

## MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE OF FOOD SECURITY: THEORETICAL MODEL OR NEW INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE

(First Draft)

### Abstract

The problem of food security governance is systematically gaining on importance but at the same time constitutes one of the less researched areas within global governance debate. Food security has never been ensured on global level despite amazing progress of science and technology. What is more, the changing nature of the threats to food security makes this goal even more distant. Given the multidimensional nature of food security concept answers to this challenge have been sought through processes of international negotiations between nation states. However it is increasingly clear that nation-states because of its contradictory interests are unable to solve this issue and meet their international commitments for addressing this issue without more explicit engagements with sub and supranational actions. Involvement of the other actors operating on different levels seems to be crucial to the process of governing of food security. The idea of multilevel governance has acquired unprecedented importance today. It not only suggests ways of dealing with new conditions of globalization, but is said it is essential term for understanding the transnational processes and for identifying non-traditional actors involved in governance processes on different levels. The idea of multilevel governance was developed into theoretical account of the European Union in opposition to state centric or intergovernmental accounts. It refers to a particular subset of contemporary governance arrangements in which decision-making authority is distributed across more than one level of relatively autonomous public-sector institutions. The paper deals with the problem of food security governance and attempts to answer the question whether multilevel governance becomes gradually institutionalized new international practice or is it only theoretical model useful in academic debates, without practical meaning to governance of food security?

## INTRODUCTION

Since Thomas Malthus food security has become a subject of a constant international debate. Apart from changing diagnoses of the problem and more or less optimistic prognoses for a future, eradication of world hunger seems to be one of the hardest tasks for humankind. The statistics are alarming. Despite amazing progress of science and technology the number of undernourished people still grows. According to the FAO 2009 estimates, almost one-sixth of humanity suffers hunger.<sup>1</sup>

For many years food security concept was limited strictly to agricultural sector concerns. International community tried to figure out how to increase food production to satisfy growing

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<sup>1</sup> FAO Press Release, *More People Than Ever Are Victims of Hunger*, URL:  
<<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/20568/icode/>>.

demand. In 1960s Green Revolution occurred. Solution to the global starvation seemed to be finally achieved. Following years showed however that food security cannot be reduced only to physical availability of food. The problem of world hunger remained unsolved even though food production started exceeding needs of growing world population. It became clear that food insecurity is caused not by the lack of food per se but by a lack of access to it. The food security concept has needed redefinition.

While the production and distribution of food worldwide were still high on international agenda strong accent was put on human dimension of the food insecurity. On the one hand it was clear that food security is no longer purely agricultural sector concern but a part of a broader arena of poverty and development problems. On the other hand the international perspective which was limited only to the national and the global level has broadened and took into account also the household and the individual dimensions of the problem.

The evolution of food security concept accompanied by changing nature of its threats revealed the weakness of the international food system governance. Governance through the processes of international negotiations between nation-states became ineffective not only because of states' contradictory interests or reluctance to engage in multilateral arrangements but by the growing complexity of the food security where, as D. J. Shaw states: 'food insecurity is seen as the eye of the storm of interlocking national and global concerns to which it contributes and whose solution lies in tackling those concerns holistically'.<sup>2</sup>

The institutional incoherence was another problem with the food security governance. With many international governmental, non- governmental, public, and private organizations and actors involved, it was impossible to develop common and coherent policies to attain world food security, as well as precisely determine each organization's responsibilities in that area. All these obstacles led to the question about more effective ways of dealing with growing food insecurity. Ways, which would be more responsive to the appearing food crises but at the same time free from the slowness of existing international bureaucratic mechanisms.

In the debates on the new mechanisms of steering of international environment in conditions of globalization the idea of multilevel governance is particularly gaining on importance. Many scholars argue that multilevel governance processes are emerging in response to gaps in national governments and international community ability to control global and transnational processes which otherwise are hard to control using traditional mechanisms and instruments.<sup>3</sup> The multilevel governance concept not only suggests ways of dealing with new

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<sup>2</sup> D. J. Shaw, *World Food Security. A History Since 1945*, Palgrave Macmillan 2007, p. 383

<sup>3</sup> Susan E. Clarke, *Regional and Transnational Regimes: Multi-level Governance Processes in North America and Europe*, ECPR Workshop, Regionalism Revisited. Territorial Politics in the Age of Globalization, Mannheim March 1999.

conditions of globalization, but is said it is essential term for understanding the transnational processes and for identifying non-traditional actors involved in governance processes on different levels.

The usefulness of multilevel governance concept was tested as an “explanation framework’ in many analyses and especially those of global environmental change<sup>4</sup>. By using the main assumptions of multilevel governance paradigm, the authors were proving that multilevel governance mechanisms become international practice without being named ‘multilevel governance’. The objective which stood behind that process was the functional control of negative consequences of climate change, which means the main concern of involved actors was rather to solve or mitigate the problem effectively than to create new mechanisms and instruments to do that. In other words the by-product of striving to achieve the goal was the creation of new governance practices.

The problem of food security governance is systematically gaining on importance but at the same time constitute one of the less researched areas within global governance debate. This paper is trying to shed some light on that issue. The analysis is organized around the main question: whether multilevel governance is a real international practice or only a theoretical model useful in academic debates, without practical meaning to governance of food security?

The structure of the paper consists three parts. The first part concentrates on a multilevel governance paradigm and its main arguments. The second part explains the concept of food security. The special attention is put on new threats to food security, which make it necessary to look for the new mechanism and models to control growing food insecurity. The last part presents arguments which help to answer the question put in the title of the paper.

## **1. THE MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE MODEL**

The researches on governance of international relations<sup>5</sup> have intensified after the collapse of Cold War Order. The attempts to find an alternative model of steering the international environment which replace the old one, based on a domination of two superpowers, resulted in the idea of Global Governance, understood as a ‘governing without government’. The creation of

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<sup>4</sup> *Multilevel Governance of Global Environmental Change. Perspectives form Science, Sociology and Law*, G. Winter (ed.), Cambridge 2006; M. M. Betsill, H. Bulkeley, *Cities and the Multilevel Governance of the Global Climate Change*, “Global Governance” 2006, no 12, p. 141-159.

<sup>5</sup> Understood as a steering.

the Commission on Global Governance in 1992 and the publication of its famous report *Our Global Neighbourhood* in 1995 have sealed this new vision of governance of international relations.

The Global Governance paradigm, based on the assumptions arising from the changeability of international environment does not intend to establish the global government, but rather the additional decision-making level between nation states, international organizations and civil society actors. It therefore undermined the priority of state-centred, hegemonic steering structures of international relations by stressing the importance of multilateralism as a fundamental rule of Post-cold War international governance.

The Global Governance model has however its limitations. Being considered as the answer to the changeability of the international environment it does not take into account the dynamic processes occurring within the nation states. The logic of the changes of the international system and especially of the nation-states' position in the international decision-making chain is also conditioned by processes which include the dispersion of nation-states competences and decision-making power vertically: up – to the supranational institutions, down – to the sub-national level and horizontally to the private actors. Concluding, the governance of the international environment in the conditions of globalization processes should be both multilateral and multilevel.

The logic of the changes caused by globalization processes undermine the usefulness of hierarchically organized structures of power. In this situation the effectiveness of international steering structures is conditioned by the integration of the traditional hierarchical decision-making models and horizontal ones. In his working paper *Discourse and Order – On the Conditions of Governance in Non-hierarchical Multi-Level Systems* Jürgen Neyer uses the notion of “heterarchy” to describe this new form of governance where political authority is neither centralized (hierarchy) nor decentralizes (anarchy) but shared, and where the vertical and the horizontal models of decision-making are combined together into an integrated mode of interaction.<sup>6</sup> From this perspective we can say that the hybridization of decision-making process is a main characteristic of this new governance model.

The governance of international relations in the conditions of globalization is not about the adjusting different decision-making models to the hierarchical structures of nation states but rather about the creation of functional control systems around the specific issues, based on the ability of different actors to mobilize its competencies and resources to deal effectively with these issues. In this model the nation-states are important but the one of the many elements of decision-making process. There is no hierarchy or decision-making centre, each element of the

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<sup>6</sup> Jürgen Neyer, *Discourse and Order – On the Conditions of Governance in Non-hierarchical Multi-Level Systems*, ARENA Working Paper No 9, February 2002, p. 4.

structure is important because of the resources it possesses, which are needed in the process of solving the particular problem. The equal importance of each element is also based on the assumption that all of them fulfil certain functions within the scope of their competencies. However, as J. Meyer points, it does not mean that all levels of this structure always have an equal influence on policy-outcomes. It depends on issue area, institutional provision and public awareness.<sup>7</sup>

According to the Susan E. Clarke the governance capacity in the multilevel governance model is both a product of the ideas that frame different ways of understanding the problem and their solution and of the networks mobilized for collective action through this new frame. It means that multilevel governance is more the function of task focused structures and mechanism, where 'attention is directed to the role of problem-oriented policy communities in generating alternative policy paradigms that set boundaries for political action, create channels for dialogue and decision, and established the grounds for collective action among diverse interests'<sup>8</sup> than creation of legal frameworks. Those functional mechanisms are characterized by the high degree of informality and not necessarily bring different perceptions of the problem together, but in a flexible and pragmatic way lead to the positive results and effective solutions of the certain problems.

The idea of multilevel governance takes its origins from EU context. It was developed into theoretical account of the European Union in opposition to state centric or intergovernmental accounts. The multilevel governance approach entertains the possibility that multiple types of institutional arrangements are possible as citizens and public officials actively seek solutions to political problem. It refers to a particular subset of contemporary governance arrangements in which decision-making authority is distributed across more than one level of relatively autonomous public-sector institutions. What became known as the multileveled governance approach made a number of claims in relation to the dynamic of integration such as: 1/the significance of overlapping competencies across levels of government and governance rather than a neat delineation of competence; 2/the interactions of actors across levels of government with national executives as important but not dominant actors; 3/the significance of multilevel policy networks rather than two level games in the dynamic of EU policy making;

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<sup>7</sup>Ibidem, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> S. E. Clarke, op. cit.

4/that the national governments were no longer the exclusive link between the national and the European.<sup>9</sup>

The multilevel governance model differs from intergovernmental relationships as B. Guy Peters and Jon Pierre argue in four respects: firstly, it is focused on systems of governance involving transnational, national, and subnational institutions and actors; secondly, it highlights negotiations and networks, not constitutions and other legal frameworks as the defining feature of institutional relationships, thirdly, it emphasizes the role of satellite organizations (NGOs), and fourthly, it makes no normative pre-judgements about a logical order between different institutional tiers.<sup>10</sup>

In the EU context the multilevel governance was developed as a more effective way of solving political problems, as a system ‘of functional control’, where the resources, access to knowledge and information and flexibility were counted more than official channels of governance. In that paradigm the pragmatism was more important than nation-states attachment to its competencies and decision-making power. It however did not mean that the emancipation of subnational and supranational levels of governance was at the cost of states. It was rather due to the pursuance of the more effective mechanisms of solving the problems and achieving the goals.

There is no doubts that the multilevel governance concept is influenced by the concept of subsidiarity which states that if something can be done better on the lower level it should be done there. Putting that philosophy to the multilevel governance we can say, that if certain goals can be quicker and better solved at different levels than nation-states they should be achieved there. The multilevel governance approach to the problem solving is holistic in the scope but not in the scale.

The term *multilevel governance* (like *globalization* few years ago) seems to be treated as a buzzword in present literature on governance of international relations. Studies of multilevel governance often take the form of case studies. However, as Stephen Welch and Caroline Kennedy-Pipe point, this research strategy works well for domestic and the European research context, where distinct policy areas (e.g. environment) allow for case by case testing.<sup>11</sup> Apart from these contexts the application of multilevel governance to analyzing a specific case studies is more complicated because of the idea of ‘policy areas’, which implies the question ‘whose

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<sup>9</sup> Hooghe L., *Cohesion Policy and European Integration: Building Multi-Level Governance*, Oxford 1996; Hooghe L., Marks G., *Multilevel Governance and European Integration*, Boulder 2001; Hooghe L., Marks G, *Types of Multilevel Governance*, European Integration on-line Papers 2001.

<sup>10</sup> B. Guy Peters, Jon Pierre, *Multi-level Governance and Democracy: The Faustian Bargain?* [in:] *Multi-level Governance*, I. Bache, M. Flinders (eds.) Oxford 2004, p. 77.

<sup>11</sup> S. Welch, C. Kennedy-Pipe, *Multi-level Governance and International Relations*, [in:] *Multi-level Governance*, I. Bache, M. Flinders, op. cit., p. 125-144.

policy'<sup>12</sup>, but it does not mean that there is no studies on multilevel governance of international relations at all. For instance, in his work on global multilevel governance Cesar de Prado argued that by the process of regionalization, the new level of governance is emerging. Intensification of intra-regional relations within the European Union and the ASEAN, but also the growing importance of their external involvement creates arguments for existence of this new level of governance.<sup>13</sup> The same line of argumentation can be found in the works on multilevel governance of global climate change, where multilevel governance is identified with the different than nation-states levels of governance. The different perspective on multilevel governance represents Philip Pattberg in his work on private governance in global forest politics. Without using the term multilevel governance he indirectly supports the multilevel governance assumption about the distribution of states authority between different levels and actors.<sup>14</sup>

Application of multilevel governance concept to different contexts than the European Union requires the identification of its main characteristics. Treated as a theoretical framework it is characterized by the distribution of state authority between different actors and levels, the actors involved, the relationships between them, the governance strategies, mechanism and instruments. The identification of these characteristics in the food security area will be crucial to answer the question put in the title of the paper.

## **2. THE FOOD SECURITY CONCEPT**

The food security concept has been developed since the inception of Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations, but the need for some form of multilateral world food security arrangement had already been recognized by the League of Nation before the Second World War.<sup>15</sup> Despite the fact that its content was changing over the six decades of FAO existence, the idea which laid behind its development was still the same. The food security concept was not about the food per se but it expressed the concern for the fulfilment of the basic human need which was food.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibidem, p. 131.

<sup>13</sup> C. de Prado, *Global Multi-level governance. European and East Asian Leadership*, United Nations University Press, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> P. Pattberg, *Private governance and the South: lessons form global forest politics*, "Third World Quarterly" 2006, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 579-593.

<sup>15</sup> D. J. Shaw, op. cit., p. 5.

## 2.1. Definition of food security

There are about two hundred definitions of food security nowadays<sup>16</sup>. At first food security concept was related only to the food supply, production and trade. The international community main concern was the stabilization of agricultural commodity prices on the national and the international level. Since the 1980s the concept has been modified. Its definition was extended to the ‘individual dimension’ of food security. It was noticed that focusing of international concerns only on food supply was distorting the reality. The physical food availability did not mean automatically that the poorest had access to it. That situation was confirmed by FAO and the World Bank reports on hunger and poverty, in which the need for the redefinition of food security concept has been suggested.

The expression of the new international community attitude to the idea of food security was its new definition adopted at FAO World Food Summit in 1996. The final documents of the World Food Summit were described as “laying the foundations for diverse paths to a common objective – food security at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels”.<sup>17</sup> According to the new definition “ food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels is achieved when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.<sup>18</sup>

The food security concept was redefined once again in 2001. Apart from the physical and economic access to food the emphasis was put on the social dimension of food security. The new definition has stated that “food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.<sup>19</sup>

This new definition divides the food security problem into the four dimensions: the physical availability of food, where the production and distribution of food are involved; the economic access to food, where the issues of poverty reduction and food prices play the most important role, the social access to food, which relates to the individuals who are at high risk of temporarily or permanently losing their access to resources needed to consume adequate food. This dimension placed food security problem in the broader context of development issues. And the fourth dimension which covers the issues of the proper quality of food and food safety.

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<sup>16</sup> FAO, *Trade Reforms and Food Security. Conceptualizing the linkages*, Rome 2003, s. 25, URL: <<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/005/y4671e/y4671e00.pdf>>.

<sup>17</sup> D. J. Shaw, op. cit., p. 350.

<sup>18</sup> FAO, *Trade Reforms and Food Security*. op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

## 2.2. Threats to food security

The discussion about the threats to food security has its long tradition. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Thomas Malthus drew attention to the direct connection between demographic factor and the hunger. He argued that population when unchecked increases in a geometrical ratio but the production of food increase only in an arithmetical ratio. It inevitably leads to the situation of world starvation. Malthus however drew his conclusions in a specific historical context and he could not anticipate the future technological and science progress in a food production, which has softened the pessimistic character of his prognosis.

Similarly to the evolution of food security concept there has been evolution of its threats. Within the most important threats to the world food security there can be identified four groups.<sup>20</sup> In the first one there are threats created by income growth, which include the demand driven by economic growth and population change. High income growth in countries like China and India readily translates into increased consumption of food. The demographic factor in these cases is also relevant. The changes in relations between rural and urban populations also pose the challenges to food security. As Joachim von Braun argues in his report on the world food situation, these changes have strong impact on spending and consumer preferences.<sup>21</sup> The shift from the consumption of grains and other staple crops to vegetables, fruits, meat, dairy and fish is resulted in agricultural diversification toward high value agricultural production. The growing demand for high-value products is satisfied at the cost of the poorest whose access to this kind of food is limited.

The climate change challenges construct the second group of food security threats. There is no doubt that climate change mostly affects agriculture and food production. As Josef Schmidhuber and Francesco N. Tubiello argue it affects food production directly through changes in agro-ecological conditions and indirectly by affecting growth and distribution of incomes and thus the demand for agriculture produce.<sup>22</sup> Projections show that due to the climate change the land suitable for wheat production may almost disappear in Africa.<sup>23</sup> As a result agricultural prices will also be affected by climate change. Temperature increases of more than 3 degrees Celsius may cause prices to increase by up to 40 percent.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> J. von Braun, *The World Food Situation. New Driving Forces and Required Actions*, International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, December 2007, p. 1, URL: <<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/fpr/pr18.pdf>>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>22</sup> J. Schmidhuber, F., N. Dubiello, *Global Food Security under Climate Change*, 2007, URL: <[www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.0701976104](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.0701976104)>.

<sup>23</sup> J. von Braun, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> W. E. Easterling, P.K. Aggarwal, P. Batima, K.M. Brander, L. Erda, S.M. Howden, A. Kirilenko, J. Morton, J.-F. Soussana, J. Schmidhuber, and F.N.Tubiello, *Food, fibre and forest products* [in:] *Climate change 2007: Impacts, adaptation and*

The third group includes threats driven by high energy prices and especially production of biofuels. Due to the rising prices of fossil fuels (oil, gas), being accompanied by the shift towards more ecological energy sources the use of agricultural products for industrial purposes increased dramatically. According to the FAO estimation, the use of cereals for biofuel production increased by more than 25 percent.<sup>25</sup>

In the fourth group there are threats posed by globalization processes which dramatically change not only the way of production and distribution of food worldwide but also the structure of global food markets. The industrialization of agriculture, the growing role and importance of food and agriculture transnational corporations, changes in the corporate food system, the monopolization of biotechnological improvements in agriculture due to the application of property rights, the hypocrisy of liberalization of international trade in agriculture, all of this can be identified as its main manifestations.

### **2.3. Food security concept and governance**

The food security concept brought a new perspective on the issue of world starvation. The identification of the five levels where food security must be assured and the four dimensions in which it must be achieved make the problem of food security governance extremely difficult. What is more the current international practice shows that because of the broad character of the food security concept the actions to achieve it are taken in a different policy areas e.g. agriculture policy, trade policy, development policy and food safety policy. However, it should be pointed that sometimes the contradictory character of the goals identified within the food security concept and the outcomes of mentioned policies makes these efforts ineffective.

The analysis of food security governance requires not only the explanation of food security concept but also the idea of governance. There are lots of different definitions depending on where it has been applied, on the author and on the context. In the broader sense the term 'governance' is used to designate all regulations intended to organize human societies. When the idea of governance is moved to the international level it is also defined as regulation but 'made in the absence of an overarching political authority'.<sup>26</sup> However, can governance be treated as the same as the regulation? When it is understood as a process of taking under control specific issues by setting rules and restriction on it, it seem to be better define it as a governance strategy.

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*vulnerability. Contribution of working group II to the fourth assessment report of the intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, M.L. Parry, O.F. Canine, J.P. Palutikof, P.J. van der Linden and C.E. Hanson (eds.) Cambridge 2007.

<sup>25</sup> J. von Braun, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> James Rosenau, *Toward Ontology for Global Governance*, [in:] *Approaches to Global Governance Theory*, M. Hewson, T. J. Sinclair (eds.), Albany, State University of New York, 1999.

There is no doubt that governance concept is strictly connected with the distribution of authority. The definition developed by Elke Krahmman, which states that governance means the fragmentation of political authority in different dimensions e.g. geography, function, resources, interests, norms, decision-making and policy implementation,<sup>27</sup> highlights this aspect.

In the first dimension authority is distributed across different levels. All of these levels can be identified in the food security concept. In the second dimension authority is distributed across different issue areas, which require different governance strategy. In the food security case, the most relevant strategies are: regulations, dissemination of knowledge, standard setting, and aid. In the third dimension authority is distributed across the resource holders. From this perspective in the governance of food security the emphasis should be put on the creation of public-private partnerships.

The analysis of the relations between food security concept and governance helps to construct the “food security governance map”. There can be identified main research categories useful in testing the existence of multilevel food security governance. The first category are the levels of governance, the second its strategies, and the third its structures. Analysis of food security governance by these categories brings also the identification of its main actors and the relations between them.

### **3. MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE OF FOOD SECURITY**

The title of this paper comprises the question whether multilevel governance becomes gradually institutionalized new international practice or is it only a theoretical model useful in academic debates, without practical meaning to governance of food security? In this part of the paper I will try to answer it. The analysis will be organized around three categories which constructs the food security governance map: the levels of governance, the strategies and the structures. However it is rather the indication of a research problem. The purpose of this part of a paper is more to signal some findings than to present its thorough analysis.

**The levels of governance.** In the current food security governance system there can be identified three levels: the global level represented by the United Nations System, the regional level represented by the regional organizations (European Union) and the nation-states level. The subnational level is missing from this system, however the existence of a strong peasant and

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<sup>27</sup> E. Krahmman, *National, Regional, and Global Governance: One Phenomenon of Many*, “Global Governance” 2003, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 323-346.

farmer organizations on the local level, and their influence on the national agriculture policy, in the EU context Common Agriculture Policy – CAP, can be considered as a form of participation in food governance system. It should be stressed however that from the perspective of food security concept the strong opposition against reforming the CAP by farmer organizations is partly responsible for the fiasco of international food trade liberalization.

There is no doubt that world food security system is dominated by the UN System. As a universal organization the UN System is responsible not only for addressing the problem of food security but also for seeking the solutions. It would not be exaggeration to say that the UN System is playing a pivotal role in the food security governance, by harnessing the private sector and civil society and by building a collective action through global partnership or alliance in the broadly defined development policy. What is more, the global level of food security governance embraces also the World Trade Organization, the IMF and the World Bank. That is why the priority areas which were identified for the global level include also the establishment of an open international trading system to achieve food security and strengthening the international finance and technical cooperation.

In the discussion on food security governance the strong accent is put on the responsibilities of nation-states in this area. Robert L. Paarlberg in his discussion paper on governance and food security in the age of globalization stresses that the greatest governance deficits in the food security area are still at the national level not the global level.<sup>28</sup> He argues that the ‘global level’ efforts to fill these gaps in the national governance have ended in frustration since the traditional norm of state sovereignty continues to stand in the way. What is more, his research shows that to mitigate food insecurity, especially in the poorest and the least developed countries the practice of taking over states responsibilities by other actors should be replaced by strengthening states governance capacities. Because the national governments are still playing the dominant role in food production, distribution and consumption the problem of food security should be dealt on this level.

The European Union represents the regional level of food security governance. However despite the money spent and the high involvement its role in food security governance is very ambiguous. When we look at the actions taking by the EU in the following policy areas: agriculture policy, trade policy, and development policy, we can see that it is characterised by a huge incoherence. The strong involvement in international development policy is not followed by its involvement in the establishing of an open international trading system in agriculture to achieve food security.

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<sup>28</sup> R. L. Paarlberg, *Governance and Food Security in an Age of Globalization*, International Food Policy Research Institute, “Food, Agriculture, and the Environment Discussion Paper 36”, Washington, February 2002.

The levels of governance include also the new players in civil society and private actors. Their involvement depends however on the food security dimension. For example in the food safety policy, apart from the national level where responsibility lies first there is strong involvement of private sector - food producers and food processors and its associations, not only as a recipients or observers but also as a standard setters. In the development policy the private actors and civil society organizations and networks plays even greater role. In these contexts the multilevel governance idea of 'functional control' over the specific issues seems to materialize.

**The strategies.** There can be identified four governance strategies within the food security governance, the regulation, the standard setting, the aid and the knowledge diffusion. We can say that all these strategies can be identified in different policy areas. The question however is that, is it really multilevel governance strategy or not. In the trade regulation there is no distribution of states power vertically and horizontally. The most important actors are states, and new regulation on trade, including the decision on its further liberalization are made by states. The subnational actors have no access to these regulations. Even World Trade Organization only facilitates the forum of international negotiations between nation-states, with one exception in a form of new dispute settlement mechanism, which strengthens its role in trade policy but without the power to create new regulations.

One of the issue areas where we can observe some form of multilevel regulatory governance is food safety policy. However as Grace Skogstad points in her article on that issue despite the developments towards multilevel governance, an effective and coherent system of coordinating and harmonizing food safety regulation remains a work in progress.<sup>29</sup> The same situation can be observed in the governance by aid. There are many actors involved in these policy areas but actions taken by them do not create a coherent and coordinated system which could lead to the problem solving. Especially conditioned aid as governance tool motivated by the desire to improve the developing states capacities to fight the poverty sometimes brought opposite results.

The multilevel governance of food security becomes a real international practice in the knowledge diffusion area. The governance by knowledge diffusion is coordinated by Consultive Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR). The Group which was established in 1971 is a strategic partnership, whose sixty four members support fifteen international centres. The Group works in collaboration with national governments, civil society organizations, as well as private business. It creates a multilevel network where 'ins' and "outs" are possible for every interested actor. Its effectiveness as a strategy of food security governance lays in a wide

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<sup>29</sup> G. Skogstad, *Multilevel Regulatory Governance of Food Safety: A Work in Progress*, [in:] *Rules, Rules, Rules, Rules. Multilevel Regulatory Governance*, G. B. Doern, R. Johnson (eds.), University of Toronto Press 2006.

availability of the new crop varieties, knowledge and other products resulting from its collaborative research to individuals and organizations working for sustainable agricultural development throughout the world.

**The structures.** The structures of food security governance take a form of public-private partnerships. These structures are relevant especially to the development and agriculture policy. According to the International Food Policy Research Institute in many countries public sector organizations are becoming increasingly reliant on collaboration with the private sector and civil society to strengthen innovative capacity and respond to the needs of the rural poor. New collaborative modalities include knowledge exchange networks, research consortia, technology joint ventures, public-private-non-governmental extension services, hybrid organizations, and other partnership-based approaches.<sup>30</sup>

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Does multilevel governance of food security become new international practise or is it only the catchword gaining on importance only in academic debates? The answer to this question is very difficult. First of all the question of application of multilevel paradigm outside the EU contexts must be answer. Without the theoretical framework of multilevel governance of international relations, analysis of international actions taken to solve any of global problems will be impossible. Why particular practices or actions should be considered as multilevel governance not just governance? It is a key question, which make the building of theoretical framework of multilevel governance of IR so important.

The analysis done in this paper which followed the explanation what the concepts of multilevel governance and the food security are shows that the multilevel governance is not the common international practice. States are not interested in sharing its authority in the most important for food security policy areas like trade and agriculture. There are however some examples where the distribution of states' regulatory authority brings positive results. That is why the conclusion of the paper will be moderately optimistic. The states are not omnipotent and from this point of view the idea of multilevel governance can be considered as a future international practice.

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<sup>30</sup> International Food Policy Research Institute, URL: <<http://www.ifpri.org/book-780/ourwork/researcharea/public-private-partnerships>>.