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The Limits of Responsibility in the Age of Globalisation

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Abstract

The process of globalisation is accompanied by the loss of power of the politics of the nation states, the breaking through of territorial boundaries and the convergence of different cultures. On the one hand, this development causes growing fragmentation of societies that is reflected in cultural conflicts, regional separatism and social exclusion. On the other hand, decentral networks, civil society actors and private organisations gain a new significance. Their task is to face the consequences of globalisation beyond the borders of the state. The value of the responsibility principle, which is transferred from the distant to the near horizon of actions, is changing thereby. Today we are primarily confronted with the consequences of globalisation in local surroundings where actors have the necessary knowledge, shared beliefs and common orientations to be able to act globally. In the future the emergence of glocal responsibility structures that contribute to the fact that societal actors attend to the solution of global problems will become more and more important since the nation states are increasingly unable to cope with this task.

The Process of Glocalisation and the Limits of Responsibility

The world is growing smaller. It is a widespread opinion nowadays that the process of globalisation is responsible for bringing different countries and cultures closer together and establishing the links between various events, however far apart they might be. The idea that the world is becoming increasingly smaller and more transparent due to the immigration of foreign nations and the use of modern means of communication, such as radio and television, has been rendered by the terms "melting pot" or "global village" for decades now. By the beginning of the 21st century it had almost been taken for granted that one could be informed about any event happening anywhere in the world via the Internet or satellite television and get anywhere in the world by plane in the shortest time possible.

The fact that the remotest parts of the world converge in proportion to the global expansion of human activities has led to the increase in the significance of the local and regional effects of globalisation. The artificial word "glocalisation" that has emerged in this context at the end of 1980s should draw attention to the fact that global developments always have a local aftermath or are affected by local or regional factors. "One world, million of places"

was proclaimed a corresponding motto decades ago[1]. Meanwhile, the idea that the process of globalisation does not simply result in overcoming temporal and space limits but also adds a new meaning to those limits, has become a matter of course. Considering the comeback of the nationalistic or fundamentalist movements or the significance of the questions of cultural identity or religious affiliation for the self-understanding of many people, one might even conclude that the role of the local and regional side of globalisation has become more important than it used to be several years ago.[2]

This development also precipitates the revaluation of the category of responsibility that is being transferred to the consequences of globalisation at a progressive rate, especially as far as "sustainable development" or "global governance" are concerned. In this respect, however, it is observed that the significance of the responsibility principle is mostly very unclear and vague. For the parties concerned it is important to find out what the criteria and measures for the responsible embedment of the process of globalisation are, although it is often unclear how to achieve this goal. The reason for it is the overall transfer of the responsibility principle to the consequences of globalisation without a more precise clarification of its practical and normative value.

I consider this approach unsatisfactory. There is undoubtedly an urgent need of the concept of the responsible embedment of the process of globalisation. This is admittedly only possible if we can say which kind of responsibility can be taken, what for and who should do that. Responsibilities do not exist in a vacuum; on the contrary, they refer to certain problems, require certain standards and rules and depend on certain actors and institutions that are in the position to influence them. In this article I would like to show that the responsibility principle has to be defined by the local areas and fields so that one can unfold its global effects from there on. Responsibilities, whether moral or legal, always adhere to the existing beliefs and conventions; they are based on the existing principles and laws and are only sufficient as long as there exist actors and institutions that can put them into practice.

I. The process of glocalisation

To some degree it is taken for granted that global developments have a local aftermath and are, in their turn, influenced by local characteristics and peculiarities. The term glocalisation was originally used in city planning and marketing, where it defined the embedment of local infrastructures and the adaptation of marketing strategies to the requirements typical of a certain country. In this respect it was important to decide on the appearance of urban areas that accommodate different cultures and remain competitive on the global scale at the

[1] R.J. Johnston, „One World, Million of Places: The End of History and the Ascendancy of Geography, in: *Political Geography*, Vol. 13. No. 2, March 1994, pp. 111-121.
[2] Arie de Ruijter, „The era of Glocalisation", in: Ton van Naerssen, Marcel Rutten, Annelies Zoomers (eds.), *The Diversity of Development*, Assen 1997, pp. 381-388.

same time.[3] With regards to marketing, glocal strategies aimed primarily at the adaptation of goods or services to regional markets without neglecting the global character of a product or a brand.[4]

It is therefore not by accident that in the 1990s the term glocalisation became one of the most important trend terms, especially as far as cultural and economic omens are concerned. The expression moved relatively quickly from the fields of regional planning and micro-marketing to the adjacent fields of politics and society.[5] There are a number of reasons for that: with the end of the East-West conflict and the global advance of liberalism the old historical and philosophical ideologies, including the erroneous doctrines of fascism and communism, also lost their validity entirely. The discourse about "the end of history" (Francis Fukuyama) and the renunciation of "the great stories" (Jean-Francois Lyotard), which was typical of the postmodern situation at the end of the 20th century, has introduced a change from the time paradigm to the space paradigm. The questions of territorial and regional differences have superseded the utopia of progress, geopolitics has taken the place of history politics. At the same time, culturally and religiously defined sources of different nations and countries have become visible. Samuel Huntington's battle cry of the "clash of civilisations" was certainly an exaggeration; it has, however, directed our attention towards the aggravating differences between Moslems and Christians, Jews and Arabs prevailing even during the age of E-Commerce and GPS-navigation.

At the same time it has also become obvious that the global exchange of goods and services does not lead, as apprehended or hoped for, to the assimilation of life styles, but rather to mingling and interaction. The idea that globalisation will result in the standardisation of products and will make all the places and people worldwide look similar has proved wrong. On the contrary, the spreading of Western capitalism with its brands, consumer buying habits and liberal ideals makes us conscious of the traditions typical of a certain country and regional peculiarities and folkloristic and exotic elements that have entered urban zones and global habitats. The homogenisation of regions and cultures that leads to the development of "one world" is opposed to the heterogenisation of modern ways of life that becomes clear in the diversity of historical traditions, local customs and particular Weltanschauungen.[6]

Cross-border trade and the growing importance of regional peculiarities have also made sure that new actors and forms of organisations beyond the nation states have emerged. It is becoming more and more difficult for the states with their national laws and regulations to have impact on global processes; consequently the number of NGOs, lobby groups, associations, entrepreneurs and civil society actors that take over the task of the solution of

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[3] Mick Dunford and Grigoris Kafkalas (ed.), *Cities and Regions in the New Europe: The Global-Local Interplay and Spatial Development Strategies*, London 1992.
[4] Ivana Modena, *Globale Märkte und lokale Strukturen*, Hamburg 2005, pp. 39-56.
[5] Habibul Hacque Khondker, *Globalization to Glocalization: Evolution of a Sociological Concept*, Working Paper No. 171, University of Singapore 2004, pp. 5-6.
[6] Ronald Robertson, „Glocalization: Time-space and Homogeneity-heterogeneity", in: Mike Featherstone et al. (eds.), *Global Modernities*, London 1995, pp. 25-44.

urgent problems is increasing.[7] The famous motto "think global, act local" stands for the fact that traditional structures, such as the nation state, as well as transnational regimes, such as the UNO, are becoming too big and too rigid to react to global challenges adequately.

From this point of view the process of glocalisation can be traced back to the following trends and developments:

- the transition from universal history to global history that is accompanied by the idea of the "asynchronicity of the synchronous", according to which people, areas and regions have not yet gained access to the essential resources and goods, prosperity, freedom and equality.[8] Global history brings to light regional backwardness and local occurrences that cannot keep pace with global development

- the spreading of the network society with its knowledge-based economy and intangible added value that has led to the overcoming of regional boundaries, a process which is now confronted with the new importance of local junctions, strategic alliances and cooperative interactions.[9] Global capitalism is marked by the cultural factors of corporate governance, regional embedment of companies and local social engagement of civilian lobby groups and associations

- the denationalisation of politics that emerges from the nation state's restricted capability to act, this task having been undertaken by private bodies and transnational organisations, each developing their own strategies in dealing with global risk processes.[10] Sectoral forms of political governance based on the specific knowledge of civilian actors, organisations and institutions that are connected through decentralised junctions become necessary where the state politics has failed

- the deterritorisation of market and power relations that is characterised by the cooperation between NGOs, functional regimes, such as GATT, IMF and WTO, human rights' organisations or environmental associations. Although the fields of action of transnational organisations and associations overlap, they originate from certain countries and are characterised by special norms, values and beliefs.

What becomes conspicuous in the developments described above is the fact that the process of globalisation almost necessarily brings out opposite trends and phenomena. With the increasing networking of state-of-the-art societies the model of centralised control

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[7] Renate Mayntz, „Die Handlungsfähigkeit des Nationalstaats in Zeiten der Globalisierung", in: Ludger Heidbrink and Alfred Hirsch (eds.), *Staat ohne Verantwortung? Zum Wandel der Aufgaben von Staat und Politik*, Frankfurt am Main / New York 2007, pp. 267-282.

[8] Wolf Schäfer, „Global History and Present Time", in: Peter Lythand and Helmut Trischler (eds.), *Wiring Prometheus: Globalisation, History, and Technology*, Aarhaus 2004, pp. 103-125.

[9] Manuel Castells, *The Information Age, Vol. 1: The Rise of the Network-Society*, 2nd ed., Oxford / Malden 2001, pp. 163-215.

[10] Michael Zürn, *Regieren jenseits des Nationalstaates. Globalisierung und Denationalisierung als Chance*, Frankfurt am Main 1998, pp. 65-94.; Ulrich Beck, *Macht und Gegenmacht im globalen Zeitalter. Neue weltpolitische Ökonomie*, Frankfurt am Main 2002, pp. 347-363.

is becoming less and less effective and is replaced by the forms of decentralised self-organisation of groups, communities and associations that fall back on their own stock of knowledge and values, have special constitutions at their disposal and are integrated in the municipal systems.[11] The global dynamics, in its turn, leads to the strengthening of the local socio-cultural and individual and collective living environments, where the resources of joint knowledge and collective models of integration are formed, which are not available at the level of the nation state and its political and legal institutions any more.[12] One can speak about the dialectics of globalisation, according to which traditional institutions are losing their importance in proportion to the emergence of a new civil society public and private organisations that are characterised by local involvement, regional embedment and sectoral structures to an even greater degree than before.[13]

However, glocalisation does not simply imply the formation of polycentral networks and subpolitical alliances that come into force outside the nation state and its power centres. Glocalisation does not just mean a mixture of alien cultures, Weltanschauungen, milieus and life styles creating an attractive cross-over culture that presents us with Tadzhik tea rooms in Berlin or Currywurst snack bars in New York. An important consequence of glocal developments, which cannot be ignored, is demonstrated above all by the fact that traditional processes of social integration and the guarantee of freedom and security do not function smoothly any more. Glocalisation also means the loss of the validity of universal norms, the erosion of constitutional systems and the disappearance of common guidelines.

One of the negative effects of the process of glocalisation is a steadily increasing fragmentation of system structures and principles of regulation that results in the decay of law and morals and of the once intact forms of solidarity and tolerance. The phenomena of this glocal fragmentation are the release of criminal energies unfolding all over the world due to the lack of state influence, which, however, essentially emanate from the regionally acting cartels and mafia gangs;[14] the onset of new wars privately led by mercenary armies and powerful local war-lords subordinate to no international regulations or state sanctions;[15] the new flaring up of ethnic conflicts on the dividing lines of the former states, such as Yugoslavia, or the fight of the Islam fundamentalists against Western liberalism.[16]

The above-mentioned developments are distinguished by the disentanglement of groups, races, regions and countries from the community of the democratically composed and universally established nation states. The dynamics of fragmentation has generated a "world of ethno-nationalistic conflicts, separatism, new compartmentalisation, terrorism and the

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[11] Hermann Lübbe, *Politik nach der Aufklärung*, München 2001, pp. 75-99.
[12] Richard Münch, *Globale Dynamik, lokale Lebenswelten. Der schwierige Weg in die Weltgesellschaft*, Frankfurt am Main 1998, pp. 415-426.
[13] Ulrich Beck, *Was ist Globalisierung? Irrtümer des Globalismus – Antworten auf den Globalismus*, Frankfurt am Main 1997, pp. 61-114; Claus Leggewie, *Die Globalisierung und ihre Gegner*, München 2003, pp. 46-50.
[14] Manuel Castells, *The Information Age, Vol. 3: End of Millenium*, Oxford / Malden 2000.
[15] Herfried Münkler, *Die neuen Kriege*, Hamburg 2002, pp. 33-43.
[16] Hermann Lübbe, *Die Zivilisationsökumene. Globalisierung kulturell, technisch und politisch*, München 2005, pp. 165-173.

decay of state order per se". Within the society this development causes "the division of Western society into a human capital intensive service sector with its high incomes and luxurious life styles and new poverty, the ghettoisation of the generation of immigrants who arrived too late, neoprotectionism, xenophobia, the revival of nation, ethnicity, cultural relativism and racism".[17] Thus, the process of glocalisation deals not only with the tense relations between "Jihad and McWorld"[18] existing between different cultural areas and societies but also with the dividing lines within them. It is important to keep in mind that the reasons for the conflicts and tensions are not only cultural; they are based on a mixture of ethnic, religious, political, social and economic factors that lead to the glocal processes of spin-off and exclusion.

II. Open responsibility areas

The above described process of fragmentation is most notably characterised by the fact that universally binding laws, norms and values have disappeared without being substituted by new principles of order and mechanisms of integration. At the same time, the process of fragmentation takes place in an extremely contradictory way, which makes it difficult for the observer to name its definite reasons. Thus, in the case of fundamentalist and extremist movements we deal with a mixture of anti-Western affects, synchretic promises of salvation and a yearning for own identity that is nourished from religious and cultural fonts that ran dry long ago.[19] When fragmentation is manifested in regional separatism and European provinces, such as the Basque country or Northern Italy, claim their right for self-determination, the main reason for it is not only the outlying location of the region but the exemption from federal constraints and the wish for economic and political independence.[20] As far as marginalisation of the poor from the centres of wealth is concerned, which is demonstrated once again by the borderlines between Penthouses and Favelas, or the repulse of refugees at the borders of the countries, whose fate is reflected in that of the boatpeople drifting along at sea, global market capitalism and self-interest of the affluent nation states certainly play an important role;[21] similarly, the logics of differentiation of social systems that leads to the effects of social exclusion and marginalisation, for which no one carries an immediate responsibility, can be regarded as another reason.[22]

Two kinds of limits of responsibility come to the fore therewith: on the one hand, the process of glocalisation is marked by the interaction of opposite tendencies of develop-

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[17] Ulrich Menzel, *Globalisierung versus Fragmentierung*, Frankfurt am Main 1998, pp. 38-39.
[18] Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld. How Globalization and Tribalism are Reshaping the World*, New York 1995, Part II.
[19] Ian Buruma / Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism. The West in the Eyes of its Enemies*, New York / London 2004; Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Die Wiederkehr der Götter. Religion in der modernen Kultur*, München 2004, pp. 50-67.
[20] Zürn, *Regieren jenseits des Nationalstaats*, pp. 277-287.
[21] Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives. Modernity and its Outcasts*, Cambridge 2004, pp. 63-93.
[22] Niklas Luhmann, „Jenseits der Barbarei", in: Max Miller and Hans-Georg Soeffner (eds.), *Modernität und Barbarei. Soziologische Zeitdiagnose am Ende des 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main 1996, pp. 219-230.

ment, which makes a clear identification of causes more difficult. The fact that the globalised world has become both more uniform and more manifold, that centre and periphery have become of equal value, that borders have been destroyed and put up afresh makes it clear that in the age of globalisation there is no direct relation between cause and effect any more. Rather globalisation is characterised by intensification of interdependencies that makes sure that side-effects, which have not been striven for and are difficult to ascribe to the causally identifiable reasons or causers, emerge at a progressive rate.[23] On the other hand, the consequences of globalisation from climate change till cultural and religious conflicts have an impact primarily on local and regional areas, where they become especially clearly recognizable and perceptible. The consequences of globalisation are not automatically global; rather they lead to changes in individual places, in certain regions and countries. They cause a change in mentalities, values and norms that precipitates in the orientation on particularistic and relativistic patterns of action. They make sure that heterarchical organisations and networks with locally distributed junctions appear that are distinguished by the limited stock of knowledge and influence capabilities.

Hence, glocal consequences of the process of globalisation require a new adjustment of the responsibility principle that has to perform in two ways: we have to have certain rules and criteria that let us ascribe responsibilities to contradictory and paradoxical developments. And we also have to shift the responsibility principle back to the near horizon of human actions, as the essential consequences of globalisation can be noticed there. It is only this way that a glocal responsibility principle that takes into consideration both local and spatial limits of human actions and uncertain side-effects caused by such actions can be shown to advantage.

Friedrich Nietzsche was aware of this dialectics of close and long range effects in the 19th century when he wrote, "There is a kind of optics even for the morals. A man feels so little responsibility for his indirect and distant effects! And how cruelly and exaggeratory the close range effect that we have caused savages us; the effect that we see, for which our short sight is still sharp enough!"[24] Due to the obtrusiveness of the "close range effects" Nietzsche recommended to concentrate our moral view on the distant, "You thrust yourselves onto your neighbour and describe it beautifully. But I am telling you: your charity is your insufficient love for yourselves. [...] Greater than charity is love for the stranger and the future; greater than love for people is love of things and ghosts."[25] The ideal of love for the stranger can be found again in the works of the German philosopher Hans Jonas about a century later; he refers the responsibility principle to the "envisaged fate of the future people" that should be taken into consideration precisely because of the absence of immediate "bonds of love" or "direct experience".[26]

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[23] Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World. How Globalisation is Reshaping our Lives*, London 2002, pp. 20-35.
[24] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1884-1885, Kritische Studienausgabe, Vol. 11*, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 2nd ed., München 1988, p. 638.
[25] Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra, Kritische Studienausgabe, Vol. 4*, p. 77.
[26] Hans Jonas, *Das Prinzip Verantwortung. Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation*, Frankfurt am Main 1979, p. 65.

The extension of the responsibility principle onto the distant horizon of human actions, which could be observed in the debates about the consequences of progress of the civilisation up to the end of the 20th century, was criticised by the German sociologist Arnold Gehlen in the 1960s. Gehlen pointed out that the responsibility principle could be meaningfully applied only when the consequences of progress could refer to certain causes and be ascribed to certain actors. The most important thing, however, according to Gehlen, is the danger that due to the further extension of responsibility our moral aesthesia can be wasted away, because "the obligations towards non-present or even abstract antipodes are more difficult to take to heart, and vice versa, television that brings the unhappy population of a faraway country directly into our houses creates an even more difficult to disregard and certainly grave change of our feelings of obligation and perhaps even leads to our becoming stunted towards actual suffering."[27]

If one refrains from the fundamental difficulties of the accountability of the collectively produced damage, Gehlen mentions two significant objections to the extension of responsibility onto the distant horizon: on the one hand, distant events can only be understood with the help of abstract categories that do not really attract our moral attention. On the other hand, permanent confrontation with the world's misery makes sure that our moral sense of duty loses its edge. Such objections can be called psychologistic, since they do not refer to the normative range of responsible and ethical principles but rather to the extent to which those principles actually reach and address us. However, they make an important point, namely that the responsibility principle has to be defined by the limited sphere of activity, where it becomes effective through the indirect reference to the actors, which is not ruled by the given laws or norms but results from the concrete problem situations. This idea was clearly recognized by the German cultural philosopher and sociologist Hans Freyer: "Responsibility always exists as a responsibility area. On the one hand, it is defined as an area: defined either by fate and the nature of things (for instance, the responsibility of a mother for her child) or by the task that creates it and that also always marks out its limits (it does not make sense to give someone the responsibility without telling them within which limits they are responsible). On the other hand, responsibility is an area in the sense that it does not extend to the sum of once and for all nameable subjects and matters but to everything that can appear, occur or happen within those limits, including everything that can penetrate the area from the outside."[28]

Freyer's understanding of the responsibility area is especially well applicable if we want to shift the category of responsibility back to the local horizon of the collective actions without losing sight of its global effects. In contrast to Nietzsche's and Jonas's pleading for the ethics of "love for the stranger" that should release our commitments to remote consequences of our actions due to the fundamental change of perspective from the near to the distant horizon, the existence of responsibility areas means that social actors are still acting in the limited requirement relations, which are open for outside events because of their

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[27] Arnold Gehlen, *Moral und Hypermoral. Eine pluralistische Ethik*, 5th ed., Wiesbaden 1986, p. 56.
[28] Hans Freyer, „Verantwortung – Heute", in: ders., *Gedanken zur Industriegesellschaft*, Mainz 1970, pp. 195-212, here p. 199.

vagueness. The extension of the responsibility area occurs not because categorical obligations are observed or because of the mental change of attitude but because actors act under the conditions of uncertainty that require taking into account what cannot be foreseen and withdrawn from traditional basic knowledge. According to Freyer: "A responsibility cannot therefore be performed in the same sense as a duty is performed. It is filled in, so to say, as a living space, which people penetrate, with which they identify themselves and whose requirements they meet ad hoc."[29]

Freyer's reflections emphasise the fact that undertaking responsibility individuals and collectives meet the demands that are assigned to them against the background of undetermined obligations. Responsibilities differ from duties and laws because their obligatory character and normative range are not clearly defined. To put it differently, responsibilities are indeterminate obligations that are based on the loose liabilities and open rules of action and are performed through their active undertaking by the actor.[30] Indeterminate obligations depend on the situational knowledge and require a right degree of common sense and moral discernment, with which the actors allege the rules of their actions. The situational integration of the responsibility principle and its dependence on the common sense of the actors make sure that responsible actions are embedded in the local areas even when they reach out beyond their boundaries. The local environment, however, is indispensable for the accomplishment of responsible mentality not only because cognitive and moral resources that are necessary to take over the responsibility can be found there. It is also a sensitive area, where the effects of the remote actions can be perceived and experienced in the first place. The picture of the responsibility area therefore does not only demonstrate that indeterminate obligations can appear only within definite limits; it also emphasises the fact that those obligations can only be enabled because they are preceded by direct experiences and immediate perception, without which our responsible ethical attention is not attracted lastingly. "Therefore, responsibility has to be limited in some way to be effective, so that an individual could rely upon his/her own tangible knowledge, in order to decide on the value of different tasks, apply his/her moral principles under the familiar circumstances and be able to help alleviate the evil."[31]

The conclusion that can be drawn here is as follows: the inclusion of global consequences and effects is only possible if we assume that we act in the local responsibility areas. The indeterminacy of obligations that we are exposed to in the local environment makes sure that the area of responsibility is exceeded towards global consequences that, though not referring to anyone's decisions, still fall into our field of attention, because the uncertainty of our action orientations makes it necessary to take into consideration those things that avoid their own attribution. The inclusion of distant effects into the local environment happens not because we are bound to it by the commandments of "love for the stranger" or global norms of equity, but because we have to deal with those consequences by virtue of distant obligations of our responsibility beliefs. The entanglement of the near and distant

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[29] Freyer, „Verantwortung", p. 199.

[30] Ludger Heidbrink, *Handeln in der Ungewissheit. Paradoxien der Verantwortung*, Berlin 2007, pp. 127-154.

[31] Friedrich von Hayek, *Die Verfassung der Freiheit*, 4th ed., Tübingen 2005, p. 109.

horizons is a result of the fact that we, as global actors, live in open responsibility areas and are therefore "involved in the events with regards to which we are neither competent nor incompetent, and which we still have to form insofar as we are able to do it."[32]

III. Glocal responsibility structures

The process of glocalisation is undoubtedly one of the most important challenges at the beginning of the 21st century. We are faced with the situation where regional activities evoke global consequences and at the same time global developments have increasing local effects.[33] It is next to impossible to imagine that there still are private or political decisions that have to be regarded independently of their global consequences. On the contrary, there is hardly a global event that does not influence local and regional zones and cause relevant changes there. However, there is certainly an aggravating problem in this correlation. It is hard to decide without any hesitation how far moral and political responsibility should extend in order to correct undesirable developments and who shall effectively undertake the responsibility if we assume that its range can be defined more exactly.

This situation is unsatisfactory. It adheres to a very distorted perception in the first place. Globalisation of the category of responsibility is a result of the necessity to bring transnational interactions and cross-border interdependencies into the focus of normative attention in order to prevent or at least correct undesirable structural developments. The aim of the focussing is to intervene in the intense and complex processes, which have their own dynamics and cause global effects, identifying the reasons and naming institutions and organisations that are able to take action of counter-control. Besides, the perspective of globalisation makes sure that simultaneous distant effects are treated in the same way as actual events taking place in the respective vicinities. This point of view, however, when regarded more precisely, is based on the misapprehension that the global does not have its own reality but rather has a reality that is derived from that of the local. We can imagine what is happening in the sphere of the global but we cannot know that, since the verifiability of our knowledge is limited. Globalisation is not an ontological but an epistemic category based on experience, knowledge and morals of the local world, which constitute a normative and cognitive background even when responsibility is extended into the global.

Therefore we could speak about a globalist paralogism of the ethics of responsibility, according to which the events happening outside the limited horizon of actions of individual and collective actors, are regarded as relevant to attribution and susceptible to influence. In order to avoid this globalist paralogism we have to assume that there exists a responsibility principle of medium range, which places special emphasis on the finiteness of our knowledge and exertion of influence on global processes. This responsibility principle is based on the "bounded rationality" (Herbert A. Simon) of actors that have specific world outlooks and information, are integrated into networked organisational processes and have a restricted power to influence global developments. The responsibility principle is restricted

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[32] Walter Schulz, *Grundprobleme der Ethik*, 2nd ed., Stuttgart 1993, p. 349.
[33] Ludger Pries, „Von der Globalisierung zur Lokalisierung der Globalisierungsdiskussion", in: *Soziologische Revue* 30 (2007), pp. 11-23.

in the sense that people and institutions created by them have to fall back upon incomplete underlying conditions in order to be able comply with the obligations to intervene in global risk processes that they have imposed themselves.

Consequently, the limitation of the responsibility principle onto the medium level of application serves a double purpose: on the one hand, it makes sure that the competence of actors as far as the consequences of the global processes of development are concerned extends farther than the accountability of those consequences. If we regard the category of responsibility as an expedient principle of actions and orientations we have to face the fact that there are developments and events that we have not caused or those that have appeared through no fault of our own.[34] Thus, the responsibility area, as described in the previous section of this article, embraces more that can actually be found there. On the other hand, this way responsibility of individual or collective actors is limited to the areas into which their foresight, ability to act and power of disposal extend. We can expect the undertaking of responsibility and responsibility is incidentally expedient only where there is a relationship of notice and exertion of influence between actors and processes.[35]

Two boundaries are crucial for the limitation of the responsibility principle: the lower boundary, that makes sure that actors and organisations do not reject globally caused problems with the argument that it was not them who caused them; and the upper boundary that marks the horizon of the area, into which the undertaken responsibility falls owing to obligations, abilities and knowledge. Both the boundaries have to be taken into consideration when our main concern is to transfer the responsibility principle to the global crisis processes without just applying it rhetorically or extending it to insignificance.

Therefore contrary to the trend to extend the areas of responsibility advancingly there is a need to relocate the responsibility principle back to the limited spheres of activity in order to be able to unfold its global effects. Responsibility structures that contribute to the overcoming of cultural conflicts and uneven economic distribution, global warming and large-scale ecological damage, cross-border delinquency and abuse of human rights have to be set up in the vicinity of powerful actors and organisations. It is only this way that despite the missing accountability of the consequences of loss the necessary attention to undesirable developments is guaranteed and the necessary consciousness of competence is formed that are distinguished by the high degree of learning aptitude, the power of self-organisation and handling of uncertainty.

The embedment of the responsibility principle into the local environment is necessary due to the following reasons:

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[34] Werner Stegmaier, „Gesichter der Politik – Verantwortung zwischen rechtlicher, politischer und ethischer Orientierung", in: Ludger Heidbrink and Alfred Hirsch (eds.), *Staat ohne Verantwortung?*, Frankfurt / New York 2007, pp. 143-164, here pp. 150-157.
[35] Ludger Heidbrink, *Kritik der Verantwortung. Zu den Grenzen verantwortlichen Handelns in komplexen Kontexten*, Weilerswist 2003, pp. 305-313.

- Focussing on the nearer environment intensifies the perception of the consequential damages of globalisation. People are no remote beings but close beings that are stimulated to face the problems only in physical and psychological contact. Distant effects that are perceived through the media, for instance TV, newspapers or the Internet, do not produce a lasting impression but rather lead to the forms of transient occupations that can evoke the feelings of powerlessness and the corresponding defensive attitudes. The distance and indifference as far as planetary crisis processes are concerned are breached as soon as certain events, such as the appearance of ghettos, the increase in tornados or the migration of jobs penetrate the local environment and become perceptible in the individual socio-cultural living environments, which coerce to cognitive occupations.

- Normative resources necessary in dealing with complex problems of actions and control are generated in the near surroundings. The learning aptitude of individuals and institutions created by them emerges not as a result of abstract material and system processes but through interpersonal exchange and collective generation of orientations and patterns of action that are assigned to the functioning self-organisation of society. The development of the social capital and joint knowledge that are necessary for the self-organisation of society essentially takes place in the networks with local junctions where information, beliefs and traditions consolidate into "shared mental models" (Douglas C. North), which construct the normative and cognitive basis for institutional learning processes.

- A sign for the emergence of normativity from the local practice is a growing demand for situational virtues, such as trust, loyalty and reliability, in order to cope with specific risks. Universal moral values that have lost their validity through pluralisation and globalisation are substituted by practical virtues of actions and functional norms that contribute to the stabilisation of expectations much better.[36] Concrete conventions and tested routines constitute a more stable basis for innovative solutions and cooperation between highly different partners than abstract rules of solidarity and justice.

- The necessity to find cooperative solutions while dealing with the effects of globalisation precipitates the revaluation of private society ways of solving the problems that suffice for everything from the development of particular regulations (for example, the allocation of domains on the Internet through ICAAN) and standards (Dow Jones Sustainability Index) and public private partnerships in environment protection or safeguarding of public institutions till the development of legally binding norms (DIN and ISO guidelines). The fact that the private society actors searches for solutions is based on the restricted rationality of individuals, who with recourse to the collective stock of knowledge come out with autonomous sets of rules and laws, is of paramount importance here. The performance of the "private law society" (Franz Böhm) consists in the ability of the actors to establish a glocal

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[36] Josef Wieland, *Die Ethik der Governance*, 3rd ed., Marburg 2004, pp. 103-116.

relationship network, which can react to complex challenges much better than the control programmes of the nation state, thanks to their intelligent self-organi-sation.[37]

- Despite the growing role of networks and communities in the regulation of the conflicts of interests and clashes of aspirations that develop with the help of informal agreements, the establishment of soft laws or multi-stakeholder dialogues between the representatives of governments, businesses and private organisations during round table talks,[38] the responsibility of the nation state continues to play a central role. The nation state is a glocal authority that acts as a mediator between the agreements made locally and the events taking place globally.[39] It has the task to produce the consciousness of political affiliation and cultural identity that are indispensable for the production of social capitals and joint knowledge. At the same time trough the guaranteeing of legal rules and the participation in transnational institutions, such as the UN or the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the nation state makes sure that the areas of limited statehood that constitute the prerequisite for the realisation of global forms of governance survive.

To sum it up: the expansion of the state governance postulated in every respect through the strategies of global governance presupposes the creation of glocal responsibility structures, to which the corresponding political control programmes can be linked. Those responsibility structures are necessary, since in the age of globalisation we deal with intense uncertain and contradictory problems of development that are withdrawn from the causal models of attribution and have to be solved to a great degree by the self-organisation of private society actors. Nevertheless, the nation states and their transnational organs have the task to guarantee the "democratic frame responsibility"[40], within which the particular activities of networks, communities, fora, associations and NGOs can unfold.

It is absolutely apparent that this way new responsibility problems appear, which lie primarily in the fact that private society actors have no democratic legitimacy for their actions and as far as commercial enterprises or fundamentalist groups are concerned their own success or power interests can come to the fore. Such risks, however, have to be accepted. We cannot eliminate them through reinforced state regulation and a global universalism. The normative vacuum that emerges due to the limited integration power of the nation state cannot be filled in by the international forms of "law-making" that take the place of the threatened "solidarity among the citizens of the world" making sure that universalistic

[37] Karl-Heinz Ladeur, *Der Staat gegen die Gesellschaft. Zur Verteidigung der Rationalität der „Privat-rechtsgesellschaft"*, Tübingen 2006, pp. 388-398.
[38] Klaus Schwab and Ulf Gartzke, „Die Problemlösungsfähigkeit unterschiedlicher Global-Governance-Strukturen: Überlegenheit von Multistakeholder-Netzwerken", in: Reinhard C. Meier-Walser and Peter Stein (eds.), *Globalisierung und Perspektiven internationaler Verantwortung. Problemstellungen, Analysen, Lösungsstrategien: Eine systematische Bestandsaufnahme*, München 2004, pp. 483-497.
[39] Carl Böhret, „Glo-Kalisierung: Anmerkungen zur Staatsfunktion in einer Übergangsgesellschaft", in: Hermann Knödler and Michael H. Stierle (eds.), *Globale und monetäre Ökonomie. Festschrift für Dieter Duwendag*, Heidelberg 2003, pp. 317-330.
[40] Otfried Höffe, *Demokratie im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*, München 1999, p. 9.

principles gain acceptance.[41] The global law system is much too highly fragmented for that, especially if one realises that there are over a hundred of international legal institutions at the moment.[42] Rather international law is assigned to the compliant ways of life; it presupposes the acceptance and readiness to commit of actors and organisations that have to have a set of common decisions ahead of legal and political control.

This readiness and ability to commit emerge in the glocal responsibility structures that are composed so narrowly that a collective stock of knowledge, practical virtues and reflexive patterns of action can appear and at the same time remain so loose that they can provide space for more precise analysis and estimation of uncertain consequences of globalisation. The embedment of the responsibility principle in the local and regional contexts does not mean putting the case for normative particularism that regards native customs, religious beliefs, ethnic identities and cultural traditions as more important than a universalism of good reasons. Rather it means that intellectual and moral competences that are necessary in order to deal with complex problems are formed in the near horizon, because it is there that the most crucial experiences and confrontations with the problems arising as a consequence of globalisation take place.

The idea that the world has become "flat" at the beginning of the 21st century,[43] means, after all, that in the places and regions where people live very differently there is enough joint knowledge and shared values that allow the development of the strategies for the solution of global challenges of our time. In order to achieve this aim we have to look away from the universalistic view of agreement to the intersection of collective perceptions of local risks and damages that are sufficient to activate moral learning processes and set in motion cooperative activities that occupy a certain position in our consolidating world.

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[41] Jürgen Habermas, „Solidarität jenseits des Nationalstaats. Notizen zu einer Diskussion", in: Jens Beckert / Julia Eckert / Martin Kohli / Wolfgang Streeck (eds.), *Transnationale Solidarität. Chancen und Grenzen*, Frankfurt / New York 2004, pp. 225-235, here p. 231, p. 235.
[42] Andreas Fischer-Lescano and Gunther Teubner, *Regime-Kollisionen. Zur Fragmentierung globalen Rechts*, Frankfurt am Main 2006, p. 8.
[43] Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat. The Globalized World in the Twenty-First-Century*, London 2006.

IMPRESSUM