

2007

## **Courts as Catalysts: Rethinking the Judicial Role in New Governance**

Joanne Scott  
*University College London*

Susan P. Sturm  
*Columbia Law School, ssturm@law.columbia.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty\\_scholarship](https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship)



Part of the [Courts Commons](#), and the [Judges Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Joanne Scott & Susan P. Sturm, *Courts as Catalysts: Rethinking the Judicial Role in New Governance*, 13 COLUM. J. EUR. L. 565 (2007).

Available at: [https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty\\_scholarship/1469](https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/1469)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Publications at Scholarship Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of Scholarship Archive. For more information, please contact [scholarshiparchive@law.columbia.edu](mailto:scholarshiparchive@law.columbia.edu), [rwitt@law.columbia.edu](mailto:rwitt@law.columbia.edu).

# COURTS AS CATALYSTS: RE-THINKING THE JUDICIAL ROLE IN NEW GOVERNANCE

*Joanne Scott\* & Susan Sturm\*\**

*This Article offers a step forward in developing a theory of the judicial role within new governance, drawing on the emerging practice in both the United States and Europe as a basis for this reconceptualization. The traditional conception of the role of the judiciary—as norm elaborators and enforcers—is both descriptively and normatively incomplete, and thus needs to be rethought. There is a significant but limited role for courts as catalysts. In areas of normative uncertainty or complexity, courts prompt occasions for normatively motivated and accountable inquiry and remediation by actors involved in new governance processes. Catalysts thus facilitate the realization of process values and legitimacy principles by the institutional actors responsible for norm elaboration within new governance. The relationship between courts and governance is dynamic and reciprocal: courts draw upon the practice of governance in their construction of the criteria they apply to their judgments. They also provide an incentive structure for participation, transparency, principled decision-making, and accountability which in turn shapes, directly and indirectly, the political and deliberative process.*

*This Article elaborates three crucial aspects of the catalyst role, drawing on examples from the European Union (EU) to illustrate how courts can exercise their decision-making authority to enhance the capacity of other actors to make legitimate and effective decisions. First, courts prompt new governance institutions to provide for full and fair participation by those affected by or responsible for new governance processes. We focus in this Article upon the courts' role in evaluating standing in the European courts (locus standi). Second, courts monitor the adequacy of the epistemic or information base for decision-making within new governance. We explore this role through the example of the European court's construction and interpretation of benchmarks for legality in judicial review. Finally, courts foster principled decision-making in new governance processes by requiring transparency and accountability as essential elements of*

---

\* Professor of European Law, University College London and Visiting Professor, Columbia Law School.

\*\* George M. Jaffin Professor of Law and Social Responsibility, Columbia Law School. The authors would like to thank Damian Chalmers and the participants at the May 2007 workshop at University College London for their comments.

*enforceability. We illustrate this role through examples of where the European courts evaluate the adequacy of deliberative processes by whether they have identified, justified, and applied criteria guiding their decisions.*

INTRODUCTION.....	566
I. RE-CONCEPTUALIZING THE ROLE OF COURTS.....	568
A. The Traditional Understanding of Judicial Role .....	568
B. The Limitations of the Traditional Judicial Conception .....	569
C. Re-Conceptualizing the Courts as Catalysts .....	570
II. COURTS AS CATALYSTS: THE EXAMPLE OF THE EUROPEAN COURTS.....	575
A. Full and Fair Participation.....	576
B. Enhancing the Information Base .....	582
C. Principled Decision-Making: Transparency and Accountability.....	587
CONCLUSION.....	592

## INTRODUCTION

As new governance forms proliferate, so have the debates about their legitimacy, accountability and relationship to law. These debates have devoted comparatively little attention to the role of the courts, as compared to other institutions of government and governance. Courts' limited appearance in new governance scholarship is understandable. New governance moves away from the idea of specific rights elaborated by formal legal bodies and enforced by judicially imposed sanctions. It locates responsibility for law-making in deliberative processes which are to be continually revised by participants in light of experience, and provides for accountability through transparency and peer review. Judicially-imposed mandates thus appear to contradict the premises and practices of new governance. Viewed through the lens of the traditional role of courts as norm elaborators and enforcers, judicial involvement signals a return to traditional top-down regulation. Judges' traditional, rights-enforcement role would transform or supplant the new governance processes themselves. According to this view, courts should occupy at best the peripheral role of stepping in when new governance fails, and they bear an uneasy and potentially contradictory relationship to new governance.

We argue that, notwithstanding the judiciary's decentralized role in new governance, rethinking courts' role is an important part of the new governance project. One reason for this is purely pragmatic: under current institutional arrangements, courts already entertain challenges to new governance forms and the enforceability of norms generated by them.<sup>1</sup> Thus, courts can and do limit or supplant new forms of public engagement. They are a concrete location where new governance and law must be reconciled.

Normative considerations provide a second reason for rethinking the judicial role in new governance regimes. Courts' gate-keeping function places the judiciary in a position to shape the practice of legitimacy and accountability within new governance institutions. Equipped with a broader conception of their role, courts can

---

<sup>1</sup> For examples, see *infra* Part II.

operate as simultaneously decentralized and pivotal actors in the project of making new governance work. Courts are poised to act as arbiters of interaction across different levels of governance and institutional roles. They can facilitate much-needed information-sharing across diverse domains encompassing new governance. They can operate as a crucial but limited source of new governance's accountability in relation to the participatory and deliberative values upon which its legitimacy rests. They can also foster the language and practice of legitimacy across institutional boundaries, and thus enhance new governance's legitimacy in relation to shared values justifying the elaboration and implementation of public norms. An examination of judicial practice reveals that, in certain domains, courts are already playing a more dynamic role than the stock narrative acknowledges, but they are doing so incompletely and without necessarily recognizing or making explicit the nature of their role.

Courts require a theory of judicial function to help navigate their course within new governance systems. This Article offers a step forward in developing this theory, drawing on the emerging practice in both the United States and Europe as a basis for this reconceptualization. We see a significant but limited role for courts as catalysts. In areas of normative uncertainty or complexity, courts prompt and create occasions for normatively motivated and accountable inquiry and remediation by actors involved in new governance processes. Catalysts thus facilitate the realization of process values and principles that are crucial to new governance's legitimacy and efficacy by the institutional actors responsible for norm elaboration within new governance. The relationship between courts and governance is dynamic and reciprocal: courts both draw upon the practice of governance in their construction of the criteria they apply to their judgments; and provide an incentive structure for participation, transparency, principled decision-making, and accountability which in turn shapes, directly and indirectly, the political and deliberative process.

In this Article, we elaborate three crucial aspects of the catalyst role, drawing on examples from the European Union to illustrate how courts can exercise their decision-making authority to enhance the capacity of other actors to make legitimate and effective decisions. First, courts prompt new governance institutions to provide for full and fair participation by those affected by, or responsible for, new governance processes. We focus in this Article upon the courts' role in evaluating standing in the European courts (*locus standi*). Second, courts monitor the adequacy of the epistemic or information base for decision-making within new governance. We explore this role through the example of the European court's construction and interpretation of benchmarks for legality in judicial review. Finally, courts foster principled decision-making in new governance processes by requiring transparency and accountability as essential elements of enforceability. We illustrate this role through examples where the European courts evaluate the adequacy of deliberative processes by whether they have identified, justified, and applied criteria guiding their decisions.

Part I describes the traditional view of the judicial role, showing why this view needs to be rethought, and sketching out the role of the court as catalyst. Part II uses examples from the EU context to elaborate the meaning of the catalyst role in enhancing participation, epistemic validity, and principled and accountable decision-making. This Article then concludes by considering further applications and flagging dilemmas and potential objections.

## I. RE-CONCEPTUALIZING THE ROLE OF COURTS

We suggest here that the traditional conception of the role of the judiciary is both descriptively and normatively limited. Part I makes explicit and then critiques the often tacit understandings of the judicial role that have framed the discourse concerning the courts and their relationship to new governance institutions. It then describes the catalyst role, which strives toward enabling judges to enhance the legitimacy, accountability, and efficacy of new governance institutions, and yet remain consistent with deeply held understandings of appropriate judicial action.

### A. *The Traditional Understanding of Judicial Role*

According to the traditional view, law is about rule elaboration and enforcement. The judiciary bears a distinctive institutional responsibility for elaborating and enforcing public norms, and applying those norms to facts filtered through formal adjudicative processes.<sup>2</sup> Normative and factual activities from other domains operate as inputs to be processed and create outcomes to be judged.

A legal norm thus operates under this view as a code of conduct that gives rise to clear obligations to address well-understood problems with clear normative implications.<sup>3</sup> Such a rule must be sufficiently clear, concise, and general to justify attaching coercive consequences to the rule's violation. Courts use analogy, logic, and moral intuition to define the problem at the core of the relevant authoritative principle, to formulate or apply a standard or rule to address that problem, and then to construct a hierarchical relationship between the judiciary and other public bodies to implement those specified rules. Legal pronouncements should settle disagreements or uncertainties about the nature and scope of problematic activity and its relationship to the generally articulated constitutional or statutory principles calling for judicial interpretation. Less formal and definitive norms, such as those produced through judicially accountable agreements or emerging from administrative or expert-facilitated problem solving, do not count as legal norms. Legal norms are the substantive product of liability determinations by a court, adoption of enforceable regulations by an administrative agency, or statutory enactment by a legislature.

Judicial pronouncements resulting from formal adversary process are the hallmark of legitimate and effective judicial intervention. Judges react to factual evidence and legal arguments presented through formal proof in court. They receive inputs (evidence arguments or records on appeal) and produce outputs (legal rules, judgments, and sanctions for non-compliance). Paradigmatic judicial involvement takes place in the courtroom through evidence and argument, and in chambers

---

<sup>2</sup> For an effort to re-conceptualize the judicial role in particular domains, see Susan Sturm, *Equality and the Forms of Justice*, 58 U. MIAMI L. REV. 51 (2003) (workplace bias); Susan Sturm, *Resolving the Remedial Dilemma: Strategies of Judicial Intervention in Prisons*, 138 U. PA. L. REV. 805 (1990). For a far-reaching attempt to reconceptualize the role of courts in institutional reform litigation, see Charles F. Sabel & William H. Simon, *Destabilization Rights: How Public Law Litigation Succeeds*, 117 HARV. L. REV. 1015 (2004).

<sup>3</sup> See Lon L. Fuller, *The Forms and Limits of Adjudication*, 92 HARV. L. REV. 353, 363–87 (1978); Michael C. Dorf, *Foreword: The Limits of Socratic Deliberation*, 112 HARV. L. REV. 4, 38–40 (1998).

through detached deliberation and unilateral judgment. This type of norm elaboration presupposes the judiciary's responsibility and capacity to define and redress the problem through centralized articulation of an appropriate legal rule. Complex, poorly understood, or normatively uncertain problems strain judicial capacity to craft and justify robust legal rules.<sup>4</sup>

Experts and affected stakeholders do not participate in elaborating norms; their role is to supply facts, interpretations, and legal arguments, which are then processed by the judicial decision-maker. Interactions outside of those stylized spaces and forms lack the imprimatur of the adversary process, and thus adjudication's presumption of accountability, transparency, and legitimacy. Even in cases involving other public bodies involved in some norm-generating role, such as administrative agencies, the focus is primarily on evaluating whether the agency got it right, or at least whether they acted within their authority in interpreting and enforcing the applicable norm. Once a court rules on the applicability of legal norms in a particular case, extended interaction (either with the court or within the relevant institution) questioning the meaning and implementation of the legal norm suggests failure—failure to articulate a precise enough rule, failure to embody the ideal of dispassionate adjudication, or failure to achieve compliance with the applicable rule.

According to this conception, the exercise of the traditional judicial function would necessarily supplant the decision-making role of the administrative, political, and deliberative bodies charged with responsibility for elaborating norms within the EU framework. The court thus would defer to those new governance bodies if they were operating within their authority, and if not, the court would substitute its own judgment. The decision about who should participate in a proceeding would thus turn on whether a party has a legal claim that, if upheld, would warrant judicial imposition of relief. The court's application of the abuse of discretion standard is essentially a determination of whether this outcome is within the range of outcomes that a reasonable decision-maker could reach, with a strong thumb on the scale for the factual assessments of community institutions. The purpose of the inquiry is to allocate primary decisional authority, and then to defer to that institution's judgments, as long as the court determines that the decision could be justified. In areas of normative uncertainty and factual complexity, courts are reluctant to superimpose an outcome, because they are operating at the border of judicial legitimacy derived from the court's authority and competence as a Socratic oracle.

This conception of judicial role treats the relationship between the judicial and administrative bodies as a static one: the court either accepts the outputs of community institutions or directs a different outcome. The judicial role is focused largely inward, using its own processes and standards to reach those determinations.

### *B. The Limitations of the Traditional Judicial Conception*

The traditional conception does not fully account for what courts actually do in a multi-level governance system. As the discussion in the next part illustrates, courts are regularly called upon to participate in decisions under conditions of complexity and uncertainty, when deferring to another body seems to abdicate responsibility but where adjudicative tools are inappropriate for the task. The traditional conception

---

<sup>4</sup> Fuller, *supra* note 3.

fails to provide adequate criteria for evaluating the court's role in such cases or for shaping the court's aspirations for legitimacy and efficacy. Courts face a wider range of choice about their role than to either defer or dictate outcomes. In areas of normative uncertainty or complexity, courts are still called upon to hold other institutions accountable for their decisions. Moreover, the judiciary does not operate in a vacuum: courts are in a dynamic relationship with other bodies involved in normative practice. They are actively constructing and being influenced by those practices. They can (and we argue that they should) choose to structure that relationship explicitly, to influence both the way normative activity occurs in other arenas, and the capacity of the judiciary to learn from (and sometimes to incorporate) the process and outcomes of normative activity in other arenas. This is a reciprocal process of interaction, rather than one where the causal arrows go only in one direction.

There is an additional reason to broaden the conception of judicial role beyond rule enforcement. Many problems of public concern result from social practices and the dynamic interaction between culture, cognition, and context. Their remediation cannot be reduced to a single explanatory theory or rule violation. They involve a combination of scientific and political judgment. Reflective, participatory deliberation, evaluated in relation to benchmarks of participation, epistemic adequacy, transparency, impartiality, and principled decision-making, can be better suited than detached logical consideration for producing the situated knowledge needed to determine the normative significance of complex or novel problems, as well as how they can be remedied. The legitimacy and efficacy of normative elaboration may well depend upon the interaction of multiple decision making bodies, using different forms of normative elaboration, which are accountable to each other.

So, courts asked to review the adequacy of new governance decisions are not merely assessing the outputs of those bodies; they are signalling the benchmarks for normative activity in these other domains, thus influencing how normative activity will take place in subsequent iterations.

### *C. Re-conceptualizing the Courts as Catalysts*

Rethinking the judicial role is not just a question of making sense of what courts are already doing, but also of supplying some sort of framework for thinking about and evaluating that role. Such a framework would help the judiciary in being more reflexive in fostering and holding accountable normative activity across domains. "Proceduralization" does not fully capture the idea of what courts are doing in their interactions with the decisions of other normative bodies. It suggests that judicial accountability extends only to the processes used to reach decisions. We want to argue that robust "proceduralization" implies a more radical re-thinking of the role of the judiciary and its relationship to other actors, both those formally constituted by law (e.g. an administrative agency) and those having emerged as informal norm communities (such as social dialogue participants and experts informing new governance processes).<sup>5</sup> This inquiry moves beyond formalistic notions of law and

---

<sup>5</sup> None of this is to deny the importance of the issues arising about the jurisdiction of the courts in relation to these informal processes. In OMC, for example, there would seem to be no observably legal

the role of the judiciary. Courts could and do structure an integral relationship between procedure and substance when norms are uncertain by, for example, requiring entities to justify their particular conception of a norm both in relation to the processes they use to produce that norm and in relation to more general normative commitments that must be articulated in context in order to assume meaning. The full range of norm-generating activity in which the courts and legal actors participate must be included, as well as the array of actual and potential channels for making that normative activity transparent, public, and precedential.

This new role requires consideration of how courts can participate in this norm elaboration and capacity building process, consistent with judicial practices, competencies, self-conceptions, and institutional relationships. If courts are not acting as unilateral interpreters and enforcers of legal rules, what are they doing? Are there ways, in addition to formal adjudication, for courts to participate in public norm elaboration? How can they engage in a less directorial relationship with non-legal actors in the norm generation process and still act like judges?

We suggest that in areas of normative and remedial uncertainty or complexity, the function of judicially articulated legal norms is not to establish precise definitions or boundaries of acceptable conduct which, if violated, warrant sanction (or to abdicate any role at all). Instead, the judicial function is to prompt—and create occasions for—normatively motivated inquiry and remediation by relevant non-judicial actors in response to signals of problematic conditions or practices. Law thus operates as a catalyst by facilitating the elaboration and implementation of public law norms by other actors, and the productive engagement of normative inquiry among relevant institutional actors, including the judiciary itself. Law imposes an obligation to articulate the basis for determining that a condition is sufficiently problematic to warrant public attentiveness, and to justify the adequacy and appropriateness of public actions. This attenuation (but not elimination) of coercion relieves the pressure for a clear, before-the-fact rule—which is needed to justify sanctions for a failure to comply—and still maintains incentives and opportunities to elaborate robust norms in context.

Judicial involvement sustains the normative dimension as a relevant and legitimate part of the problem solving process. It creates occasions and incentives for relevant stakeholders to convene, thereby solving collective action problems. Courts and other public institutions also provide the architecture to compare and build on the outcomes of this contextual problem solving. Courts become a way of publicizing and making visible the diversity of governance forms which have emerged, and the diversity of the ways in which governance values are being realized. New governance invites cross-fertilization in two different arenas, both of which courts have the capacity to bring together. One is within particular problem areas, with repeat players who have strong knowledge in those domains. The other

---

act susceptible to challenge under Article 230 EC. The same might be true in the Water Framework example, though here the soft norms emerging are implementing an ostensibly hard law (but vague) obligation, and so could be used as benchmarks against which to assess the adequacy of Member State implementation responses. The Water Framework example also shows that there can be a link between hard and soft norms. Here it is contemplated that guidelines could ultimately be adopted as binding comitology decisions. Thus, the guidance document on reporting within the framework of the Water Framework Directive is self-consciously presented as a first step toward achieving a decision on this matter to be adopted through comitology procedures.



is across domains employing new governance methods, each of which is generating strategies for enacting the underlying principles and practices that make new governance legitimate. Without a legitimate public intermediary, the opportunity to share information is likely to remain within particular problem areas, and even there, to be segmented in specialized areas within those domains. For example, water experts do not necessarily talk to air or nature specialists, and environmental experts do not interact with those working in employment or financial services. And yet, there are principles and practices that are transportable across these domains and that can assist in the development of legitimate and accountable practices in each of them. The courts then become a source of communicating ideas and experience, without being the source of their creation, and without being specifically prescriptive in relation to any particular form. Over time, this process promotes the development of binding legal norms if clear, recurring patterns and normative consensus emerge.

This dynamic interaction introduces rule of law values—such as participation, transparency, and reasoned decision-making—to deliberations by non-judicial actors, although it need not dictate the form through which those values are realized. We are not setting out to establish what those values are or to claim that they have enduring value. Instead, we are drawing on the body of literature laying out these tenets of legitimacy and efficacy as foundational for new governance. That literature converges around a series of principles, including participation, impartiality, principled decision-making informed by an adequate factual foundation, and accountability.<sup>6</sup> Those principles are also reflected or embodied in the constitutional and legislative framework of the European Union. We are taking these principles for granted, but also building into the theory the contingent character of these values. They are themselves open to revision through the process of reflection and justification, both in terms of their manner of realization and the range of foundational values that are conceived as necessarily underpinning new governance.

It is fruitful to consider the exercise of judicial power as a way to prompt inquiry as operating on a continuum. Each phase of the conflict resolution process offers an occasion for bringing together affected and potentially responsible stakeholders to deliberate, albeit with different levels of legal obligation to act on what is learned from that inquiry. This is a more reflexive and self-reflective approach to the process of developing mediating principles for actualizing public law norms. The objective is to calibrate the scope and method of judicial involvement to the type of problem under consideration. The factors shaping the court's approach to norm elaboration would include: the simplicity and certainty of the legal norm in the abstract and in relation to the circumstances posed by the case; the complexity and novelty of the problem under consideration; the scope of participation needed to address the problem; and the capacity and willingness of responsible and affected actors to participate in and generate criteria for evaluating the adequacy of problem solving.

---

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Orly Lobel, *The Renew Deal: The Fall of Regulation and the Rise of Governance in Contemporary Legal Thought*, 89 MINN. L. REV. 342 (2004); Joanne Scott & David M. Trubek, *Mind the Gap: Law and New Approaches to Governance in the European Union*, 8 EUR. L.J. 1 (2002). See generally the contributions to this Issue and to LAW AND NEW GOVERNANCE IN THE EU AND THE US (Gráinne de Búrca & Joanne Scott eds., 2006).

As the European experience discussed below shows, liability determinations are not necessarily the most frequent or necessarily preferred occasions for judicial participation in norm elaboration. Courts participate in deliberations about the meaning and scope of norms as a necessary part of reaching other decisions less directly tied to coercive imposition of rules or liability, such as reviewing the adequacy of expert determinations or of the level of participation in a deliberative process. In both roles, courts participate in and foster normative development in a more open-ended and exploratory posture. Judicial involvement can also influence the way non-legal actors negotiate and deliberate by focusing on the methods of inquiry and governance structures that produce informal norms and agreements, and by weighing more heavily those outcomes that result from principled, accountable, and participatory practices.

It is important to emphasize that this inquiry will not necessarily yield informal processes that mirror the features of formal adjudication; rather it would encourage a more principled and context-specific approach to due process. As Kenneth Winston has argued, “the form [due process] should take depends crucially on the setting in which it finds its application. Specific norms or rules should depend on the purpose of the enterprise and even its particular stage of development.”<sup>7</sup> Insisting on an adversarial process as the only measure of fair and effective process would defeat the deeper values motivating due process, such as participation, information generation, and effective problem solving, by importing the previously discussed limitations of a rule enforcement approach into the informal arena. Courts should instead encourage parties to develop—and the court would then assess the adequacy of—functional criteria of adequate process in light of the purposes and attributes of the particular project. Processes or outcomes could be precedential, in the sense of providing a normative or remedial solution that others can learn from, even if they are not formally binding. Full and fair participation could be achieved through creative institutional design and governance. Decisions could be public and norm generating, even if they are not liability determinations. Courts could develop standards for evaluating informal agreements and expert opinions and reward those that give general legal norms concrete meaning in the particular context, articulate criteria by which their agreements can be evaluated, and generate the information needed to evaluate resulting normative assessments and agreements.

The judicial process builds in a variety of decision points that invite less binding norm elaboration. These types of questions cast the court in a role beyond the determination of whether to impose liability for violation of a rule. Courts either consciously or unwittingly craft process frameworks that potentially shape the capacity and incentives of non-legal actors to engage in effective problem solving and accountable norm elaboration. These non-binding occasions for normative elaboration have the potential to be public, norm generating, accountable, and precedential, if these terms are given principled rather than formalistic meaning.

One important occasion for norm elaboration occurs when courts decide who can legitimately participate in the problem solving process. Through its application of standing rules, the court provides a mechanism for deciding who may or must participate if new governance is to be treated as legitimate and binding. Courts as

---

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Winston, *Lessons from the Right of Silence*, in *LEGALITY AND COMMUNITY: ON THE INTELLECTUAL LEGACY OF PHILIP SELZNICK* 389, 391–92 (Robert Kagan et al. eds., 2002).

catalysts create incentives for new governance institutions to carry through on the participation values afforded by, and basic to, the legitimacy of the new governance arrangements.

The catalyst role also functions when courts make decisions reviewing the adequacy of expert evidence or of the factual record upon which a decision is based. This sometimes entails assessments of the type and quality of information needed to inform the problem solving process or to justify reaching a particular outcome. An example will help illustrate the idea. Experts play a crucial intermediary role in the formation and translation of norms. Many of the experts who appear in litigation also conduct research and consult with organizations about the adequacy of their practices. They play a key role in translating legal principles into organizational norms and vice versa. They are repeat players who work across the boundaries of legal regulation and practice. It is crucial, but not always the case, that these professional intermediaries articulate and satisfy criteria of methodological and process accountability.

Courts can structure processes for the admissibility and evaluation of expert evidence that foster transparency and professional accountability for these norm intermediaries. Courts evaluating expert evidence must assess its persuasiveness, methodological validity, and generalizability. They also consider the degree to which expert evaluation develops replicable methodologies that receive review and validation within the relevant knowledge community. This review could be conducted with more explicit attention to the crucial intermediary role being played by experts. Ideally, courts could also review administrative agency decision-making with this concern about effective norm intermediation and capacity building as a guiding principle.

Finally, when courts decide whether to uphold outcomes produced by new governance institutions, they shape norms by prompting effective and legitimate problem solving and conflict resolution by non-legal actors, and then by developing points of permeability between legal and non-legal arenas so that public norms can emerge out of that local norm generation process. Courts play an important role in influencing how governmental actors, such as regulatory agencies, and nongovernmental actors, such as experts and lawyers, mediate the relationship between formal law and informal norms and practices. These mediating actors play a normative role within both the judicial and various policy domains. They translate legal norms for non-legal actors, and they educate courts about non-legal normative activity. Courts review the activities and outcomes of these mediating actors, such as the comitology committee and the scientific experts, who participate in normative elaboration and capacity building. This review process affords the opportunity to prompt the development of standards and processes of accountability governing the role of these norm intermediaries.

Legal norms thus develop through legally structured occasions for deliberating about the relationship between norms and practice. These practices cast courts in a crucial but limited role in addressing problems that implicate public norms but are insufficiently understood and/or resistant to centralized rule enforcement. They emphasize law's role in structuring focal points of intra and inter-institutional

normative activity.<sup>8</sup> This does not signal a retreat from rules of proper conduct, but rather it structures a dialogue among different institutional locations about those rules, when they cannot be legitimately or fully formulated in one institutional location. This process creates an important tension among normative spaces that must be engaged with each other. It also explicitly puts on the table the question of the circumstances under which normative dialogue will carry public weight.

This role, as an important concomitant of the court's more traditional rule elaboration and enforcement function, enables the judiciary to participate in addressing normative questions in areas of uncertainty or complexity without compromising its legitimacy or overstepping its capacity. It also highlights and creates accountability for the many occasions beyond formal liability adjudication in which courts prompt elaboration of norms under conditions of uncertainty. The impetus for normative engagement could come from various institutional locations, but we are arguing that this normative catalyst role is a crucial aspect of the judicial role. The legitimacy, and, in our view, long term efficacy, of a judge who assumes direct responsibility for imposing a standard in the face of normative or scientific uncertainty differs markedly from that of a judge who uses the tools and processes of the judiciary to prompt responsible actors to engage in effective problem solving. Judges' willingness to participate in problem solving under conditions of complexity turns on the availability of a role that is consistent with their tools, practices, and relationships.

## II. COURTS AS CATALYSTS: THE EXAMPLE OF THE EUROPEAN COURTS

In Part I, we provided a framework ascribing a catalyst role to courts in new governance. This framework is more than mere aspiration; it reflects elements of the current practices of courts in a variety of jurisdictions and settings. We want now to highlight some such elements in the case law of European courts, specifically in the performance of the courts' judicial review functions. The elements we point to emerge in the European courts' construction of their rules for standing (*locus standi*), and in their elaboration of benchmarks for legality in judicial review. This Part lays bare an important aspect of our methodology: our framework is both reflective of real world experience and offers a tool to evaluate it. The relationship between theory and practice is iterative: practice informs theory and theory informs practice. Our conception of courts as catalysts combines elements of fact, elements of will, actuality, and aspiration.

Our framework for thinking about courts as catalysts specified three overlapping judicial functions. These concerned full and fair participation in governance, enhancing the epistemic or informational basis for decision-making, and ensuring principled decision-making through transparency and accountability. The European courts are active in relation to each of these functions. We will both exemplify this fact and think critically about the catalyst function of the courts in light of the framework outlined above.

---

<sup>8</sup> See David Charny, *Illusions of a Spontaneous Order, "Norms" in Contractual Relationships*, 144 U. PA. L. REV. 1841 (1996).

### A. Full and Fair Participation

A cross-cutting element providing support for attempts to unify new governance's diverse forms under a single rubric is broad participation by non-governmental actors.<sup>9</sup> As the role and capacity of representative parliaments diminish in governance, more direct forms of public participation are seen as key to legitimacy and effectiveness in new governance. Participation is justified in democratic and epistemic terms.<sup>10</sup> It enhances direct citizen participation and ensures the input of additional, and better, information. As Gráinne de Búrca explained:

The intrinsic value of self-governance derives from the basic ideas of moral autonomy and individual dignity. The instrumental reasons include not just popular demand for greater participation in and influence over the processes by which people are governed, but also the self-interest of bodies and organizations wishing to maximize their reputation and their authority, as well as to generate useful information with a view to more effective decision-making and to securing greater compliance.<sup>11</sup>

New governance theories are searching for ways to arrive at a better understanding of how to identify participants, and how to organize their participation in a manner which is consistent with these underlying values. Various experiments in participatory governance are underway, and as contributions to this volume show, are imbued with a deep self-consciousness about the importance of participation, and about the challenge of continually interrogating the adequacy of participation as a means of attending to the democracy requirements upon which legitimate public norm elaboration depend.<sup>12</sup>

Courts as catalysts can hold new governance institutions accountable for providing adequate participation, based upon the criteria specified or implicit within the new governance framework. These are principles established by legislation, administrative frameworks, or general principles of community law. Through its application of standing rules, the court provides a mechanism for helping to determine who may or must participate if new governance is to be treated as legitimate and binding. This is different from, but complementary to, the orientation to standing that characterizes legal and scholarly discourse. That orientation focuses on the question of whether the party seeking participation has a rights-based claim on influencing the normative outcome within the judicial arena. The catalyst court is asking the Commission or other government bodies to explicitly address and justify

---

<sup>9</sup> See Scott & Trubek, *supra* note 6, and the contributions to LAW AND NEW GOVERNANCE IN THE EU AND THE US, *supra* note 6.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion, see MARIA LEE, EU ENVIRONMENTAL LAW: CHALLENGES, CHANGE, AND DECISION-MAKING ch. 5 (2005).

<sup>11</sup> Gráinne de Búrca, *Developing Democracy beyond the State* (forthcoming article, on file with the authors).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

the judgment of who should be able to participate and what form that participation should take.

The catalyst function of courts in relation to participation is illustrated, in striking if controversial manner, by the *UEAPME* case.<sup>13</sup> This case presented the question of whether UEAPME could require its participation in the deliberations, conducted as part of the European Union's social dialogue, which produced a European directive on parental leave. As with the other cases under discussion here, the catalytic opportunity arises at the admissibility stage, in assessing the standing of the applicant association. UEAPME is a European organization representing the interests of small and medium-sized businesses. It is recognized by the European Commission as a cross-industry organization representing certain categories of workers or undertakings. It is included on the Commission's list of organizations entitled to be consulted at the initial stage of "social dialogue" due to the "representativity" of its views. This participation requirement assures that the varying perspectives of diverse workers concerned with work and family issues will have a voice in the deliberative process. The Commission framework establishes representativity as the benchmark for determining an organization's entitlement to participate in new governance processes.

UEAPME sought to challenge the legality of a European directive concerning parental leave.<sup>14</sup> This piece of legislation was adopted on the basis of a framework agreement agreed upon by certain "social partners" as part of the European social dialogue. Though consulted at the initial stage, UEAPME was not given a place at the negotiating table by the representatives of management and labor who initiated the negotiations. It did not enjoy a clearly specified right to participate notwithstanding its inclusion on the Commission's consultative list. However, the Commission and the Council had to, at a minimum, verify the collective representativity of the signatories to the framework agreement. "This obliges them to ascertain whether, having regard to the content of the agreement in question, the signatories, taken together are sufficiently representative. Where that degree of representativity is lacking, the Commission and the Council must refuse to implement the agreement at Community level."<sup>15</sup> Hence, while no organization has a clearly identified right to participate in negotiations, any organization, whose presence at the table is necessary to guarantee collective representativity, must be included. To this end, the Council and the Commission are required to oversee the self-selection practices of the social partners.

The question then arises as to the role of the courts in relation to this new governance form. Significantly, in assessing the standing of UEAPME to challenge the legality of the parental leave directive, the court turned to this issue of representativity. In essence, it agreed to confer standing on UEAPME to the extent that its participation in the negotiations could be regarded as indispensable to meet this benchmark of collective representativity. As such, the court was required to ascertain whether UEAPME's participation was required to raise collective representativity to the required level.<sup>16</sup> Where it was, UEAPME could gain access to

---

<sup>13</sup> Case T-135/96, *UEAPME*, 1998 E.C.R. II-2335.

<sup>14</sup> Council Directive on the Framework Agreement on Parental Leave, 96/34, 1996 OJ L 145.

<sup>15</sup> *UEAPME*, 1998 E.C.R. II-2335 ¶ 90.

<sup>16</sup> It decided that it was not.

the court and, it seems fair to assume, provoke an annulment of the directive as being in breach of an essential participation requirement.<sup>17</sup>

The court is entirely conscious of what it is doing in construing its standing requirements in this manner. It notes that the legislative procedure at issue in this case does not provide for the participation of the directly elected European Parliament. As such, "the participation of the people" must be otherwise assured; through parties which are sufficiently representative of management and labor.<sup>18</sup> This is required by "the principle of democracy on which the Union is founded."<sup>19</sup> Here, we see the judiciary cast in the role of creating incentives for participation adequate to produce fair and legitimate results that respond to concerns about democracy. By creating participation rights in the judicial arena (*locus standi*), standing doctrine structures incentives to participation. By refusing to honor a process that inappropriately denies participation, the courts require participants to adhere to these values. By conferring standing on those entitled to participate, but whose participatory rights have not been respected, the silencing of actors in the political process does not prevent them from challenging their exclusion from that process. What is important here is that the court will not review the outcome of the flawed process, but will simply send it back for a deliberation which meets the participation requirement. This generates an incentive in favor of including those actors in the political process in order to mitigate the threat of a subsequent challenge. Likewise, it creates an incentive to treat these participants with respect, and to regard their interventions as more than time-consuming formalities.

In UEAPME, we see a striking illustration of the court operating as a catalyst for full and fair participation in governance. It does so on the basis of a standard which is internal to the legal framework constructing the governance regime in question (representativity). The court does not itself establish the criteria for adequate participation. It does, however, require the deliberative process to define and apply those criteria. It is willing in turn to construe this standard, and to require its application in such a manner that ensure respect for constitutional principles, such as the constitutional principle of democracy.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the court is not merely policing respect for clearly established participation rights, but is construing the proper scope of these rights, in light of the constitutional framework and values in which governance occurs. The court's role is not merely a passive, policing one, because it is elaborating participation requirements in light of a broad standard. But though it plays an active part in construing what democracy demands, it does so in a manner which is responsive to the internal premises of new governance. The court's commitment to democracy does not imply a commitment to any one particular conception of how democracy might be realized. On the contrary, the court is open to being persuaded that a given conception, unorthodox perhaps, reaches the standard of protection required. It is apparent in light of this, that the catalyst function of courts in new governance implies the construction of a relationship between law and politics which is dynamic and interactive, not static and top-down.

---

<sup>17</sup> Consolidated Version of the Treaty Establishing the European Community, art. 230, 2002 O.J. (C 325) [hereinafter "EC Treaty"].

<sup>18</sup> UEAPME, 1998 E.C.R. II-2335 ¶ 89.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> Treaty on European Union, art. 6, Feb. 7, 1992, 1992 O.J. (C 191) 1 [hereinafter TEU].

As we will discuss later, the courts do seek to influence normative activity in other settings, but they are also open to being influenced by experience in these other settings in the construction of incentives for full and fair participation.

In one important respect, the approach of the court in *UEAPME* is typical of a broader trend in the case law. Though the European courts are notoriously and scandalously restrictive in their interpretation of standing requirements for non-privileged—namely private—actors,<sup>21</sup> they have developed a doctrine which may be viewed as giving rise to a participation exception. By contrast to the early years,<sup>22</sup> the courts adopt a rights-based approach in construing this exception. That is to say, a person will enjoy standing to sue before the European courts, where they enjoy “specific procedural guarantees conferring upon them a right to participate in the political process.”<sup>23</sup> These guarantees may be laid down in legislation or arise by virtue of general principles of Community law, such as conferring a right to be heard in certain administrative proceedings.<sup>24</sup> Anti-dumping investigations may be offered as an example where specific provisions in the general regulation confer on certain traders a specific role in the procedure leading to the imposition of anti-dumping duties.<sup>25</sup> Different levels of participation may be afforded to participants. These may include a right to be notified, consulted, or a formal legal right to sit at the negotiation table. The judiciary will play a role in holding new governance processes accountable for providing participation in these different forms.

Our framework for conceiving courts as catalysts in new governance provides a tool for understanding and evaluating the existence and scope of this participation exception. Viewed from this perspective, the exception is easy to understand and seems normatively sound. By granting standing to those entitled to participate in the political process, even where their participation rights have not in practice been respected, the court is able to play a role in the construction of these rights in accordance with the principle of democracy, and to create an incentive for the rights to be respected, as seen in the *UEAPME* example. From this perspective, the critique of the participation exception which questions the perversity of granting standing to those who have already enjoyed the privilege of political participation, as opposed to those who have not, seems misconceived.<sup>26</sup> It is not simply or even principally a case of giving these actors “another bite in court,”<sup>27</sup> but rather, of encouraging respect for participatory rights and respect for participants in the practice of governance. If there is a public, as well as a private, interest in full and effective participation, the European courts’ recourse to standing rules as a means of

<sup>21</sup> For a full discussion, see DAMIAN CHALMERS & ERIKA SZYSZCZAK, *EUROPEAN UNION LAW* ch. 10 (2005).

<sup>22</sup> Previously the courts adopted a fact-based approach, whereby the fact of participation, independent of a legal right, was enough to confer the advantages of the participation exception. See Cases 67/85, 68/85, and 70/85, *Van der Kooy v. Commission*, 1988 E.C.R. 219, ¶ 22; see also Case C-313/90, *Comité International de la Rayonne et des Fibres Synthétiques (CIFRS) v. Commission*, 1993 E.C.R. I-1125, ¶¶ 29–30.

<sup>23</sup> Case T-339/00, *Bactria v. Commission*, 2001 E.C.R. II-1721, ¶ 51.

<sup>24</sup> Case T-109/97, *Molkerei Grossbraunshain v. Commission*, 1998 E.C.R. II-3533, ¶¶ 60, 68. For a good and accessible discussion of the scope of this right to be heard in EU law, see CHALMERS & SZYSZCZAK, *supra* note 21.

<sup>25</sup> *Molkerei*, 1998 E.C.R. II-3533 at ¶ 69.

<sup>26</sup> See CHALMERS & SZYSZCZAK, *supra* note 21, at 435.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*



creating an incentive in favor of this should be welcomed. As we noted previously, the point of conferring standing to challenge under the participation exception, is not intended so much to allow the party to exert influence on the normative outcome in court, but rather to encourage government bodies to justify, by reference to standards, their decisions concerning which organizations have been allowed to participate, and in what form.

While our theoretical framework leads us in the direction of favoring this participation exception in the construction of opportunities for *locus standi*, and indeed as exemplary of the kind of approach we favor, it also offers us a tool to evaluate the adequacy of judicial intervention in this sphere. The point here is not to do so in detail, but simply to exemplify how a theoretical perspective which has been developed with a close eye on practice, can serve as a source of critical inspiration in relation to that self same practice. This is consistent with our methodology alluded to above.

This framework suggests a critique of the approach taken in *Bactria*,<sup>28</sup> where the court was faced with a challenge to a legal act adopted within the framework of comitology procedures. The legislation delegating the power of decisionmaking to the Commission and comitology committee required that decisions be reached following “close cooperation between the Commission, the Member States, and applicants for authorization [or biocidal products]”<sup>29</sup> (emphasis added). At the admissibility stage, the court concluded without reasoned justification that the procedure in question provided an appropriate basis for such cooperation. It did not examine the role of the applicant in this process, or consider whether the applicant’s participation rights had been unduly curtailed. This is illustrative of a failure on the part of the court to embrace its catalyst function in relation to participation.

Similarly, from the perspective of our framework, the court’s rights-based approach to the participation exception, which insists upon a formal legal entitlement to participate, seems to be unduly narrow. It is appropriate that a party with a right to participate enjoy standing to challenge those proceedings, regardless of whether participatory opportunities have in fact been accorded. But in a new governance setting, it would seem likewise appropriate to acknowledge standing even where a party’s entitlement to participate is not legally mandated. We offer a single example by way of illustration. We have written elsewhere about the Water Framework Directive and its associated Common Implementation Strategy, as a clear and developed example of new governance.<sup>30</sup> As with so many examples, this is premised upon the participation of diverse non-governmental stakeholders in the implementation process. However, these participation opportunities are not guaranteed by law, be it through legislation or general principle. But neither are they ad hoc or purely contingent. They arise by virtue of settled procedures and practices, which are laid down and affirmed in documentary form. Over time, the fact of participation comes to be consolidated as a provisionally settled entitlement to participate, and the parameters of participation acknowledged as sound by all

---

<sup>28</sup> *Bactria*, 2001 E.C.R. II-1721.

<sup>29</sup> Here the close cooperation requirement was laid down in the preamble to the relevant legislation. The CFI (upheld by the ECJ) found that this was not such to confer specific procedural guarantees on individuals, and was not as such capable of sparking the participation exception into play.

<sup>30</sup> Joanne Scott & Jane Holder, *Law and New Environmental Governance in the EU*, in *LAW AND NEW GOVERNANCE IN THE EU AND THE US*, *supra* note 6.

interested parties. This entitlement is self-consciously presented as a key element to new governance's claim to legitimacy in this setting. Such is the nature of new governance; with its emphasis upon experimentation and evolution in institutional arrangement, standards for participation or specific entitlements to participate will often be recognized in a form which is not strictly mandated. Such entitlements should nonetheless suffice to grant access to the participation exception.<sup>31</sup>

The scope of the participation exception arises similarly in the apparently obscure but fascinating case of *Schmoldt*.<sup>32</sup> Here, the Commission adopted a decision not to withdraw standards on the basis that they failed to meet essential substantive requirements laid down in a "new approach" framework directive.<sup>33</sup> The contested decision stated that information received in the course of consultations with the body responsible for drawing up the standards in question, known as The European Committee for Standardization (CEN), and with the relevant standing committee, disclosed no evidence of the alleged risk associated with the standards in question.

Mr. Schmoldt was Chair of that part of CEN which is responsible for the adoption of the standards in question. Nonetheless he disagreed with the Commission's decision not to withdraw these standards and attempted to challenge the legality of that decision. The courts denied standing, based on the conclusion that Schmoldt was acting in a personal capacity and not on behalf of CEN. This decision may have been motivated by Mr. Schmoldt's close industry connections and by fears that he was acting in the private rather than the public interest.<sup>34</sup> If so, the court did not make this concern explicit. Although the decision explicitly claimed to have taken account of the results of consultation with CEN, CEN did not appear to have a legal right to participate in the process leading to the adoption of this decision. The relevant provision accords such rights to the standing committee and to the so called notification committee, but not explicitly to CEN.<sup>35</sup> This scenario squarely presents the question of the basis for the participation exception.

Where a party does not enjoy a legal right to participate, but is named—specifically or by reference to a standard such as representativity discussed above—as having been involved in the process leading to the adoption of the contested decision, ought that party benefit from the participation exception? The catalyst approach warrants a positive response. Where a decision-maker seeks to under-gird

---

<sup>31</sup> This raises the broader issue of the wisdom of the courts' shift from a fact-based to a rights-based approach to the construction of this exception. We certainly, for reasons given, favor a rights based approach, but think that this might sensibly supplement rather than replace a fact-based approach. At the very least, a rights-based approach should be capable of embracing situations in which a formally recognized entitlement to participate nonetheless falls short of being a procedural guarantee recognized in law.

<sup>32</sup> Case T-264/03, *Schmoldt v. Commission*, 2003 E.C.R. II-5059, dismissed on appeal in Case C-242/04P.

<sup>33</sup> For an overview of the new approach, and the adoption, role and contestation of standards, see ¶¶ 11–22 of the CFI's judgment.

<sup>34</sup> He was manager of *Hauptverband der Deutschen Bauindustrie* (the second applicant), and "[a]t the hearing he said, finally, that he played an active part in the activities of *Kaefer Isoliertechnik* [the second applicant]." Case T-264/03, *Schmoldt v. Commission*, 2004 E.C.R. II-1515, ¶ 40 (application for interim relief).

<sup>34</sup> Recall *Schmoldt*, 2004 E.C.R. II-1515, ¶ 101, where the CFI notes that Article 5(1) of Directive 89/106 lays down such guarantees for CEN, among others.

<sup>35</sup> See Directive 89/106, art. 5(1).

the legitimacy of its decision by alluding to the processes according to which that decision was reached, individuals and organizations apparently implicated in these processes ought to enjoy standing to challenge their adequacy. Moreover, they ought to do so regardless of whether they enjoyed any legally constructed participation rights. The transparency and integrity of the decision making process requires that decisions which rest upon spurious claims about who was involved, and on what basis, be susceptible to contestation on the part of those whose knowledge or reputation has been used—albeit misused—to enhance the legitimacy of governance processes and outcomes.<sup>36</sup> If we think about courts in terms of their capacity to act as catalysts for full and fair participation, at least authorities should be bound to ensure that their own claims to legitimacy, based upon the ostensible fact of participation, are susceptible to contestation in court. We will return to the transparency dimension, and to Mr Schmoldt's case in the analysis below.

In thinking about the catalyst role of courts in relation to participation, we have focussed here upon the issue of standing. Of course this does not exhaust the possibilities. In their construction of benchmarks for legality in judicial review, the courts can also further create incentives for appropriate participation. The grounds for review are set out in the Treaty, and included among them is breach of an essential procedural requirement. Where a party has a right to be heard, for example, failure to respect this right will justifiably lead to an annulment of the contested decision. In *UEAPME*, for example, the standing dimension was just a first step. Had the *locus standi* of this body been conceded by virtue of the indispensable contribution it could make in attaining collective representativity, the failure to include it at the negotiation stage would be a ground for vitiating the directive in question. The task of constructing benchmarks for legality, like the task of construing rules for standing, provides an opportunity for courts as catalysts in new governance.

### *B. Enhancing the Information Base*

The second catalyst function that we see the European courts playing is that of scrutinizing the information base according to which decisions have been reached. They do so in their construction and interpretation of benchmarks for legality in judicial review, be it by reference to the proportionality principle or through the articulation of a specific procedural requirement. The courts seek to ensure that decision-makers have at their disposal the type and quality of information which they need to reach a decision which is consistent with the underlying objective, and with applicable legal norms. This review guards against the possibility that decisions may be justified by reference to reasons which have not been scrutinized in relation to the information needed to assess their credibility. In addition, it seeks to promote reflexivity on the part of decision-makers, challenging settled but untested assumptions or prejudices, and exposing them to the full consequences of their decisions. Information has long since been used as a tool in regulation, and there is

---

<sup>36</sup> See CHALMERS & SZYSZCZAK, *supra* note 21, 317 for a construction of the notion of transparency. This is taken to include transparency as to who decides and on what basis.

considerable evidence that decision-makers will reach different decisions, depending upon the stock of information available to them.<sup>37</sup>

The catalyst function of courts in relation to information creates an incentive for decision-makers to integrate the findings and opinions of relevant experts into the decision-making process, and to conduct or draw upon studies which address the kinds of questions which require an answer before an agency can credibly claim a proper fit between an instrument and underlying objective. Here, the role of the courts is to prompt new governance actors to generate and rely upon sufficient reliable knowledge. As we noted previously, it is also to encourage the experts themselves to take account of the legitimacy and validity of their methodology, and to foster transparency and professional accountability for experts.

In so far as it requires the participation of experts in the decisional process, this role overlaps with the participation function above. As with the participation example, the court is responsive to governance context in construing the parameters of the information which will be required as a foundation for decision-making. It relies upon the new governance actors in question to ascertain and then hold themselves accountable in relation to the categories and quality of information which must be made available, and the processes through which it is generated.

In recent case law of the European courts we see the courts conducting a searching review of the adequacy of information's bases. This may be illustrated by reference to cases involving law and science, and more specifically law's response to scientific uncertainty. *Pfizer* is exemplary in this respect.<sup>38</sup> This long and complex case is concerned with a challenge to a regulation withdrawing authorization for certain antibiotic substances in animal farming. Withdrawal was said to be motivated by concern that the use of such substances might generate antibiotic resistance in animals, and that this resistance might in turn be transferred to humans. The decision was explicitly justified on public health grounds.

In *Pfizer*, the court speaks the language of deference. "It follows that in this case, in which the Community institutions were required to undertake a scientific risk assessment and to evaluate highly complex scientific and technical facts, judicial review of the way in which they did so must be limited. The Community judicature is not entitled to substitute its judgment of the facts for that of the Community institutions."<sup>39</sup> The court recognizes, rightly, that on its own, it has neither the epistemic capacity nor authority to conduct an in-depth review of factual findings. But the court's role goes beyond simple deference. The court assumes the catalyst function of assessing the adequacy of the decision-making procedure in terms of its capacity to generate the kind and quality of information required to reach a decision in the policy domain in question.

---

<sup>37</sup> Environmental impact assessment is a good example of this. This embodies a purely procedural approach to regulation, simply requiring that certain kinds of environmental information be gathered before a decision is reached. This includes information about direct and indirect environmental impacts, information about public attitudes to the development in question, and information about possible alternatives to the development proposed. For a good discussion and clear examples of this procedural mechanism having a substantive impact on decisional outcomes, see JANE HOLDER, ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: THE REGULATION OF DECISION MAKING (2004).

<sup>38</sup> Case T-13/99, *Pfizer Animal Health SA v. Council*, 2002 E.C.R. II-3305.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.* ¶ 169.

An example will illustrate the court's epistemic role. The court insists that where decisions are based upon complex scientific and technical assessments, as here, a scientific risk assessment must be carried out before protective measures are adopted.<sup>40</sup> This risk assessment task must be entrusted to experts, and the advice which they provide must match the standards of "excellence, independence, and transparency."<sup>41</sup> In this case, questions were raised about the latter two principles, with the court concluding that a standing committee, comprising scientific experts acting as political representatives of Member States, did not satisfy these standards. The committee is not independent due to its close associations with the government. Neither is it transparent in its operation, given its failure to publish its scientific analysis, and its failure to make available minority scientific viewpoints expressed on the committee.<sup>42</sup> While, for reasons of democratic legitimacy, a decision-maker is not regarded as being bound by the advice of any given expert, that decision-maker must at the least give reasons for disregarding that advice, and those reasons must operate at a scientific level at least commensurate with that of the opinion in question.<sup>43</sup> The clear implication here is that an agency disregarding a certain body of scientific advice must have at its disposal conflicting advice which likewise meets the standards outlined above.

Although the excellence principle was not applied by the court in *Pfizer*, elsewhere we see striking evidence of the court's willingness to look behind the veneer of apparent expertise, to check its adequacy in relation to the matter at hand. In *Technische Universität München*, the court insisted that a group of experts could not properly carry out its task unless it is composed of persons possessing the necessary technical knowledge in the various fields concerned by the issue, or was advised by persons having the requisite knowledge.<sup>44</sup> To this end, the court engaged in an assessment of the range of scientific disciplines of the persons represented on the committee, or consulted by it. It concluded that neither the minutes of the Commission's meeting with experts, nor oral proceedings before the court, showed that the members of the expert group possessed the necessary knowledge in the necessary fields, or that the Commission had consulted persons with such knowledge. The fields cited by the court included chemistry, biology, and geographical sciences. The implication of the court's approach is that the burden rests on the decision-maker to show that it has turned its mind to the range of

---

<sup>40</sup> *Id.* ¶ 155.

<sup>41</sup> *Id.* ¶¶ 157, 159.

<sup>42</sup> *Id.* ¶ 285. The emphasis here on the availability of minority scientific opinions is reflected in the constitutional framework for risk regulation in the EU, particularly since the BSE crisis. This reflects the current wisdom that it is better to acknowledge and confront scientific difference, than conceal it behind a veneer of scientific consensus. To confront it is to acknowledge that possibility that the majority might be wrong, and to encourage scientists to look for signs that this might be so, and to share information in so doing. This observation has relevance also to Mr Schmoldt's case discussed above. He was refused standing on the basis that he was acting in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the institution of CEN as a whole. It seems he disagreed with committee's conclusions regarding the standards in question, at the time or later. To silence Mr Schmoldt is to ignore the lessons of the past in relation to risk regulation, and the importance of confronting difference in the manner suggested above, and wisely recognized by the court in *Pfizer*.

<sup>43</sup> *Id.* ¶ 199.

<sup>44</sup> Case C-269/90, *Technische Universität München v. Hauptzollamt München-Mitte*, 1991 E.C.R. I-05469, ¶ 22.

expertise required, and to ensure that this is reflected in the choice of experts offering advice.

The court struck down the decision on the basis that the Commission had infringed its obligation to examine carefully and impartially all relevant aspects of the case.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, the decision was vitiated by virtue of the Commission's failure to hear the institution which was seeking duty-free importation of the scientific instrument in question. In the circumstances of this case, this right to a hearing was construed in terms of the information which the applicant could bring to bear on the decision in question. The institution in question is "best aware" of the technical characteristics of the product, its intended use, and its comparability with products originating within the European Union. It must therefore be allowed to explain its position to the scientists advising the Commission, comment on the information before the group, or take a position on the scientists' recommendation.<sup>46</sup> Failure to hear the institution in question, in one form or another, is treated as creating an epistemic gap, and one which was fatal to the decision given the peculiarly privileged position of the applicant in terms of access to relevant information. In this sense, the court is seeking to promote a process whereby Commission-appointed scientific experts enter into discussions with other parties in possession of information which may reasonably be thought to be indispensable in answering the question with which they have been presented.

Before returning to other elements of the court's judgment in *Pfizer*, it is important to be aware that the benchmarks for legality applied by the court—the independence, excellence and transparency of scientific advice—are not its own inventions. On the contrary, these are standards which are internal to governance processes in the European Union. Thus, the court points to relevant Commission communications on the precautionary principle, consumer health, food safety, as well as to the preamble to the decision establishing scientific committees in the field of consumer health and food safety, in extrapolating these principles as applicable standards for judicial review.<sup>47</sup> Of course, the court plays an important role in elaborating these standards, which are defined in the broadest terms, but even there the court seems to draw implicitly upon later legislation in other spheres, which expressly acknowledges the indispensability of recording minority scientific opinion.<sup>48</sup> Here, we can see signs of the possibility we alluded to in the framework above. We suggested that one valuable role for courts in new governance is to act as a bridging institution, facilitating learning across different policy domains, not least in terms of the governance processes which experience reveals to be most adequate in achieving legitimate and effective outcomes. The principles deployed by the court are internal to the process of governance, but their elaboration may be inspired by experience in different policy domains, thus encouraging collaboration and learning across otherwise segmented policy spheres.

---

<sup>45</sup> *Id.* ¶ 22.

<sup>46</sup> *Id.* ¶ 23.

<sup>47</sup> Case T-13/99, *Pfizer Animal Health SA v. Council*, 2002 E.C.R. II-3305, ¶ 159. These principles are also now clearly enshrined in the framework for food safety regulation in the EU, including in relation to the functioning of the European Food Safety Authority. See Commission Regulation 178/2002, *Laying Down the General Principles and Requirements of Food Law, Establishing the European Food Safety Authority and Laying Down Procedures in Matters of Food Safety*, 2002 O.J. (L 31) 1, 16–17.

<sup>48</sup> Commission Regulation 178/2002, 2002 O.J. (L 31) 1, 16–17.

Returning to *Pfizer*, a careful reading of the dense and complex judgment reveals many points of intersection between the case and our understanding of the role of courts as catalysts, including their assessment of the soundness of the underlying epistemic base. The court was insistent not only upon the expertise upon which the decision-maker was obliged to draw in reaching its decision, but also on the decisional methodology which it was obliged to apply. In particular, the court found that in the context of risk management, the proportionality requirement encompasses a cost-benefit dimension. "The Court considers that a cost/benefit analysis is a particular expression of the principle of proportionality in cases involving risk management."<sup>49</sup> As such the court was willing to verify that the decision-maker had access to documents which contained a cost/benefit assessment of this kind, though it did not insist on any autonomous procedural requirement that the decision-maker conduct this analysis itself.<sup>50</sup> It was also willing to review whether the decision-maker had made any manifest error in weighing the various options available.<sup>51</sup> In doing so, it looked closely at the consequences of the regulation, particularly in light of the existence of alternatives to the banned substance, and the narrow scope of the contested regulation. The court's analysis of the substantive reasonableness of the contested regulation, in cost/benefit terms, was greatly assisted by the richness of the informational record. We see here an illustration of the futility of trying to distinguish procedure and substance in judicial review. Procedural requirements relating to the adequacy of the informational basis for decision-making ensure the availability of sufficient information to permit the court to engage in a meaningful review of substance, albeit on the basis of a standard of review which is deferential. Courts are informational catalysts. This serves not only to improve the decision-making process, but also to facilitate substantive review of the plausibility of the outcome reached.

*Pfizer* is not an isolated instance. Even in areas not involving risk management, we see the courts performing their catalyst function by creating incentives for the generation of adequate information. We will offer one more example to substantiate this claim. This involved a different court—the European Court of Justice (ECJ), a different policy context—environmental protection, and an actor at a different level of governance—a Member State. The case is *Commission v. Austria*.<sup>52</sup>

The Commission brought an action against Austria claiming that it was in breach of the free movement rules, which are the European equivalent to the dormant commerce clause. Its alleged wrong-doing took the form of a decision to ban heavy lorries carrying certain goods on a section of a motorway in the Inn Valley in Austria. This road is one of the main land communication routes between Southern Germany and Northern Italy. The court accepted that this ban was a restriction on the free movement of goods, and was simply concerned with considering its justifiability. While it accepted that the ban pursued a legitimate aim—environmental protection and in particular a reduction in air pollution—the court condemned the ban for breaching the proportionality principle.

---

<sup>49</sup> *Pfizer*, 2002 E.C.R. II-3305, ¶ 410.

<sup>50</sup> *Id.* ¶ 469.

<sup>51</sup> *Id.* ¶ 470.

<sup>52</sup> Case C-320/03, *Comm'n v. Republic of Austria*, 2005 E.C.R. I-9871.

The court adopted a reading of proportionality which placed the emphasis upon information. It expressly desisted from ruling on whether there were less trade restrictive alternatives available to Austria to achieve its objective. Adopting a procedural approach to proportionality, the court insisted that before adopting “a measure so radical as a total traffic ban,” it was incumbent upon Austria “to examine carefully the possibility of using measures less restrictive of freedom of movement, and [to] discount them only if their inadequacy, in relation to the objective pursued, was clearly established.”<sup>53</sup> Austria had not done so. Similarly, Austria explicitly justified the measure by claiming that it was designed to promote a transfer of goods from road to rail. This was its declared objective.<sup>54</sup> The court did not rule upon the availability of this rail alternative. It pointed out simply that Austria itself had not “sufficiently studied” this question.<sup>55</sup>

In this case, the court did not substitute its judgment on the facts for that of the Member State in question. Instead, it used the proportionality principle as a means of ensuring that the Member State had established an adequate informational base for its decision. In the absence of studies demonstrating the existence of the supposed rail alternative, and in the absence of evidence of an inquiry into the existence of less trade restrictive alternatives, the Member State was not in a position to assess the consequences and effects of its measure. As suggested above, the catalyst function of the court here emerges as a mechanism to check the authenticity of reasons put forward by the decision-maker in seeking to bolster the legitimacy of the decision which it reached. It is not enough to give reasons. These reasons must be supported by the informational record.

### C. Principled Decision-Making: Transparency and Accountability

The transparency function of the European courts is multi-faceted. Among other things, it encompasses creating sufficient access to information about the proceedings to enable outsiders to ask questions about and seek justifications for the decisions reached. Transparency could include access to information used as part of the decision, including documents and proceedings. It also includes a reason giving dimension, and encourages transparency in relation to the mode of operation of the political process.<sup>56</sup> The transparency dimension of the framework we articulated above may be exemplified by reference to existing case law, and again used as a basis for critiquing the judicial role.

In the Austrian case, the reasons given to justify the measure were not supported by the informational base. The court took the reasons seriously, but also took seriously its task of verifying their authenticity. Similarly, with *Schmoldt*, a transparency perspective offers critical insight into the case. Mr. Schmoldt was denied standing on the basis that he was acting in a personal, not an institutional, capacity in bringing the case. Evidently, Mr. Schmoldt disagreed with the institutional stand-point adopted by CEN. His minority viewpoint was not recorded

---

<sup>53</sup> *Id.* ¶ 87.

<sup>54</sup> *Id.* ¶ 88.

<sup>55</sup> *Id.* ¶ 89. This language applies both to the rail alternative point and to the investigation of less trade restrictive alternatives, as discussed above.

<sup>56</sup> See CHALMERS & SZYSZCZAK, *supra* note 21, at 317, where the authors elaborate the various dimensions inherent in transparency.



anywhere. As noted above, the importance of acknowledging different positions, including minority positions, in policy spheres characterized by scientific complexity and scientific uncertainty, is widely and increasingly recognized.<sup>57</sup> Courts may perform a valuable function in ensuring transparency in this respect. The court was mistaken in focussing upon Mr. Schmoldt's personal interest in bringing proceedings. He may have been motivated, as the court supposed, by a desire to protect his reputation. But this private interest should not have been allowed to conceal the valuable public function served by transparency of the kind that Mr. Schmoldt was concerned with promoting. Similarly, the Commission sought to bolster the legitimacy of its decision by claiming that it was based upon consultations with CEN among others. Mr. Schmoldt alleged that it was not. As Chalmers et al observe, transparency pertains also to the availability of accurate information about participants and processes in decision-making.<sup>58</sup> By granting standing to Mr. Schmoldt, and by invoking transparency as a benchmark for legality in judicial review, the court would have created an incentive to ensure a fit between the presentation and practice of political process.

Reason-giving, as with information, further attests to the impossibility of separating out the procedural and the substantive in the conception of benchmarks for legality in judicial review. The courts will not merely check the availability of properly articulated reasons, but will act also to exclude reasons which are invalid in view of the objectives pursued by the institution in question. Reason giving is not solely a procedural requirement; it is a substantive requirement pertaining to the kind of justification which can legitimately be put forward. We see this clearly in *Pfizer*. Here the court rejected a claim that the Council had acted for reasons of political expediency, and not in fact to guard against risk.<sup>59</sup> The clear implication is that reasons expressed in terms of placating media or public opinion would not fulfil this requirement, at least in the framework of legislation granting powers to guard against a specified risk, however clearly articulated or apparently compelling.

We conclude this Part by reference to one last, highly controversial, case. It is a case which is, in one respect, consistent with our framework, but ultimately falls short in its implementation. It illustrates the dangers which inhere in the courts' lack of awareness of the catalyst function that they might usefully serve in governance. The *Yusuf* case, currently pending on appeal to the ECJ, is concerned with the legality of a regulation imposing sanctions on individuals as part of the "war on terror."<sup>60</sup> This regulation was adopted to implement an EU "common position" which was, in turn, adopted to give effect to a U.N. Security Council Resolution. The court declined to review the legality of the regulation in light of established community law principles relating to the protection of fundamental human rights. It did this on the basis that any such review would imply, indirectly, a concomitant review of the Security Council Resolution. It emphasized the binding nature of the U.N. Charter and its primacy over domestic and EU law.

---

<sup>57</sup> See Regulation 178/2002, *supra* note 48.

<sup>58</sup> *Id.*

<sup>59</sup> Case T-13/99, *Pfizer Animal Health SA v. Council*, 2002 E.C.R. II-3305, ¶¶ 127, 207.

<sup>60</sup> Case T-306/01, *Yusuf v. Council*, 2005 E.C.R. II-3533. See also Case T-315/01, *Kadi v. Council*, 2005 E.C.R. II-3649, which was delivered on the same day.

While the court has been accused of “judicial abdication,”<sup>61</sup>—a charge which is in large part fair—its abdication is more contingent than it appears at first glance.. While the court was not willing to use the EU’s human rights standards as benchmarks for legality in judicial review, it was willing to assess the lawfulness of the contested regulation—and hence, by its own admission, indirectly the Security Council Resolution—on the basis of human rights norms which originate in the international rather than the EU legal order. In so doing, it turned its mind to the question of whether the contested regulation was compatible with human rights norms in customary international law, in the form of inviolable *jus cogens*.<sup>62</sup>

Leaving aside the detail of the court’s analysis, one point is pertinent in exemplifying the application of the framework we outlined above. In assessing the lawfulness of the regulation, the court placed great emphasis upon certain procedural guarantees put in place at the level of the U.N.

Concerning the applicants’ right to make use of their property, the Court of First Instance (CFI) pointed out that the Security Council resolutions provide a means for reviewing, after certain periods, the overall system of sanctions. There is established “a procedure enabling the persons concerned to present their case at any time to the Sanctions Committee for review, through the Member State of their nationality or that of their residence.”<sup>63</sup>

Concerning the alleged absence of any right to a fair hearing, the CFI again laid emphasis upon this procedure to re-examine individual cases, whereby the persons concerned may address a request to the Sanctions Committee, through their national authorities, in order either to be removed from the list of persons affected by the sanctions or to obtain exemption from the freezing of funds.<sup>64</sup> Guidelines for the Sanctions Committee had been adopted toward this end. In doing so, the CFI concluded, “[t]he Security Council intended to take account so far as possible, of the fundamental rights of the persons entered in the Sanctions Committee’s list, and in particular their right to be heard.”<sup>65</sup>

As regards to the absence of an effective judicial remedy, the CFI remained on the same terrain. It emphasized that the sanctions are not imposed indefinitely, but are subject to periodic re-examination.<sup>66</sup> It likewise concluded that the establishment of the Sanctions Committee, and the associated procedure for re-examining individual cases, “constitutes another reasonable method of affording adequate protection of the applicants’ fundamental rights as recognized by *jus cogens*.”<sup>67</sup>

The message each time is the same. The court emphasizes the opportunity for questioning the adequacy of a decision in light of articulated criteria and adequate information, and the provisional nature of decisions and the possibility of recursive review. It is flexible as to the form that this might take, and it crucially guards against the danger of isomorphism by accepting that administrative frameworks for

---

<sup>61</sup> Piet Eeckhout, Fifth Walter van Gerven Lecture to the Leuven Centre for a Common Law of Europe: Does Europe’s Constitution Stop at the Water’s Edge? Law and Policy in the EU’s External Relations (Oct. 7, 2005), available at <http://www.law.kuleuven.ac.be/ccle/pdf/wvg5.pdf>.

<sup>62</sup> *Yusuf*, 2005 E.C.R. II-3533, ¶¶ 277–82.

<sup>63</sup> *Id.* ¶¶ 300–01.

<sup>64</sup> *Id.* ¶ 309.

<sup>65</sup> *Id.* ¶ 312.

<sup>66</sup> *Id.* ¶ 344.

<sup>67</sup> *Id.* ¶ 345.

contestation may differ from those in place in the judicial arena, but still be capable of achieving an adequate level of protection.

The court is on the right track but moves too hesitantly. Its intervention seems little more than symbolic, given the palpable deficiencies inherent in the U.N. system in question. There is no possibility of submitting an individual application to the Sanctions Committee. All applications are mediated through national governments. Any individual not enjoying the support of his or her government will be excluded. Add to this the fact that the review is conducted by the very same body as the one adopting the initial decision, and the degree of protection afforded emerges as so slim to be manifestly inadequate. The court asked the right question—does the governance system internal to the United Nations guarantee an adequate level of protection for individuals?—but adopted a hands-off approach and arrived at the wrong conclusion. To the extent that the court is performing a catalyst function in this case, the nature of the incentive it constitutes is disappointing in the extreme. There is an incentive merely to create the appearance of a possibility for recursive review, even where that possibility is undercut by practical restrictions. Even in an area characterized by political sensitivity and deep security concerns, the degree of individual protection provided is manifestly inadequate.

The case serves as a useful reminder that it is one thing to conceptualize the role of courts in new governance in terms of their relationship with other actors, and it is quite another to ensure a role for the judiciary which is capable of promoting positive political change. This is especially true in settings in which individual liberty is diminished in the name of collective security. But though the outcome here is disappointing, the circumstances of the case nonetheless strengthen, rather than undermine, our overall argument. It is self-evident that there are circumstances in which it will not be appropriate for judges in open court to balance the claims of individual liberty and collective security. What they can do, however, is scrutinize the institutional framework within which this balance is being struck, both initially and over time. In so doing they can listen to the claims of the political authorities that the framework provided is appropriately respectful of individual liberty, in the context of the specific problem being addressed. In essence, they can evaluate, in light of comparable experiences from other spheres and other times, whether that framework provides for the maximum feasible respect for the values outlined above; participation, transparency, and adequate information. Consistent with our observations, it would not be for the courts to arrive at a blueprint for what counts as good governance in a setting such as this. Rather, courts must be open to being persuaded that any given institutional manifestation is appropriately respectful of the values identified by the court, and of the court's contextualized elaboration of these values.

Before concluding this Part, it may be helpful to address explicitly an issue which has been lurking. This concerns the origins of the values embraced by the courts in the performance of their catalyst function, and of the benchmarks for review selected to give expression to them. In *UEAPME*,<sup>68</sup> for example, the underlying value was democracy, and "representativity" the benchmark for review.

---

<sup>68</sup> Case T-135/96, *Union Europeenne de l'Artisanat et des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (UEAPME) v. Council*, 1998 E.C.R. II-2335.

Article 230 of the European Community (EC) Treaty establishes the legal grounds for review, but does so only in the broadest of terms. These include infringement of the Treaty or of any rule of law relating to its application. Included among the latter would be legislation and general principles of law. Looking to these sources, a range of values emerge as embedded in the constitutional framework of the European Union, and as available to the courts in judicial review. Prominent among them are those articulated in Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union. Included here, among the values on which the European Union is said to be founded, is the democracy principle relied upon by the court in *UEAPME*, together with liberty, respect for fundamental rights, and the rule of law. Other such values are given expression in the treaty, including that of transparency,<sup>69</sup> and in the form of general principles, such as that pertaining to proportionality.

While there is no shortage of values in the treaty to support the courts in their catalyst review function, these values are barely elaborated, and leave the courts considerable room for maneuver in giving substance to them, and in tailoring them to the particular circumstances of a given case. The values of democracy and support for the rule of law are notably vague, and yet of high salience in contemplating the role of courts in relation to our three categories—participation, information and principled decision-making. Thus, while there is a constitutional foundation upon which this catalyst function may rest, it is one which empowers the courts as creative interlocutors in governance.<sup>70</sup>

The identification of values is the first step. Thereafter, the courts are required to give these values expression by framing benchmarks for judicial review, and by assessing the adequacy of specific institutional arrangements put in place to ensure respect for them. There is one additional dimension of our framework which merits particular emphasis in this regard. We have argued, and exemplified in the European context, that in performing this catalyst function in relation to new governance, the courts are acting as collaborative participants rather than overlords in giving expression to constitutionally established values such as democracy or the rule of law. More particularly, we have suggested that the courts are not engaged in an act of abstract interpretation, devoid of context, or independent of the experience of governance. On the contrary, there is much evidence that the European courts look to the practice of governance in arriving at the benchmarks for review. Courts are not entirely passive in this regard, in that it is their responsibility both to evaluate internally-generated benchmarks in light of overarching constitutional requirements, and to scrutinize institutional arrangements in light of these value-sustaining benchmarks for review. But nor are they closed or prescriptive as to the range of

---

<sup>69</sup> See EC Treaty art. 255, and Commission Regulation 1049/2001, Regarding Public Access to European Parliament, Council and Commission Documents, 2001 O.J. (L 145) 43, as regards the access to documents dimension of transparency. See also the discussion in PAUL CRAIG & GRÁINNE DE BÚRCA, *EU LAW: TEXT, CASES AND MATERIALS* 392–95 (3d ed. 2003), on transparency as a general principle of Community law.

<sup>70</sup> It is thus important to note that we are not claiming that our conception of courts as catalysts offers an easy way out of the counter-majoritarian corner. As JEREMY WALDRON, *LAW AND DISAGREEMENT* 255–81 (1999), has argued, courts' articulation of process values is just as politically laden as their articulation of substantive values, and anyway we have suggested that the distinction cannot even be neatly drawn. What we would suggest though is that the catalytic function of courts presented here plays better to the institutional capabilities of courts, as it does not involve detailed second-guessing of substantive policy choices.

benchmarks which may be considered acceptable. Courts are critical interlocutors, but are open to being persuaded as to the normative worth of diverse processes born of the diverse experiences of governance.

Again, *UEAPME* can be used to illustrate.<sup>71</sup> Democracy is an open-ended value. The court did not arrive at a blueprint of what this demands. Instead, it looked to the normative framework constituting the practice of social dialogue and extrapolated “representativity” as the key concept in sustaining its claim to democratic legitimacy. Having done so, the court asserted the adequacy of this concept in relation to the underlying value of democracy, rightly or wrongly, and scrutinized the institutional arrangements put in place to ensure respect for it. The court is open to the idea that the underlying constitutional value may require different things in different settings, and to working with rather than against the experience of governance in articulating benchmarks for review, and in contemplating the adequacy of specific institutional forms.

### CONCLUSION

This Article forms part of a broader project examining the role of courts in new governance. It sets out a framework for thinking about the judicial function, and illustrates its application in an EU context. As our earlier work has shown, this framework has purchase in other diverse settings; the United States and the World Trade Organization prominently among them.<sup>72</sup> In thinking about accountability in governance, sharp distinctions are often drawn between judicial and political mechanisms. It is often suggested that political mechanisms are more appropriate in a new governance setting. There are often good reasons for this, such as impediments to access to courts where, for example, there is no clearly defined norm with sufficient binding force to acquire the identity of a challengeable legal act under Article 230 of the EC Treaty. These are important issues which need to be addressed. Here, we have argued that the line between judicial and political mechanisms for accountability is not a sharp one, and that the judicial function may be conceived in relation to the political process rather than as sharply antagonistic to it. The judicial function ought to be—and in some important respects already is—able to work collaboratively with other actors in devising and promoting governance structures which are at once effective and legitimate in problem-solving. Judges are not equipped in circumstances of uncertainty and deep value contestation to proclaim as Socratic oracles, nor should they seek to do so with respect to the nature of the political process. What they are equipped to do is to listen to, and evaluate, diverse explanations as to why any given political process is, or is not, likely to satisfy core constitutional requirements, including that of democracy, and to ensure the existence of an adequate fit between normative explanation and political practice. One advantage of this approach is that courts emerge as a site for increasing transparency about experimentation in governance, and for fostering cross-domain learning in this respect.

---

<sup>71</sup> *UEAPME*, 1998 E.C.R. II-2335.

<sup>72</sup> See Sturm, *supra* note 2; Joanne Scott, *European Regulation of GMOs: Thinking About “Judicial Review” in the WTO* (Jean Monnet Program, Working Paper No. 04/04, 2004), available at <http://www.jeanmonnetprogram.org/papers/04/040401.pdf>.

We have sketched out the catalyst role for courts. There is still much work to be done, both theoretically and empirically. We must also consider the institutional constraints on fully implementing the catalyst model. It would be important to consider its applicability in different institutional contexts and to different types of problems. Further work is needed to consider its relationship to more traditional forms of judicial intervention. How do courts work out the blend? Further thought must be given to the consequences of using the threat of reversal as a motivator for deliberation. What impact does this have on the deliberative process?

For example, there is a risk if courts were to take on directly a searching review of the processes, before the governance bodies have themselves devised those processes or internalized that they will be held accountable according to these standards. In that situation, new governance institutions might focus their attention on satisfying the courts upon a later review, rather than on developing the processes that will satisfy the goals of the project. Judicial superintendence of process could then foster a static compliance mentality rather than a more fluid developmental one. This risk suggests that, in the areas of process as well as substantive norms, the court has to pay explicit attention to the dialogic character of its relationship with these other bodies. Courts could minimize the risk of stifling innovation by signalling that new governance bodies must themselves assume responsibility for giving institutional expression to the values under-girding their legitimacy. This may be challenging in a system that currently provides only two dichotomous choices—uphold outcomes or strike down the outcome of the process—as either choice will be incomplete. The court would not lay down a blueprint for what constitutes good governance in a particular setting. Instead, it would prompt the actors to revisit the processes and the legitimacy upon which they rest. Courts would catalyze government process by reference to values, without any strongly articulated preconception of how those values should be implemented.

There is a more general question about the relationship between the traditional orientation accompanying the judicial role and the more dynamic/catalyst understanding of that role. Will courts be able to overcome their tendency to reproduce themselves in the way they evaluate and structure non-judicial normative processes? Can they evaluate other institutional processes by standards that differ from those governing their own processes?

We also have to address how traditional adjudicative conceptions of formality, principled decision-making, and accountability can be used to evaluate the adequacy of more deliberative and participatory forms. We see intermediary institutions and actors, such as experts and institutional deliberative bodies, as crucial buffers and mediators of these different modes of practice. They can place explicit emphasis on translation across domains.

Finally, one could ask the question, why courts? Are we asking too much of courts? Is this an overly demanding set of tests? Are we constructing an empire of law? Can we expect law to govern everything? Our answer to these questions depends on whether we are able to broaden the conception of what we mean by law itself. In its more dynamic sense, to live in a legal world requires that one know not only the precepts, but also their connections to possible and plausible states of affairs. It requires that one integrate the “is,” the “ought,” and the “what might

be.”<sup>73</sup> We think that new governance provides the opportunity and the expectation that courts are not the only institutions grappling with questions of legitimacy and accountability, and that courts will and should be part of the process of enabling new governance institutions to practice law in this broader sense.

---

<sup>73</sup> Robert M. Cover, *Foreword: Nomos and Narrative*, 97 HARV. L. REV. 4, 10 (1983).