

Part III

Institutions and Processes: A Normative Framework for Legitimate Partner NGOs

What institutions and processes build the cornerstones of a normative framework for NGOs that strive for legitimacy as partners of corporations? What central notions of the research question are open to different justifications from different political models?

The first term to be assessed is one that is not explicitly contained in the research question. Nevertheless, the “public sphere” is probably one of the most essential terms that need to be clarified. From clarifying the public sphere I will proceed to discussing different conceptions of “public reason”, thereby differentiating between substantive and procedural restrictions on public reason. This will lead me to an assessment of the political process as such. The central term of the research question, namely “legitimacy”, rests on the political-philosophical examination of all the other terms and will therefore be assessed at the very end of this theoretical part.

The systematic point of this procedure is to assess all of these terms from a liberal and a deliberative point of view so as to determine which of the two models offers a more meaningful conceptualization of the legitimacy of NGOs as partners of corporations against the background of the postnational constellation.