicative rationality as a logic of action that allows to reflect validity claims about what is true, authentic, right and just. Here rationality is understood as practical reason which comes to life through forms of intersubjective communication that allow validity claims and their questioning and proof to be aired. In situations where actors with different logics of

action meet, the concept of communicative rationality requires that the prerequisites and implications of these logics of action can be picked out as an issue. Such a form of communication opens up the opportunity to create reflexivity with regard to multiple value horizons and logics of actions. The communicative space in which these plural viewpoints meet is not governed by a specialised instrumental rationality but constitutes a realm of practical reason where arguments from divergent provenances are balanced against each other in the medium of deliberation, i.e. the pondering argumentation about the desirable and the possible according to rules of practical reason.

Such a communicative understanding of practical reason is extremely informative for the conceptualisation and practice of reflexive institutions. An important implication for public issues is that communicative processes that are set up to allow the questioning of validity claims of all sorts must enable participation of all affected and interested parties. Hence, deliberation and participation are two sides of the same coin. From the perspective of practical reason both are indispensable prerequisites for the creation of reflexivity.

Frank Fischer has extensively elaborated on the theory and practice of deliberative participation. Fischer (2005) reminds us that there can be no general theory of participatory design because the rules and meanings of what is going on in a specific

case are continuously negotiated among participants. Since participants bring along their discourses and experiences, the web of meanings that constitute the social space of such arrangements is intertwined with the discourses that are part of the practices outside – practices which such reflexive arrangements are set up to change. Participants thus have to take a reflexive stance toward the discourses and practices in which they and their social activities are embedded. Hence, deliberative participation requires a political culture that allows actors to acquire and practice the corresponding skills and attitudes.

How can we describe and analyse the kind of practices that emerge in these new hybrid spaces? Martin Rein, Donald Schoen and David Laws have developed the concept of framing and re-framing to analyse the processes of meaning-making in spaces of deliberative participation which they have empirically observed in reflexive, participatory and deliberative arrangements (Schön and Rein 1994). According to this concept the logic of action of organisations and groups forms an interpretive frame for the understanding of events, proposals, initiatives etcetera. In participatory and deliberative arrangements several of such frames meet. The interactive communication can be used to develop new interpretive frames for controversial or novel issues. Empirical case studies show that participatory and deliberative arrangements can help to reflect not only on the effects, but on the inner logic of established practices and hence allow developing new, more integrative

approaches. In doing so it is crucial for success to begin with the definitions of the situation that the actors bring along: “The scope for reframing is strongest when the ideas, concepts and theories that reframing draws on derive from the experience, understanding and active involvement of actors in concrete social situations” (Laws and Rein 2003, p. 173).

To conclude this section: A multitude of theories – from system theoretical interpretation of functional differentiation to theories of modernity, ecological and evolutionary economics to theories of deliberative democracy, converge on the diagnosis that not only consideration of the effects of societal routines and practices must be improved (moving from unreflectedness to reflectiveness), but that reflexive arrangements are needed to gain a reflexive stance toward the construction of governance objects through the operational schemes of observation (moving to reflexivity). This is also an important motive in the discussion on sustainable development, albeit the latter concept is only occasionally referred to in the debate on reflexive governance.ⁱⁱ

3. Reflexive Governance and sustainability

The sustainability principle adds a discrete normative dimension to the theory and practice of reflexive institutions. It would be daring to assume that in the empirical reality a shared understanding of sustainability would be implied in the multiple

logics of action of the broad range of actors involved. Reference to the principle of sustainability facilitates as well as calls for critical reflection on the implicit validity claims that come with different logics of action and frames. It is added as another point of view to their mutual critique. Yet interpretation of the sustainability principle is carried out within the horizon of exactly those logics of action and those interpretive frames it is supposed to be referred to critically. To avoid circular conclusions, a critical reflection on interpretations of the situation, logics of action, practices and interpretive frames presupposes a more precise understanding of the type of validity claims embodied in the sustainability principle.

In the scientific sustainability discourse and in environmental ethics different interpretations exist about what kind of value judgements are implied when it comes to operationalise the sustainability principle. In order to better understand the different approaches, it is helpful to draw on a distinction that Juergen Habermas (1991) has proposed for value judgements in general. He suggests distinguishing ethical and moral judgements. From a moral perspective we ask what is *right for all*; from an ethical perspective we ask what is *good for us*. Ethical and moral questions differ in the reach of actors addressed and affected. Ethical questions are posed from the perspective of members of a community who share certain values and attitudes. Moral questions are posed from the perspective of all those who are possibly affected, even if they hold diverging values and worldviews. Moral argumentation is

'purged' from ethical considerations. The only guiding principles for moral argumentation are the autonomy of the person and justice.

The sustainability principle somehow differs from pure moral judgements. Indeed the Brundtland formula according to which sustainable development requires to satisfy the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs and choose their own lifestyle (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), has been interpreted as consisting of the two principles of intra- and inter-generational justice. Hence it employs the grammar of a consequentialist (looking-at-outcomes) moral value judgement. It is abstracted from specific ideas about the 'good life' and instead states outcome oriented conditions which specific ideas about the 'good life' are requested to respect. Therefore it can be acceptable for groups with quite different cultural and religious background.ⁱⁱⁱ The sustainability principle also contains the requirement that future generations can choose their way of life. This implies that 'our' (present) way of life and the ethical concept embodied needs to be compatible with the choice of other (future) ways of life. The principle does not allow one group through their way of life and its consequences to compel a certain way of life on others. Sustainable development hence requires a shared understanding of the adequacy of ways of life and production from the moral point of view provided by the sustainability principle. Here the perspectives of all relevant ethical philosophies need to be taken

into account, but they can also be problematised with regard to the moral question if their consequences would be generalizable. The principle of sustainable development hence is best understood as a maxim at the interface of ethical and moral judgments (cf. Habermas 1991, p. 106).

It is crucial that the multiple logics of action of different organisations and groups provide the frame for the ethical consideration of ways of life and production or the interpretation of situations. For example the release of transgenic plants can be discussed with regard to the question if the use of such plants and the consumption of transgenic products implies specific ways of life and production. The answers to these questions will be informed by different interpretations of the situation, e.g. how urgent global hunger is and how important transgenic plants are for the fight against it. Depending on the functional perspectives like economic, business, ethical, jurisdictional, ecologic or other, different ethical aspects and different elements of the situation will come to the fore. This multitude of functional perspectives is further increased if functional perspectives are internally differentiated or contested. With regard to the release of transgenic plants for example variegated economic perspectives surface, because the economies and economics of international herbicide producers, seed companies, organic processors or regionally marketing family farms differ sharply in their assumptions, prerequisites, logics of action conditions for success (on the notion of multiple economies see Biesecker and Hofmeister 2006).

Similarly we can discern a range of different ecological perspectives that look at different scales of time and space and thus recognise different system characteristics and vulnerabilities.

If the sustainability principle is located at the interface of ethical and moral judgments then learning processes for sustainability and its operationalisation require taking into account different value horizons and interpretations of the situation. Clarification of the relevant values and interpretations of the situation should reflexively refer to the different relevant logics of action and the interpretations of the situation that follow from them in a way that takes notice of their differences, acknowledges them and takes them as a starting point for more integrative, 'reflexive' interpretations of the situation and the relevant norms.

To sum up: The sustainability principle alone is too abstract to generate positive orientation what to do. It needs to be interpreted in the specific contexts of action which are typically constituted by a multitude of different logics of action, value horizons, frames and interpretations of the situation which are embedded in routines, ways of life and production. They are implicitly bound to ethical ideas about what is 'good for us', which can be critically assessed from the moral point of view what is 'right for all'. As a maxim at the interface of ethical and moral judgments the sustainability principle requires a reflexive clarification of routines,

ways of life and patterns of production. The reflexive institutions that allow doing so can be conceived as deliberative and participatory communicative arrangements that open the way to integrative re-framing.

4. Agricultural policy – a shift toward “reflexive governance?”

In the remaining section I will take the CAP reforms as an example to discuss how the various concepts of reflexive governance are useful to describe and understand shifts in policies that are crucially important for the delivery of global public goods. I start with the well-established notion of a paradigm shift in agriculture policy as evidence of re-framing, and focus on the shifting notions of the relevant public goods. I then discuss to which degree this reflects a move to reflexive modernization, to more reflectedness and reflexivity, and a reflexive notion of sustainable development.

4.1. Re-framing of agricultural policy and shifting notions of the public good

There is ample evidence that agriculture policies in OECD countries have undergone a major re-framing since the mid 1980s. This is captured by the notion of a paradigm shift (Coleman, Skogstad and Atkinson 1997; Daugbjerg 2003). According to Peter Hall’s (1993) concept which is based on Thomas Kuhn’s work on “scientific revolutions” (Kuhn 1962), a policy paradigm is an “interpretive frame” for the formulation and implementation of a policy. It includes normative and cognitive idea

elements and encompasses ideas about policy goals as well as theories about the world and preferable policy instruments and practices.

The interpretive framework that dominated agriculture policies in all Western countries from the 1930s to the 1980s (Tracy 1989) has been termed as „developmental or state-assisted paradigm“ (Coleman and Grant 1998, p. 636), „state assistance paradigm“ (Skogstad 1998) or „dependent agriculture paradigm“ (Moyer and Josling 2002). It is based on the assumption that the key public good that agriculture provides is food security, which is threatened by market failure, especially volatile markets and ruinous prices in years of good harvest. The state must help to stabilise markets and control supply through import controls, surplus buying, state trade and aids for export (Moyer and Josling 2002, p. 33). Environmental goods as such are not a concern. Rather, the agrarian landscape is seen as a productive resource that needs to be optimised, and farmers are intrinsically motivated to protect the productivity of natural resources (Feindt et al. 2008, p. 289). Based on an ideology of “agricultural exceptionalism” (Skogstad 1998) and a range of “agricultural myths” (Browne et al. 1992), the sector is treated as different from others, isolating the policy discourse from external criticism.

The *market liberal* or “*competitive agriculture paradigm*” (Moyer and Josling 2002, p. 33f.) which was embraced by the Reagan administration during the 1980s assumes that the market can provide best for cheap and abundant food. Product related market policies are reduced to a safety net with minimum prices and direct payments for a

transitional period which are decoupled from production. Environmental concerns are not addressed as provision of public goods, but through regulation that limits negative external effects from production. Due to resistance in Congress, the market liberal paradigm had limited impact in the US (Orden, Paarlberg and Roe 1999), but it was broadly implemented in Australia and New Zealand during the 1990s.

The *multifunctional agriculture paradigm* (Coleman 1998) embraces a broad range of public goods which are perceived as coupled to farming activities. The list includes the 'cultural landscape', natural resources like groundwater and biodiversity, and the viability of the rural space. The state has to ensure that agriculture continues to fulfil its social and ecological functions, and that the cultural landscape and the family farm remain viable. Since farmers are insufficiently rewarded for the non marketable goods they produce through their sellable goods, the state should prevent dominance of 'mono-functional' agriculture and remunerate farmers for the environmental benefits they produce (Moyer and Josling 2002, p. 34-36). Apart from the EU, the multifunctionality paradigm has been adopted by Norway, Switzerland, Korea and Japan (OECD 2001; Feindt 2007) who even formed a group called the "friends of multifunctionality" to influence WTO negotiations (World Trade Organization 2004).

The „*globalised production paradigm*“ (Josling 2002b, p. 94-99; Coleman, Grant and Josling 2004, p. 98-110) moves from a national to a global perspective and comes closer to the notion of *global* public goods. On one side, markets for food, feed and

agricultural raw materials are globalising and mainstream agriculture is becoming part of complex transnational networks of production and distribution (Higgins and Lawrence 2005; Morgan, Marsden and Murdoch 2006). This allows producers and retailers to exploit regulatory differentiation and evade costs for the provision of public goods or the mitigation of negative externalities. On the other side, a more global perspective on public goods is evolving. Consequently, domestic environmental improvements are no longer viewed as satisfying and efficient if they are achieved through the export of 'dirty' or environmentally inefficient processes of production. These developments call for international harmonisation of standards on a high level of ambition (Harl 2003) to avoid a "race to the bottom" (Vogel 1995). While an emerging global consciousness of environmental issues linked to agriculture (e.g. FAO 2007) constitutes an imagined global *moral* community, the *political* community to establish the necessary policies remains fragmented, with the WTO as the central arena for harmonization. Another feature of the globalised production paradigm is the notion that markets have become more demand driven and differentiated. The provision of global public goods can be enhanced through 'ethical consumerism' for which consumer trust is critical. Hence the state should guarantee transparency and consumer safety through quality and safety standards, labelling and control schemes. Examples include the labelling of genetically modified organisms, organic products and products of regional origin or traceability rules.

In sum, over the last two decades, as part of a continuous reframing of agriculture policies in OECD countries, environmental concerns are taken into account either as threatened by negative externalities of competitive agriculture, as a public good provided by multifunctional agriculture or a quality that adds value in the eye of the cosmopolitan consumer. Depending on the frame, the necessary policies are regulation of minimum standards, remuneration of public goods or differentiated standards and harmonization.

4.2. Toward reflexive modernity

State-dependent agriculture fits well with the core institutions of first modernity, and evolves as its manifestation in the sector. Key actor is the nation state that strives for food sovereignty and protects domestic producers from outside threats, most prominently import competitors. Farmers are also shielded against natural disasters – constituting nature as an Other of society that needs to be controlled. Natural hazards are transformed into manageable risks through all kinds of institutions from public weather forecasts to hail insurance. Nature is constituted as exploitable, too. The quest for increasing productivity requires mechanical, biological and chemical control over nature. Even during periods of insalable surplus production technical progress is never questioned but continuously advanced through generous funding for research and development, outreach and education. Farmers' identities are constituted around the notion of production and a productivist use of the

countryside (Marsden 1993). This contributes to produce all kinds of internal inconsistencies. For example, the 1933 US Agriculture Act introduced set aside programmes to lower surplus and stabilise market prices, while another programme in the law authorised government money to be spent on buying and storing surplus, providing incentives to increase production (Tweeten 1989, p. 325). The massive use of interventionist policy instruments displays a trust in instrumental control that is characteristic to first modernity. During the following decades, market intervention effectively provided a floor market price, kept marginal producers in the market and gave incentives to increase production. The costs were partly shifted to third countries through import controls and export subsidies, following the nationalist policy approach characteristic for first modernity institutions. Coupling support to production rather than focussing on income mirrors the prominence of the employment society as a core institution of first modernity, where the welfare state prefers policies that link benefits to work and production (like the coupling of social benefits to income from dependent work). Finally, the commodity programmes further contributed to the individualisation and disembedding of farmers who increasingly produced staple crops for anonymous mass markets (or the state intervention system) rather than for local communities, specific consumer groups or regional markets. Production processes were re-organised according to the principle of functional differentiation with the built-up of specialised companies for seeds and

inputs as well as for distribution and processing that took away functions that used to be located on the farm.

The interventionist and productivist agriculture policies were continuously surrounded by notions of crisis (e.g. Tracy 1989) which have increasingly politicised side-effects of modern agriculture and farm policies. In the EU, recurrent budget crises indicated an unsustainable need for external financial resources. The rural crisis brought to attention an increasing disconnection between disembodied modes of production and the rural economy. Environmental impacts have been perceived with alarm. A series of food scares and animal diseases triggered questions about the controllability of biological processes and the treatment of animals and also created widespread consciousness about the blurring boundaries between knowledge and ignorance as well as the natural and the artificial in modern agriculture (Dressel 2002).

Over time, the institutional boundaries shifted, too. The state is now complemented by all sorts of professional and standards organisations as a guarantor of sound practice. With the emerging WTO and intellectual property regimes (Tansey and Rajotte 2008) the location of control has partly moved from the national to the inter- and transnational arena. The idea of controlling nature is contested by the organic and traditional agriculture movements. Spending on agriculture research decreased

(an instance which is now blamed as one of the reasons for the global food crisis in 2008). The dominant ideas about the rural space shifted from productivist to consumptionist countryside (Marsden 1993; Frouws 1998). With the crisis of employment society the agriculture policy focus has moved from supporting farming as such to the effects of farming (see section 4.4 below). The local food movement, supported by regulation on traditional and geographical products, strives to reconnect agriculture and food production to a wider notion of locality (Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Feagan 2007).

4.3. Toward reflectedness

Traditional agriculture policies were characterized by an astonishing degree of unreflectedness. Since the late 1970s, these policies have encouraged overproduction and triggered budget problems. Since the late 1970s they were criticised for harming the environment, and for not preventing rural decline, at least in peripheral areas. Facing structural and ever rising surpluses of grain and beef as well as high costs for public budgets, the state-assisted paradigm came into disrepute. The governance situation became increasingly reflective (e.g. Commission of the European Communities 1985). Since 1987 the OECD started to build up a monitoring system for agricultural policies of its member states (OECD 1987). Consented indicators were developed that showed that the costs for dependent agriculture paradigm were borne not only by taxpayers but also by consumers and processors who faced higher

prices for raw materials and consumer goods respectively (OECD 2005). Further costs, it was shown, arose for producers in third countries who lost market shares through import restrictions and export subsidies. Arising trade conflicts and foregone trade liberalisation put costs on the trading industries.

In the EU, new budget procedures introduced through the Single European Act 1987 and the Inter-Institutional Agreements between European Parliament, Commission and Council on budgetary discipline and budgetary procedure since 1988 have changed the dynamics of the budget process from an annual bargaining over support prices to the design of agricultural programmes over a period of five, later seven years, in tune with the EU budget period (Laffan 1997). These new procedures have improved the conditions for policy learning. On the one hand they allow the Commission to strategically develop innovative policy schemes over a preparatory and discussion period of several years. On the other the process now encompasses several levels of decision making, calling for broader consideration of issues beyond the narrow horizon of the policy field. Finance ministers and heads of state need to agree on the spending limits. Agricultural ministers then have to come up with programmes within the financial confines. The budget limits hence force the Agriculture Council and the Commission to set policy priorities.

The more reflected governance situation in which the CAP was formulated was mirrored by shifting policy paradigms. The market liberal paradigm, while deeply rooted in economic thinking (Moyer and Josling 2002, p. 33f.) and framing governance situations in terms of economic costs and benefits, nevertheless requires more deliberation than the state assisted agriculture paradigm. First, stripped from the idea of agriculture as exceptional, lobbyists and politicians cannot fully disregard calls for comparing costs and benefits of agriculture policy with those of other policies. Second, to the degree that the market liberal paradigm takes a global rather than a national perspective, reasoning extends to international policy effects. Third, through the calculation of costs not only to taxpayers, but also to consumers (OECD 2007), broader distributive effects enter the horizon. Fourth, environmental issues, as long as they can be economically valued, enter the deliberation. Taking these considerations together, the market liberal paradigm allows for a relatively high degree of reflectedness. The weight given to public policy concerns beyond narrowly defined economic concerns depends on the preferences that the actors bring to the table. However, since all arguments have to be translated into economic terms, reflexivity as attention to Stirlings's "recursive mutual contingency of subjective representations and interventions" is not encouraged. This would require a language and a conceptual approach that allow for a plurality of value systems rather than requiring all values to be translated into economic equivalents (which some people might not consider an adequate representation of their values and concerns). Re-

framing in the market liberal paradigm then appears as translating all other frames into the economic one.

The paradigm of multifunctional agriculture seems to be more apt to concepts of reflexive governance. The very term indicates the acknowledgement of multiple goals and value dimensions. Yet not every account of multifunctionality is inductive to reflexivity. The term as such leaves open which functions are considered and how they are valued. Agriculture economists, for example, will try to translate the functions attributed to agriculture into economic values. Only when the concept of multifunctionality is coupled to ideas about value pluralism and the regular appearance of non-commensurate values in public deliberation, the road is open to a more reflexive governance approach.

At first glance, the globalised production paradigm seems to suffer from similar limitations as the market liberal paradigm. It is often presented in economic terms that appear not conducive for reflexive deliberation (Josling 2002a; Harl 2003). However, the paradigm is political from the scratch. The underlying problem description puts market power and rivalling standards at the core. On the instrumental side of the paradigm, legal food and agriculture standards embody cultural ideas about food, landscape and the environment. These are regularly embedded in broader cultural frameworks – for example, EU’s labels for protected

designation of origin, protected geographical indication or traditional specialities refer to culturally embedded notions of landscape, region and food (European Community 2006b; 2006a). When these ideas are translated into standards that deny market access to certain products or help to add value to others, cultural ideas are translated into market power through legal-political mechanisms. Hence, harmonising standards on a global scale requires negotiations that are not limited to power-based bargaining but include argumentation on the reasons for different concepts.^{iv} If for example European environmental standards or standards for organic products are grounded in concepts of nature which are rooted in Judeo-Christian and Enlightenment thought, these ideational foundations might not be evident for people with different cultural backgrounds and concepts of nature. In these cases a reflexive turn seems both adequate and functionally unavoidable. It can further be argued that this will spill over from the international to domestic policy arenas where these arguments can easily re-emerge. The kind of reasoning needed here resembles ethical arguments in an intercultural setting, calling for the reflection of the issue at hand from the partial points of view of the various cultural standpoints as well as from a global perspective – i.e. exactly a constellation that resembles the multi-layer models of political justification discussed above which are necessary to take a reflexive stance. The globalised production paradigm with its focus on the internationalisation of regulatory issues in a globalised marketplace then calls for a ‘cosmopolitan’ perspective (cf. Beck 2007; Zierhofer 2007).

4.4. Toward reflexivity and sustainability?

Since the late 1980 the CAP has gone through a series of reforms which most observers consider a stepwise move in the same direction (cf. Coleman, Skogstad and Atkinson 1997; Greer 2005): the 1992 MacSherry reform, Agenda 2000 and the 2003 Fischler reform (Ackrill 2005; Greer 2005). As a result, the current CAP embraces idea elements from all four policy paradigms :

- In line with the market liberal paradigm, most market price policies were reduced to a safety net level. Instead, farmers now receive direct payments, the “Single Farm Payment”, which is decoupled from production. This has eliminated state incentives to increase production and specialise on a few subsidised products.
- In line with the multifunctionality paradigm, agro-environmental programmes compensate farmers for the higher costs they incur from providing public goods, especially environmental benefits. The Single Farm Payment requires recipient farmers to comply with environmental, consumer protection and animal welfare standards (cross compliance regulations). In some member states a “regional premium” has been introduced from which more extensive farms benefit. Modulation, that is the capping of payments above 5000 Euro by several percent and redirection of the saved funds to rural development, structural and agro-environmental policies, diminishes the concentration of payments to large and productive farms.^v

- The salience of standards highly resonates with the global agricultural production paradigm. The cross compliance rules use the financial resources as leverage to push forth quality standards, identification and traceability systems and at the same time strengthen the competitiveness of European production chains in the global marketplace. Most of these standards have been introduced since the 1990s. They are increasingly complemented by mandatory traceability systems. Furthermore the EU tries to anchor these systems and rules in the WTO system and make them the global standard (Vincent 2007), especially in the context of the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Codex Alimentarius.
- Justification and results of the CAP reform are still in line with the state dependent agriculture paradigm. In a sense Cross Compliance implies that farmers are paid for obeying the law. Agricultural exceptionalism still seems to be alive.

Recent reforms have reinforced the transformation of the governance situation in which the CAP operates from unreflectiveness toward reflectedness, especially since all programmes are now continuously evaluated. But it is unclear if the CAP qualifies as reflexive governance. Most policy-makers actually agree that the CAP after 2003 rests on a set of diverse policy ideas (Feindt and Lange 2007). Income political goals continue to be relevant. But they are now complemented by environmental, consumer protection and rural development goals (whereby most rural development

funds effectively go to farms, which are not representative of the rural economy). Market prices have become more effective to guide producer decisions, reducing the state driven market failure of artificially high commodity prices. While the global dimension of agriculture plays a major role, considerations have been more geared toward trade than environmental impacts.

The European Commission brands its approach as “sustainable agriculture” (see website of the European Commission, DG Agriculture, August 2007). This however begs the question how different challenges and dimensions are weighed and balanced. The Commission has published extensive policy documents that embrace different perspectives – most prominent the 1985 White Book (Commission of the European Communities 1985) and the 2003 Midterm Review (Commission of the European Communities 2002) and most recently the “Health Check” (Commission of the European Communities 2007). Policy reforms are presented as better serving a wide range of policy ideas hold by member states. Under the umbrella of “sustainable agriculture” these ideas are rather amalgamated than transferred to a fully reflexive governance situation where the “attention simultaneously encompasses and helps constitute both subject and object” (Stirling 2006, see above). Certain features of the decision-making process limit the degree of reflexivity. According to the ‘community method’ the Commission acts as representative of the community while the Council represents the member states. Scholars of European

integration have argued that this implies a division of labour where the conceptual work and the policy-learning (arguing) is left to the Commission while the member states in the Council concentrate on distributive bargaining (Gehring 2000). The dominance of distributive bargaining in the Council is one of the explanations for path dependence in this policy (Kay 2003; Ackrill 2005). Under these circumstances reforms of the CAP are the result of several years of conceptual preparation by the Commission which in the case of commissioner Fischler was wary not to have ideas leaked early in order to prevent resistance to form before a solid coalition had been built. Since the final decision is made by the member states in the Council where distributional bargaining dominates, the ideas and rationales that justify policies must be coined and selected with a clear view to majorities. Qualified majority rule can ensure that a wider range of interests and ideas are considered, but not that a reflexive stance is taken. However, the literature on European integration gives evidence that continuing negotiations and consultations in an EU like regime help to develop common perspectives, shared understandings and mutual solidarity (Kohler-Koch 2005) which makes construction of common, transnational public goods more probable. The existence of two institutions, the Commission and the Parliament, who embody the common political community and more embracing perceptions is crucial. The example of the CAP reform illustrates that a certain degree of reflexivity and policy learning can be achieved through the presence of an institutional actor – in this case the Commission – that is expected to care for the

community cause and allows other actors to concentrate on distributive bargaining. It combines the roles of knowledge broker and agenda-setter (Peters 1996). However, the degree of reflexivity depends on the openness of such an actor and its independence from power pressure on the one hand, from narrow professional standards on the other.

5. Concluding remarks

In a globalising market place the character of public goods coupled to or threatened by different kinds of agricultural production becomes increasingly global: Food security and food safety are traded globally with the food. Achieving environmental goals at home increasingly depends on developments in transnational markets. Other environmental goods like biodiversity, prevention of desertification, and biosecurity are increasingly framed in global arenas and addressed by global regimes. They are imagined and constructed as global, presupposing a global economic, political and/or moral community that is responsible for their provision and maintenance. From an actor or micro-perspective, the calculations, solidarities and obligations of these global communities do not supersede those of existing local, regional, national or professional communities, but add to them. They call for a reflexive stance toward variegated normative assumptions and knowledge bases. An important consequence of the notion of global public goods is therefore the call for

polycentric political arrangements and multi-level moral-ethical spaces. Reflexive governance comes with transformed institutional settings. The provision of global public goods will often require reforms of deeply entrenched, functionally differentiated, highly specialised and narrow-minded policies and routines in production and consumption. As the example of agricultural policy illustrates, such entrenched policies and routines are typically characterised by unreflectedness. Institutional changes in the policy environment that enhance the reflectedness of the decision-making process can help to reframe policies. Enriched interpretive frameworks open up the interpretation of governance situations and allow more viewpoints from global to local and corporate to be taken into account. Methodologically, attributing degrees of reflexivity to a governance situation is to assess situations that are constructed by actors through interpretive frames.

Agriculture is only one example of a sectoral policy arena like energy, transport, housing, or chemicals, with neo-corporatist governance patterns, where side effects outside the sector tend to be ignored or downplayed. In such policy environments “reflexive governance” cannot be equalled with a purely sectoral bottom up approach, which would not be in the interest of sustainable development either. Instead, a reflexive governance perspective pays due attention to the interplay of wider institutional arrangements, deliberative preference building in specialised sectors and processes of framing and re-framing in a fragmented and pluralist world.

The sustainable provision of global public goods requires institutional arrangements that facilitate deliberation on side-effects, reflection on the feedback loops between identities, ethics and perceptions of goods and scarcities, and taking a reflexive, moral, cosmopolitan stance toward multiple communities, economies and constituencies.

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ⁱ This argument draws on the concept of co-constitution of process and structure as probably most prominently formulated by Giddens's (1984) theory of structuration.

ⁱⁱ One problem that cannot be discussed more deeply here is that depending on the theoretical approach employed, reflexive arrangements are conceptualised on the level of subsystems, organisation or temporary institutions.

ⁱⁱⁱ On the other hand moral rules alone typically provide little guidance what precisely to do or how to live. They rather point to guardrails that should not be overrun. Often they are formulated negatively, that is they define what is not acceptable. This side of the guardrails they leave room for very diverse ways of action. Hence they often contain little positive motivation for specific modes of action.

^{iv} Jon Elster has elaborated the role arguing and bargaining for deliberative democracy (Elster 1998).

^v In financial year 2004, 52% of the smallest recipients according to turnover received only 3.84 % of direct payments (less than 1250 Euro per recipient), the 1.7% largest recipients however 28.88% of direct payments – 20.000 Euro or more per recipient (European Commission 2006, p. 3).