

Foreword

The book by Ms. Babyesiza fills an important gap in research in that it deals with changes of higher education governance in a post-colonial country ravaged by civil war. Babyesiza's focus on Southern Sudan is unusual in interdisciplinary higher education research, since changes in university governance – also in this book series – are mostly studied with regard to Western nations. The book provides interesting and important insights that go beyond the current state of research on university governance. Of note here is particularly the concept of the Islamist Public Management Regime developed by Ms. Babyesiza in this case, which combines elements of political Islam and New Public Management (NPM). This concept as well as its development provide a new and highly interesting look at the governance debate which opens comparative perspectives beyond Southern Sudan. These highly interesting perspectives are not only apparent for higher education research but also for African Studies and research on governance in places of limited statehood.

The book consists of seven parts. The first part, a brief introduction, describes the structure and objective of the analysis. The second part explains the theoretical-conceptual frame of reference and methodology. The frame of reference is the governance theory in political science which since the 1990s moves away from traditional models of governance theory. Furthermore, concepts such as good governance and New Public Management, which in the examined country are foremost disseminated by international organisations, also play a role. The research design consists of a case study. However, not the examined universities are understood as case studies, but the case is the university-governance-regime in Southern Sudan. This approach seems very plausible and well chosen since Babyesiza can thus focus on the particularities of higher education governance in Southern Sudan. Furthermore, this approach allows her towards the end of the book to provide comparative perspectives that go beyond the university level. The collection of data, which follows a discussion of the state of research, represents the basis for the later analysis. In this context, Babyesiza distinguishes between three sources of data. The first consist of written documents and archive material which mainly refer to the governments of Sudan and Southern Sudan as well as the three examined universities. Second, interviews were conducted, partly according to guidelines and partly open. Third, Babyesiza made direct

observations in the field. The data base is rich and well documented, as is the explanation for the choice of methodology. Here, the extremely difficult context of the data collection should be taken into account – in contrast to field research in an African nation torn by civil wars, field research in Germany or other Western nations seems to be a piece of cake.

Parts 3 – 5 represent the heart of the book in which three central and mutually connected aspects of the case study are described and discussed. First, the history of the Sudanese higher education system from colonialism until 2011, when Southern Sudan became an independent state, is traced. Of particular significance here is the peace agreement of 2005, which ended the civil war between the government troops of the North and the South Sudanese SPLM and introduced a phase of increasing autonomy of the South where Babyesiza's field research took place. The changing and partly overlapping influences she reconstructs in this part are of high importance for the understanding of the results of her field phase presented in the following two parts. The fourth part deals with the three universities examined in Southern Sudan. It reveals interesting similarities as well as differences. Thus, despite their different founding histories, all three universities are oriented to the nation state and the direct economic and social development of the nation. The teaching programmes are socially embedded and application-oriented. Particularly with regard to financial issues, but also by way of direct judicial regulation as well as issues of personnel, the state plays a central role in higher education governance.

In the fifth part of the book, the field of examined actors is expanded. Whereas the previous focus was on the individual university organisations, now the relevant environments with respect to governance issues as well as the internal governance actors are described in more detail. This entails an expansion and differentiation of the field of actors in which now also different governmental actors, the local community, international actors, as well as the university council, the vice-chancellor and collegial bodies play a role. Here, too, the aforementioned historical influences as well as new developments are of importance. This becomes apparent both in the description of functions and roles – the vice-chancellor is, on the one hand, the result of the British colonial history but, on the other hand, has much more decision-making power than his British counterpart and is much more strongly involved in the external political-administrative structure – as in the analysis of the governance regime. The latter is characterised by clear structures of hierarchy and instructions which lead to strict interconnections of the levels and courses of action within the university. Here, state governance actors, particularly in the North of the country, are of central importance. In contrast, Babyesiza does not consider the newly founded South Sudanese Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, societal stakeholders and internation-

al actors as belonging to the actors relevant for the governance of universities as they are not involved in the intentional coordination of higher education.

The description of the case has a clear structure, is well treated and easy to follow. Thus, the reader gets a clear and dense description of a highly interesting case. In the sixth part of the book, the results of the previous chapters are further sharpened. Higher education governance in Sudan is characterised by governmental steering, random intervention and obstruction by the state, forming of coalitions based on ethnicity framed by elements of New Public Management and political Islam. Universities in Southern Sudan focus on teaching profession- and profit-oriented programmes with a strong application orientation. Babyesiza summarises these results in the three topical areas of Islamist Public Management, Neopatrimonialism and Teaching for Development.

The final chapter of the book reveals the special analytical contribution which goes beyond the case analysed by Babyesiza. In the first part of the chapter, she uses the Travel of Ideas perspective to conceptually explain the development of the Islamist Public Management Regime. Subsequently, she applies the governance concepts of higher education research to her case. In particular the so-called governance equalizer serves as a heuristic in order to classify and extend the particularities of higher education governance in Southern Sudan. These extensions consist of deriving patrimonial steering and cultural self-governance, i.e. in particular ethnic identity, as additional steering factors from her case and to introduce them as further dimensions in the governance equalizer.

In the epilogue, Babyesiza discusses the developments in Southern Sudan since the time of her research. The republic of South Sudan has meanwhile become an independent state with a ministry of higher education that continues to pursue the republic of Sudan's policy of expanding higher education. Babyesiza focusses particularly on the problems that Southern Sudanese universities face due to the state's financial crisis, but also deals with the more recent violent conflicts in South Sudan, which brought the nation on the brink of a civil war.

Babyesiza's book is highly inspiring and there are three reasons for hoping that it reaches a broad readership, not only in academia, but also among those who deal with practical questions of development cooperation.

First, the case itself is highly interesting and enriches higher education research and education, African Studies and the failed-state discussion. These fields of research are addressed individually as well as in their interaction by Babyesiza's careful and methodologically diverse case study. In particular with regard to higher education research, which serves as the main intellectual system of reference, the chosen case requires a high degree of disciplinary transfers as

well as the academically competent and creative deviation from common research routines.

Second, Babyesiza succeeds in applying concepts of higher education governance, which often entail a Western or ethno-centric bias, to a case that, at first glance, seems to be maximally distant from these concepts (and the Western democracies on which they are empirically based). On the basis of the analysis the governance debate is extended by further dimensions, namely patrimonial steering and cultural self-governance, i.e. in particular ethnic identity. Building on these extensions, Babyesiza develops the concept of “Islamist Public Management” and it is to be hoped that she and others can test the range and fruitfulness of this concept in future works on other cases.

Third, Babyesiza is able to put common lines of thinking into question by not presenting her case as an exotic counterpart but by also pointing out the familiar in what appears to be foreign. Many lines of conflict, e.g. between state intervention and autonomy of universities or between the embeddedness in global contexts and the strong contextual dependence of university structures and processes, seem familiar. Moreover, is the steering dimension Babyesiza terms neopatrimonialism not also an aspect of higher education governance that is too easily neglected in idealised concepts of increasing autonomy of universities?

Georg Krücken

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The Nexus of Islamism, New Public Management and
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