Comment 1: The study is about Interdisciplinary Theories of Sustainable Development in which New Institutional Economics are incorporated. Also, the authors discuss major approaches for learning and assessing governance sustainability. Bringing the concept of agricultural reforms within the sustainability framework is a very important idea. I am looking forward to a well-designed and full paper from the authors on this.

Reply: Good point.

Comment 2: Ahh! I nice and fresh breeze from Bulgaria. Interestingly, a country that has seen a lot of difficult past in a not very distant time has come along and a fresh start. I would greatly appreciate if the scholars can give us a detailed account of the events leading to such sea changes in the Bulgarian economy after all. It would be a very interesting study if supplanting by many empirical studies are presented compared to this study. That will enhance the scientific value of the present research greatly.

Reply: In my paper I will give overview on governance transition in the last decades. I also will critically assess all existing studies in the area of governance pillar of sustainability, which are mostly on national and international levels. In fact, there are no empirical studies on governance pillar of agrarian sustainability at sectoral, ecosystem and farm levels on which my study focus. Therefore, comparisons of other studies are hardly to be made.

Question No. 1: Do you think the same model will apply to other Eastern European countries too?

Reply: This research incorporates well known framework for assessing sustainability of agricultural systems - SAFE (originally developed in Belgium) and which has been referred widely in literature. Our paper suggests inclusion of a new “fourth” (governance) pillar in the same framework. That more holistic approach can be used in all countries. In fact, our new framework has been studied and is being applied in a number of former communist countries like Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and Ukraine. Hopefully, my presentation will induce interests in scholars from other countries as well and I will find partners to cooperate in that new and prospective area.

Question No. 2: What is your research methodology?
Reply: I apply interdisciplinary methodologies of Sustainable Development and New Institutional Economics, which let me incorporate and assess all pillar of sustainability and all forms and mechanisms of governance. Most previous studies are at conceptual level, apply qualitative assessment mostly on national and international level, focus only of public and formal modes of governance. Our framework encompasses all modes and mechanism of governance – formal and informal institutions, market modes, private modes, public modes and hybrids, and all agrarian systems – national, sub-sectoral, ecosystem, regional, farming organisation. Our new framework will be presented in details in the paper.

Question No. 3: Why do you keep your study’s scope so limited, are you thinking of expanding the scope later?

Reply: That is just a first step to test a new methodological framework in an empirical study. Research in the area will be extended increasing representativeness, time-span and scope of evaluated agro systems in Bulgaria, and hopefully to make international comparisons on the near future. In fact, currently we are trying to use my new framework to make a comparative study between Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania.

Question No. 4: How do you think agricultural sustainability models from the East can contribute to circular economy for countries like Bulgaria?

Reply: Circular economy is high on agenda in EU and Bulgaria alike. In fact, some of the indicators in the Environmental pillar of our framework, including crop and livestock diversification, waste management, recycling, using renewable energy, etc. incorporate circular economy principles. However, comprehensive research in this important area is still waiting to be initiated in Bulgaria.