

2 Concepts – Methodology – Data Collection and Analysis

The governance concept forms the guiding framework of this study. This chapter only offers a broad introduction to aspects that are important for the discussion of university governance in (post-)conflict states. Since the approach of the dissertation was inductive and the theoretical background only functioned as a broad framework in order not to bias the data collection, it is in the concluding chapter that theoretical concepts will be discussed against the background of the empirical results.¹⁰

2.1 Concepts

Governance has become a popular concept in the social sciences since the 2000s. The term can be traced back to different roots: The term governance was first used by Williamson. He used it for describing steering and coordination mechanisms of economic processes in his transaction theory (Benz & Dose 2010, Brunnengräber, Dietz, Hirschl & Walk 2004, Schuppert 2006). In the field of international relations the term governance was first used to describe governing without government. Another source is the use of the term good governance by international development agencies, especially the World Bank (Benz & Dose 2010:20, Schuppert 2006, van Kersbergen & van Waarden 2004:145).

In political science, one has to differentiate the term governance from steering theory. In German the two terms were translated synonymously although they offer different perspectives on political decision-making (Mayntz 2005:11, Mayntz 2009:14) The attribute of the theory of political steering is a central steering authority, a strict division between the object and the subject of steering and a Eurocentric democratic concept of the state (Mayntz 2005:12). In the 1970s and 1980s, the steering responsibility of the state was redefined striving to small government, more emphasis on market forces as a tool of more efficient regulatory structures and the outsourcing of thitherto government provided ser-

¹⁰ For an in-depth discussion see Benz & Dose (2010:13-36), Mayntz (2010:37-48) for a general introduction and Hüther (2010:85-106), Leisyte (2007:27-34) for higher education.

vices (New Public Management). This redefinition was accompanied by a widening of the perspective on steering towards the concept of the cooperative state which also included non-state actors. In contrast, the term governance describes the process as well as the structure of societal regulation (Benz & Dose 2010). Compared with the actor-centred theory of political steering, the governance concept is institutionalist and focusses on the way a things are steered or governed. The two perspectives do not rule each other out, but can be seen as complementary (Mayntz 2005:17).

There are three definitions of governance (Mayntz 1998, Draude 2007). In political science, the term governance, on the one hand, stands for non-state non-hierarchical decision-making, i.e. societal self-regulation and public-private cooperation, and, on the other hand, for all forms of collective regulation of societal circumstances, therefore, governance of, with and without government (Mayntz 2004:66). In sociology, governance stands for the handling of interdependencies and is a superordinate concept for basic forms of social order/modes of coordinating individual actions (Lange & Schimank 2004, Schimank 2007b). Hence the governance perspective encompasses, in addition to the role of the state, the role of societal actors like representatives of the private sector, civil society, churches and non-governmental organisations that are institutionalised and part of the political process (Brunnengraber, Dietz, Hirschl & Walk 2004:7). The governance concept is used in different ways. The first area of application are different sectors, i.e. economic governance, security governance or, in the case of this study, higher education governance. The second area of application is the political arena or level where governance takes place (Brunnengraber, Dietz, Hirschl & Walk 2004:7), i.e. local governance, national governance, global governance and if transgressing all these political boundaries, multi-level governance.

Van Kersbergen & van Waarden (2004) define nine different uses of the term governance: governing without government in international relations and as a form of local self-organisation, economic governance, network governance and as subsectors private networks and multi-level governance and three normative uses of the term, i.e. good governance in international development, good governance in the private sector (corporate governance) and good governance in the public sector (New Public Management). Taking into account these definitions and the focus of the thesis, the following concepts are of relevance for this study: multi-level governance due to the devolution of powers prescribed in the peace agreement, normative definitions of governance due to the influence of international organisations, i.e. good governance in international development and the public sector (New Public Management), and of course higher education governance.

The term multi-level governance describes regulations and processes, which was also called joint decision-making. The term was first outlined and elaborated in the study of political processes in the European and the international arena. As Benz said: “international politics is per se multilevel politics” (Benz 2005:97; translated by author). Multi-level governance is defined as “political regulation of societal problems or processes including public and private actors and the integration of local, regional, national and international levels” (Ziai 2006:2; translated by author). In (post-)conflict situations decisions are made by a combination of local and national public and private actors as well as international donor countries, non-governmental organisations and multilateral organisations. One could therefore say that multi-level governance is as prevalent in the European Union as in so-called failed states and can thus be a useful tool for researching post-conflict governance (Risse 2005:11). There are thus three reasons why the concept of multi-level governance might be useful for the current study. First, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement names the tertiary education sector as an area of concurrent powers between the national, regional and local governments (CPA 2005). Second, due to the civil war, education has for the last decades been a service provided by civil society, churches and international non-governmental and governmental organisations. Third, new public institutions, like ministries of education, finance etc., were established in the aftermath of the peace agreement. Based on these three elements, I concluded that universities in Southern Sudan might be regulated in a multi-level governance system.

Mayntz (2004:66) points out that governance as an opposite to hierarchical steering is often used by the World Bank and other development agencies as the normative term good governance. The term has become central to international development policy (König 2001) and is defined “as transparent, accountable and legitimate public actions within a stable legal order” (Stockmayer 2005:252). The rise of the term good governance was a reaction to the failure of neoliberal-inspired structural adjustment programmes and state failure in developing countries. The reform of the public sector by structural adjustment programmes originated not only from a firm belief in the free market, but also from a misconception of the constitution of the state. Fukuyama (2004) differentiates the scope of the state’s activities, i.e. the functioning and the goals of a government, on the one hand, and the strength of state power, i.e. the capacity to plan and execute policy and to enforce laws transparently and correctly. Through structural adjustment programmes, the state’s capacity as well as its scope were sharply reduced which did not lead to the expected results (Fukuyama 2004:21). The failure of these World Bank funded programmes was followed by the awareness that the state did have a role to play in development. The evaluation of structural adjustment programmes showed a clear relation between good governance and

efficient institutions, on the one hand, and economic growth and development on the other (Stockmayer 2005:254-5). Good governance is a highly normative term that stands for good polity, policy and politics in order to ensure economic growth. Thus while in the 1970s in the development cooperation arena the state was seen as the problem that had to be minimised, the end of the 1990s and 2000s were characterised by a utilitarian view on the state as a tool to achieve economic growth (Theobald 2002).¹¹

Good governance in the public sector – New Public Management – is a philosophy usually associated with reforms that entail the deregulation, the privatisation of public services and the introduction of management methods from the private sector to public sector organisations. The policy prescriptions of New Public Management can be divided into two dimensions: a macro dimension with respect to regulatory policy and a micro dimension with respect to the internal structure of public institutions. The macro dimensional reforms are the reduction of the scope of public service provision by delegating service provision to private actors through deregulation, privatisation and outsourcing. The application of management methods of private business organisations to public sector organisations with respect to more hierarchical management and management by objectives and the introduction of competition to the public sector are reforms with respect to the internal structure of public sector organisation (Hüther 2010:70, Schröter 2011:79).

The broad governance concept in its meaning as the handling of interdependencies forms the conceptual framework of the study. While this study is based on the sociological definition of governance, the two normative concepts good governance and New Public Management, as well as multi-level governance as a form of network governance also play a role.

2.2 Methodology

The aim of the study is to analyse the role of actors in state, society and universities, their constellation and the mechanisms they use. My research questions are:

- How are the three universities in Southern Sudan regulated?
- Which actors are involved in higher education governance?
- Which governance mechanisms can be observed and how do they relate to each other?

¹¹ Cf. Babyesiza (2007)

- To what extent are the established university governance typologies useful for describing university governance in post-conflict situations?
- Is higher education in Southern Sudan regulated in a multi-level governance system?

The case study research strategy will be used as a methodology, because the research questions do not focus on the “incidence or prevalence of a phenomenon” (Yin 2009:9), but on explanations; because I had no control over the behavioural events and it was not required and because the focus of the study is a phenomenon in its real life context. Those are the three aspects outlined by Yin (2009:8) that favour the use of the case study methodology. According to Putney (2010:117), “a series of decisions must be made concerning, the rationale, the design, the purpose and type of case study”. Stake classifies case studies according to three rationales: intrinsic, instrumental and collective case studies (Stake 1995, 2000). An intrinsic case study “is undertaken because, first and last, the researcher wants better understanding of this particular case”, and with an instrumental case study “a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization”. When a researcher chooses a “number of cases in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition”, it is called a collective case study (Stake 2000:437). Since I focus on the Sudan to get a deep understanding of this particular case as opposed to a general phenomenon, my study can be classified as an intrinsic case study. The case was therefore identified beforehand and its context and embedded units of analysis will be presented below. Yin divides case study designs based on research questions and their purpose: exploratory (what can be learned), explanatory (how and why - questions) and descriptive (thick description) case studies (Yin 2009:8). Therefore, my study is an explanatory case study. The decision about the design of the case study is based on extensive literature research for scholarly publications, dissertations and development reports on higher education in Sudan. The result was that most literature (e.g., Ibrahim 2007, Ramadan 2007, Ismail 1991, Kardaman 1982) focusses on Northern Sudan, or specifically on the University of Khartoum as the largest and oldest university in the country, while the South is omitted. Some articles and development reports (e.g., Sommers 2005, Blunt 2002) exclusively deal with education in Southern Sudan.¹² The role of universities was usually omitted in these reports which focused exclusively on the challenges of education in emergencies. Therefore an in-depth analysis is needed that takes into account the general higher education system and the universities in

¹² There are some old scholarly studies that also include educational development in Sudan like Beshir (1969) or that include the issue of education in general studies about historical developments in the South like Collins (1983).

Southern Sudan. I therefore used a single case study design with embedded units of analysis. The focus of my research was the emerging higher education system in Southern Sudan and its governance during the transitional period and post-conflict reconstruction. I therefore chose all three Southern Sudanese universities existing at the time as embedded units of analysis.

This means that the Republic of Sudan is the context of my study, the higher education system in Sudan is my case and the University of Juba (UJ), the University of Upper Nile (UNU) and the University of Bahr el Ghazal (UBG) are the embedded units of analysis.

2.3 Data Collection

An important aspect of the case study strategy is the use of multiple sources of evidence (Hartley 2004, Yin 2009, Lamnek 2010). The six sources of evidence for case studies according to Yin are documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts (Yin 2009:99).

I first started to gather information and literature on higher education in Sudan through internet research on online archives with respect to Sudan, websites of Sudanese embassies, dissertations provided online, online publications by international organisations engaged in education in conflict societies like the UNESCO and World Bank, and publications of non-governmental organisations active in education in crisis states. Based on this first research, I found out that there is a dearth of research on higher education in Sudan. The reference handbook for higher education in Africa (Teferra & Altbach 2003) lists ten scholarly articles and eight dissertations on higher education in Sudan. Since the Sudanese government only irregularly reports data on education to international organisations, reports on higher education in Sudan are mostly based on insufficient data. Due to the scarcity of the literature and the conflicting information concerning the status and the location of the universities, I therefore decided in line with the case study research strategy to use multiple sources of data. In addition to documents and archival records, I decided to conduct interviews and direct observation. In the following, I will discuss the methods of data collection used and how the heuristic framework helped to narrow down the type of data needed.

Since an in-depth study of organisations is not possible exclusively through text analysis and telephone interviews, part of the research process was a five-month-stay in Sudan with regular visits to the universities. All three universities had relocated to the capital of the country, Khartoum, in the North. The administrations and deans of the universities stayed in Khartoum, while part of the

faculties and colleges of the universities were still situated on campuses in the South or were about to be transferred back to their original location. I therefore spent the first two months (12.01.-17.03.2008) of my stay in Khartoum and then embarked on a two-month-trip to the South where I visited the campuses of the University of Upper Nile in Malakal (18.03.-07.04.2008), of the University of Juba in Juba (08.04.-01.05.2008) and finally the campus of the University of Bahr el Ghazal in Wau (01.05.-14.05.2008) in order to complement the data collection that had taken place thus far.¹³ The remaining month (15.05.-23.06.2008) in Khartoum was used to revisit former interviewees and to gather additional data based on the information received during my trip to the South.

I gained access to the field through German Sudan experts and their local contacts. Furthermore, I attended a conference on governance in South Sudan after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Bremen, Germany.¹⁴ Through this conference I got in contact with academic staff of two universities and already received important information through informal interviews, the results of which stood in stark contrast to parts of the document material gathered on the internet, which confirmed my doubts about a long-distance study.

As mentioned above, the governance concept forms the heuristic framework for the study. Governance is the intentional coordination of societal problems and the coordination system. In order to analyse the constellation of actors and the governance mechanisms used, I collected data with respect to the state, society and the individual universities.

2.3.1 Documentation and Archival Records

The documentation used in the case study were scholarly studies on higher education in Sudan, Sudanese newspaper articles and ads focussing on higher education in Southern Sudan as well as administrative documents and organisational records of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the three universities. Studies on higher education in Sudan were collected in Germany before and after field re-

¹³ Since foreigners were not allowed to travel to most of the parts of Sudan outside Khartoum, an additional travel permit had to be obtained from the Aliens Registration Control Central Office of the Sudan Police Headquarters for traveling to the South. I am indebted to the administrator of the local office of the former German Development Service, which is now part of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH for guiding me through that process.

¹⁴ The attendance of the conference was made possible by Elke Grawert who was the coordinator of the project "Governance and Social Action in Sudan after the Peace Agreement of January 2005: local, national, and regional dimensions" funded by the Volkswagen Foundation at the University of Bremen (<http://www.iwim.uni-bremen.de/africa/Sudan.Drittmittel/Governance.htm>).

search and during field research at several Sudanese libraries: Sudan Library, which stores all final theses of the University of Khartoum, the library of Ahfad University for Women, the library of the faculty of education of the University of Khartoum and the library of the Ministry for Higher Education and Scientific Research. The document search had only limited success due to the “intricacy” of local libraries. They are not well stocked and not properly ordered. Customers are sometimes not allowed to search for themselves and have to rely on the staff to find interesting studies. Copying is frowned upon and borrowing is not allowed. Thus, the document search only brought to light studies on school education in Southern Sudan and selected topics of higher education in Northern Sudan. During my interviews with stakeholders in state, society and universities, I asked for additional documents and archival records, i.e. public policy documents, higher education statistics and laws, information of admission of students, curriculum, the organisational structure of universities and organisational records on the number of staff, students, staff salaries and financial resources among others. The number and usefulness of documents I received from interviewees and staff vary from institution to institution depending on the respondents’ ability or willingness to assist in my research.¹⁵ Therefore, there is a lack of equivalence of the data collected in each institution.

2.3.2 Interviews

I conducted 34 formal and tape recorded interviews with members of the top management of universities and ministries of the national, regional and local level. I used different interview manuals for each group, i.e. public actors, University Council members, administrators, deans, international actors.¹⁶ The selection of interviewees was based on their function and position in universities, the state and society. Since I interviewed representatives in high-ranking positions, i.e. government officials, vice-chancellors and deans, the overwhelming majority of interviewees were male (cf. Littig 2009).

I gained access to the field in Germany via telephone through one of the vice-chancellors. In Sudan, it was his secretary who introduced me to some staff members at the University of Juba and to the leadership of the University of Upper Nile where she had worked before. Access to the University of Bahr el Ghazal had to be secured through a formal letter by my supervisor. Interviews at the universities were conducted after an appointment was made prior to the interview or spontaneously. Interviews took place in the offices of the universities

¹⁵ The same holds true for the number of interviews I conducted.

¹⁶ The interview guidelines can be found in appendix 3

which I visited daily. Sometimes appointments for interviews were not kept and had to be rescheduled. In a few cases, appointments had to be rescheduled several times until it became apparent that the interviewee did not want to participate in my research project. Concerning the external members of the University Council, it turned out that tracing these members was difficult, since university administrators had doubts about facilitating the contact. Owing to the good relationship I forged with some of the interviewees, I was able to talk to the chairman and a member of the council of the University of Upper Nile and the chairman of the council of the University of Juba. Furthermore, I talked to two academic staff of the University of Juba who were or had been members of the council of the University of Upper Nile and the University of Bahr el Ghazal respectively. The latter being the university where I conducted the least interviews and received the smallest amount of data due to the apparent suspicion of the vice-chancellor. He was reluctant to grant access to members of staff and to provide organisational records in order to control the information I received and did not want his interviews to be taped. That is why most of the data collected at the University of Bahr el Ghazal was obtained during my trip to the campus in the South, where the vice-chancellor was not present and the academic staff were therefore more forthcoming. I conducted 24 interviews with representatives of the three universities.

I gained access to employees of the ministry through interviewees at the three universities who provided contact information. Interviews were made after prior appointments via telephone or conducted spontaneously during an office visit. Interviewees were most forthcoming if I was accompanied by university staff who personally knew the interviewee. It turned out that for some interviewees my background as someone who is connected to someone they know was crucial information.¹⁷ I had also received a letter from the University of Juba stating the reason of my stay in Sudan and the topic of my research which was also helpful in accessing public servants at the local government level.¹⁸ In summary, my interview request had to be legitimised through personal contacts or official documents. Five interviews were conducted with representatives of the public sector.

External stakeholders in higher education are defined as representatives of organisations who are neither part of the science nor the education system

¹⁷Radsch (2009:95/96) uses the concept of *wasta*, translated as personal connections, and a modified or secularised concept of *isnad*, i.e. an unbroken chain of acquaintances known to the potential informants, in explaining the role of trust and gaining access in Egypt and Lebanon through personal relations.

¹⁸At the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Government of Southern Sudan in Juba, however, a new research permit had to be acquired in the department of research and innovation.

(Schimank 2007a).¹⁹ Since the access to external stakeholders in the University Council was limited by university staff, I decided to look for certain groups based on the academic calendar of the University of Juba, which lists all members of the University Council, and based on a general definition of higher education stakeholders and their role in decision-making. Therefore, I tried to get in contact with trade unions, chambers of commerce, women's organisations and political parties. It became increasingly evident during the research process that the named groups were – although partly mentioned in the academic calendar – not members of the council or in any other way involved in higher education governance. This also holds true for the involvement of international actors, which based on my hypothesis would in a post-conflict situation form a multi-level governance system with the different levels of government and external stakeholders. I gained access to these groups through local facilitators, i.e. staff of the university and drivers. Furthermore, through university staff I gained access to two higher education experts who were not members of the three universities. I conducted five interviews with representatives of society and the international community.

2.3.3 *Direct Observation and Informal Interviews*

Direct observation was also a tool used during the research process. I visited the universities daily and spent time in hallways and offices waiting for an interview or the opportunity to discuss open questions and make an appointment for an interview. Sometimes I would wait for hours talking to the secretaries, observing the visitors to the vice-chancellor's office or follow up on former interviewees with additional questions or spontaneous questions based on the observations I just made. While the administration and the leadership of the universities resided in Khartoum, some of the colleges and faculties were located in the South. During a two-month-trip to the three locations. I stayed in the staff quarters opposite the campus and visited the offices of the universities daily. I took tours of the campus, talked to employees and students and took photographs of the campus, the billboards with information for students and the organisational charts in the offices. One problem during observations was the language barrier. During conversations staff would use colloquial Arabic or their mother tongue, of which I have no in-depth knowledge. Therefore, I mostly observed behaviour followed

¹⁹ Some members of the University Council could also be defined as external stakeholders, but are subsumed under academic and administrative staff of universities (see Appendix 1: List of interviews).

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