

Review of doctoral dissertation

Daniel Messele Balcha:

“The Scope of Governance in Addressing HIV/AIDS Issues in Ethiopia”

The dissertation theses analyses the phenomenon of partnership among public, nonprofit and commercial actors concerning the HIV/AIDS problem in Ethiopia. The main objective of the theses is “understand the scope of governance in addressing HIV/AIDS issues in Ethiopia”. The specific objectives are as follows:

- a) Explore the partnership pattern among the three sectors organizations
- b) Identify the effects of the new NGO law on partnership in addressing the issue

The topics and the goals of analysis look very interesting from the public policy point of view and it could be said that implementation of principle of partnership is among the most discussed problems of governance in public policy literature.

I appreciate so much the author’s review of literature in the Chapter 2. It is written with emphasizes on the main insight in the governance research scope. What I only missing is some insights from the Civil Society research scope (Bache, I. 2010, Bache, I. and Olsson, J. 2001, Brinkerhoff, J. M. 2002, Caplan, K. 2005, Fowler, a. 1998, 2000), where one could find more elaborated categories and indicators of ideal (authentic) participation. Author presents partnership as a normative notion without any warning of its possible negative influence on the interested actors.

Author in his analysis first of all concentrates its attention on uncovering of barriers of successful or efficient partnership. He put himself three main research questions:

1. What kind of partnership experience its actors have?
2. What challenges of partnership they see?
3. What are the effects of the new NGO law in addressing the HIV/AIDS issue?

After than he formulates three research hypothesis:

1. There will be partnership failure because of competition among NGOs for limited resources, limited resources and lack of participation on decision making.
2. New NGO law has limited partnership endeavors.
3. If the new NGO law prohibits human rights activities undertaken by NGOs, then addressing HIV/AIDS will be difficult.

At first I would like to add to these two lists of analysis tools that they are not fully compatible. The list of hypothesis concentrates attention more on the problem with the new

NGO law, than do the list of research questions. On the other hand, the content of the whole theses is focused much more on the topic of partnership experience and its challenges. Author should explain why he allowed this asymmetry. And one remark on the address of the third hypothesis - the notion of "difficult" is exactly very difficult to operationalize. I think this kind of rhetoric is not the proper tool for the precise academic analysis.

As regards the employed methodology, I think that semi-standard interviews, was a good option in relation to the analysis objectives. On the other hand I am not fully clear about the sampling. What exactly are the selection criteria for the organizations interviewed? Can author make the explicit list of the criteria?

The Chapter 4. represents the core of the author's analysis. I found it very fruitful. Author gradually reveals characteristics of particular partners and evaluates qualities of partnerships on different government levels and regions. Very instructive are the subchapters "4.3.5. Sectoral and Areal Comparisons" and "4.3.6. Major Outcomes of the HIV/AIDS Partnership Forums" which include synoptic tables with items like partnership barriers and outputs or "important aspects of Partnership Forum". All of them have proper theoretical background and are relevant for the partnership pattern estimation. I just recommend to aggregate the particular indicators to the more general categories (dimensions of partnership) and in this way get more comprehensive characteristics of the whole pattern of partnership. The final conclusion, that *"The kind of partnership that exist could be characterized as partial ..."* seems me a bit banal, because none of real partnership is identical with the ideal one. Dimensional analysis for example of the list of "important aspects of Partnership Forum" certainly will solve the problem of rather kaleidoscopic description of the general pattern of the partnership.

At the end I have one small terminological objection regarding the author presupposition that particular partners in partnership should be independent. By my opinion if it is true, then there is no reason for partnership.

Finally I would like to stress that my estimation of the theses analytical quality is high and I can conclude that the applicant fulfill all the requirements for doctoral dissertation. I recommend the thesis for its defense.

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