



Higher Education in Afghanistan

Governance at Stake

Michael Daxner and Urs Schrade



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DFG Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 700

Freie Universität Berlin

Alfried-Krupp-Haus Berlin

Binger Straße 40

14197 Berlin

Germany

Phone: +49-30-838 58502

Fax: +49-30-838 58540

E-mail: sfb700@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Web: www.sfb-governance.de/en

Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft

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Foreword

Michael Daxner¹ and Urs Schrade²

Governance is neither a homogeneous field of research, nor are its diverse sectors equally accessible for investigation. Generally speaking, the main sectors of *Rule of Law* and *Security* are much better analyzed than the third sector, *Welfare Governance*. There are some good reasons for that deficiency, and some not as good ones, especially when it comes to areas of limited statehood (ALS). Good reasons are that all development in welfare domains, such as health, education and social security, is slow and often not rewarding when it comes to reputation, recognition and alliances. It is also clear that most areas of welfare governance are under heavy tension, like the other two fields, concerning fights over values, traditions and habits. But, in particular, education is a field that very often serves as a quid-pro-quo for much broader antagonisms in a society. Not so good reasons for the deficiency in linking education to governance research in the non-OECD world are either the education field being one of the “sovereignty” reserves of any state, irrespective how weak its statehood is developed and its potential for good governance is developed, or the fact that education does not play a significant role in state-building until it is too late, i.e. until the lack of education hampers all other areas of consolidating statehood.

The project C9 of the SFB 700 deals with security and development in North-East Afghanistan. While it may appear at first glance that education does not play a dominant role in our investigations, indeed, it will be marginally highlighted in this study, e.g. when it comes to the importance of girls’ schools or the education and training of government employees. Indirectly, we have learned and will continue to be aware of the impact of education on development and security. Education can, under different circumstances, contribute to both the stabilization and destabilization of a community.

This working paper provides a brief and condensed outline of Higher Education governance in Afghanistan. We will not be going into the prevailing theories on education and Higher Education in countries under intervention. However, since intervention is one of the most significant frames for analyzing anything in Afghanistan, and since the position of education and Higher Education is very significant for the framework of governance analyses at large, we hope to shed some light on a rather neglected aspect of welfare governance under the conditions of intervention (since 2001) and transition (the period till 2014).

¹ Michael Daxner is Professor of Sociology at the SFB 700 Free University of Berlin. His research is i.a. on Security and Development in Northeast Afghanistan and in Higher Education Planning Projects. His main field are societies of intervention and peace & conflict studies.

² Urs Schrade, MA, is a doctoral candidate, supervised by Prof. Daxner, and a research associate in the Project on Afghan Higher Education Landscape for the Foreign Office, 2012. He also is the main investigator in the SAR monitoring violence and violation of academic standards in Afghan Higher Education.

Education, more than Higher Education, enjoys the strongest attribution of being a common good; therefore, it should be governed and administered by the state³. Opinions regarding Higher Education are less unanimous, but the focus is in all cases on access, admission and enrolment as public goods, only challenged by a club-good mentality by the wealthy and political or ethnic elite. Since the enlightened age in the 18th cty., Higher Education has become a focus of dispute whether it can be regarded as a private good or a common good. The debate has been developed along the lines of ownership (who owns the universities, the state or private companies, or public non-state institutions?, profit-orientation (tuition or free study?)) and the legitimacy of the autonomous curriculum. We are not going into the details of the debate, but will make clear that the problem is not private or state ownership; the discussion is focused on the question, whether a common good is accessible for everybody who shows a certain qualification or whether admission is reserved to certain groups, giving them a specific advantage over others. The modes of delivery play a role as well as the *rule of law* that may or may not regulate selection criteria for admission and enrolment. Another question is whether the *state* should decide upon disciplines, curriculum, syllabi and research, or the *owners* should, or the *institutions* themselves can decide. The type of interdependence between the three actors is typical for the differentiation of Higher Education systems over time. Most of them are still attached to the nation-state. But upcoming globalization has shaken up the traditional leading models of Higher Education systems. The fight for the right models has also reached Afghanistan, where the issue of private and/or for-profit Higher Education is on the agenda; another issue that has yet to arrive is the integration of a research sector into Higher Education; some countries in the Soviet tradition, which is still strong in Afghanistan, tend to allocate research outside the universities in academies. For our context it is important to recognize that the relationship of both science and Higher Education with the state is one source of legitimacy the system of Higher Education is granted by the people.

Another base of legitimacy is the reward by graduating from a recognized institution of Higher Education. This reward can lie exclusively in cultural and social capitals without economic effect and little gain in power, it can become materialized in secure positions and a rise in career and payment, and, finally, it can be converted into economic and status gains by applying the qualification earned in Higher Education and its authorization for being accepted in some professions. For this act of *authorization*, the state is needed, even if the Higher Education field becomes totally privatized (this one of the few problems that OECD-countries share with the rest of the world).

Since Afghanistan is no exception in many aspects of Higher Education under development, we shall concentrate on significant and important features concerning governance, especially the *legitimacy* and effectiveness of Higher Education governance.

³ Some new references to the debate concentrate on globalization as having a dubious effect on the claim to maintain HE as a common good: Philip Altbach, one of the international peers in the discipline, is sceptical about the effects of globalization: Altbach (2013). A sociological approach is being developed by Naidoo: Naidoo (2003). A very good overview on the debate is given by Chambers/Gopaul (2008).

Table 1: Participation in education⁴

| | Primary Schools | Secondary Schools | Higher Education | Population |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 2003 | 1,8-2,3 m 2,6 m (WB) | 0,5 m 0,4 m (WB) | 34.000 22.000 (MoHE) | 22 m |
| 2010 | 5-6 m 4,9 m (WB) 5,4 m (MoHE) | 2 m 2 m (WB) | 70.000 | 27 m |
| 2012 | 6-7 m 5,2 m (WB) | 2,2 (WB) 2,0 (MoHE) | 70-100.000 | 29 m |

There are not many fields where legitimacy and effectiveness can be measured so clearly as they can be in the field of education. Legitimacy is given by legislation and administration of admission to school, by organizing fair and realistic catchments, hiring a large enough number of qualified teachers and providing a good curriculum *for as many young people as possible*. In other words, it is not enough to have some good teachers, some good curricula, some modern school buildings; it is the quantity that makes a system of education legitimate and links it to quite a few constitutional rights. This is one reason for the boisterous attitude of development collaborators in the Afghan intervention when they do “school count”, that is, when they measure the rise in the number of schools and rise in the number of students during the period of intervention.

But legitimacy is also conveyed by individuals – they must benefit personally from their share in the common good. This makes admission important for the link between the community and the individual; it is also a trigger the perception of legitimacy – *why not me, and why so many others?* The answer is closely linked to perceptions of fairness, just distribution, access to resources, etc⁵.

Legitimacy is given to any school system that accepts one’s children for low or no tuition and provides a career in education, being aware of the “deferred gratification pattern” (Schneider 1953)⁶, meaning that a good education with no income while studying will pay afterwards. The

4 Figures taken from Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoHE), World Bank (WB) and other sources, as well as our own research (thanks to Clifford Mann). All numbers are estimates; only the dimension is relevant (Germany speaks of 8 m schoolchildren in 2010 based on a population of 30 m (Bundesregierung 2010)).

5 Most of our theory on the systems and structures of education and Higher Education are based on the theories of Pierre Bourdieu. Since the 1970s they influenced European and American sociology of education. Among his most influential ideas are the concepts of habitus, cultural capital and the illusion of equality: cf. Bourdieu (1983); Bourdieu (1988), Bourdieu/Passeron (1971); Zembylas (2007), are among the texts that matter for our context. The ethnological and conflict-oriented research of Bourdieu will be mentioned later in this text.

6 This approach has been extremely influential during the period of education reforms in Germany in the 1960s and 1970s.

same is true to a certain extent in Higher Education. Here, however, we have a sharp town vs. countryside divide, because many parents from rural areas do not see the eventual rewards for investing in their children's education instead of having them available as working hands for the family as soon as possible. We will not go into this problem here, but when we discuss town vs. rural areas, it should be kept in mind.

An education system is considered *effective* if a large number of graduates find employment on an expected or even higher level, i.e. when the demands from the labor market are met by the mass of graduates. But this only seems simple; it is, in fact, not a simplistic formula at all. You need quite a few matching conditions in the economic system, in the status hierarchy of society and in the areas of symbolic capital that have an immediate impact on the effective governance in education, and the category of *efficiency* is one of the most crucial because good education and Higher Education are expensive. Since all education and higher education are susceptible to certain ideological, religious and cultural influences, governance in this area is far more political than, say, in road construction.

At the end of this foreword, we want to present five propositions and one thesis:

Five Propositions:

- (1) The education system as a sector serves all three established fields of governance: rule of law, welfare and security. This sector is functional for delivering public goods such as titles, entitlements, authorization and legitimacy (RoL), social and cultural capitals and transferable, status-granting qualifications (welfare) and for guaranteeing basic requirements for a society's security (and stability).
- (2) Within Education, the tertiary sector – here, Higher Education (HE) – is the key distributor of deliveries to all three fields.
- (3) Education plays a pivotal, though underrated, role in Afghan state-building and societal reconstruction.
- (4) There are specific conditions for Higher Education governance that are likely to appear in humanitarian interventions, irrespective of local and national particularities.
- (5) Good governance regarding Higher Education is the key factor in the equal development of all three fields. Good enough governance neglects the key principles of inclusive policies to serve these fields.

One Thesis:

The intervention of 2001 has failed to develop afghan Higher Education to prepare for handover of responsibility and liability to the Afghan people; up until now, the transition period 2011-2014, Higher Education has never been functional under the imperatives of afghan needs, nor has it been prepared for a continuous handover by the intervention powers.

Higher Education in Afghanistan – Governance at Stake

Michael Daxner and Urs Schrade

Abstract

Afghan Higher Education has become the most sensitive field of reforms on all levels of governance: rule of law, welfare and security. Compared to primary and secondary education, access to the universities is still a neuralgic point for status distribution and the stabilization of the entire system of education. Admission policies and traditional forms of reproducing disciplinary elites endanger a differentiated development of qualifications and diversified status. The Afghan system will need its own research in Higher Education, and then must develop a minimal base for disciplinary research. It is likely that Higher Education will play an important role during the transformation period 2014-2024 in fields like urbanization, emerging middle class elite, and serving schools by improved teacher training. It will be central to peace-building processes by comprehensive reforms in its governance structure. How much state will be needed in order to provide fair and equal access to the common good of Higher Education, and how much private and individual initiative must emerge in order to create quality and stability of the system? – These are central questions of this working paper.

Zusammenfassung

Das afghanische Hochschulsystem hat unter den Gewalteinwirkungen eines dreißigjährigen Krieges stark gelitten und kann die Erfordernisse eines modernen tertiären Sektors nicht erfüllen. Diese sind ihm durch die Intervention ab 2001 und die Aussicht auf eine Transformationsperiode 2014-2024 aber auferlegt. Die Governance von Hochschulsystemen greift tief in das Rechtssystem, in die Wohlfahrtspolitik und in die Gewährleistung von Sicherheit ein. Nicht nur Legitimation durch Statuszuweisung und Effektivität durch Allokation von Qualifikationen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt sind gefragt. Die Zulassungspolitik zur Universität kann schon vor der Politisierung durch die Hochschule zu gewaltsamer Destabilisierung führen. Die Einbettung der afghanischen Hochschulen in das globale System der akademischen Regeln wird ebenso erörtert wie Beispiele für Fehlentwicklungen und mögliche Reformen. Für weiteren friedlichen Aufbau sind bestimmte Voraussetzungen im Hochschulbereich auch deshalb zwingend, weil sie Entscheidungen über den Grad an Staatlichkeit und nichtstaatlicher Initiative festlegen sollten.

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1. Introduction

Recent interventions, post “post-colony” type are likely to produce certain kinds of societies of methods of intervention (Bonacker et al. 2010; Daxner 2010b; Distler 2009; Free 2010; Koehler 2010). Action-oriented implementation concepts, such as sequencing by (Blair/Srinath 2008), do not refer explicitly to such societies. The aspect of governance in such societies of intervention has been set as a unique and not repeated example never before or after in Kosovo, where the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was a peacekeeping operation with full authority to act as state authority. Between 1999 and 2001, UNMIK acted as a state and not *like* a state. The history of this Serbian province after 1945 contains an abundance of conflicts within society and consequently also in its education systems. Most significant was the role of Higher Education in stepping up the conflict, agitating and providing the armed insurgency after 1989 with ideological and personal support. Thus, it is not surprising that the universities played a significant role under the rule of UNMIK after the intervention of 1999 as well. However, while this was widely recognized and reported in the policy community,¹ remarkably little systematic research has been pursued on the topic. The first comprehensive and sound study in retrospect was published in 2011 (den Boer/van den Borgh 2011); this overview does support – briefly – the propositions made above. One of the lessons to be learned from the authors is the need of sufficient time to evaluate the history and the stories of Higher Education governance under the circumstances of intervention.

Circumstances of intervention produce for a certain period of time a society that is more than an addition of elements of both the intervened and the interveners’ societies. This must affect governance beyond the question of how far the monopoly of violence is attained by the state; normally, statehood in such societies is fragile or limited, but the modes of governance do not follow the logical development of statehood. This is, at least partially, due to one of the most consequential and least recognized facts of all societies of interventions: the *difference between those conflicts that are causal for the interventions – “root conflicts” – and those conflicts stemming from the intervention itself*. More often than not the latter conflicts are interpreted by the interveners in terms of the former, which creates heavy semantic rifts (the semantic aspect of conflict theory was a significant segment in the C9 Application of extension (2013) and in Jan Koehler’s dissertation of 2013).

We can rely on numerous studies on the effects of interventions on diverse areas of governance. However, these areas are quite unevenly distributed. Prevailing research concentrates on security, the rule of law and economic and infrastructural fields within welfare governance, whereas health and – even more so – education, Higher Education – are being rather neglected or underrated (Daxner 2003a; Daxner/Schrade 2012). We should consider the reasons for this deficiency before analyzing the special case of Afghanistan. Education and Higher Education

¹ Michael Daxner has written and reported widely about both the experience of acting as a key representative of UNMIK and his reflections on his role as a social scientist. However, his views are certainly biased by personal experience and subjective judgment, and – more importantly – by too little distance in time as to present conclusive results in both research and policy assessment.

sectors are likely to be destroyed by violent conflicts and wars, as they are likely to become reconstructed slowly and insufficiently by any post-conflict regime. They are slow systems in and of themselves, i.e. a large number of actors have the opportunity to interfere with their systematic restructuring. Furthermore, less than primary education, Higher Education is not a sector where interveners can gain reputation or gratitude from their own constituencies, because any success in this area will appear only much later, after the actual interveners are no longer on site (the difference is estimated to be between 5 and 15 years). Another problem, and one that remains remarkably true for all recent interventions, has been that the education sector was never included in negotiations for truce, transitional government, legal improvisation or, preferably, as a key sector for sustainable stability. This lesson has been one of the key tasks of the authors with regard to Afghanistan, and it was a major motive for Daxner's decision to include HE in concepts of security and the rule of law, rather than restrict it to development and cultural cooperation. There appear in all cases of societies of intervention two almost self-evident (self-explaining) dilemmas:

- (1) The interveners' ideas on education compete with or are incompatible with those of the intervened. In many cases (Kosovo, Afghanistan), there is also competition among interveners and among the intervened actors on concepts and implementation of envisaged changes in the system.
- (2) The institutions in the society of intervention have to rely vastly on those teachers, curricula, rules of authorization and public opinion that may have been sources of the root conflict. Degrees are the representative of authorization, if no binding norms on qualification exist. This is an example of symbolic capital becoming effective.

These dilemmas have an effect on modes, legitimacy and effectiveness of Higher Education governance. Since the effects of education can be best measured on the bottom level of society (micro-social effects, life-world adherent), we have to consider the movement of Higher Education policies on the trajectory of welfare governance from system-level to life-world level.

2. Governance and Higher Education

There is hardly another field in society that is as interconnected with different aspects of governance and, yet at the same time, so underrated in its relevance for good governance as Higher Education. Higher Education has become the first totally global institution, far ahead of economy and supra-national politics; it has bypassed other institutions, such as family, public administration or communication in adopting a set of rules and structures that are valid worldwide. Alternative options for replacing some of the global features of Higher Education systems have so far either failed or resulted in a dramatic loss of effectiveness and quality.

Let us accept this statement without going into the details of its historical and political background. The worldwide structure of Higher Education has been closely attached to the development of European cultural and economic hegemony since the Middle Ages, and is thus imperative to colonial, imperialist and post-colonial discourses. Though we may judge the

“occidental”² colour of these discourses, the results of Higher Education are strikingly isomorphic; universities and other institutions of tertiary education look alike no matter where they may be located, their internal structure is rather uniform and their competitive differentiation is rather limited, though functional.

A few mainstream varieties of the academic world, e.g. the German tradition of a unity of teaching and research, the French orientation towards state-borne interests in knowledge production and application and the British debate on personality development apart from qualification can be found following the days of the great academic reforms following enlightenment and nation state building. The remnants of these models can be seen in all post-colonial societies, according to the respective former colonial powers³. Of course, there are more modeling impacts, e.g. from the Soviet Union’s foreign aspirations, or from the United States’ strategy to implant their structures wherever they are seeking hegemonial influence. A rather homogeneous institutional and structural pattern of operating Higher Education is found in contemporary universities, where all these aspects of education become intertwined. This is because the globalization of the nexus qualification-employment has become dominant. We see only a limited variety of relations between the system of Higher Education and the Science System⁴, which is equally globalized, although with some different functions regarding the nation-state or government⁵. Regarding Afghanistan, we shall put aside this aspect, as the country does not yet possess a significant share in the Science System, i.e. there is no research base at all. Consequently, the impact of authorization and the conveyance of status dominate all functional education and qualification functions.

Of course, within these globalized types of institutions, there are some major differences in certain respects, especially regarding quality, social equality and the effects on governance.

2 This corresponds primarily to a discourse started by Max Weber (Weber (2001)). In the course of a differentiated politico/linguistic development, the notion of *Occidentalism* has been often opposed to “Orientalism” (Edward Said), but also to a flat and ideological concept of simple “Western culture”. There is no equivalent counterpart to “Western” in this discourse, but the politically correct notion is frequently “Islamic” values or concepts.

3 The history of the university has always been torn between historians and sociologists. While there is no authoritative single text, the concepts – as described above – are all similar, and they are “European” in the sense of “Western” (cf. Weber FN 7). A systematic institutional approach can be found with Bourdieu: Bourdieu (1988)

4 Without fully applying Luhmann’s system theory (Luhmann (1997); Luhmann (2002), the distinction between the Science System and the System of HE follows his pattern. At least, it works well on the level of describing the communication between the two systems that are intertwined; more important is the fundamental difference between the two, cf. Zieherm (2010).

5 The independent variable in this case is always the Higher Education system, irrespective of the level of research, under the condition that a minimum quality of knowledge base or research potential is provided. Authorization and licensing functions belong to the Higher Education system. The science system is intervening in Higher Education and provides variance – from Ivy League and other elite universities down to almost insignificant knowledge resources beyond common wisdom. The dependent variable is effectiveness, expressed by the “real” capacity of the Higher Education system to place the graduates in licensed occupations and to provide them with advantages in gaining social and cultural capital. Only in advanced OECD-countries is the research – i.e. science system – factor included in HE institutions, which creates the imbalance of disadvantaging study against research.

While quality has a few characteristics that determine acceptable or rejected accreditation to the world-wide community of Higher Education, and while the social aspect determines in many cases the ability of Higher Education to stabilize or dynamise social strata or classes, the question of governance has rarely been in the center of Higher Education policy – except in times of revolution or fundamental societal changes.

It would be tempting to discuss the reasons for this deficiency. Higher Education – more concretely, “the University” – belongs to a class of institutions that seem to be partially inaccessible to concepts of governance, like sports, the military or the churches. One assumption is that this resistance stems from almost anachronistic armor in a “philosophy” specific to the institution. Of course, Higher Education is different from other institutions in this class; theories of Bourdieu still understand the main specifications of Higher Education beyond diverse political environments (Bourdieu 1988). Bourdieu also has been the staunchest critic of social progress “through” education, while nevertheless accepting the indirect profit individuals and social groups can gain through accumulation of social and cultural capitals. Higher Education avoids major changes by simply claiming that its philosophy is alien to any reform, which, in the case of Afghanistan, is somehow paradoxical, as the Higher Education system became dysfunctional a long time ago, but is defended in terms of mature university cultures by many of its members.

When using a rough and simple description of the discourse on governance as it is leading research in the SFB 700, we distinguish between the dimension of the **rule of Law**, the field of **welfare-governance** and the aspect of **security**. All three dimensions are affected in the permanent struggle of Higher Education to remain a Public Good or to change from a Collective Good into a Club Good or Private Good. And all these dimensions are under scrutiny when it comes to deciding **how much state(hood)** must be included in the tertiary sector education in order to keep it “public”. While this debate is ongoing in the OECD-world under frames such as *knowledge society, global mobility, life-long learning and standards of excellence*, shaky states and fragile statehood are facing quite different problems. Apart from chronic underfunding and a lack of minimum quality on all levels of required performance, many countries have not found a way to integrate their tertiary education into a coherent system of governance. **The state is needed** in these countries on very different levels, with a highly diverse set of abilities. Emerging economies need a certain solid and stable statehood for *licensing* degrees and *authorizing* professional applications and the order of professions for the market. Less statehood is needed in question of *ownership* of the respective institution, but then welfare-governance is asked for when it comes to *tuition fees* and the *social environment* of students and faculty. The problem of public and/or private ownership is a typical product of the OECD world, because here universities compete on a high level of accumulated knowledge, prestige and status attribution. All these aspects exist in developing countries as well, but depend, more on the rules that make the university attractive to certain social groups, ideological camps (religious or secular), reproduction schemes of elites and simple profit expectations, rather than on whether an institute is private or state-owned. The state is also needed in many cases when it comes to *accreditation, international exchange, visas for students and foreign faculty, the social protection and pension plans*

for faculty, etc. There are a few areas, however, where functioning Higher Education without some statehood is barely imaginable:

Security as a function of demography, participation in Higher Education and the positioning of young generations

- **Town and Countryside** and “Town and Gown” conflicts
- **Status** attribution
- **Human Rights:** gender issues, minority protection and cultural diversification

Most important is the impact of the state on behalf of **academic freedom and institutional autonomy**.

This list is not self-explanatory; one imagines these issues could be handled separately from state and government in developed countries like the U.S. and wealthier Western countries, where statehood is functionally substituted by professional associations, private foundations and quite a few public-private partnerships. In other parts of the world, there are practically no examples where non-state governance is able to tackle all these issues in a comprehensive way that makes investing in the institution make sense. In other words, only when the Deferred Gratification Pattern (cf. FN 5) is applicable is the main focus on students as the core of Higher Education likely to remain stable. For a long time, this model (Schneider 1953) has been a leading concept for Higher Education reforms; only in the midst of the 1968 unrest was it challenged, but even then it did not end up truly being replaced.

The contribution of Higher Education to diverse sectors of good governance will be briefly explained here along the lines of the short list of categories as listed below

- **Security** is affected in many ways by Higher Education. Traditionally, one would suspect that ideologically and theoretically well-trained students are only a *threat* to stability, such as in situations where rebellions stem from academic unrest or where universities are a hatching ground of insurgence⁶. However, the opposite is also true. Educated people aspire to become part of the future elite, to focus on social change and to impact ruling discourses. While the threat to security may or may not come from inside academia, the acute danger is *before and after the status passage of study*; before, when those who seek admission remain outside and don't want to stay on the waiting list forever, and after, if placement and a timely transition into employment disappoints the expectations in the gratification scheme through Higher Education. Both groups are susceptible to ideological impregnation, and more open to violent

⁶ We see such striking examples in Kosovo between 1989-1999, preceding the intervention.

and abrupt political action, than those inside academia. This is an imminent problem in the Afghan situation of transition.⁷

- The security threat correlates with the importance of **status attribution** through study and an academic degree. In poor societies, an academic degree, especially in a few distinguished professions (Medicine, Law, Engineering, sometimes Divinity) may be one of the few status symbols that can fortify the social status of a family, clan or network. It depends on the depth of intrusion into the system whether governance can use the Higher Education system as an effective hinge for distributing status along the lines of power – or along lines of envisaged social change. There are very few societies where the teaching professions rise to the top of status hierarchy, though professors and members of the top research institutes enjoy high regard.
- “Town and countryside” is an important aspect of national governance. Higher Education has an overwhelmingly urban tradition and genealogy. However, if it attempts to bring tertiary education to the countryside, this may result in major social changes and a rather differentiated development of social strata in remote areas. Thus, the deliberate allocation of Higher Education resources to poor rural areas has a significant impact on welfare governance at large. “**Town and Gown**” is the short formula for the economic impact of Higher Education. In many cases, universities are tax exempt and become wealthy and rich islands in poor environments, which is a substantial challenge for good governance on all levels, especially if the university uses its juristic and institutional autonomy to allow itself a certain exemption from the local rule of law. The relationship between Higher Education and the community is often a rather underdeveloped field of governance. This refers to the conflicts between academic habitus and local attitudes as well.
- There are quite a few relevant intervening variables in good governance, such as **gender democracy, minority protection and cultural diversification**. These are never accidental when it comes to Higher Education planning and policy. When these aspects are ignored or underappreciated, they may develop into major sources of conflict. In most cases, it is the state that imposes rules that are more sensitive towards the specific constituencies of high-aiming values (gender equality, inclusiveness, diversity), while the institutional powers tend towards a more conservative defense of the status quo. Academic unrest is often a forerunner to broader social movements on such issues.
- The most important role of the state, apart from licensing and authorizing, is the protection of **academic freedom and institutional autonomy**. We do not know of any **sustainable** system of Higher Education in which these principles are not protected either by the constitution or special legislation. At the same time, the state regularly endangers the same principles by intervening whenever its power of defining discourses and policies is challenged by academia; thus universities often defend their

⁷ Cf. Daxner/Schrade (2012). This was the original motivation to approach the Foreign Office. In the Report of 2011, the Foreign Office reserves just a few lines for the problem: Bundesregierung (2010), 63f.

privileges against those instances that are meant to protect them. This plays an enormous role in constructing a cross-system governance that is functional for all three sectors, i.e. scientific (scholarly), professional (educational), and economical (labour market). If you deliver into one sector, how can you safeguard the stability of the other two? It is noteworthy that such an interplay does not occur when there is no state interference; in this case, academic freedom is a mere function of effectiveness, i.e. it is granted if it promotes the outcome of research and training without giving away too many effects to competitors or an uncontrolled public.

- We should add two rather important sectors that influence governance on all levels. One is the pivotal role of Higher Education in teacher training for all levels of elementary and secondary education. With this massive constituency one can reach a good part of any nation, reaching meaning educating, influencing, manipulating; it means shaping mindsets and convictions, critical abilities and affirmative complacency among the direct contact persons, not only for the younger generation, but for their parents and peers as well. Secondly, the agency training and education of school teachers has a hand in the (relatively speaking) largest civilian workforce of any developing system. This has an indirect impact on all kinds of governance, from labour relations to competition over payment with security forces and civil administration.

This is only a very brief introduction into a field that has been regularly marginalized in conflict areas, and especially in governments set up as a consequence of (military, humanitarian) interventions.

3. Higher Education in the Society of Intervention

All of this applies to **Afghanistan**, as it would to any country with a tertiary sector. There are quite a few direct and indirect links to the research we are doing in C9, which is focused on villages and districts in North East Afghanistan. Education is an important category and indicator for certain analyses of local networks; interface with professional training always allows insights into the changes in social stratification and differentiation. The security aspect is obvious, if there is correlation between the origin of high school graduates and their later attempts to get admitted to Higher Education. In order to understand the present situation in Afghanistan, we should distinguish between the expected function of the tertiary sector (i.e. universities and post-secondary education) and the conditions under which such systems can function in a society of intervention and conflict.

However, let us try to cover some basics first before we investigate this situation (which is similar in other societies of intervention) further. From “universities”⁸ we expect the delivering of scientific and analytical support of government and the provision of expertise to political and

⁸ The title “university” in place of college, polytechnic, institute etc. is eagerly sought by the institutions, in order to gain reputation with students and their parents, and thus, indirectly, with the social environments of graduates. On the ethno-linguistic quarrels about naming universities see Rzehak (2012).

cultural peers (it is as yet unclear if foreign interveners are also addressees of the services by Afghan universities). The function of formation (“Bildung”) is not regarded as highly important in reality, as the context of class and status is not traditionally linked to the Western type of social and cultural capital. Universities influence the future texture of culture through teacher education and professional retraining. In Afghanistan this is even more important than elsewhere because the reconstruction of the school sector has by far overtaken the development of Higher Education. Universities can only succeed when assuring international and inter-institutional communication in a field that is already globalized and does not depend excessively on *national* particularities; however, developing critical capacities and a communicative spirit among the young generation is a very specific local and national endeavour. In societies under reconstruction, universities should help create a strong status group across social strata and a democratic elite for future leadership and public office. This is related to the aim of strengthening statehood by serving as a distributor of titles, authorization, professional licensing and formal augmentations to status and reputation.

This list is certainly not exhaustive. Before we turn to the special case of Afghanistan, we have to recognize a few conditions set by institutional history and tradition and by globalization. The tension between state and statehood on the one side and local governance on the other is significant in the education sector. This is the case in Higher Education; it also implicates the strained relations between central government and local governance and the relation between cities and towns on the one side, and villages and remote rural areas on the other. Only recently, i.e. after 2009, has there been a vague effort to increase the availability of Higher Education in the countryside, mainly by building institutes of Higher Education in some provinces, and by licensing new universities, which often contain only faculties of education and agriculture. Most of these institutions are just blueprints; in any case, it is too early to predict whether they are sustainable.

3.1 Global, European and Local Universities

Afghanistan has never prominently sought close connections with the international community of higher learning (other than in the field of general education, where the government of Amanullah Khan (1917-1929) led the ground for a certain catch-up with modernity – but this is in the very distant past) (Barfield 2012: 164pp.; Ruttig/al. 2011). The Soviet intervention, as a spin-off, fostered direct contact with a highly elaborate and functional system of Higher Education. Since then, Afghanistan’s tertiary sector has entered a road of no return: academic standards, hierarchies, rewards and degrees and, most importantly, a certain mode of governance, have deeply influenced all of Afghan Higher Education – till today. The Djihad, the Mujaheddeen, the Taliban could not extinguish this influence, but the system eroded and became diffuse. When the Western intervention began to gain influence on welfare governance, primary education received priority, while Higher Education remained in the background (cf. Daxner and Schrade 2012). However, it was clear to all universities and the respective ministries (Higher Education, and for parts of teacher training, Education) that a re-integration into the regional (i.e. South Asian) and global communities of Higher Education was desirable for the new sys-

tem. Only recent nationalistic ideologies and a strong value threat have created a less favorable climate for that endeavor. Several of the major donor countries, with the U.S. at the helm, and Germany still playing an important role, try to support reforms in direction of this integration, but have increasingly become ineffective through a misguided idea of Afghan ownership (see later: page 30).

In order to not become denounced as post-colonial advocates of global (=Western) ideas of Higher Education, let us take a short look at this field. We speak of *global* universities when considering the numerous strong networks of institutions, i.e. rules and procedures that structure all tertiary institutions of some reputation. While in former periods universities were central to nations' self-esteem, today the transnational element of a global academic structure prevails. This creates substantial tension as the process of globalization meets post-colonial and neo-nationalist resistance, especially when it comes to the function of universities serving a national ideology. This aspect is important for several reasons: Afghanistan must *internationalize* its universities within the *global* system in order to establish the necessary contacts in research and study. But international contacts are always political: e.g. joining the South-Asian Rectors Conference has other implications than looking for a European or East Asian option. Among donors there is a certain competition for afghan affiliations: if afghan universities accept aid or money they should be inclined to take over elements from the donor's system of Higher Education.

Higher Education as we know it today exhibits an explicit *European* structure and appearance, and will lose it by becoming globalized and transnational. The universities have older roots; in the strict sense their origin is in the Golden Age of Islam in the 8th – 10th centuries and the Almohavid Empire in Spain in the 11th century, but their lasting significant characteristic universities received in Bologna and Paris in the 12th century. The Bologna and Paris models have formed our image of universities till today: the ideal unity between scholars and students, the high level of internal participation, the principles of academic freedom, and many functions had been established at this early stage. The functions slowly changed according to the development of European societies; the separation of faith and science, the rising of the middle classes, the differentiation in qualification needs, the diversification of knowledge and classification etc. all played a role in this process. Colonialism and the making of the nation state were perhaps the most influential re-adjustments in the structure of universities, and they explain why, beyond any reasoning, the worldwide features of Higher Education are "European"⁹. The European structure of the university is expressed through its organization of faculty and the arrangement of subjects, by its teaching routines and its basic educational endeavour and by its permanent struggle for academic freedom and autonomy. This struggle has not ended in any Higher Education system and is in fact global today, as is the network of Higher Education. With regard to globalization, Higher Education is a forerunner. Standards, rating and ranking, trans-disciplinary exchange and communication have overcome national concerns. The transnational organization of Higher Education is like an anticipation of a world culture; in

⁹ We do not automatically equate "European" with "Western". We shall refer back to this later in our argument.

any case it is trans-national.¹⁰ This is an overall positive and peaceful outlook on Higher Education. However, there are many deficiencies, dangers and risks that darken this bright picture. Some of the main reasons for a multi-cause discontent with universities and Higher Education can be found in the antagonistic view of particular interests and in general misunderstandings about the functions of Higher Education. Business has a narrow view, focused on applicable skills; the government has a narrow view and wants scholars to comply with national and ideological imperatives; industrial lobbies want to exploit research results while not paying for them, etc. Democratic systems and good governance in Higher Education can cope with these antagonisms, but never can erase them totally; systems with poor governance and less expert Higher Education policies have more problems. Malfunctions of Higher Education are caused by continuous under-financing, which occurs for various reasons. One of them is that business often thinks Higher Education needs more free market and the power to create its own income. Higher Education is not a business, even if some of its parts operate like businesses. This also leads to attacks from business and industry about the poor qualifications of graduates, which may be true in many cases. On the other hand we find the discontent exhibited by many experts and students to be because of their inappropriate positioning in the spectrum of disciplines. Another area of deficiencies lies in the conflicts between students and the owners of universities about the students' social status, tuition fees, study conditions, teaching quality and campus restrictions. There are struggles of faculty over salaries, working conditions, promotion and recognition. And, last but not least, there is the conflict between "town and gown".

Everybody in Higher Education will immediately recognize these types of deficiencies and conflicts and refer to the many successful or failed attempts to reform the system. *Permanent reform is a significant ingredient of Higher Education, everywhere and at any time.* The delivery of collective public goods under the permanent stress of change is a big challenge to welfare governance. This is a similar phenomenon to those observed on the local level in those communities, which must be open to adaptive change in order to maintain their social order. Higher Education is, despite its need for permanent reform, "conservative". Its credibility is based upon a long-term stability of its structure. But there are other conflicts that come from a deeper layer of social problems; universities tend to be seismographs of political instability. Many protest movements world-wide have their origin in the university, and they are feared by those in power, the perception depending on the frontlines between rule and discontent. Dictatorships tend to shut down universities or to marginalize them, until the rulers realize that their national economy and the expertise needed for ruling suffer equally from the suppression of academic freedom and the curtailing of quality. A fully developed dictatorship would be required to significantly damage Higher Education. Restraints on curriculum for religious or ideological reasons, bureaucracy, corruption at admission, exams and graduation, discrimination of specific groups, etc. are other ways of disciplining academia. All of this is why Higher Education is permanently under political scrutiny.

¹⁰ It would be rewarding to link this aspect to John W. Meyer's outlook on a world-society that combines democracy and progress while simultaneously individualizing human rights (cf. Meyer 2005).

We want to add some more signifiers to all institutions of Higher Education. It is necessary to list them because, very often, as in the Afghan case, planning reduces the institution to its merely functional core, with little consideration for the social and political impact of each reform. First of all, universities are *slow systems* – “slow” implies here that rituals, traditions and symbols change slower than social dynamics in the environment, and it also means that time between decisions taken within the university and between the institution and the state or a partner take a long time, especially when it comes to appointments of faculty or changes in the curriculum. Another characteristic of Higher Education is that it plays an integral role in the power games in a society, including the symbolic representation of values, ideas, ideologies and trends. Terminologies and ideas are formulated, if not always created, in Higher Education. Universities demand continuous care of their properties, such as academic freedom and institutional autonomy; this implicates the demand for recognizing their authority in defining the interface between laypersons and experts cultures, as no ministry or board can regulate all of these domains. This claim of the universities certainly has no deep roots in most post-colonial Higher Education systems and is indeed one of the more dangerous trigger points in relations between the state and the universities. That is one reason why private Higher Education is mushrooming even more pronouncedly in post-colonial societies than in developed capitalist societies¹¹. Most private institutions on the tertiary level operate on the rather unpretentious level of mere training, thus avoiding any controversy about competing ideas and academic freedom; these are critical to the RoL aspect of Higher Education. **Good governance is challenged by the private institutions because they are dealing exclusively with club goods, and their intention is to get their delivery recognized as “public” through the recognition of the institution’s titles.** In countries with limited statehood and badly functioning administration, this claim falls prey to either corruption or devaluation of titles. Both are equally detrimental for good governance. We also see an interface with Higher Education and its role in education and the formation of mature, critical personalities and mindsets. Over the centuries, it has been less the normative impact of this role, but rather its practical outcome that has allowed for the survival of the universities. Moral and intellectual roles cannot be replaced by standards of efficiency and quick impact, imagining a free market for trained competences. Since Higher Education delivers its products over the long term only, the outcome of each single reform is difficult to measure. Politics and idealistic programs as well as the claims from the science system want Higher Education to be part of the public space and to translate science into comprehensible orientation and knowledge for lay persons. The credibility of Higher Education depends on its capacity to identify problems and to offer solutions, which includes “criticism of reality”. The university demands respect and recognition of its expertise and its authority does not like to be challenged by popular ideologies. Finally, universities compete with each other, for students, reputed professors, research contracts and impact on diverse markets. Yet, there is also the solidarity of all members of Higher Education to shield their institutions from undue influence by particular groups, from misdemeanor and from corruption (reality is clearly different from this concept, and less resplendent; however, the modes of legitimacy more often than not rely on this idealistic frame).

¹¹ Cf. www.mohe.gov.af/?lang=en&p=private. Retrieved 2013-04-22. One example out of many: Royee (2011).

This is a quite normative framework. It is accepted and propagated by the majority of Higher Education associations and advocacies worldwide, such as UNESCO, IAU (the International Association of Universities), regional Rectors Conferences such as the SARC (South Asian Rectors Conference) and by many disciplinary and professional associations. Therefore, it is essential for any Higher Education system to be part of this transnational network. With regard to academic freedom and the ethical core of Higher Education, organizations like the Magna Charta Observatory¹² are strong guardians of principles that must be defended permanently.

It is obvious that these high standards and demanding norms are being challenged from diverse sides. We will not engage in general considerations on how to face them here, but rather concentrate on concrete and detailed circumstances of a system of Higher Education, in our case for Afghanistan. It is this case that will allow us to describe the security dimension of governance.

3.2 Afghanistan

Let us shift attention now to the Afghan case. Before coming to the analytical part, we shall lay out some basic facts on the current state of Higher Education in Afghanistan. This will provide a sound base from which to map the role that Higher Education plays in the current state building process and to portray the links to different areas of governance.

In Afghanistan, a population of at least 28 million lives on a territory of more than 600.000 km². School attendance increased from 2,3 million to 8,6 million between 2003 and 2011. Public universities and institutes of Higher Education host ca. 100.000 students, and their cumulated admission capacity is ca. 40.000. The waiting list of students who are seeking admission is 160.000 in 2012 and likely to rise to 500.000 by 2014. The prognosticated increase of capacity in public Higher Education is 15% p.a., while the budget increase in the long run shall be 5% gross, i.e. with adjustment for inflation. The data for private Higher Education are volatile, but a conservative estimate counts ca. 200 establishments of private tertiary establishments, of which not more than 10-15 can be regarded as serious institutions of higher learning. Since private education is free to charge high tuition fees, little quality is sold for maximum profit. Apart from the American University (AUAF) and very few followers, private Higher Education does not seem capable of bridging the gap between state governed and private governance in delivering basic needs for the sector; however, in terms of the major aspects of status distribution by admission, private education and Higher Education may get strong impact from private actors, especially in delivering symbolic capital for the status aspiration of the new middle classes.

¹² The Observatory of the Magna Charta Universitatum is an advocate for academic freedom and institutional autonomy set up in Bologna in 1988 at the 900th anniversary of the founding of Europe's oldest university. It monitors the status of academic freedom in diverse systems. Former Minister Fayez (2001-2005) was a strong supporter of the Observatory and made a remarkable contribution in 2007 at the anniversary celebration. Fayez (2008).

Table 2: Public Higher Education¹³

| No. | Name of Educational Institution (incl. official website) | No. Students | No. Academic Staff |
|-----|--|--------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Albiruni University Gulbahar (http://au.edu.af/en) | 1643 | 70 |
| 2 | Balkh University Mazar-e-Sharif (http://ba.edu.af/en) | 5781 | 259 |
| 3 | Bamyan University (http://bu.edu.af/en) | 616 | 64 |
| 4 | Herat University (http://hu.edu.af/en) | 5285 | 247 |
| 5 | Kabul University (http://ku.edu.af/en) | 13350 | 541 |
| 6 | Kabul Education University (http://keu.edu.af/en) | 5500 | 184 |
| 7 | Kabul Polytechnic University (http://kpu.edu.af/en) | 2536 | 173 |
| 8 | Kabul Medical University (http://kmu.edu.af/en) | 1736 | 248 |
| 9 | Kandahar University (http://kan.edu.af/en) | 2850 | 162 |
| 10 | Khost University (http://szu.edu.af/en) | 3000 | 132 |
| 11 | Nangarhar University Jalalabad (http://nu.edu.af/en) | 8020 | 335 |
| 12 | Paktia University (http://pu.edu.af/en) | 3000 | 46 |
| 13 | Takhar University (http://tu.edu.af/en) | 1572 | 51 |
| 14 | Baghlan Higher Education Institute (http://baghlan.edu.af/en) | 1348 | 47 |

¹³ Sources: MoHE: Strategic Plan (2009); homepages of universities; project research by Michael Daxner and Urs Schrade. Spelling has been slightly homogenized. A few universities have been officially founded in the meantime, but either are not yet operational (“Paper Universities”) or represent a non-academic status of performance. Politically, this is an extremely touchy point; many students who did not receive admission to better reputed colleges are outsourced to the regional teacher colleges and paper universities. Thus, the quantitative outlook does not look that grim, but even with all students in minor colleges, the numbers are much too low as to deliver relief to the situation described.

| No. | Name of Educational Institution (incl. official website) | No. Students | No. Academic Staff |
|-----|---|--------------|--------------------|
| 15 | Kundoz Higher Education Institute (http://kundoz.edu.af/en) | 1139 | 30 |
| 16 | Faryab Higher Education Institute (http://faryab.edu.af/en) | 1214 | 42 |
| 17 | Ghazni Higher Education Institute (http://gu.edu.af/en) | 368 | 16 |
| 18 | Badakhshan Higher Education Institute (http://badakhshan.edu.af/en) | 385 | 25 |
| 19 | Parwan Higher Education Institute (http://parwan.edu.af/en) | 1237 | 43 |

The history of Afghan Higher Education is not considered typical for Central Asia. Pakistan has a typical post-colonial system with many elements of British academia; Iran has a long academic tradition, although only under the Pahlevis in the 1950s did a massive modernization and stratification of national Higher Education begin, and democracy and human rights still have not caught up with development. Afghanistan went through long periods of indirect rule after serious violent conflicts with the British Empire; later on, after 1919, the making of a new state developed some particular features. While the northern neighbors came under Soviet rule rather early (after 1924), Afghanistan underwent a short period of massive top down modernization under King Amanullah Shah (1917-1929). The King focused on schools and other areas of public emancipation. Kabul University opened for classes in 1932, only after the King's demise. It was a reputed college in the region and for the region. Especially in the 1960s, it became a centre of education for the intellectual elite who were to rule the country only a decade later. Herat University was founded only in 1988, and it underwent a most remarkable reconstruction after 2001 to become an intellectual centre in a modern environment. Nangarhar got a university in 1963. The same year, Kabul Polytechnic opened its doors. It was meant to be a college that would follow the rules of the first wave of internationalization. It is now the second largest university in the country. Kandahar University was founded by the post-Soviet government of President Najibullah in 1990. Balkh University in Mazar-e-Sharif was founded during the occupation in 1986. There are some more public universities and teacher education colleges as well:

Table 3: Founding dates and number of faculties of public universities¹⁴

| No. | Name of University | Year Established | No. Faculties |
|-----|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Albiruni University | 2000 | 6 |
| 2 | Balkh University | 1986 | 9 |
| 3 | Bamyaan University | 1996 | 2 |
| 4 | Herat University | 1988 | 11 |
| 5 | Kabul University | 1932 | 14 |
| 6 | Kabul Education University | 2003 | 6 |
| 7 | Kabul Poly Technique University | 1969 | 5 |
| 8 | Kabul Medical University | 1932 | 4 |
| 9 | Kandahar University | 1990 | 6 |
| 10 | Khost University | 2000 | 9 |
| 11 | Nangarhar University | 1964 | 9 |
| 12 | Paktia University | 2004 | 5 |
| 13 | Takhar University | 1995 | n.a. |

In any case, before the Soviet occupation, Afghan Higher Education was a phenomenon of a certain urban seclusion, aiming at a small elite; competition between the major Afghan universities and the trend of the upper classes sending their children to neighboring countries or to reputed universities in the West still occurs today. It is of little importance to seek continuities and ruptures in this system over the last 40 years. A 30 year war and a complex post-war period of intervention and post-intervention conflicts certainly mark a new period. This does not mean that there are no leftovers from earlier periods and that there are no real or imagined traditions from certain periods of the war, e.g. from the Soviet occupation, or the time of the Jihad. The Soviet tradition is not as short-lived as any other in recent history. The Soviet intervention itself also created and left first traditions, as has the new Afghan state. After 2001, the Afghan system of Higher Education was shaped by three groups of experts, all of them speaking in the context of the intervention and the new government. One group consisted of Afghan returnees, who brought with them their experience with foreign Higher Education; another group was made up of their peers from within existing institutions, including rectors, deans, distinguished academic teachers and students; the third group consisted of a rather incoherent mix of foreign Higher Education specialists, monetary and other material development cooperation experts, business, and the masses of academic exchange activists. While the first two groups consisted mainly of individuals, the third group was a mixture of individual and institutional actors. This created very significant problems (Altbach 2012). While elementary education was high on

¹⁴ Source: MoHE and websites of institutions Cf. Table 2.

the list of international actors, both donors and advisors, Higher Education was much less so. In principle, the task to reconstruct and enlarge a system of Higher Education seemed to be relatively easy, if costly, but compared to elementary and vocational education, it did not look like an impossible task to rescue the system. Germany was the unofficial lead nation for Higher Education¹⁵. Our account of Afghan Higher Education does not follow a detailed chronology, which has already been documented quite meticulously. It is neither an assessment from the point of view of Higher Education evaluators nor from consultants. The results from efforts to support Afghan Higher Education can be found in several comprehensive Master Plans and programs.

Table 4: Important planning documents for Afghan Higher Education¹⁶

| Planning Document | Year |
|---|------|
| Ministry of Higher Education: National Higher Education Strategic Plan | 2009 |
| Ministry of Higher Education: Planning Process | 2009 |
| Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Afghanistan National Development Strategy | 2008 |
| Mousavi, Dr. Sayed Askar: Ministry of Higher Education Strategic Development Plan | 2006 |
| UNESCO: Ministry of Higher Education Strategic Development Plan | 2005 |
| Ministry of Higher Education: Strategic Action Plan | 2004 |

We try to present here a meta-analysis from the view of the present with strong attention to the political context and the position of Higher Education in a broader social and cultural environment. Despite the fact that many planning documents (“strategic papers”) seem to be perfectly rational, they don’t show much attachment to the reality both of people and of changing social and political structures. Meta-analysis simply means that we observed the environment of the Higher Education system, looking for interfaces, antagonisms and unexpected options. It is contextualization that is underdeveloped in most plans. The present is the beginning period of transition. Our assumption is that the role of Higher Education will be more important for the transition period than before and that it will be decisive for four areas of the country’s development, and universities and other institutions of Higher Education will be equally important for four areas of public interest and governance.

- First of all, Higher Education will be needed for public education and the creation of a mindset for the new democratic elite. This is important for Afghanistan, as the old

¹⁵ (This is where “I” (Michael Daxner) and another “we” (i.e. the team, the Ministry of Higher Education, where I had the privilege to serve as an international advisor, and some team-members) come into the picture, no longer as specialists in Higher Education policy, but as active practitioners in Higher Education reforms in Afghanistan.

¹⁶ The first comprehensive legislation (Draft) is attached to The Action Plan of 2004. For the most recent version see www.mohe.gov.af/?lang=en&p=plan. Retrieved 2013.04.22. Cf. also (Hayward 2012; Kohistani 2011).

elites are becoming increasingly obsolete and will not meet both the democratic and the functional requirements of a society that, in its majority, consists of people under twenty. On the other side, a rivalry with a military elite is unlikely for the time being, because the ANA (Afghan National Army) is currently still under construction, and commanders from the wars have increasingly lost both reputation and actual influence. We do not know what will happen if some of these commanders come back, as is a recent development.¹⁷

- Equally important is the function of serving economic development, especially the labor market and the progress of research-based development. The very narrow hierarchy of disciplinary fields and professional areas of qualification has already created a shortage in many sectors; the booming business administration and IT segments are not representative for the disciplinary priorities needed.
- Another function that is often neglected by Higher Education insiders is the effect of Higher Education on the social adaptation of new stratification and differentiation processes. There is a new middle class emerging for whom the status of having their children in college is more important and differentiated than in the past, but it is also less easy to send these children abroad now. Status distribution through Higher Education is an important peace-building element.
- This is linked to a fourth and sensitive issue: Higher Education can improve security with regard to reducing the risk of alienating youth and driving them towards violent and extremist views. This last aspect is heavily discussed amongst experts in the intervening countries; many of the politicians fear an academic proletariat that will become more extreme and less easy to integrate into the new society, a society that will have more students enrolled in Higher Education. We hold that the opposite is more likely, i.e. high school graduates left on the waiting lists, unable to get through the doors of academia, are in fact the greater danger.

These four areas are partially interdependent. They have not been in the focus of international development work in Afghanistan because of deficits in comprehensive state-building and in connecting Higher Education to other societal processes, e.g. creating visible sectors of successful placement of donor money. There are many reasons for this multi-dimensional deficit:

The reforms planned during the Golden Hour¹⁸ after 2001 were abruptly stopped shortly before the elections of 2004/5. Achievements up until that point, such as the Rectors Conference and the draft legislation for Higher Education, stagnated or were withdrawn. At the same time, the reconstruction of elementary and secondary (=high) school system and primary school teacher

¹⁷ In our project C9 (cf. www.sfb-governance.de/C9) we do longitudinal studies in North-East Afghanistan. Some of our recent findings give importance to the question of returned commanders, but the answers will have wait until further analyses of data.

¹⁸ *Golden Hour* is the technical term for the period of time between ceasefire or the termination of hostilities and the first signs of disappointment by the local population. The real Golden Hour is not a homogeneous period of time, but also a construct of perception.

education were given so much attention and priority that Higher Education fell behind. This led to a sharp increase of graduates from primary and secondary schools, often communicated as one of the major success stories of reconstruction.

Higher Education has not been subject to comprehensive assessment in a way that would allow for the drafting of a plan for diversified institutional profiles with quantitative and qualitative specifications. The Universities of Kabul, Kabul Polytechnic, Kabul University of Education, Kabul Medical University, Balkh, Herat, Nangarhar and Kandahar are certainly in a different league when compared to the rest of institutions. Upcoming universities, like Khost, are given too little attention, while some teacher training colleges and the medical faculties are special cases. The capacity for absorbing more admitted students has not been substantially enlarged in public universities, while the quality of private institutions has never been assured (exception: AUAF (American University of Afghanistan), which is very expensive and certainly an elite institution). The relationships between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) have never been well coordinated. The former profited from vast investment by international donors with quick impact outcome; the latter suffered from the immobility of the Higher Education system after Minister Fayez' resignation in 2005 and the low profile of reforms thereafter. Only recently, say, after 2009, has the MoHE begun to recover from these deficits. Today, there is more openness towards addressing the problems listed above, especially from the new Minister Obaidullah (since 2012) and Deputy Ministers. However, the system in and of itself is neither stable nor integrated in the dynamism of social change and development, as would be needed in the period of transition up through 2014 and beyond. The underlying program of good governance to deliver the public good of Higher Education and to place it appropriately in all three sectors has never been elaborated on or developed further.

4. Governance

The circumstances of our research and conclusions should be described before we arrive at the core of our considerations. Our main sources of information have been observation, dialogue with representatives of the Higher Education system and rather fragmented participation in a reform debate, both at political (centralized) and institutional (decentralized) levels. The study of written sources and other research has had some importance, but did not help us much to gain new insights. With regard to governance, some very typical and significant literature was necessary; such as (Nixon 2007; Stapleton 2012), while other, more policy-oriented studies belong to a broader framework. Much of our knowledge is based on inductive proceedings and a complex labor of translating contexts and interpreting statements, deeply involved in critical semantics.

We want to translate the description of the system in terms of governance. What content of delivery do the people expect under what circumstances, and what kind of delivery would be appropriate?

We may assume that some expectations can be more easily proven than others. However, all of them have a strong empirical background that is less taken from Higher Education itself, but

rather from studies on Afghan society. The following list is ordered according to a hypothetical ranking of relevance; this may be modified by more empirical insights in some cases:

- Most people expect education and Higher Education to remain “public”, i.e. admission and enrolment are guaranteed by the state and degrees remain an authorized domain of the state. The state is also a good shelter for semi-autonomous academic patronage and external patronage, using Higher Education as a safe haven for activities (not only corruption, but also political organization and ideological/religious infiltration).
- The Deferred Gratification Pattern shall be continued and modified in such a way as that the degree serves changed expectations, especially those of the growing middle classes.
- This will require a massive shift in the labor market towards those professions that depend on a certain qualification and less on a position in civil service or in the symbolic hierarchies of the elite. This does not apply, however, to those lower strata whose members will not enjoy the benefits and gratifications from Higher Education, but will depend more on social welfare and a protection of their primary reproduction; nor will it apply to the top percentile, who will continue sending their children to study abroad or save them important positions irrespective of their qualification in certain fields. We may call this class the patrons, i.e. those running powerful patronage networks.
- People in the countryside and in rural or remote areas expect that a minimum delivery occurs in terms of female teacher training and some other professions aiming at females. The chance to foster female education can be combined with the chance to keep the graduates within the local or regional catchment of the training location. Male adolescents may seek the same programs and graduate from teacher training colleges, but they do not intend on becoming practicing teachers. They will instead use the title as a status distinction and migrate to the cities, where they are likely to earn more.
- Good governance would also care that all establishments of Higher Education develop a certain degree of economic spin-off, thus serving the local economy.

These expectations from good governance are simply plausible; the empirical data are inadequate as to serve as a compact foundation. However, we hold that they can be relatively easily proven, not least by the explicit statements by representatives of the system, both in power or oppressed.

Other expectations are more difficult to meet:

The impact of tertiary education will change local habits, which will also cause changes in the modes and intensity of social control. It is very likely that any level of quality education, but especially Higher Education, will create some knowledge and behavior that may bring increasing frictions between parents and children, between peers and self-conscious students and between traditional and modernized patterns of behaviour and judgment. In other words: people know that Higher Education will bring social change, but are not at all certain in which way this change should or will change social control (the idea of changing patterns of belief and behaviour through school can be widely studied in late colonial and post-colonial literature, one prominent example being *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling, where the boy is taken as an example of this change and shifts from personal supervision to the “system” through a kind of unavoidable education).

- Another aspect of good governance in all education and Higher Education is the expectation that the relatively large and compact workforce will become a loyal party of dedicated civil servants and thus part of governance itself. Ideally, these teachers and academic lecturers will become multipliers of the norms and principles that are guiding governance, and thus act as another formative executive of social control other than parents. While this is true in general, there are many diverting forces that may accumulate to a reverse effect. Religious indoctrination may deviate from state-orientation; teachers, as a less respected group of civil servants, may adapt to the local rules of social control and act with counter-emancipatory impact; as intellectuals of sort they may be susceptible to radical or sometimes extremist views, because their recognition within the social system is not rewarding; being low paid, they may also divert their capacity to private side-jobs that can be counter-productive to their educational duties, or they could even become criminal or entangled in patronage bondage. The quality of teaching is representative for the overall respect and recognition that governance will receive by the people.
- Promotion and assignment to certain positions within the education system is part of normal patronage and insufficient governance within this system. This is the paradigmatic field of governance broken down from the highest system level into the immediate life-world of individuals and local families and communities.

Example 1:

Under the pretext of the strictly legal meritocratic selection of students, a traditional exercise of testing high-school graduates has been applied, the *Konkor*. The procedures of this test are almost incomprehensible and were originally designed for a very small number of applicants; today, the number is ca. 650% of available admissions, irrespective of the distribution among certain disciplines. The *Konkor* is like a rated breaking point of the system. No one pretends this system is free from corruption. This refers to the technical performance of this

test – similar to the SAT, as favored by Prof. Hamidzai, former Rector of Nangarhar University and an important advisor to MoHE. (Hamidzai is influential insofar as he has been a Maryland, U.S., public employee and is a very knowledgeable expert in public employment. He is currently chancellor of Kabul Education University). The real destructive force is created by the contortion of the results; students are individually graded and assigned to certain study programs and to certain institutions. Immediately after the release of the results from Konkor, a most remarkable spectacle begins. Literally hundreds or thousands of admitted students – and many among those who failed the test – show up at the MoHE to try to change or correct their results. One bizarre example was a student from Nimruz who wanted to do Medicine in Kabul and was assigned to another program (art history) in his home province. Of course, corrections are costly, and not only in a financial sense; if a student requires his family's ties to patronage and political protection, the RoL layer of the system is challenged more than the welfare level. And of course, the ruling elite, the urban elites and the regional/local elites and their respective networks protect the process as long as it serves their status.

While all the listed aspects of poor governance apply to the entire *system of education*, Higher Education is affected in particular because good governance concentrates by priority on teacher education; only if school teachers are significantly better educated than their clientele and their clientele's parents will they enjoy authority and thus attain certain positions in local communities, notably at the level of informal institutions. The producers of such good teachers will enjoy even higher reputations and may be rewarded by higher ranks in the informal hierarchy of local honor and recognition. To attain such noble aims takes time and money and an explicit strategy which is barely perceptible at the moment. If this stark assumption is plausible enough, we must insist that there are no valid empirical studies covering the entire field and supporting all aspects of it. Nevertheless, we can base the assumption on a series of empirical studies with relative significance and reliability, as well as on some policy papers related to the assumption. Policy papers often rely on surveys that measure anything but governance and effectiveness in education and are therefore of little help for our considerations (cf. surveys of ARD, Asia Foundation 2004-2012, AREU, e.g., (Hunte 2006), etc.. On the other hand, many targeted reports on education and Higher Education miss the broader context, e.g. (DAAD 2010). One of the most reliable sources is the continuous coverage by Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), (i.a. Bijlert, Giustozzi, Ruttig).

Without an analysis of the complex situation, no new programs can or should be developed. The early reforms were either appreciated by the academic peers and any politicians in 2003-5, or there was at least a debate about coping with the situation in order to instigate reforms. Examples for the first situation are the opening up towards the international community of higher education, partnerships with other universities, disciplinary and subject-oriented exchange and projects and institutionalized relations between the rectors/chancellors and the state (MoHE). Examples for the second field of reforms were the entire question of tuition fees and student social situation, the problem of entry qualification and upgrading of academic

staff and the problem of corruption in admission and examinations. On the policy level, we can attribute much of this reform stagnation to both the incoherent coordination among the international agents and the “ungoverned government and administration”, a term that was coined by me after studying the attempts to make the administration of MoHE more efficient without using the unfeasible recommendations of consultants for creating a lean bureaucracy. The negative synergy between the two causes for failure proved (and is still proving) fatal.

Many political leaders among the Afghans and the international community likewise had no understanding of the importance of Higher Education for both the peace-building process and the backbone reforms a country would need for secure infrastructure reconstruction. Peace-building cannot be achieved without the participation of the younger generation. But this generation must be given a frame within which it can develop and distance itself from traumatic wartime childhoods and a cultural and social environment that would never come back. The first aspect goes without saying, but is difficult to transfer into policy; the second aspect is, of course, a challenge for conservative and backward ideologists who, in hindsight, believe that any of the circumstances from before the war can be regained. The internationals, advisors, the World Bank, military etc. repeated the Kosovo mistake; Higher Education was considered as one element of civil administration. While literacy and the development of an elementary school system were high on the list of priorities, Higher Education remained within the conservative mainstream, just in need of material modernization – and by no means a threat to security and social stability. Thus, the Afghan government can hardly be blamed for not having ranked Higher Education as high on their list as it should have been. This is evident in the recent German-Afghan negotiations and the outcome of the Tokyo summit in summer 2012, when Higher Education was not placed on the priority list by the Afghan government, and consequently not ranked highly by their German counterparts.¹⁹

Without crying over spilled milk, we can conclude that the main issues were not tackled seriously after 2005. We cannot speak of good governance, of course, but even this good enough governance can be questioned. Awareness of the following list of insufficiencies and deficits is imperative for future political planning:

- Transition from high school to the tertiary sector is dysfunctional, corrupt and does not meet strategic goals, even if these goals may have been formulated appropriately.
- Firm legal standards for the tertiary sector, delineation between universities and other institutions, private and public, creating an internationally recognized minimal provision for accreditation (the best would be a comprehensive law with large elements of autonomy for each institution) - this is the decisive interface between RoL and welfare sections of good governance. Since academic degrees and titles must be recognized outside the system, and it is likely that a big portion of graduates will need this recognition, what is presently the case is a dead end policy.

¹⁹ Information by the Foreign Office (AA) 2012/10/16.

- Regulations of the social, financial and gender aspects of application for admission and enrolment are “virtual” and do not reflect the real situation. This is one of the critical interfaces with security, as the number of unsatisfied pre- and in-university people is steadily growing.
- Massive enlargement of the supply with academic subjects and degrees in fields that have been gravely neglected or are still missing in the calendar is needed. Based only on this condition, a selective, fair and uncorrupted system of admission and enrolment can be implemented.
- Basic rules for self-government and recruitment of academic and administrative positions are missing; division of powers between the state and the autonomous academic performance does not exist.
- A national system of uncorrupted rules for examinations and the validation of degrees is still missing.
- Special provisions for teacher training under the supervision of the MoHE, and in cooperation with ME, are hampered by an endless quarrel about competence and spheres of influence between the two ministries.
- Creation of a basic research capacity in most academic disciplines based on the university (and not outsourcing researching before you have it) is almost non-existent. Higher Education research, economics of Higher Education, demographics etc. are underdeveloped or non-existent. Sometimes, the potential outcome of research in these disciplines is substituted by foreign think tanks and policy determination, which is the case in Afghanistan.
- Last but not least, and most important of all in terms of political considerations, new rules for social protection of all students and their social and cultural environment on campus are needed. This implicates the questions of tuition costs and fees, housing and food, transportation and health care.

Anyone can see that even this long list is incomplete. One of the major problems that are difficult to tackle is the fact that, in terms of recognition and appreciation, the entire tertiary sector is fixated on the image of “The University” as the old former generator of a small elite. Thus, “real” universities like Kabul and Herat and Mazar etc. are competing with other, valuable, institutions that do not meet any international standard for universities and can hardly be compared to advanced professional or vocational training institutions. This combination of deficiencies has created a dangerous mix of sentiments, status decrease for all those who do not attend a real university and much uncertainty about the level to be aspired. We should keep in mind that there is also *delivery of symbolic public goods that has a very real impact on social structures and placement on certain status levels.*

It is not our aim in this paper to suggest specific reforms or quick-impact steps to be taken by the Afghan authorities with the help of international experts and donors. But let us have two paragraphs on some parameters for reforms are still missing.

To be very clear about one aspect of reforms, neither the German model (universities and universities of applied science), nor the American model (research universities, comprehensive universities, four year colleges and community colleges), nor any other can be transferred directly to Afghanistan. But, given the location and the capacity of existing universities, a combination of the two models could be a solution for Afghan Higher Education; this was discussed during the Golden Hour, under Minister Fayezi. Six *universities* could offer advanced undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate studies, while the other *colleges and teacher education* institutions could provide bachelor degrees and access to universities for their graduates, and teacher training could be included in all institutions. But as a novelty of maximum effectiveness and efficiency, *community colleges* should be built in all provinces, bridging the gap between high school and academic proficiency, and easing the access to Higher Education of young women and students from remote areas. The plans of Minister Fayezi went in this direction, but were dissolved in stagnation after his resignation.

Example 2:

We want to present one example in which explicit changes in Higher Education governance opened a promising window, but did not come to fruition for political reasons, and without strengthening any other segment of statehood. The example is the establishment of an Afghan Rectors Conference (ARC). On behalf of the German Foreign Office and with monetary support from the German Academic Exchange (DAAD), Michael Daxner served as an expert advisor and after 2004 as Principal International Advisor, to Minister Fayezi. In this capacity he was mainly engaged in legislation, planning and institutional reforms. It should be mentioned that the draft of a Higher Education bill was complete by mid-2004 and was then taken off the table by the President because of the upcoming elections, as to not compromise parliamentary powers. Today, proper Higher Education legislation has still not passed parliament, for a variety of reasons. Thus, the RoL aspect of Afghan Higher Education was deficient from the beginning.

On another front, progress seemed to be more promising; with strong support from the German Rectors Conference (HRK) and international networks (IAU, UNESCO etc.), ARC was established in 2004/5. All universities – nineteen at the time – participated, and their chancellors, vice-presidents or rectors were represented. For the first time, a woman was a full member, and even vice-president of the ARC. The aim was to establish a strong representation of Higher Education vis-a-vis the state in order to create some institutional autonomy (given the homologous structure of all universities, the ARC worked as any of those institutions would, with the exception that the minor colleges that did not deserve the title university and thus played a less consolidating role). A female Secretary General was established and supported by Germany. Everything looked fine, and there were debates about the way Higher Education governance could be shared between the

state (Ministry of Higher Education) and the colleges. When Minister Fayez had to step down because of an ideological backlash in policy, mainly against secular tendencies and modernization in the super-structure after the elections of 2004/5, the end of ARC was quickly decided. The new Minister, an Islamist, re-established state-rule over all aspects of Higher Education and limited the political influence of foreign actors; DAAD gave in immediately, and HRK and other supporters had no perspective in further assisting the project. In terms of governance, ARC could have been an organization that would have strengthened statehood by limiting the role of the state. This would have required new institutions, similar to processes like accreditation, quality assurance, etc. What we have now in this field of institutional autonomy is a bureaucratic vertical system of top down governance which does nothing to aid the image of the state or strengthen statehood.

An epilogue is useful for understanding how this example links to considerations about public and private universities. Ex-Minister Fayez, who had been a staunch advocate of state-run public universities, now turned to private non-profit models. He became founding president of AUAF, but he also spoke out for academic freedom and institutional autonomy, and thus became something of a positive exception among his colleagues: highly respected, but without much power. One of his aims clearly points at a PPP-aspect of governance: instead of the ARC, he has proposed an “Association of Afghan Universities” which would act as a horizontal buffer institution between the state and the universities.

It would have been a promising approach to implement the elements of reforms as listed above within the framework of a straight-forward legislation and with the continuous support of the international community of higher education, represented by organization such as the IAU, the IAUP, UNESCO etc., and financed through a consortium of the World Bank and EU, with bilateral segments assigned to the major agencies from strong donor states, such as US (USAID), Germany (DAAD, GIZ), Japan (Jica) etc. A lack of national leadership and a flawed international coordination together created a slow and poorly coordinated growth of the Higher Education system as a whole and of some of its pivotal sectors in particular.

That is not to say that nothing has been achieved in the past ten years, but what has happened is insufficient and not sustainable.

This picture of the Afghan Higher Education system will meet grim reactions from all those who point at their (successful) attempts to establish reforms in their respective fields and niches. We concede that a lot of things have happened during the last ten years, and we can make a long list of more or less successful implementations of programs. We even admire some of the real accomplishments, such as the completion of the Herat Campus or the taking over of responsibility for a comprehensive development of Kandahar by USAID. But, all in all, these attempts remain islands in a rather chaotic sea. The main problems, as listed above, are not much closer to being solved than they were five years ago. Our conclusion is even harsher

than that: **because the isolated reform projects lack sustainability, the conditions for improved governance by the central government and the local institutional leaders are dim.**

At this point we can present a dual continuation. On the one hand, it is possible to analyse and evaluate reform programs and ongoing projects with regard to their potential effects on the system and indirectly on conditions for better governance within an existing frame. This is done in some parallel research²⁰. On the other hand and this is what we are going to do here, one can analyse certain phenomena of deficient governance in context. In our conclusion we will take up this split again and elaborate on it in view of our results.

The functions of Higher Education for the stabilization and consolidation of Afghanistan permit two critical questions:

- What are the empirical findings and strong hypotheses that can support the long list of insufficiencies and disappointed expectations as listed above?
- Is it possible to imagine partial relief from these insufficiencies by more strongly taking into account some off-state developments and some hybrid governance growing?

The answers to the first questions come from the empirical field work of the authors and a rather in-depth analysis of available policy papers and strategic statements on Higher Education. While the field work has a continuous history dating to 2003 (Michael Daxner), the literature offers a good overview on the educational and institutional level, but only poor accounts on governance and micro- social phenomena, and almost no clear links to the fields of security, status-distribution and the political impact of Higher Education. The situation is much better in areas like employability, placement and professional qualification. Both authors have tried to condense the findings and assumptions here.

The second question is closely related to findings we have from different research projects, such as in C 9, corruption research and other related investigations.

Since this working paper is meant to give brief insight into a special sector, it has not been deemed necessary to present a comprehensive and complete overview of all problems mentioned. Instead, we have chosen **exemplary** segments to make our approach understood. Since many empirical statements are drawn from personal sources that must be protected, we don't give names in certain cases. These sources are available for confidential examination.

4.1 Neither private nor public – the exceptional case of the American University of Afghanistan

Higher Education is a paradigmatic testing field for PPP everywhere. If Higher Education governance decides that delivering Higher Education aims more at the individual reward by

²⁰ Research for interveners' governments provides much insight, cf. documents by the Congressional Research Services (U.), or the German Foreign Office's (AA) regular progress reports since 2010. One of the internationally best accounted for sources is the Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN). Specifically directed to HE, cf. bibliography and sources by Daxner/Schrade (2012).

accumulating all sorts of capital, then quality and access will be organized as club goods, i.e. shielded from the broader public by high tuition fees and strict rules for admission. If the state decides that Higher Education will bring more accumulated gains for the entire society and the state, access will be open and tuition will be nil or low. However, Higher Education is never a completely common good because of the requirements and duties connected with active enrolment. There are extreme examples for both strategies; highly elitist and expensive special Higher Education institutions are more likely to reproduce an elite class within an elite class, and seldom excel proportionately in terms of advances in research and good study, while entirely open Higher Education institutions will not satisfy the aspirations of students by abandoning deferred gratification²¹. In developing societies, the normal way of operating Higher Education is to strengthen good enough study – curriculum, professional education, disciplinary basics – and reduce aspirations to conduct research. In many countries this leads to a divided Higher Education system: cheap, popular fields of study – such as business management, accounting, some parts of media and IT studies, journalism, modern languages – tend to be privatized and serve a broad public demand, promising good profits, while expensive studies – medicine, engineering, sciences, and mass studies like teacher training and law that need state supervision – remain public institutions and are permanently underfinanced.

The first minister of Higher Education, Prof. Fayez (2002-2005) tried to overcome this split and tended towards a totally reformed open access Higher Education system with moderate tuition fees for everybody and an end of discipline-oriented differentiation in fees and faculty salaries. He failed on all these reforms.

Not only out of understandable frustration, but also encouraged by the major intervention force – the U.S. – he founded the American University of Afghanistan. Today, it is probably the best undergraduate college in the country, on a level above community college and below a traditional 4-year-university in the Western system.

The idea for AUAF was brought up in 2002 by Laura Bush and gained support from then Ambassador Khalilzad. While the foundation was made possible by a remarkable appropriation of U.S. funds by the Congress, today the AUAF relies primarily on significant donations by Afghan major businesses and generates extra income through high tuition fees, ameliorated by a sophisticated system of grants and stipends that support >70% of all students. Standards are significantly higher than the comparable average in all other Higher Education institutions, and intra-college violence does not exist²². It is notable that ISAF, the intervention force, gave AUAF a newspaper headline in 2009: “Higher Education is set up to soar”²³. In this article, the

²¹ However, the populist approach of Buarque and others promises “democracy” instead of “scientific achievements”, something like science by the people instead of science for the people: Cristovam Buarque, Minister for Higher Education in Brazil 1995-1999.

²² <http://auaf.edu.af>, retrieved 2013.04.22.

²³ <http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/news/higher-education-set-to-soar-in-Afghanistan> (by Alexandre Brecher-Dolivet). Retrieved 2013.04.22.

advantages of AUAF were described in the light of the quantitative problems and linked to a need for better quality.

Formally, AUAF is entirely private and thus leads a growing market of non-public universities and colleges (see above). However, both accreditation/licensing and the operational conditions for such a college require a strong interplay with the state, i.e. Ministry of Higher Education, local security authorities and patrons.

We can learn from this example that Higher Education governance is strongly institution-driven insofar as rules and norms are better served in AUAF than in the public institutions, and thus it is a competitor with all other universities and a model for these at once. We can also learn that the communication with the public is important. Clients (students), donors and authorities create a high level of legitimacy that is sustained by the effects from programs and rewards. One of the prices is the high rate of employment of foreign faculty as academic teachers. If ownership comes into the picture, it is more students' ownership than a diffuse public that recognizes AUAF as "theirs".

4.2 Higher Education and Good Governance II – Transition Challenge

Since 2010, it has been officially known that ISAF combat forces will pull out of Afghanistan by 2014. 2010 was also the year when the German government published its first assessment on the intervention, followed by a second one in 2011. In December 2011, a grand conference marked a decade since the Bonn Conference of 2001. In the run-up of this conference, and in the wake of its final resolution, *Transition* and outlook till 2024 marks another decade of reconstruction in Afghanistan. In May 2012, a bilateral agreement between Afghanistan and Germany on future cooperation was signed (Bundesregierung 2012). A few days before that, the bilateral agreement between Afghanistan and the U.S. was signed (Government 2012), waiting for detailed elaboration²⁴. These documents, among others, can be taken as significant for a new policy, linked to "Transition". This is of importance for two reasons in our context. One is in the sphere of political psychology, the other in the domain of governance. The first aspect of transition is an almost generally shared appearance of "relief", as if transition could heal whatever has gone wrong during ten years of intervention. We won't go deeply into this change of mood, but simply say that it is influencing all discourses on the relationship between interveners and the intervened. When Ambassador Steiner said in the wake of the Bonn Conference 2011 that transition could be used for correcting earlier mistakes, the message was clear. Many reforms, most of them in the non-military sector, will get another chance to get started before 2014, with

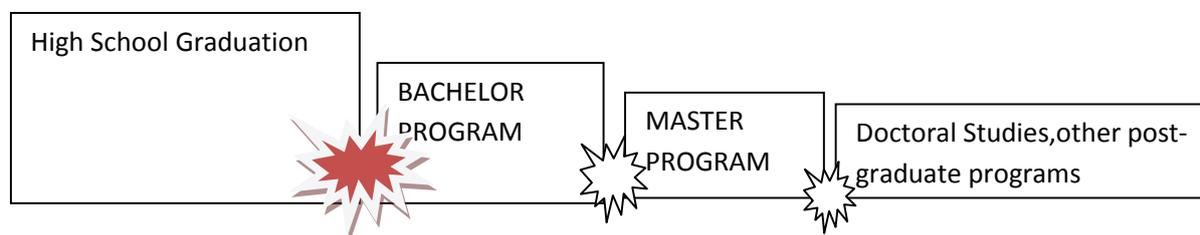
²⁴ There is a pompously signed document; but all detailed provisions for implementations are still open, inter alia the question of impunity for US soldiers and the extra number of troops. President Karzai has recently stated that he is not in a hurry to get the documents signed (Reuters, 08/24/2013). Only the details will show how deep the impact and intrusion of the hegemonial partner in this relationship will be in all sectors of governance, including, rather prominently, education. How intensely will the self-perception of the Afghan people be determined by the knowledge and interpretation of the American lead agencies and think tanks working with US policies towards Afghanistan? (Cf. Daxner 2013 forthcoming: Endgame Afghanistan, CAS, Leipzig, Working Papers Series, Nr. 3)

an outlook towards 2024. The other aspect is more important for our debate. From the very first international conference on Afghanistan – and there have been many of them since 2001 – governance was one of the key issues of debate, the other being security.

Some general considerations about trends in Afghan governance development considering education and higher education: Education has never become priority in the reform programs and plans. Despite the fact that cooperation on all fields of education is a recurring topic in all bilateral agreements and international resolutions, it has never become such prominence in direct negotiations (this information is unofficial, of course, but even ranking experts in the Foreign Office (AA) complained to me after the Bonn (2011) and Tokyo (2012) Conferences that the Afghan side did not give the whole education very high priority. From the German side, the absolute priority is given to vocational and professional training.

As a part of welfare and the normative effects from the rule of law, education is normally shaped on the *system* level. Its effects, however, affect the people on the basis of society. Only here, the education system becomes empirical. On the micro-level of society there is the power of the *life-world* (Lebenswelt), which is still decisive for the effects from education policy. This truism has far-reaching effects on governance.

Table 5: The following picture shows the structure of the conflict



The  symbolizes the major conflict zone in a tertiary system: the transition from the previous level into the next. There may be several barriers, often combined: entrance examinations, tuition fees, invisible admission restrictions (gender, ethnic background) and an irrational subject distribution. It should be clear that all drop outs from the selection process do not automatically get admitted or aim at getting admitted to non-academic professional or vocational training.

At this point we want to demonstrate how much the critical conflict-zone is related to both good governance and several aspects of statehood, as well as to some fundamental problems of the rebuilding of Afghan society. The following are a few hypotheses with far-reaching consequences:

- (1) So far, the conflicts over admission to the tertiary sector are mainly problems of urban areas and the vicinity of university locations.
- (2) Thus, the conflicts may be confined to the emerging middle classes, which are trying to enlarge their range of relational power in society.

- (3) The prognosis is, however, that the conflicts will widen and deepen when the access to tertiary education becomes an element of higher importance for all areas of the country, including those areas that are remote and secluded. This will have an immediate effect on patronage networks and corruption.

The relation between these hypotheses and governance is evident. But we must go more into detail in order to explain what we need to test the hypotheses and what we understand so far about the context.

First of all, what do we already know?

The admission conflict as a variety of the town/country divide is ubiquitous. Urban strata tend traditionally towards higher education because of their bigger share in literacy and, even more so, because of the higher esteem of social and cultural capitals conveyed by education titles. But this is a rather Western statement, as the nexus only exists if the value of cultural capital is unevenly distributed and if the delivery of titles and *employability* through Higher Education fulfils the expectations of the DFG. We *know* that the indirect effect of admission policies affects local governance, because patronage has to select certain persons – on request of clients or as a reward for members of a patronage network – for a post-secondary career in Higher Education. We can only assume, but *do not know* exactly, if different governance zones have adopted “policies” to stabilize an admission strain from the local level to the education centres higher up – centralized – and eventually to Higher Education proper.

Secondly: we can draw solid lines between diverse fields of governance. We want to link security governance to delivery in Higher Education. As partners of the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR)²⁵, we have started to build up a network reporting on violent incidents in Higher Education. These include killings, violent attacks, threats and other violations of laws and rules. It is too early for a conclusion, but our first reports show the direction of future investigations. Two recent incidents at universities show exemplarily the tight enmeshment of universities and politics in Afghanistan and that campuses are microcosmic mirrors of pressing national issues. In November 2012, sectarian violence broke out at Kabul University when Sunni Muslim students tried to prevent Shiite Muslim students from celebrating the Ashura festival inside a dormitory mosque. Hundreds of students were involved in the clashes, several of them were injured and one was killed. According to observers, the violent component of the quarrels significantly increased at the moment when non-student activists from both sectarian groups joined the conflict. Likewise, non-student activists had fueled violence in student clashes that hit the headlines only two month earlier. In September 2012, when President Karzai announced his intention to rename Kabul’s University of Education after former Tajik leader Burhanuddin Rabbani, Pashtu and Hazara students protested. While initially peaceful, the opposition turned violent when non-student supporters of the name change converged on the protesters.

²⁵ <http://Scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu>, retrieved 2013.04.22. This human rights advocacy group is perhaps the most prominent organization dedicated to practically supporting endangered scholars and – at least temporarily - providing safe havens for them in democratic countries and in adequate academic environments.

Both incidents exemplify one of the most crucial societal challenges in the country, namely the increasing fractionalization along ethno-religious lines. The most important lesson to draw from the two incidents is that Afghan campuses are not only hotbeds for ideological formation and political protest, but also venues of concrete violent conflict. Among other things, it is this potential for actual violence that directly links Afghan universities to security governance.

What we can learn from our observations is the importance of the relationship between local governance and policies by the central authorities of the state (Presidency, ministries, vice-chancellors and chancellors of universities). Example 2 in this excerpt shows many of the significant elements of our initial analysis of security threats in Higher Education.

5. Preliminary Conclusions

The transition period up through 2014 offers decisive chances for institution building in Afghanistan. Many donor countries are looking for sustainable civilian areas to comply with their pledges to further support Afghanistan's reconstruction. Education has always been a model field for demonstrating continuous commitment. However, if this is true for elementary and secondary education, it is much less a reality in the world of higher education. Our working paper attempts to demonstrate how complex the effects of higher education in any society are and how they will affect concretely the future development of Afghanistan.

The basic argument is that one should not begin with established higher education planning and implementation structures, but rather by analysing the functions of universities and the entire tertiary sector of education. Universities are among the most stable institutions in history, comparable only to the military, rural communities and families. The rules of creating knowledge beyond the level of common sense, i.e. theoretical knowledge, challenge views on the world – and without such rules, neither governance nor progress can be imagined. Professional education of teachers, lawyers, clerics and clerks is the backbone of creating governance in areas of robust statehood. This is a process that has developed over the centuries, and many challenges target the strong role of an institution that provides the functional integration of knowledge into systems of power, being critical to social differentiation, the formulation of rules and comprehension, the transfer of values and literacy from one generation to the next, and, last but not least, the enhancement of the dynamics of socio-economic development by producing new knowledge. Fields like teacher education show immense impact on whole generations of mindsets.

For Afghanistan, we have identified four major fields in society that all are strongly affected by Higher Education institutions:

- Social stratification
- Security
- Economic development
- Educational dynamics and qualification

The four fields are interrelated. If the democratic elite cannot be developed by a national system of Higher Education, the dependence on foreign hegemony is likely to be perpetuated. If the aspirations of the young generation to become part of this democratic elite are disappointed because they were not allowed to attain cultural and social capital through academic study, this generation is likely to become radicalized and susceptible to ideological and violent ideas. If the country does not build a solid research base focused on its own history, territorial circumstances and society, the entire society will depend on foreign think tanks, external expertise and alienating concepts of self-perception. If the remarkable functional differentiation in society is not reflected in the system of degrees, authorization and licensing by the state, the emerging middle classes will try to bypass their own system of higher education and escape into foreign systems and private elitism.

This list of conditions could be extended easily. Afghanistan has no glorious, though normal history of Higher Education as a property of small urban elites (cf. Ruttig 2012). This history was rudely interrupted by 30 years of war, occupation and unrest. After the intervention of 2001, reconstructing education was a priority for interveners and most local groups. However, the key interest was primary and secondary education. The tertiary sector, including teacher education, research bases and an enlargement of disciplines, was neglected for various reasons. This negligence is now endangering not only the entire system of education, but the sustainable development of the country as a whole.

Our working paper has shown some detailed explanation for both the reasons for and the effects of the denied priority of higher education. As is the case with many other humanitarian military interventions, Higher Education has not been given much attention at the negotiations, e.g., in writing the Bonn Agreement of 2001. Even under strong efforts to thoroughly reform the entire system of Higher Education in 2002-2005, the effects remained poor, because the central government did not care enough about the implications, and the international donors did not coordinate their attempts to provide a solid foundation for a new system in compliance with the global standards of the community of higher education. After 2005, many reforms stagnated or even failed completely. The failure to provide adequate legislation and structures was bad enough, but even more devastating was the fact that neither quantitative growth (i.e. admissions and diversification of disciplines) nor academic freedom and institutional autonomy was provided. Apart from these fundamental shortcomings, all other conflicts and weaknesses of the system can be described as normal for any emerging system of higher education in a poor country. But Afghanistan is not only poor; it is a country recovering from thirty years of war. It is a country stripped of many of its authentic roots and continuities. It is a society of intervention, caught up between interveners and the intervened. Under such circumstances, the function of higher education for peace-building, economic development and the accumulation of cultural and social capital should not be underestimated.

At this point, we have to choose between two consequential procedures: we can – as we have done in our study for the Foreign Office (Daxner and Schrade 2012) – develop a policy paper on the requirements of an adequate and realistic Higher Education policy, in lieu of the Afghan

planning capacity, and in cooperation with it under the imperative of ownership. Our other option is to discuss the consequences from our considerations for the diverse dimensions of governance. We have – for this working paper – decided to restrict ourselves to the latter. While the SFB, on the brink of its 3rd phase, concentrates on legitimacy and effectiveness of governance, it is also evident that a strong top down “unified” Higher Education policy is needed to allow for effective governance regarding access and fair delivery of recognized titles and authorization by Higher Education (this central prevalence of Higher Education policy is one effect of globalization, because the actors want to exchange and recognize all titles and authorizations on a horizontal level that is still mainly ordered by nation-states and their rules. Germany finds itself in the unfortunate situation that it is experiencing true disadvantages as a result of its federal system Higher Education accountabilities). But, as in all education and health systems, the impact of any Higher Education policy affects individuals first of all (and only individuals). No personal learning process can be substituted by a collective. Of course, communities of learners or students can compensate for uneven distribution of learning effects, but in the end, it is still the personal, individual learner that is at the end of the delivery chain of Higher Education. The individuals are certainly bound into their “life-world”. Their embedded social life follows the rules of their respective social order, which is by no means homogeneous and does not congruently reflect the Afghan statehood or governance order, including the shadow of hierarchy; instead, it reflects the fragmented structure of society. This creates a necessary antagonism between the system (central government Higher Education policy) and the life-world at a local level. In terms of research, it is interesting to learn more about the clash of the two; the little that we know already would indicate that good governance within admission policy at a local level could provide effective relief for the problems of sending local youth to the upward careers through education – if, and only if, the quantitative capacities and a minimum quality assurance would receive them at the community colleges, colleges and universities in the central habitats of the country. This is not the case, and thus we do not find good governance in this sector, indeed, not even good enough governance.

Since the country is by no means so backward that local communities do not know about the importance of getting a new generation enhanced by Higher Education, a conflict is inevitable. Upward mobility will be blocked, and this blockage will no longer be part of a “natural” distribution of chances and disadvantages. The traditional balance between the rural community sending some of its youth to study in the Higher Education centres and expecting that at least some of them return to their home communities afterward, which would support local development, as a process, cannot start.

Our research in project C9 of the SFB has no such themes in its focus; however, indirectly, some indicators for stability, i.e. the availability of girls’ schools, and the education of government employees, play into our arguments.

Any policy-assessment would state that it is late, if not too late, to improve Higher Education governance. Donors’ aid is still not concentrated on Higher Education; German international cooperation has refrained from effectively supporting Higher Education reforms. It is only in the field of vocational and professional training, especially in public administration, that there

are effective measures. US supports targeted projects in universities, e.g. in Kandahar, and is obviously willing to invest more in reforms of community colleges. Altogether, there are no effective strategies to gain control over the most urgent problems: admission of more than 250.000 first year students, reform of the Konkor and purging the examination system from corruption. In all three fields, “good enough governance” is an inappropriate term for what can and should be expected.

Legitimacy for reforms would be increased by further opening the universities and increasing their capacity to admit student and enrol them in many more disciplines than are available today. . There is no effective governance in the rural areas, which widens the gap between them and the urban populations. In urban areas, there are at least institutions of Higher Education that can or may be reformed. But as this is not the case, the misery is nationwide.

The argument – also discussed in the SFB (Project A12) - that ownership runs the risk of being corrupted by the unwillingness and/or inability of local actors to adopt minimum standards in human rights, is valid. However, it was not heard by the German Foreign Office regarding reform models for Higher Education (with the paradox that the relatively weak Presidential Palace would actually support such reforms more than the responsible ministry would be capable of doing, if, and only if, the international support was be more significant and stronger). Ownership is a rhetorical and symbolic trap in cases where a country with limited statehood cannot build sustainable structures in a central sector of its welfare governance.

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The Authors

Michael Daxner is Professor of Sociology at the SFB 700 Free University of Berlin. His research is i.a. on Security and Development in Northeast Afghanistan and in Higher Education Planning Projects. His main field are societies of intervention and peace & conflict studies.

Contact: daxnermf@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Urs Schrade, MA, is a doctoral candidate, supervised by Prof. Daxner, and a research associate in the Project on Afghan Higher Education Landscape for the Foreign Office, 2012. He also is the main investigator in the SAR monitoring on violence and violation of academic standards in Afghan Higher Education.

Contact: uschrade@googlemail.com

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Governance has become a central theme in social science research. The Collaborative Research Center (SFB) 700 *Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood* investigates governance in areas of limited statehood, i.e. developing countries, failing and failed states, as well as, in historical perspective, different types of colonies. How and under what conditions can governance deliver legitimate authority, security, and welfare, and what problems are likely to emerge? Operating since 2006 and financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Research Center involves the Freie Universität Berlin, the University of Potsdam, the European University Institute, the Hertie School of Governance, the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), and the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB).

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