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**Master's Thesis**

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**Measuring the performance of Public Universities of  
Georgia: The Case of Social Sciences Faculties**  
Problems of education quality and knowledge production

Master's thesis

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Study Programme: Sociology in European Context

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Year of the defense: 2019

## **Declaration**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on **10.05.2019**

**Sopiko Shubitidze.**

## References

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## **Abstract**

In this research I investigate the problem of education quality at the faculties of Social Sciences at four Georgian Public Universities. The findings of research are derived through interviewing of professors and document analysis of Georgian legislation concerning higher education and European-level frameworks supporting the enhancement of education quality. I deal with the problem of quality using the mixture of theories. I divided researched topics in three parts: Ideological, Institutional and personal-level. This research aims at measuring the performance of State Universities and their education quality in local context with link to the Internationalization and Bologna Process. My main question in this research is about fleshing out the constraints for producing better quality knowledge and research at the Social Sciences Faculties by main actors of the academia, -professors.

## **Keywords**

**Social Science; Education; Research; Education Quality; Professor; Academic; Knowledge. Public University**

## **Title:**

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## Introduction

The MA thesis deals with the problems of education quality at the faculties of social sciences at Georgian public Universities with an emphasize on professors' involvement in the process of quality improvement. In this research, professors are regarded as the core actors of academia. This MA research covers four public Universities of Georgia and its social sciences faculties, these are Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Ilia State University, Gori State University, Akaki Tsereteli Kutaisi State University. Certain factors determine the reason for the interest of education quality; the most important among them are high salience of the issue of higher education and student upsurge that emerged in the country since 2011. The contentious character of education quality exposed by students motivated me to study the problem further, especially from professors' perspective, that was yet not covered. Besides, dominant literature about HE quality and management problems are produced about Western countries and Universities. It is essential to see how the problem is formulated in other geographical settings.

I believe that demanded a change of quality of education is dependent on the high level of collaboration and consensus between stakeholders- not only students but also professors' who are assumed to be the major stakeholders. Added to that, Georgia is the country, which has joined the Bologna process in 2005 and signed the Association agreement with the European Union in 2013, which shaped the requirements of modernization of the education system of Georgia and its internationalization. It challenged professors with new requirements of teaching. Also, it opened broad horizons of internationalization, collaboration with European peers, research, etc.

My research problem deals with the quality enhancement of high education with the involvement of professors both at the external and internal levels. I am interested in what are the main constraints of quality enhancement and what are the opportunities for progression. I examine the factors of research commercialization in Social sciences, Motivations of professors to produce better quality knowledge and the role of QA internal and external agencies.

The first part of the thesis presents the theoretical framework for my research. I start from traditional theories elaborated by Humboldt, Merton, Kuhn, Abbott, Readings and many others that are not still considered to be classics but have a massive stake in contemporary research about education. The majority of research about education frameworks is done about and in The UK, United States or Australia and then it is transferred from other settings. In this sense, Georgia seems to be a quite remote country from Central-Western Europe, but I expect to see similarities between those two contexts.

The second chapter of the thesis elaborates on the research methodology, research questions, hypotheses, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Terminological precisions also will be made to clear out all possible misunderstandings. As it has been stated, I rely on qualitative – documentary analysis and interviews. I believe that first attempts in the field in Georgian context need to be made qualitatively, which will provide ground for a more comprehensive study uniting both methods of research. The third chapter is dedicated to an analysis of results, key findings, and final discussion

# 1.Theoretical Framework

## 1.1: An approach to theoretical scholarship

It is highly essential to note from the beginning, that during the research about the character of Georgian higher education system I hardly found a onefold theoretical basis that would perfectly fit the context of Georgia. For example, New Public Management theories or Public-Privat-Partnership theories, Weber Bureaucracy theories, etc. This is why I rely on full scholarship, but I will emphasize certain hybrid forms and patterns of ideas, theories, and management practices that are the feature of Georgian case at the end of the chapter, derived from previous scholarship.

I am interested in investigating the research problem in three-fold dimensions; the theoretical part of the thesis will be constructed according to that aim as well. These angles are:

### 1 - Ideological:

A pathway from Humboldtian understanding to the Marketisation of University.

The role of the University in the society and forces that are shaping ideological fiber of it.

### 2- Institutional actor-level at the University

The analysis of core administrative, i.e. management patterns,

The interrelation between the quality assurance department and social sciences faculties

Democratic mechanisms of involvement of professors in strategic planning

### 2- Agent i.e Person-related:

- motivation of professional growth, academic peer-reviewing and integration into an international research community.
- The factors that give stimulus to improve the current state of quality of education in social sciences.

Since I use the flexible design of research, the list of problems is continuous.

In my view, drivers of changes of quality of education stem from both Institutional circumstances, but also it can be pushed from the personal endeavor of professors. Which

of them is the strongest determinant of quality improvement and knowledge production at Social Sciences faculties will be one of the critical questions of the research. I have got an inspiration of such an approach from Karl Jaspers (1971) who states in his essay- "An Existentialist look at University Education", that

"the quality of education in Western institutions is devolving, and the reform can be achieved through "Unitary thinking", he distinguishes Institutional framework from mindsets of individuals who are engaged in the education system. He does not believe that change can be ripened by new legislation, laws, but from academic mindsets, who really acknowledge and deeply understand the Idea of University, so these are our study focus-main agents at University – professors.

## **1.2. The idea of the University**

The idea of the University education has undergone through several challenges and modes of both governance and thought. The aims University education varies from individual to collectivist goals of society, from Enlightenment goals to contemporary "knowledge-based economy" principles and material gains. The dominating social science literature on the idea of the University mentions such great scholars as are: Jurgen Habermas (1978,1987), John Dewey (1966), Talcott Parsons (1973), Pierre Bourdieu (1988), Alain Touraine (1971), Ulrich Beck (1994), Zygmunt Bauman (1987). I mention only some of those in my thesis. The predominant notion of the Humboldtian community of the University of culture is now superseded by a market-driven "knowledge-based economy." There are two distinctive oppositions, which compete to be the defining frame of University education - On the one hand, epistemological concerns emphasize the value of education, knowledge as "for its own sake." On the other hand, the value is based on the demands of different social actors, dominantly the market.

Several social actors are entering the field of higher education, and they try to influence problems of education and the research production and its purpose and current face (Delanty, 2008). The power of the academic community is at stake. The epistemological form of accountability has been altered by an administrative way of accountability and productivity in education is separated from the productivity of education (Machlup, 1962).

The academic community is not the only actor who defines the production of knowledge in an educational institution, especially from the late 1980s, when private-incentive and competition-based models of governance have become dominant. University education is challenged by many external actors, market forces and state regulations or demands. The countries in the process of democratic transition and labeled as developing countries, like Georgia that faces the challenges of high education on different levels of higher education is remarkable. The demands of the quality of education are aggravated by the expectation of Euro-approximation goals and aspiration towards European social organism.

### **1.3 – Ideological account on the scholarship on University knowledge – Humboldtian, Neo-Humboldtian and post-historical University**

Humboldtian understanding of the University was based on three core principles:

- Integration of Research and Study
- Equality of the disciplines
- The autonomy of University and knowledge producing

University knowledge constitutes a basis for culture, citizenship, and education

The slogan "Bildung durch Wissenschaft" ("education through learning and research") expresses the idea that science will educate the young generation to understand both the world and their duties in it (Hautamäki A. & Stähle P.2012). Humboldtian ideals stem from the heritage of Enlightenment; it is a continuation of the idea of nurturing individual citizens as universal world citizens. These ideal-type, absolute principles had already been established by Kantian philosophy. The Humboldtian university concept profoundly influenced higher education throughout central, eastern, and northern Europe (Anderson, 2004) Unfortunately, historical circumstances did not allow Georgia to stand in such a privileged and primary position in Europe that would enable it to operate in enlightenment principles. Georgia missed the Enlightenment in the 18th century (Zedania, 2013). The first University in Georgia was established in Georgia in 1918. Georgian University took

the Idea from the Humboldtian model. Humboldtian model of "Bildung" was fundamental if we take into consideration several distinctive characteristics of the epoch:

The struggle for autonomy of Georgia in Tsarist Russia

Struggle for preserving national language under the influence Russian Empire

The declaration of the independence of Georgia in 1918 and the building of the Democratic Republic, that lasted till the Soviet invasion in 1921.

Three years of independence have been remarkable in Georgia. The country that was partitioned before and existed in the Russian Empire was united. University has been perceived as the "fireplace for national identity" (Liluashvili, 2007). It is not an accident that Georgia builds upon European traditions and the first faculty of Tbilisi State University was named as faculty of Philosophy (TSU, 2019). To be more precise, the name of the faculty was closer to the meaning of "preaching the wisdom." It will not be arrogance if I say that it links Georgian educational tradition with European academia.

Back to the essence of the University Idea, Humboldtian principles have undergone through challenges posed by economic and political conditions. The marketization of University and massification of education are more explicit indicators of it. Consequently, the number of scientists and academic disciplines has been increased. The new concept of Neo-Humboldtian University appears on the scene (Gibbons & al. 1996, Geiger 2004, Nielsen 2012). Neo-Humboldtian University provides excellent conditions for the integration of fundamental research and social responsibility (Hautamäki A. & Ståhle P. 2012). The Neo-Humboldtian model deals with triple-task rather than a two-fold Humboldtian notion of "Teaching-Research Integrity." The third task is a large-scale of societal problems, that are worth solving. This third task, i.e., connection with the society is proposed mainly in economic terms. Universities are becoming thus entrepreneurial and market-oriented. Neo-Humboldtian understanding lies in the following principles:

- Interdisciplinary research
- Open and transparent science
- Cooperation with outside stakeholders
- The larger scale of problems worth solving

Neo-Humboldtian University integrates fundamental research and social University. In my opinion, the revision of Humboldtian principles under contemporary challenges is essential, but it should not be exaggerated on the extent that discards traditional autonomy and abandons University research to modern capitalism and market values.

Regarding the radical rejection of modern marketizing tendencies, we should mention several influential scholars, who write with a dedication to it. The notion of Post-historical University by Bill Readings (1996) and Academic Capitalism elaborated by Sheilla Slaughter and Larry Leslie (1997) have high importance. Reading argues about the concept of "excellence" of University education which is equated with a healthy amount of money outsourced by University education, rather than "raison d'etre." He writes:

"Teaching is the administration of students by professors; research is the administration of professors by their peers: administration is the name given to the stratum of bureaucrats who administer the whole."

The main idea of Readings befits the idea I mentioned before, University must not be subjugated to private incentives of marketization, but not to fall in love with Humboldtian principles in a sense to imagine that University is able today to nurture national culture and citizenship. Bill Readings was distracted from nostalgic feelings about the past. Instead Readings call for Institutional Pragmatism, which means recognizing the University today for what it is: an institution that is losing its need to make original claims for its function (Readings, 1996). The disappearance of Humboldtian University of culture and nation is understandable considering the two conditions:

- The nation-state is no longer provide overarching ideological meaning for what Goes on in the University (Readings, 1996).
- Sheering influence of global capitalism and corporations in the sense that, it alleviates the power of national culture.

The remaining reason for continuing existence in "Ruins" is how to keep thinking in an institution whose development makes "Thought" more and more difficult, less and less necessary. The concept of excellence appears to substitute the idea of critical thought, which was the foundation of modernist University. Excellent performance means merely

excellent skills of research, rather than evaluating the quality of what research is about and how meaningful it is for society.

As soon as we talk about Social Sciences and our focus of the study are Social science scholars, we should not forget that it gives us a different scope of view, rather than life sciences would provide. Marketisation of University knowledge is especially painful in social and humanitarian sciences. Social scientists (Especially theorists) are not able to influence neither public nor private business. This is not new that social science has always been disharmonious and is likely to remain so (Noble, 2000). University, as a whole, ideally should represent the community of dissensus, rather than consensus (Readings, 1996). Ruined University, reconciled relations with external market forces, forces that tend to maintain the status quo are highly increasing today. University has become vulnerable to them. We do not feel that we are living under a comfortable status quo. It is like dammed up water, which causes various diseases by its non-activity and absence of will to flow, while for example an earthquake or tornado has more power to show dangerous results.

Living on the ruins reverberates in the contribution to Delanty (2001). Despite the desperate situation, there are opportunities on which new universities must lean on. The role of the University must be to make sense of this situation of continuous change, and secondly, it must enable people to live more effectively in this chaotic world (Delanty, 2001). By his terms, University cannot be reduced either on science or culture, and it has a reconciliatory role of merging technology and cultural citizenship. The rise of democracy is an excellent opportunity for University to base its rule on democratic values and establish communication to the outside world. We can divide the functional role of University in two periods: before WWII and after WWII. In the first period, the University community existed as a separate whole. From 1960-70s movements of modernity (workers, women, anticolonial, etc.) challenged the University and it made University as a site of democratic radicalization (Delanty, 2011). However, it did not change the knowledge production at University. The emergence of contentious movement on the University basis is highly essential for my research since the student rupture in Georgia is tightly related to "radical democracy."

The marketization of University knowledge is best addressed in the book by Slaughter and Leslie, "Academic Capitalism." The authors examine ongoing changes like academic labor in the period of 1970-95. They conclude that the structure of academic work changes dramatically and it is conditioned by global markets. In the new market-influenced environment Academics are hired by Public Universities, but they are not responsible for and autonomous from the public. The distribution of market wealth is uneven, those professions and academic disciplines close to the market – for example. Business or applied sciences – are likely to gain, while cultural fields (Slaughter, Lesslie, 1997). Academics, who bring more resources to the University, gain more prestige and status within the institution, they are highly valuable for University administrators.

The purpose or functions of today's University is based on the tenets of 1) Research 2) Professional training, 3) General education 4) Cultural development (Parsons and Platt, 1973). The most significant from that is professional training that precedes the social functions and even the purpose of general education. University is no more "Universal" entity, rather than Multiversity (Parsons and Platt, 1973).

The disintegration of University, as a community of academics, is at stake. But we consider the fact that Georgia from the period of academic marketization (1970-1980s) was not even a free capitalist country. The emergence of academic capitalism must be linked to gaining independence in 1991 and a comprehensive process of privatization of public services that followed it. Therefore, we only use the previous scholarship on marketization as a reference point, which needs to be investigated in the local context of the country's educational market. The derivation of results how it affects the production of knowledge in social sciences is the matter of my research and will be shown in the section of results.

#### **1.4. "Epistemic cultures" of sciences and the position of social science in the locale.**

The previous scholarship represented in the later paragraph has been built upon more based on cultural studies and classic ideas of the modern University education. In the upcoming part, I will try to turn more specifically to the place of Social Sciences in University education by referring to the stratification of Sciences proposed by Robert.K. Merton, T.Kuhn, Andrew Abbott, Stephen Cole, etc.

Differentiation of sciences has been the matter of interest of high-profile social scientists; such are Robert Merton and Tomas Kuhn. The differentiation criteria, however, are not similar in their work, but some common tendencies are to be found. Kuhn (1970) differentiates among sciences by the extent to which they have developed paradigm and methodological approaches about which there is a high consensus. It means that Mathematics, biology or Physics are at the upper side of hierarchy, while sociology, for example, lies at the bottom of the hierarchy. In social sciences, there is no consensus about methodologies, theories, etc. Whether it is good or bad is not the focus of our work. Social science has always been and will stay as a melting pot of versatile ideas and perspectives, which try to explain the world in which we live in, this is why I assume that discontent of quality of education in higher institutions is notably higher among those who study or teach social sciences.

Kuhn pays special attention to social epistemology, he considers the cyclical pattern of scientific change from normal science to the crisis, from crisis to revolution, and from revolution to a new regular scientific tradition. In each of these phases of research, scientists encounter different sorts of challenges. And the structure of the research community changes to meet these challenges. Normal science is characterized by the uncritical acceptance of a theory in a research community (Wray, 2015) When the consensus that describes normal science breaks down, the research community is in a state of crisis. It is only then that scientists are willing to develop and seriously entertain

alternative theories. The research community thus changes to meet the new challenge, a challenge that requires significant "retooling" (Kuhn 1996). Kuhn challenged the conventional idea of linear, incremental scientific development with his conception of successive and discrete paradigms of scientific thought (Hollinger, 2003).

For Robert.K. Merton, Kuhn's paradigm theory meant that patient efforts toward the construction of social sciences were futile (Haney, 2008). Here, I would like to refer the Merton's classification of sociological theories into three groups, that I will apply to social sciences generally, but with an emphasize that Merton initially elaborated it about sociological science, rather than the whole spectrum of social sciences. Merton distinguishes three types of theories:

- Grand narratives – classic theories
- Middle range theories
- Thick descriptions – narrow research

Merton pays special attention to the significance of the middle-range theories (1967):

"Middle range evolve in abundance during day-to-day research and all-inclusive systematic efforts to develop a unified theory."

Unlike Kuhn, Merton believed in integrity and coherence, the cumulative nature of knowledge in social sciences. His approach is aimed at integrating empirical research and theory. Merton concludes that all middle-range theories are in direct line of continuity with the work of classical theoretical formulations (Merton, 1967). Following Merton, I assume that the scientific community in social sciences consists of inheritors of Durkheim and Weber. There could hardly be found faculty of social sciences that do not introduce those grand theorists to its graduates during the first years of their studies. Concerning the problem of my research, I would refer to the social science knowledge, produced at Georgian Public Universities, in connection with middle-range theory. However, I hypothesize that the academic community at University rarely or never claims that its research is "narrower," without the reference point to theories and the limited capacity of generalization.

The knowledge in social sciences is to be divided into two strands: Research frontier and the core of knowledge (Cole, 1983). Knowledge is not a uniform whole; it is made up of two principal components mentioned above. Going further to Kuhn's assumptions, Stephen Cole suggests that in Social sciences similar consensus can exist at the research frontier as it is in natural sciences. His comprehensive quantitative study results show that an equal degree of consensus exists for example in Sociology and Physics due to the fact, that there is more agreement in research frontier in sociology (unlike to core of knowledge) and this outbalances the disagreement about the core of knowledge.

The knowledge in social science falls into segmentary lineages. These lineages are generated by fractal distinctions, distinctions that tend to repeat within themselves, both hierarchically at a given time and in decent systems over time. Synchronically, the indexicality of these distinctions encapsulates systems of knowledge in a compact form but also generates endless misunderstandings. Diachronically, such distinctions give rise to the processes of perpetual rediscovery that is called fractal cycles (Abbott, 2010).

Abbott stresses on three forms of lack of knowledge in social science (2010):

1. A scientist does not know facts;
2. Too many citations in articles and inappropriate usage of them
3. Researching in on a specific field without taking into account the research in adjacent scientific fields.

How does it refer to Georgian social scientists? This is one of the significant questions that will be addressed in the section of findings that are derived from interviewing and citation analysis; we are interested in positioning research produced by Georgian social scientists on the international academic scene. How does knowledge is differentiated from the research frontier? Which one is more dominant on the teaching scene? Is research driven by state efforts? Market incentives? Those are only one part of questions and still not the complete list that is derived from the theoretical background and will be addressed in the section of research results.

## **1.5. Research-teaching nexus and knowledge production**

The quality of education is affected by factors such as: competition among professors, strenuous relationship, closed circles of academics without prior contact to adjacent disciplines, struggling for having big citation impact-factor. The University, as a body of equals, is much more idealistic conception, rather than reality.

Two of the most problematic issues are dilemmas of "publish or perish" and "teaching versus research."

Being published means being existent at academia. But the evaluation of what is published is contextual and relational (Lamont, 2007). The peer reviewing process is both formal and informal. By formality, it is meant the significance and originality of publication, whilst informality means the cultural capital of the author, elegant style of writing, etc. In many cases, the ability to generate "Excitement," "elegance" and display of "cultural capital" decides whether an applicant who applied for publication of his or her article is successful or not (Lamont, 2009). In this research, we see the publication visibility and reach or otherwise citation index as the indication that affects the position of the faculty or University in a global context and betters its prestige and creates the atmosphere, that quality of education is high there.

It is a frequent case when creative and innovative projects or publications must clear higher hurdles to be successful. Then who are those who easily find their ways in the sciences? Here I would recall "Matthew effect" in sciences coined by Merton, which is defined as follows:

"Accruing large increments of peer recognition to scientists of great repute for particular contributions in contrast to minimizing or withholding such recognition for scientists who have not yet made their marks" (Merton, 1968)

It means that those who are much more resource-rich already can attract more and more resources for their research. It is a closed circle that does not attract early career scientists. The system also does not allow "late-blooming," i.e., showing your potential later (Gregg, 1957). The same power structures and class positions function at the University as it is in a capitalist society. But we should recall the Merton's "Matthew-effect" here as well, and he adds that it is not always true that Matthew-effect will work as usual. For example, many

scientists try to choose different places for growth, because some institutions already have "stars" that might overshadow new arrivals.

One of the major characteristics that are our interest is about the distinction posited by Cole (1983) about "star" or "gatekeeper" scientists and mid-range professors. If "gatekeeper" is not a star and instead is mid-range academic, then recognition and legitimation of new talents of science is difficult and even impossible,

The relationship between teaching quality and research productivity is much more elusive than conventional wisdom would suggest (Griffiths, 2004). The flow between teaching and research is two-dimensional. Teaching can be:

- Research-led
- Research-informed
- Research-based
- Research-oriented.

The most comprehensive study of research-teaching nexus has been done by Hattie and Marsh (2002). The research found that there are zero relationships between research productivity and teaching capacity at the individual and Departmental level at the University. This suggests that the University might have as many excellent teachers as there are excellent researchers. It also means that the common belief that research and teaching are inextricably intertwined is a myth. The conventional wisdom suggested that symbiotic relation of research and teaching distinguished University from other institutions (Neumann, 1992). Indeed, teaching and research might be complementary, conflicting or even unrelated to each other (Hattie, J, and Marsch, H.W, 2002).

In this Master thesis, I would borrow the teaching-research nexus scheme that was elaborated by Robertson (2007), he differentiates between three primary interfaces that depict the levels of interconnectedness:

- The weak relation
- The hybrid relation
- The integrated relation

Research and teaching are rapidly being transformed through the combined influences of information and communication technologies, globalization, mass education, and government economic policies (Gibbons et al., 1994; Kogan, 2004).

Research at one hand is driven by private incentives, external agencies, corporations or businesses. On the other hand, the teaching scene is influenced by student demands and their diversity (Robertson, 2007). What do students want? How many students sit in the auditorium? How diverse is the student community regarding ethnicity, race, social status, etc.? All those reflect upon how professors should approach teaching and transmission of knowledge. Two significant forms of knowledge are distinguished at the University scene: Declarative knowledge and Functional knowledge. (Biggs and Tang, 2011). Declarative knowledge represents verifiable public knowledge, that is consistent and exists in the libraries, while functional knowledge informs the learner about action (Biggs and Tang, 2011). Regarding the increase of student population worldwide, I assume that more demand is for functional knowledge, in other words, "professional" knowledge, that is applied in the real workplace.

The purpose and nature of knowledge are challenging in today's University. The distinction between declarative and functional knowledge is blurred in postmodern University. Core knowledge, i.e., lay knowledge can no longer be separated from professional knowledge (Wallerstein et al. 1996). The teacher and researcher acquire a new role: to supply a trained labor force (Delanty, 2001). The role of University education has become to serve the economic needs of society, production of technological expertise (Kerr, 1963). The idea of commercialized knowledge of the teacher is described by Weber (1918), who feared about the "Americanization" of knowledge, that meant functioning of the professor as enterprise merchant: "Professor sells me his knowledge and his methods for my father's money, as the Greengrocer sells cabbages to my mother".

## **2. Quality Assurance in Education**

### **2.1. Definition, emergence and development of QA in education**

Quality is different to measure and define in higher education. Various stakeholders have their positions about it. Quality is hard to capture with numbers and scores. Hence, the usefulness of performance indicators by focusing primarily on input and output is very much in doubt. (Maureen, 2001). Each group tries to define what is quality and enhance its powerfulness (Barnett, 2004). I would need to exclude some irrelevant groups for my research that are trying to determine education quality and stay in focus that targets internal stakeholders of University: students and professors. I will use the classification by Harvey and Green (1993). Therefore, I should define what education quality for them is. For students, quality has a transformative function, and HE education exposes qualitative change for their lives. The transformative aspect of education is one of the quality types; Harvey and Green define that. There is no doubt that some of the students do not expect any transcendental or cognitive transformation and they would require just skills that are relevant for their future careers. In both situations, education has transformative power.

Regarding professors, the most relevant definition for them in the Georgian context can be "fitness for purpose." It is especially crucial since professors are hired by short-term employment contracts and accreditation results of programs they are part of. To accomplish this, they would need tools, infrastructure, finance and motivation to teach and do research.

Although the concept of quality assurance is quite a new term in the field of Higher education, it has become rapidly approbated by Universities. The idea of quality assurance comes from large-scale manufacturing systems. When workers worked on the mass production of goods, they could have a rare interest at the end of the product, the quality of it. (Allais, 2009). It became necessary to control the quality of what had been prof we transfer it to the HE systems, and it means that educational product needs to be monitored to meet the certain predefined criteria. Michael Power (1997) calls this trend "audit society." Besides, the term of Taylorism was coined by Dominelli and Hoogwelt (1997). Taylorism ensured the reduction of worker autonomy over the labor process placing them

‘under permanent surveillance and control in the fulfillment of their output norm’ (Aglietta, 1979) Three significant scholars who developed the vocabulary of quality management are Deming, Juran, and Crosby (Mishra, 2007).

Why do we need QA in higher education? I would distinguish two primary arguments:

- Massification of Universities- the growth of student numbers and faculties, departments.
- The necessity of controlling public funds allocated for state HEIs by governments.

Quality assurance is different from quality control. Quality assurance involves auditing mechanisms and systems for quality management embedded in every stage of the production process, rather than only at the end (Morley, 2003). Quality assurance at one side is a circular process because institutions used to base their improvement strategies after receiving the feedback. But it is essential how quality assurance and quality itself is perceived by academic staff. Many academics might regard the quality assurance proceeding as a part of discipline and bureaucracy, rather than as an enabling framework aimed at organizational and professional development. Quality assurance, audit systems are the tools for improving accountability. From the standpoint of democratic values, which are primary in Western societies who are distinguishable with a high-quality education, it is good, because before the audit systems were introduced the past was a cauldron of secrecy and inefficiency (Morley, 2003). Also, there are some concerns, that audit is introduced when trust has broken down (Power, 1994).

Research on the pact of quality assurance is complicated because it is almost impossible to control all related factors to find out the causal relationships. Many studies argue that a quality assurance system has not caused University change as much expected (Liu, 2006). The impact of quality assessment is related to the characteristics of the quality assessment scheme, the context of evaluated institutions and their initiatives. In some countries, quality assurance has proven to be the most potent change agents (Kogan & Hanney, 2000). But change does not necessarily mean improvement; quality is a relative concept. Notably, in the case of Georgia since the country committed itself to the radical transformation of the Education system in Georgia since 2005. Studies on change indicate

that strategic planning that focuses only on external dependency is unsuccessful mainly in Higher education (Keller, 1997., Birnbaum, 2000). Internal factors, or in other words inside the context of the institution is essential (Shin, 2010). Also, the term "quality culture" matters here, since the stakeholders of HEIs should be aware of the significance of quality assurance. There has been an important shift in QA systems that was depicted in refocusing from "input accountability" to "outcomes accountability" (McLendon et al., 2006). If input accentuated on the process, outcome, i.e., performance-oriented accountability stressed on achieved results, budget allocation, etc. The same trend of refocusing to "outcomes-accountability" is present in Georgia.

## **2.2 Models and criteria of Quality Assurance**

In this research, I rely on the five concepts of quality of education, which was elaborated by Harvey and Green (1993), who are the most influential scholars on the issue. They distinguish:

- Exceptional quality – special, distinctive (like Oxford, Harvard, etc.)
- Perfect quality – Zero defects, getting things right first time
- Fitness for Purpose – most commonly used by education specialists and policy-makers
- Value for money - "high standard" at a reduced cost, accountability is at heart.
- Quality as transformation – Education as a process, which places learners at the center, transformation is added value.

In my research, I am interested in investigating the "Fitness for Purpose," "Value for money: and "Perfect quality." However, I expect that the policy sphere representative that I am going to interview will stress on fitness for purpose value, while the views of interviewed professors might be varied.

Different interest groups have their idea of quality and how to measure it. For example, employers want specific competencies and skills for a job; the government seeks for the

accomplishment of set goals: As many of the possible students should graduate timely and get their diplomas.

The general management philosophy that is used in quality assessment in education is Total Quality Management – TQM. Total quality management systems generally use the idea of "accreditation." A business that subscribes to a total quality management system, and is audited by the appropriate organization, is given accreditation (Allais, 2008).

Managerialism in higher education have different characteristics from the general management Gordon and Whitchurch (2010) differentiate six of them:

- Greater separation of academic work and management activity.
- Increased control and regulation of academic work by managers.
- A perceived shift in authority from academics to managers and consequent weakening of the professional status of academics
- An ethos of enterprise and emphasis on income generation.
- Government policy focused on universities meeting socio-economic needs.
- More market orientation, with increased competition for resources.

The fundamental belief of managerialism is the objectivity and professionalism of managers (Clarke and Newman, 2000; Ward, 2011; Klikauer, 2015). Managers are rational and neutral. There is no difference whether a manager operates in the field of higher education or private enterprise that produces light bulbs.

Regarding the Georgian context, I assume there is doubt whether should I rely on entirely on New Public Management theories that are more appropriate for developing countries. New Public Management is not as consistent and complete in developing countries, as it is in the developed parts of the world. Certain factors are impeding:

- The politicization of the public sphere
- Nepotism or favoritism
- Patron-client relationship
- Corruption

(Khan, 1998; Polidano, 1999; Soeters and Mussie 2004).

### **2.3. Critique of managerialism culture and NPM in High Education.**

The spread of Taylorism culture and audit reshaped the roles of head of academic departments, deans and rectors, and they act more like administrators who have huge tasks: attract more students, attract more excellent students, attract high-profile professors, raise funds for research, etc. etc. The list of administrative functions is continuous.

Deem, Hillyard, and Reed (2008) coined the term 'neoliberal managerialism' by merging two terms. They suggest that Universities are pervaded by the logic of neoliberal managerialism. New Public Management changed the old model of public administration in the 1980s. NPM is a modern management practice with the logic of economics retaining core public values (Samaratunge, Alam and Teicher, 2008). In the 1980s, the drivers of change, particularly financial pressures, pushed most Western countries towards a focus on making the public sector more competitive and public administrators more responsive to citizens by offering value for money, the flexibility of choice and transparency. This movement was referred to later as New Public Management by academics (Kallimulah et al. 2012). NPM followers believe that the private sector is more effective and the public sector should learn from it.

The operational principle of NPM is that the government should give self-governing opportunities to the public sector on anti-hierarchical, anti-bureaucratic and contextual principles. Although citizens are treated as customers, it also implies that to satisfy the customer one needs to have competition and free choice and equality of condition (Tolofari, 2005). Ferlie et al. (1996), Marginson & Considine (2000) and Duke (2002) highlight the changes that have been made to the governance of higher education and these include:

Shift from traditional academic collegiality to more independent vice-chancellors acting in the manner of company chief executives.

Besides the fact that faculties and departments have budgetary autonomy, they allocate funds within the framework of institutional plans.

Decisions are making by executives, rather than academic discipline representatives

Research centers are created and dissolved as needed because research is geared toward short-term returns and commercial potentials

High pressure from the market to maintain a reputation and raise funds from private sources

The quality of education in these conditions is defined by the culture of the private sector and economical consumption. In the case of Georgia, NPM found a slippery basis in higher education. Georgian scholars note that NPM was not wholly successful due two main reasons: internal logic of NPM and value-orientation and readiness of society to keep up with it. (Dolidze, 2015; Abashidze 2016). The major problem is the depoliticization of the public sphere and failure to eradicate clientele relationships and nepotism. Added to that in Georgia, there is a lack of entrepreneurial culture, and it is partly related to the post-Soviet heritage. The private sector is not interested in funding the non-commercial structures, such as HEIs and its social sciences faculties. During my research, none of my respondents claimed that the faculty academic and administrative management was empowered and guided by market logic. Moreover, some of them claimed that this is a very utopian project at this stage. I would call Public Management of HEIs as hybrid structure, on the one hand, the majority of decisions are made by chief executives, but on the other hand, there is no pressure from economic logic to act as manager of the firm. Also, there is one strong factor that needs to be taken into account, public Universities in Georgia do not have direct state financing scheme, they are dependent on the study fees of students, it means that there is no necessity to compete for state funds and engage in competition for obtaining more public funding.

#### **2.4. Cross-country analysis of external QA systems and comparison with Georgia**

A general model for Quality Assurance does not exist at the European level. Quality assurance in the sector of education is difficult since the product of HE is comprehensive, and unlike the other sectors, for example, manufacture, results of it are not easily

discernible. In this paragraph I will present the examples of QA systems in the following settings: Nordic Countries represented by Sweden and Denmark only, Central and Eastern Europe represented by Poland, Germany, Romania and Georgia itself. I assume that regarding the shared past with Eastern European countries like Poland and Romania, I could find many similarities with these countries. Quality culture is a complex, socially constructed phenomenon that cannot be seen in isolation from the specific context in which it is embedded and cannot be transferred from one organization to the other (Harvey and Stensaker 2008). Indeed, quality culture is a specific kind of subculture which overlaps with other types of subcultures (Bendermacher et al. 2017).

Early research about QA in higher education has been done in the 1990s by Neave (1991); Van Vught and Westerheijden (1993); Frazer (1997); Wahlen (1998); Brennan and Shah (2000); The research results driven from their studies suggest that mainly two types of quality assurance systems are distinguished: one that aimed at improvement and self-evaluation, the one that is aimed at accomplishment of set criteria and accountability. All the researches are based on comprehensive surveys and results are generalizable. Kells (1995) found two trends in QA systems:

- Quality assurance schemes are becoming more internally-driven, aimed at self-evaluation and self-regulation
- The influence of the government is diminishing in the majority of countries.

It is widely agreed that quality assurance and quality improvement are a shared responsibility between HEIs and quality assurance agencies (and in many cases governments). Besides, cross-country comparison show quality assessment should be as much as institution-driven as much-agency drove (Weber, Mahfooz & Hovde, 2010). It means that the abovementioned shift from accreditation criteria to more flexible, self-driven criteria of Universities are an important element of QA. There is an ascending trend of shifting from mere accountability to enhancing the improvement-oriented policies designed by institutions themselves. Even Germany, which was the most "strictest" country in a sense, that it used bold accreditation criteria for the high number of public and

private Universities, now tends to be lighter and focuses on self-driven evaluation. (Mahfooz & Hovde, 2010).

All the Nordic countries have redirected their focus from centralized assurance proceedings to self-evaluation criteria. It is argued by scholars that Nordic country practices in quality assurance have influenced common European principles under the Bologna process (Vinther-Jørgensen & Ploug Hansen, 2006). Today's trends in Scandinavia are following common modernization trends in Europe with a focus on "outcomes-based" in HE quality assurance. Sweden attached a high value to accreditation compared to other Nordic countries; accreditation, in conjunction with auditing, served to maintain and control the quality of higher education (Hämäläinen et al., 2001) In 2011 Sweden redesigned its system and refocused on learning outcomes. HEIs conduct a self-evaluation; external experts conduct a site visit and do the evaluation based on student theses (Högskolverket, 2011). The existing system was created by the involvement of diverse stakeholders, such as Association of Swedish Higher Education the Swedish National Union of Students, labor representatives and chambers at institutions. The Swedish system can be criticized in terms of lacking capacity to detect why educational programs are not successful or how to improve them. Thus, the interaction between internal and external quality assessment has not been fully developed (Sørensen et al., 2015; UKÄ, 2013a, 2013b, 2015). Danish model of quality assurance represents the joint effort of quality experts, international experts, labor market representatives, and students. The assessment is based on key figures, institutions' self-evaluation reports, site visits and documentation for the performance of quality assurance in selected areas as well as audit trails across a number of programs or academic areas (Schmidt, 2017) Danish Institute of accreditation has high autonomy and as it was shown it reflects the interest of all stakeholders. It can be characterized as "shared responsibility." Besides, state finance allocation in both countries is dependent on achieved results in QA.

In Poland, two types of quality assurance systems are present: internal and external. Externally quality assurance is administered by an autonomous body of the Polish Accreditation Commission (PAC). Evaluation proceeding include self-evaluation reports,

site visits, reports after site-visits by expert panels, feedback from HEIs and a resolution with a quality rating adopted by the PAC Presidium. Final analytical reports are disseminated to policy representatives to inform them about policy decisions regarding the quality in HEIs. Izabela Kwiatkowska-Sujka and Mieczysław Socha (2015) conducted a comprehensive study of the internal quality assurance system in Poland and found that the internal system is more formal, bureaucratic and burdensome. The involvement of interested stakeholders is lacking, unlike Denmark for example. The development of quality assurance systems in Poland is closely intertwined with the Bologna process, internationalization and adoption of European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The QA promoted important changes in HEIs, and such are improvement of learning and teaching quality, development of academic teachers' competencies, increase of external stakeholders' involvement in the development of programs. The QA had also impact on improving the quality culture at Universities (Tutko, 2015). Although Poland tried to decrease the number of bureaucratic proceedings from 2017 by new law under institutional accreditation has been substituted by the accreditation of programs, the system still suffers from bureaucratic burdens. Based on new amendments greater emphasis is placed on quality and education improvement, and quality aspects are the focus of a site visit undertaken as part of the evaluation (European Commission Report, 2019).

In the case of Germany, multi-stage evaluation of is prevalent including external, internal and follow-up proceedings. External evaluation is conducted at the level of the land. The accreditation of academic programs are decided by the accreditation council that is comprised of professors, one rector, two students, two foreign experts, representatives from Land ministries, External evaluations generally involves peer reviews, It consists of a systematic inventory and analysis of teaching and studying, taking account of research, performed by the individual department or the faculty and concludes with a written report Student criticism of classes, in some cases involving graduates, has now also become a widespread method of evaluating teaching in the sector of higher education. Such criticism primarily serves the purpose of optimizing teaching within the higher education institution and is not an official means of monitoring teaching staff (European Council, 2019). The findings of the previous studies on evaluation of teaching and learning mentioned in Section Introduction confirmed that multi-stage evaluation procedures – with internal

evaluation, external evaluation, and follow-up – are useful and effective (Bornman et al. 2006). In Germany, the interaction between internal quality assurance and external quality assurance has reached a relatively balanced status (Damian et al. 2016). As was already stated at the beginning of the chapter, Germany had the first very rigid and inflexible system, but today it is more oriented on improvement and development of quality and promotion of HEIs capacities in that regard.

Quality assurance in Romania is a matter of multi-level regulatory framework: Government law, ministry of education and higher education institutions themselves. The evaluation process is accomplished through internal evaluation, within the respective higher education institution, and external evaluation accomplished by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) (European Council. 2019). The domains of ARACIS evaluation include institutional capacity; educational efficiency; internal quality assurance. In general, Romania is a remarkable example of the rapid expansion of higher education opportunities with having an ability to mobilize international support for its reforms (Curaj et al. 2015). The motto of Change has been the Bologna Process and European integration, but I leave it for discussion out of the thesis whether it is good or bad. Regarding the involvement of interested stakeholders and democratic aspects of quality assurance procedures, quality assurance body ARACIS is also aware of it and is capable of providing innovative information for the future: students and their families, professional associations, public and private universities, international organizations and teaching and research staff from research and development units. (Dima, 2010). Still, such information dissemination is not equal to real involvement in the process of evaluation. Added to that, the "quality culture" itself in Romanian HEIs is lacking, which means that internal quality assurance for Universities is more or less formality (Curaj, 2015) Since universities depended on ARACIS for their legal survival, they formally complied with external requirements for quality assurance without necessarily developing systems of their own (Vlăsceanu et al. 2011) In other words, Universities in Romania simply tend to be compliant with formal rules that are imposed by QA. The distinction between external and internal measures of QA is not clear in Romania, because internal evaluation resembles an external one, but it does not suggest that there is the hierarchical relationship among two and external assurance is superior to internal one

(Curaj et al. 2015). The failure to internalize quality assurance is dependent on four factors in Romanian HEIs: "Academic Complacency" (i.e., people believe that they are good at what they do and do not need to be assessed), Failure of "top-down" policy, failure of "bottom-up" policy and problems in overcoming the "legacies from the past", logic of Market policies (Geven et.al.2015) In the case of Romania problems exist on both: micro and macro levels. Research conducted by K. Geven suggests that Romanian academics themselves do not perceive that the purpose of quality assurance is beneficial for them either for "accountability" reasons or for "improvement" goals, henceforth, it is clear why the culture of quality assurance is missing.

In this light, Quality assurance in Georgia can be assumed to be as "quasi-shared responsibility," Quality standards at Public and private Universities are divided into two parts: internal and external. External quality is supervised by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE, in short EQE). EQE controls the quality by using two proceedings according to its law: self-evaluation report and by its own initiative (Legislative Herald of Georgia, 2010). EQEs mission is to enhance the quality of education as it is declared in the name of the agency itself. EQE states that quality of education should be assessed through "outcomes," it proves to be the same in other European systems, where quality assurance shifted from "input accountability" to "output accountability" (McLendon et al., 2006). The outcome of education quality is assessed by four components: "Knowledge," "Comprehension," "Responsibility" and "Autonomy" of education recipients, i.e., students. In other words, the student, the main object of the higher education system should have knowledge, and he/she should be aware of it how to use this knowledge independently, and various circumstances and should be able to take responsibility when he/she does it.

Internal quality assurance departments are autonomous bodies at each University, and they have a direct touch with EQE. However, EQE does not have any tools to monitor the quality of education in the actual situation – for example during a lecture, it also does not assess student achievements, like it is in Sweden. Besides, the state finances of Universities are not dependent on quality, and all public Universities receive an equal amount of money regardless the excellence.

In the case for Public Universities, because there is more trust between government and Public Universities, rather than with private ones and it stems from the heritage of the previous rulership when during the Soviet time's Universities were governed by the state directly. Although the agency of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) is a state agency, the appointment of quality experts is based on open competition of candidates, however the council of accreditation is appointed by the Ministry of Education and Sciences (NCEQE, 2019) There has also been shifting from accreditation criteria to supporting development and enhancing self-evaluation by HE institutions themselves, and it is stated in the new strategy of the center (NCEQE strategy, 2016). The real consequences of a new strategy and working rationale of external quality standards at the level of professors will be analyzed in the research results. The main aim of my study deduces the QA proceeding at an individual level and how it affects the quality improvement capacities of lecturers in real settings. If I compare Georgian system to selected countries, I would state that it is more similar to Eastern European model, like Romania, but it tries to apply some best practices from Central-Western Europe (like Germany) and stresses on empowering University capacities of self-evaluation at least formally, that stems from strategic documents.

### **3. Methodology of Research**

#### **3.1. Research design**

In my research follow the flexible design (Rubin and Rubin, 1995), according to which the researcher is allowed to change and modify the selection of materials during the period of research several times. Modification depends on whether we find something interesting and beneficial to our study. Besides that, the rationale for choosing flexible design lies in the fact that I am conducting qualitative research, that is not as fixed as quantitative research. Although my research topic is more theory-driven, rather than empirical, this theory lacks consistency in terms of generalizability to the case of Georgia. Leading theoreticians that are mentioned in the theoretical framework talk about Western HEIs.

Georgia is not the case in this sense, because it is not part of the Western world, but rather it is the part of Eastern Europe. Consequently, I expect that during the research period I will be challenged by the factors that were not part of my fixed plan.

Following Kvale (2007), I will employ the analytic generalization of research results which is opposite to statistical generalization. Analytic generalization is used for making conclusions about other people or other situations derived from the interviews. My aim is not to make conclusions about the population, rather than about certain situations. I consider analytic generalization a suitable mode of generalization for my study. The findings of the research, in this case, should show how the results of the study are either challenged or supported by the theory or argument (Yin, 2010). The theory should be made clear at the beginning of the research, and I think I accomplished this.

### **3.2. Research Methods**

I use qualitative data collection based on following claims that it enables me to;

- Construct meanings and understand phenomena deeply
- Apply inductive, hypothesis-generating research, rather than hypothesis-testing research (Hammersley, 1992).
- Analyze documents, interactions, communication with the research objectives.

To clarify, I do not provide any preliminary hypotheses to test in research.

I will use two types of qualitative methods: semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Regarding the interviews, I refer to University professors of Social Sciences that work at Public Universities, these Universities are:

Iv.Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU)

Ilia State University (ILIAUNI)

Akaki Tsereteli Kutaisi State University (ATSU)

Gori State University (GSU)

In terms of selection of respondents, at the first stage, I used random sampling and then snowballed sampling, the contacts of professors I obtained from the websites of Universities. Then I asked the interviewees to recommend other people who might also be relevant for my study. I protected the principles of gender balance and also balanced the research regarding the departmental distribution: for example, interviewed professors do not belong not only one department of Social sciences (for example only political scientists or only sociologists). I present as much variety as possible. Interviews are done via online tools- skype or messengers, because of the next important reasons:

- Digital tools are low-cost
- Digital tools are helpful to conduct interviews with regional University professors since the traveling would be difficult for me and it is also related to money/time concerns
- It offers flexibility to the respondents in terms of choosing the place and time of the interview. Plus, if some interruption occurs during the conversation, respondents can cancel the call at any time, and we can continue later.
- The professors are assumed to be knowledgeable, aware of how to use digital technology.
- Face-to-face contact can still be maintained through online interviewing.

The limitation of such a method is that it is quite difficult to build trust via online communication and it takes time to convince the professors why do I need them to participate in this research. The majority of problems I found with regional University representatives and more than half of the people I contacted, did not even respond to me. As a solution, I referred to mutual contacts, and it turned out to be successful. Generally, I have to admit that online communication via e-mail is not that productive when introducing yourself as a fellow researcher asking for an interview, one should use personal contacts or some intermediaries to bring about an agreement.

### **3.3. Research questions and objectives:**

- How does the external and internal quality assurance proceeding help the professors to improve the quality of the subjects they teach?

- How does the Internationalization and Bologna process help to improve the education quality at Social Sciences?
- What are the motivations of professors for improvement the quality of the subjects they teach?
- How do University management patterns affect the academic life of professors?
- What are the prospects of research commercialization in Social Sciences?
- How do professors view the research-teaching integers at today's University?

I divided the questions into two broad groups:

- The ideological framework of today's University management. The role of the private and state sectors. How do professors frame the terms like "quality," "academic freedom," "management of University," "research-teaching unity" etc.?
- Institutional givens, Interpersonal interaction among academics and individual level motivations: whether social scientist professors feel academically integrated at the national and international level, what factors promote the academic career growth, how does the academic title affect how they are perceived by peers, etc.

**Interview notes:** During the interview process I was taking notes. The notes helped me to register the information related to expressions, gestures, and feelings of interviewees. Although such kind of information is not included in the part of the research results, it served me a lot to disclose how the interviewees felt or looked like when I asked them specific questions. Also, I was writing down one major exclamation, adjective, a proposition for each question posed to interviewees. Sometimes it was the complete sentence or several words. I have recorded the interviews on the recorder.

### **The research objectives:**

- Examine what the motivations of professors to produce better quality knowledge are.
- Investigate how do the professors define their role today's Georgian Public Universities in terms of academic and administrative responsibilities

- Determine whether education quality at Public Universities is dependent on existing resource allocation schemes or individual motivation of professors to strive for better conditions.

### **3.4. Abbreviations:**

ATSU – Akaki TSsreteli Kutaisi State University

GSU – Gori State University

ENQA – European Association for Education Quality Assurance in Higher Education

HE- Higher education

HEI – Higher Education Institution

ILIAUNI- Ilia State University

NCEQE – National Center for Education Quality Enhancement of Georgia

NPM- New Public Management

TSU – Tbilisi State University

QA- Quality assurance

### **3.5. Strategies for document Analysis:**

I used the following legislative documents related to HE in Georgia and European frameworks that serve as a reference point for Georgia's education system in general:

Law about High Education of Georgia

The law about education quality enhancement of Georgia

The framework of national educational qualifications

European National Qualifications Framework

## Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Higher education Area

Document analysis requires that data are examined and interpreted to reveal meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Rapley, 2008). In my research, I see an analysis of documents as additional research data. Information and insights derived from the document can be valuable additions to a knowledge base (Bowen, 2009). I am interested in the one hand whether there is convergence between European level frameworks and Georgian legislation. On the other hand, I want to explore whether documentary evidence is contradictory or corroboratory to interview findings. Document analysis is cost-effective in my study, there is ample access to them, they cover a broad range of issues, but there are some limitations as well. For example, not all the documents I found provided sufficient details I searched for. Besides, I admit that I was not capable of covering all the legislative acts that are related to HE in Georgia and all internally issued acts or statements of the Universities. I preferred to focus on National and European level frameworks, as toolkits for understanding the quality management and improvement and also see how University development strategies reflect upon the research problems I am interested in.

First of all, I will start document analysis by unfolding the context, time and target audience of legislative documents. I will explore the "hidden" layers related to the context and time by which these documents were produced. Next, I will study the selected documents through content analysis. It will be necessary to quantify the use of particular words, phrases, and concepts (O'Leary, 2014). Additionally, I will determine thematic issues in documents and will classify them from less relevant to quality issues to the most pertinent to quality issues. I acknowledge that the process of analysis needs a high level of carefulness and sensitivity. Therefore, I bear the responsibility of objectivity and consistency at least following my MA thesis objectives.

### **3.6. Ethics of the study:**

Tracy (2012) describes three types of ethics: procedural, situational and relational. Procedural ethics relates to what is applied by the researcher before starting the interviewing, and it is much more formal. It includes confidentiality guarantee, informed

consent, benefits and harms of study (if any) et.c. Situational ethics refers to situations that emerge unexpectedly daily, it can happen if participants feel vulnerable or uncomfortable. Relational ethics "mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness between the researcher and researched, and between researchers and the communities they live and work in" (Ellis, 2007). It even enables the participants to read the research thesis during the writing process; in other words, relational ethics is about caring about each other. I followed the two types of ethical considerations: procedural and situational, I found it to be challenging to use relational ethics since it went beyond the scope of my particular MA thesis and I could not find it necessary.

Respondents were informed about the purpose of my MA thesis and the aim of my interview. I followed the principle of informed consent. All the interviewees were informed that I would have recorded the interviews. More than that, I used the principle of continuous or process consent, where the researcher reaffirms consent throughout the research process (Byrne, 2001; Nunkoosing, 2005). I reiterated several times the importance of informed consent when I went deeper and wanted to discuss some salient issues. I guarantee confidentiality to respondents. It is important especially when one needs to quote some excerpts from interviews (Shaw, 2003) Although interviewees cannot be identified by public, but if the interviewees find themselves the research report, they might find the quotes that belong to them and feel uncomfortable, but of course it depends in which context their quotes are cited, and it is sole responsibility of the author of the research to be careful in regards with quotation that is detached from context or is "sensational" and "exaggerated".

## **4. Analysis and Results**

### **4.1. The context of higher education reform in Georgia, Bologna process and external quality assurance of HE**

After the Rose Revolution of Georgia, 2003, the country implemented fast reforms in every sphere of public life. The signing of the Bologna declaration by Georgia in 2005 seemed to be the solution for the revolutionary government to get out of the chaos in which the whole educational system in Georgia deemed after and during the Soviet Union rulership. One year before, in 2004 Georgia adopted a new law about higher education, it happened during the first year of the rulership of the new government, who took power after the revolution. However, the national qualifications framework was adopted in 2010, and it was based on the "descriptors of Dublin." The question is why did Georgia adopt the framework so late? After five years of signing the Bergen communique. I found the part of the answer in fact that the countries which adopted this framework had to undergo the extensive and hard working process of approximation study curriculums to the framework. Before 2010, Georgia did not seem to be mature to take such responsibility, and it needed a gradual transformation of HE. The problems were related to corruption, financial crisis, strategic management, innovation, research capabilities and the absence of research-oriented teaching (Glonti, Chitashvili, 2006). Georgia joined the Bologna process in Bergen, 2005. In total, the next topics were covered by communique issued by different ministerial in different European cities after that time. Those topics included:

The unitary system of qualifications, credit transfers, quality assurance, and its mechanisms, mobility of students and academic personnel, integration of teaching and research, market demands and HEIs adaptation to it, life-long learning, the social dimension of HE and importance of inclusion of different groups, Innovation in learning and teaching, etc. Our focus in this research is about the quality of higher education and research-teaching integration. I included in the analysis only three communiqués of Bergen, Yerevan, and Paris.

Also, I examined the amendments to the law about higher education and law about quality assurance. The totally 75 law amendment was made in the law on higher education and 15

for law on quality assurance of higher education. I elevated these amendments to the political context and compared the rulership of two opposing political powers – Georgian Dream (2012-till now), National Movement of Georgia (2004-2012). Out of 75 amendments 45 were made during the rule of Georgian Dream in 2012-2018, while in the quite long period of 9 years, only 30 change was made to the law. Regarding, the law about quality assurance of higher education only three changes were made by the post-revolutionary government of National movement Georgia, and the other 12 amendments are initiated by the current ruling party of the Georgian Dream. How did I reflect upon it? I tried to link it with the ideology and orientation of parties. National Movement Georgia is a right-wing liberal country with an aim to deregulation of public spheres, while the Georgian Dream instead of deregulation increased the bureaucracy. So, this phenomenon stems also from the rapidly changing nature of the appointment of ministers. For example, the last three ministers of education governed the ministry for one year. Although the legislative framework underwent quantitative changes, it did not reflect the demand of students to achieve substantial differences in terms of increasing quality through more financial resources for research, more autonomy of the Educational system. Mainly the student upsurge was based on two claims: Resources and Autonomy.

#### **4.2. The role and place of the National Center for Quality Assurance**

In this context, it needs to be also noted that the center for quality enhancement is still a "quasi-autonomous" body since the head of the center is appointed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports, and Youth. This is a problematic issue since the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Education (2015) demands the independence of external evaluators of quality. Also, I would like to emphasize one critical feature of the center – it changed its name from the "national center for the quality control of education" to the "national center for education quality enhancement" in 2016. It means that more accent was put on the improvement of quality rather than control of quality. The substantial changes were made to the standards of accreditation, and the NCEQE reshaped its mission to become more supportive to HEIs and attain advisory functions. During my interview with NCEQE representative, I discussed these changes and the impact of the consultancy function of the center. It will be discussed in the interview

results. The work of NCEQE needs to be evaluated more positively, than vice versa, because it tried a lot to become the full member of ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance Agencies). It first became the affiliated member, then associate and in the May 2019 it is waiting for the final decision on full membership. (NCEQE, 2019). From outer perspective ENQA tries to be responsive to challenges, Bologna Communiqués, ESG, and other European level frameworks, it increased the body of evaluation experts up to 600, among them, 120 are student members, besides employees are also involved in the evaluation of higher educational programs. Student involvement is a new trend. Also, it should be emphasized that NCEQE radically transformed its scheme of evaluation in 2017 after adopting new standards of quality assurance. The problem with the NCEQE is that it is still focused on accreditation standards and no other mechanism is elaborated besides the accreditation. For example, how political science MA get accreditation at Tbilisi State University? The scheme is simple: Body of expert (5-6) people first review the self-evaluation report, afterward, they go on-site visit, which lasts one day and meet the professors of political science, dean, students and administration of the faculty, meetings are held separately with abovementioned stakeholders. After that, the expert body decides about the accreditation of the program and issues recommendations for improvement. The report is published on the website of NCEQE. During my research, I compared the reports before 2017 and after 2017. I found substantial changes in them: the expert reports are more detailed now, the decisions they made are not straight: yes or no. Experts can express their opinion on self-evaluation reports and site visits according to a much more flexible scale: "Satisfactory, "Moderately satisfactory" "Moderately unsatisfactory, "Unsatisfactory." In the case of the experts agree on the definition other than "unsatisfactory" the program is given a chance to improve detected problems.

The most problematic part of the evaluation is that the quality of research is not at stake at all. There is no indication in the standards of accreditation how many and what type of scientific publications are required from professors. The accreditation standards only state that the qualification of academic staff is defined by its "scientific activity in the last ten years." Therefore, I assume that the assessment of scientific activity is subjective and dependent on the personal view of an expert. In other words, there is an issue of measurability. On the other hand, I found an interesting answer to the lack of detailed

measurement, that can help at least partially in explaining the problem. Several respondents noted that there is hesitation both at the internal level and externally to stress on the quantitative results since the majority of professors lack scientific publications that are internationally acknowledged, especially in social sciences there are only a few professors who have citation index at all. If they are excluded from the University and unemployed or underrated, the situation will become severe for them since it is linked to the general economic hardship of the country. I found it interesting to examine through google scholar system how many times and how many full professors in social sciences that work at selected Universities of my research, are cited during the last ten years at all. The results are presented in the next paragraph.

#### **4.3. Google Scholar citation indexes of full professors in Social Sciences at selected Universities**

I included only three University professors in the google scholar analysis (TSU, Iliani, Gori State University) because I could not find public information about academic staff in social sciences at Kutaisi State University and I obtained contact details of interviewees by personal contacts of mine.

TSU: Number of full professors at the faculty of social and political sciences: 17.

The total sum of citations of all full professors at the Social and Political sciences faculty of TSU: 1042.

There is a discrepancy of data, for example out of 17 professors, three professors had zero citation index. 2 of them are cited only once. Only three professors had been cited more than 100 times during the last decade.

Iliani: Number of full professors at the faculty of sciences and arts (excluding the philosophy, philology, language studies, culturology): 22.

The total sum of all citations of full professors at the faculty of sciences and arts: 1443

And still, like the previous results have shown us in the case of TSU, there is an even bigger discrepancy of data among the professors. For example, one professor has been cited 640 times during the last ten years, while five professors are not cited at all,

throughout this time. Also, I found a tricky pattern, there were many international scholars acknowledged as full professors at Ilia State University, but they do not teach at the faculty, it means that excluding such professors would have given us even lower total sum. Unfortunately, I was not able to detect at this stage how regularly are these professors present at the University.

Gori State University: the number of full professors at the faculty of social sciences, business and law (excluding business administration and law): 6.

The total sum of citations of professors: 0.

Therefore, I assume that the research potential of full professors is limited; I am not counting the citation indexes of associate or assistant professors. If I had done this, the results could have been much more desperate. The issue of excluding such research-inactive professors from Universities is very salient and is related to the economic hardship of the country, especially in the regions of Georgia. During the interviews, I asked all respondents what the impeding factors of producing quality research at the University and what is the relationship between teaching and research is. Survey results present the answers.

#### **4.4. Quantitative analysis of keywords and general concepts.**

I conducted a text analysis through the NVIVO program. First of all, I identified the keywords that were relevant to my study. I selected 11 keywords that are represented in the table and analyzed them in 5 documents: Law about higher education of Georgia, Law about education quality enhancement in Georgia. Qualifications Framework of Georgia, European Qualifications Framework, European Standards and Guidelines for Education Quality Enhancement, Modernization Agenda for European Higher Education System; Bologna Process documents – Bergen Communique (2005) and Yerevan Communique (2015) and Paris Communique (2018). I chose only three communiques of the Bologna process because Georgia joined the Bologna process in 2005 and bologna ministers had the

last meeting in 2018 in Paris, so I chose the first and the last version of bologna rationale. I divided documents into two groups: Georgian and European laws and frameworks. I named them as GEOLAW and EULAW. Also, I identified the top ten commonly used words in all texts, analysis excluded so-called filler words, like "and" or "but," NVIVO enabled me to have access to this feature. I analyzed University Strategic Plans separately since they represented independent units and more internal ones, but of course with connection to international frameworks and Georgian laws, but I found that strategic plans are more aimed at unfolding sp problems at each University and finding solutions to it.

**Key words****References**

<b>EULAW</b>	
<b>Key words</b>	<b>References</b>
Academic personnel	19
administration	8
education quality	254
knowledge	148
learning outcomes	387
management	36
professor	0
quality assurance	259
Research	85
resources	26
Student	41
<b>GEOLAW</b>	
<b>Key words</b>	<b>References</b>
Administration	37
Academic personnel	175
Education quality	350
Research	2
Management	26
Professor	12
Resources	1
Student	1
Learning outcomes	108
Knowledge	2
Quality enhancement	146

### Top ten frequently used words in EULAW

education	learning	quality	qualifications	level	higher	assurance	European	national	knowledge
377	375	254	241	232	220	202	191	170	148

### Top ten frequently used words in GEOLAW

Educational	Georgia's	Higher	Year	Law	Institution	webpage	teaching	state	academic
1314	973	709	651	523	413	258	210	173	169

Since documents included in GEOLAW are in Georgian language NVIVO analysis was not that much precise, and it included so-called filler words as well and terms like "year" or "section," "subparagraph", that are quite common for law documents. Besides we should take in mind that mainly GEOLAW documents have direct legislative power, while EULAW included frameworks and guidelines that are not mandatory. So, there are different rationales behind those two types of documents.

I excluded from the analysis of the Association agreement of Georgia with the EU since it included only one page dedicated to my interest. I provide here the content of the agreement regarding HEIs and will continue the analysis of Bologna documents signed by Georgia and requirements of EU Modernization agenda for Higher Education in the following section:

B) modernizing education and training systems, enhancing quality, relevance, and access throughout) the education ladder from early childhood education and care to tertiary education;

(c) promoting quality in higher education in a manner which is consistent with the EU Modernization Agenda for Higher Education and the Bologna process;

(d) reinforcing international academic cooperation, participation in EU cooperation programs, increasing student and teacher mobility;

(e) encouraging the learning of foreign languages;

(f) promoting progress towards recognition of qualifications and competencies and ensuring transparency in the area;

(g) fostering cooperation in vocational education and training, taking into consideration the relevant EU good practices, and

(h) reinforcing understanding and knowledge on the European integration process, the academic dialogue on EU-Eastern Partnership relations, and participation in relevant EU programs.

(Eur-Lex, 2014).

#### **4.5. Conceptual Analysis of GEOLAW**

Taking into consideration the quantitative analysis results of frequently used words and keywords chosen by me, I selected four concepts to analyze at the next stage; these are Education Quality at HEIs, learning outcomes of HE, Management/Administration of the University, Research and teaching integration. The derived conclusions are from the analyzed documents of GEOLAW and EULOAW. The detailed statements that I found in those documents are provided in Annex 2 to the thesis. Due to the limit of the thesis, I could not provide them in the body text, and I give here only my analysis.

##### **Education quality at HEIs:**

Significance of the concept: While I was searching for the word "education quality" and its usage in different places of the text, I found that this word mainly referred to the "national center for quality enhancement", it was hard to find conceptual significance and this word only represented administrative and procedural alignments of the law. But I acknowledge that I should not have expected more elaboration by the legislative document. In short, internal quality assurance proceedings are not defined by GEOLAW. It is the sole responsibility of the internal quality assurance department of Universities. The Geolaw establishes the responsibility of external assurance. All the documents stress on "enhancement" of quality rather than control or even assurance. Mainly, the accreditation

is used as the term for measuring the quality at HEIs. Accreditation standards consist of 5 components:

- a) The aim and outcomes of the educational program and their relevance.
- b) Methodology and organization of teaching, the adequacy of assessment of how the learner acquires the program.
- c) Achievements of students and working with them individually.
- d) Provision of learning resources.
- e) The opportunities for education quality enhancement.

I assume that a self-evaluation report and short-term site visit is not satisfactory for proving or disproving the quality of the educational program. Let's take the component "c"; "Achievements of students and individual work with them." How should the quality expert commission investigate whether each professor works individually with every student? In this case, a large meeting with the students should be necessary. During the interview, NCEQE representative claimed that accreditation experts held meeting with students, but not every student can attend and are informed about it. Measuring this standard is ambiguous. The most achievable standard is "a" in my opinion, because professors can write this nicely in their syllabuses to meet the criteria and it will not be tested in a real setting, in other words, nobody will attend the lectures they give to students. This is one of the most problematic parts of external quality assurance at social sciences faculties.

NCEQE promotes quality enhancement through issuing recommendations. The assessment of quality is systematic and cyclical. Quality experts are autonomous. However, the NCEQE is a "quasi-autonomous" body. The standards of quality are based on measures of accreditation. It means that the law does not define what quality is or what kind of quality is demanded. GEOLAW descriptively mentions the terms such as the purpose of learning, the outcome of learning, resources for learning, individual communication with students, etc., but it is hard to assume what is meant behind these terms, how each component will be evaluated. Besides, there is a necessity of defining what the standard of quality for each specialization is, today only a few numbers of specialties have such kind of independent criteria, and social sciences are not among them.

### **Learning outcomes:**

The learning outcome is the result that is gained through the successful completion of the educational program. The learning outcome is often linked with qualifications. The most acute problem with learning outcomes is that it is copied by the Dublin Descriptors. The Dublin descriptors were adopted in 2005 as the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. Initially, the Dublin Descriptors were elaborated as a general guideline, and each European country should have created its descriptors with reference point to Dublin descriptors. It is quite common when the formula of "Knowledge and understanding, Application of Knowledge, judgment skills, communication skills, learning skills, values" are copied in the syllabuses (see also, Lezhava, Amashukeli, 2016). In my case, I have only selected the definition of learning outcome that is ascribed to the first cycle, I.e., Bachelor's programs that are given in appendix 2. The "learning outcomes" are presented with active verbs, like "participate," "use," "prepare" etc. It follows the international expert's recommendations, and I did not find problems with it, the problem is interpreting them in a national context. (Bloom 1975; Kenedy 2006, Adam, 2004). The reason why I chose the learning outcomes to analyze is that quality of education is related to the expectations teachers and students have, what students achieve and how teachers are contributing to it.

### **Management and administration of HEIs:**

I could find any implicit links related to New Public Management, not to say about explicit connections. The GEOLAW itself is general and broad and deals with different aspects of higher education. It proposes responsibilities and rights of governing bodies at the University. These are; academic council, facultative council, representative council and council of regents separately. Here, I only took the responsibility of administration and its head. It is important that the Department of Quality Assurance at the Universities are defined by law as the governing body of the University. In the law about selecting faculty councils and academic council, I found some non-democratic patterns that are constraining the participation of students. The most interesting is the notion of academic freedom, which is only briefly mentioned in the law. Although it is said that academic staff has the

right to work without interference, but there is no indication of what happens if academic freedom is violated and who is responsible for preventing such cases. Moreover, the GEOLAW mentions three types of cases, when restricting academic freedom is permitted. These are for the benefits of: "freedom of academic research in terms of organizational issues and priorities"; "Freedom of teaching- for the organization of learning process including organizing program curriculum and schedules," "Freedom of learning-for organization of learning process and high quality of education." Of course, academic freedom is very vulnerable, especially in hybrid regimes of democracy, such as Georgia is. It is better of the freedom is guaranteed as an absolute value. It can be used by University management in many cases related to so-called "organizational" issues, and it is hard to define and limit what is organizational and what is not.

### **The integration of research and teaching**

Significance of the concept: Unfortunately, I could not find enough supportive statements that would help me to unfold and define what is a connection between teaching and research at HEIs, this can be explained partly by the fact, that some HEIs in Georgia are as teaching Universities. Then I tried to explore those two concepts per se, independently. The GEOLAW indicates that the accreditation of programs is about research as well. But nothing is said how the research capacity is going to be evaluated. What are the minimum standards of evaluation? For example, brutally saying, how many international publications should be produced by professors at social sciences faculties? I admit that quantitative criteria of assessment of research are hard, but GEOLAW does not provide nor quantitative nor qualitative criteria of evaluation. In terms of teaching, GEOLAW states, that professors are free to choose the methods of teaching, this issue is tightly connected to the problem of academic freedom which was discussed previously. The GEOLAW mainly focuses on the outcomes of learning, that is centered on the student, and little is said about the role of the professor/teacher.

## **4.6. Conceptual Analysis of EULAW**

### **Quality of education**

Significance of the concept: As I mentioned I used the definition of quality of education that is focused on students and professors. Quality assurance states that teaching should be student-centered. However, the law also states that the decisive power of student in quality assurance should be restricted; it is said that:

"while experts from relevant stakeholder backgrounds, particularly students, take part in quality assurance processes, the outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency." What does it mean? I see that there is a danger of interpreting this statement differently in different locales and contexts.

The EULAW does not define the term "quality" and its content. It is more procedural. Moreover, it is said that a unified approach to quality and quality assurance in HE is inappropriate". The EULAW only mentions two characteristics of quality, that is accountability and enhancement and not the value of quality assurance or improvement or of quality itself. In my opinion, approaches can be different about quality assurance proceedings or how it should be conducted, but the definition of what is meant by the quality of higher education is necessary.

### **Learning outcomes:**

Significance of the concept: The least number of reasons for criticism I found in examining the statements about learning outcomes. EULAW defines that learning outcomes are specific for each study unit, module, program. Besides, it can be defined differently at sectoral, national and institutional levels. The one thing that is clearly defined by EULAW is that learning outcomes need to be stated precisely; they should be transparent and accountable to the learner. "Knowledge" is only one aspect of the learning outcome, the more emphasize is paid to skills and competencies that should be produced by HEIS as an outcome of learning, rather than knowledge. In my opinion, such an approach is right. The "knowledge" can't be and should not be defined by any legislative framework, agreement or general guideline. It is the responsibility of each professor of social sciences to determine the outcome of learning that is in agreement with general guidelines, which stands of two pillars: accountability and transparency.

### **Management and Administration of HEIs:**

Significance of the concept: All the documents say that management bodies and administration of the University should be supportive to the students and professors and their academic freedom. They do not have any distinctive, extraordinary power, and I could not find any indication, that management or administration of the University is regarded as a stakeholder in the process of decision-making and governance. Moreover, they are regarded as "servants" of the needs of the academic community. Furthermore, the EULAW states that HEIs should deduce any administrative barriers for engaging outside stakeholders, such as businesses. Also, I could not find that many supporting claims to the theoretical framework of Neo Public Management as I expected.

### **Teaching and Research integration:**

Significance of the concept: Unfortunately, EULAW does not define precisely what the relationship between teaching and research should be like. I discovered in all the documents that there are more indications on the links between research and innovation, but little is said about research and teaching. On the other hand, I found that research is the same level priority, as teaching and high quality of education in Europe entails both. In other words, on the nominal level, it is admitted that European education needs to involve research and teaching integers, but not in Humboldtian sense, since it added third integer, namely "innovation" and it is stressed in the last communique of Bologna ministers, 2018. This proves, in my opinion, to be Neo-Humboldtian understanding of higher education, because the production of innovation means that University has the connection with the society and especially economics because innovation is related to the growth of the economy.

### **4.7. Interview Results:**

I interviewed eight professors from 4 different Universities, who belong to the faculties of Social Sciences and one representative of the National Center for Education Quality Enhancement of Georgia. My questions were built around the same pillars, as the analysis

of the interviews, but it is more detailed and includes more sub-pillars. The difference is that, by interviewing I try to explore the context for social sciences, that is not covered by a legislative basis. Besides the qualitative in-depth interviews, I also used a quantitative survey. Interviewed professors filled it. The semi-structured interview questions are presented in the annex 1. I assigned the nametag "TBS" to capital-based University professors and "REG" to region-based professors to see the differences between the capital-based and regional Universities.

First, I started with the general question about the quality of education and how professors understood it. As I had expected I got different answers to it:

TBS: "Formally, quality means that students and professors go to the classes, the professor gives them an assignment, students fulfill these assignments, but the most important is if the subject that is learned arises topics worthy of discussing, how it encourages discussion."

REG: "Quality of Education means that students are ready to get a relevant job after graduation and can use the knowledge and skills that they got during their studies. Especially in today's situation, quality education is mainly related to the job market. I cannot evaluate whether this is bad or good, but it is a fact".

REG: "Quality education has different aspects. Defining especially in Social Sciences is hard. Many students and professors claim that the quality of education in Social Sciences is deficient compared to other fields. In my opinion education quality in social sciences means sufficient understanding of classic works of social sciences and be able to deliver it to students, it also means that professor can conduct original research and can enrich the field of research. In short, quality is based on those two interrelated factors".

**Effects of Bologna process and establishment of external quality assurance, consequences for social sciences:**

Generally, the Bologna process is evaluated positively, rather than negatively. Some difficulties existed in the first phases of Bologna requirements implementation, but now professors feel more stable and confident in terms of keeping up with changes. None of the interviewees mentioned that the nature of knowledge or quality of knowledge had been changed by establishing quality assurance systems and by joining Bologna declarations and signing international documentation. All these proceedings relate to the more formal and organizational aspects, rather than content-related elements of teaching and research. There are no unique treatments or requirements for Social Sciences.

Moreover, internationalization is seen from the unification perspective, I.e., all the programs and professors are treated without the distinction of field-specific standards. Although the representative of the NCEQE stated that, they try to avoid unification and they have trained and qualified for each academic field, at the practical level it is not felt by professors, that this is so. I assume that field-specific quality evaluation standards were elaborated two years ago and it can be early to say how it challenged the professors academic and administrative work.

Regarding the NCEQE position, my respondent mentioned substantial changes in the evaluation of educational programs after 2017. The quality assurance has become more outcomes-oriented, the pool of quality experts increased up to 600 and it also included students. NCEQE supports the existence of quality culture at the institutional level and does not pretend to be the controlling body professors are scary about. Because new standards have just been established, I could not measure how it affected professors during interviews. The involvement of professors during accreditation is necessary, but as my poll shows not every professor has ever attended the meeting held during site-visit of experts. The consultative function of the NCEQE is limited, and it does not help professors or head of educational programs to solve the problems and does not guide how to follow the recommendations. As NCEQE representative admitted, consultation is more oriented on clarifying what is already written in standards and not helping the day-to-day improvement burden of beneficiaries. This is problematic and would need more elaboration. The second

problem is the absence of field-specific criteria for social sciences, which was also mentioned by my respondents.

TBS: "The bad practices of writing syllabus, especially in regards to "learning outcomes" is that it is often accomplished by copying and pasting, very automatically. I radically opposed some practices, for example. But bureaucracy does not like if they have that many differences, so professors try to obey the rules because they know that if the copy template it will work".

REG: "For the first time, when Universities started implementing Bologna requirements it was tough work for professors. There were many misunderstandings. We had to change the grading scale; syllabuses were introduced, etc. I felt pressure, especially when meeting the criteria of external quality assurance, but our University administration helped us a lot in that process. Now we are more familiar".

TBS: "At the first stage the Bologna process was successful. It enabled the teaching and learning process to be more organized. Practically, by introducing syllabuses, which was an important part of the Bologna process, the Internationalization process of the education system began. Also, the external reviewing system did not exist before the Bologna process, and it had isolated the University, the University did not try to implement changes and innovations."

TBS: "One of the positive sides of the Bologna process is that student has more freedom of choosing subjects. Some of the professors do not like it, but I do not belong to this category. On the other hand, the Bologna process contributed to Internationalization. International mobility of students and professors contribute to accumulating new knowledge at the University".

TBS: "The assessment by an external agency is rather formal, there are no field-specific criteria of assessment. Yes, field expert was also the member of the commission, but still, the expert commission is focused on technical aspects of programs and not the content".

NCEQE: "The center for quality education quality enhancement of Georgia is open organization. We have a consultative function, which means that any interested person who has questions about quality assurance, proceedings, formats, or if there are some misunderstandings, can come to us. [...] Our recommendations are aimed at clarifying what accreditation standards mean and not how to improve particular problems mentioned in recommendations."

NCEQE: "Besides the consultative function of NCEQE, we plan to establish the school of quality and introduce training modules about the accreditation standards, authorization standards, national qualifications framework, etc. This training school will train both University representatives and our experts".

NCEQE; "Standards of accreditation were changed in 2017-2018, and it has become oriented not a formal assessment of documentation, but the assessment of outcomes. For example, we ask Universities to give numbers of students, how many BA graduates continued studying at MA or Ph.D. levels, also we ask to show the research activities of students and professors, what they do and how they develop themselves".

NCEQE: "The problems of openness at the meetings during site-visit exist, both among professors and students, but it is understandable, to implement "quality culture" time is needed."

NCEQE: "If you send two different groups of experts to evaluate the educational program in Journalism for example. You will get two different types of evaluation from both. The program is assessed regarding the resources, aims, and conditions under which it is taught. Experts are of course subjective. It would be improved by introducing field-specific evaluation criteria.

### **The role of internal quality assurance department and administrative bodies at HEIs:**

The most important that I found is that regional and capital-based professors evaluate the work of the internal quality assurance department differently. Region-based professors

greatly value the support of it, while other professors from Tbilisi can't see any substantial value in it. I can only state hypothetically why is this is so. I think that the size of the University has an important role. If the faculty or University is rather small, then communication is easier, and professors can get help from the quality assurance department according to their individual needs. And vice versa, larger institutions cannot offer such one-on-one consultations for each professor what to change and how to improve curricula or programs; their guidelines are more technical.

Regarding the management patterns, I found some evidence, that administrative bodies have attained the roles that were played by professors themselves before, and the power of the professor is decreasing, but the scale of decrease is not as much as theories I used in the thesis states it. Professors still feel that they have decisive power and it is mostly in the case of regional academics. The community of academics is rather small, sometimes the administrative and academic responsibilities are intertwined, and the one who teaches is also the employee at the administrative department.

TBS: "The improvement of quality of education is not formal process and does not mean the simple organization of curriculum and syllabus, it is necessary to have the whole range of infrastructure to enhance the quality "

REG: "We are systematically trained by the department of education quality at our University. Also, the department provides consultations for us, and it is adjusted to our specific necessities".

REG: "I assign a big role to the department of quality assurance at our University. It has a great function. The department provides regular consultations for the heads of the programs, such as me. Their advice has an especially important role in the process of accreditation, doing self-evaluation reports, SWOT analysis and making changes to the programs and syllabuses".

TBS: "I cannot remember any substantial consultation or recommendation by internal quality assurance department, as soon as I see is that they send us e-mails about the new

criteria of curricula or new standards of evaluation and we change it in our syllabus. I would say that such changes are more technical, rather than substantial improvement, it does not affect that much what I do in class".

TBS: "Before the internal quality assurance was very formal and mere technical process, [...] the internal department would send us directives to make changes in syllabuses, I would not say that such changes are substantial, for example, we were asked to write the word "knowledge" instead of the "awareness" in the syllabus. [...] but now I see some changes in the last period. The training was organized, the international specialist was invited, who shared their experience about the quality."

NCEQE: "The first thing we tell to internal quality departments at HEIS is that they should not be oriented at us, what they do should be directed towards internal usage at the institution. Quality is not the responsibility of quality assurance agencies. Everybody is responsible for quality".

### **Academic communities at Social Sciences faculties: Knowledge production and integration of research and teaching.**

Findings: Academic community at social sciences faculties are fragmented. I found during the research that academic communities do not go through administrative pressure as described by new public management theories, nor they are controlled that much or supervised. They are not influenced either by market forces. I call it academic communities "abandoned", who feel disempowered by the lack of state funding, the majority of them do not even have the room to work, the only space for them is auditorium in which they conduct lectures. The production of knowledge at the faculties of social sciences is mainly related to the absence or presence of funding. As it was mentioned Georgian state does not fund Universities directly from the budget, and it has a negative impact, that Universities are dependent only on student fees.

Regarding the research/teaching nexus, all interviewees mentioned that it is not relevant for all classes at all degree stages. At BA level they find it hard, to integrate the research and teaching in class because the language barrier has a significant role, professors cannot introduce English language materials in the course at the BA level. In terms of positioning between researcher professors and teaching professors, no precise distinction is the researcher professor and who is the teacher. This is also conditioned by the fact that social sciences in Georgia do not produce that much knowledge at the research frontier. The majority of interviewees mentioned that the integration of Georgian research community into international academic communities depend on their research about the region, for example, Caucasus. I should also note, that some interviewees opposed this view about taking a regional niche.

Generally, problems found in this section are two-fold: persons-related and system-related. On the one hand, professors are demotivated to form the academic community and contribute to knowledge production and quality improvement. I hesitate to provide judgment about the demotivation because I found pieces of evidence from both sides and I can 'put blame' on both the state and University administration for not offering relevant conditions to professors and professors themselves not fulfilling their responsibilities, it seems to me that is like the dilemma of "egg and chicken."

TBS: "I think the role of professors is slowly decreasing today. They do not have influence, also guarantees. The majority of them are hired by short-term contracts and in that case, how would you expect from them to influence the processes? Administrative bodies are more powerful, especially in larger Universities. On a smaller scale, it might not be visible".

TBS: "The integration of research in teaching classes is very rare at the BA level because we are restricted by language. It is prohibited to give students mandatory literature for example in a foreign language. At the Master's level, we try to integrate research literature with teaching."

TBS: "Yesterday I attended the meeting about introducing new methods of teaching, assessing dissertations, etc. Training are planned for professors at the faculty of social sciences, but to be sincere that the majority of professors are not expected to participate in this, they do not care that much about it ...[...] problem is that professors think that they already know everything [...], but there is the second side of the problem, when the professor sees that that working conditions are so bad, nobody cares for them, basically, they do not have the room to sit and work, I do not speak about salaries at all. The last increase in salary was made eight years ago, eight years ago, it is unimaginable from today's perspective"...

REG: "I use systematically new research, but it depends on thematic and the content of the course. "

REG: "Yes, we try to integrate the research and teaching, but in many cases, this kind of research is not done by my colleagues or me. I can't see a problem here, but it would be better if we had more research opportunities to provide our work as additional literature for students".

TBS: "What I liked about the Western Universities, was that professors constituted a fundamental part of the University, students, and administration too, but professors were the rulers of the University. I do not know how it is now, but I have heard that it is changing, I was talking about the situation some 20 years ago".

TBS: "The scarce infrastructure for teaching and research demotivates the professors. I can say, that in that case, the professor is not capable of improving education quality. Besides, University is not the only site for producing knowledge. There are many activities at the Universities: some conferences are organized, publications are published, events are held,

but still, the University does not constitute an academic community. Academic solidarity does not exist, which means that every professor should try to contribute to the future development of the University. Yeah, it happens sometimes, but rather in a non-systematic and fragmented way and it affects education quality enhancement."

TBS: "Many depend on the responsibility of professors: I remember the case when translation program of foreign literature was funded by the faculty of social sciences, professors applied for the grant, but only two books were translated in the end. The program failed due to the failure of professors".

NCEQE: "We evaluate research capacity of institutions at the level of authorization, we assess how HEIs to support research activities, whether there are the elements of internationalization, whether there are grant schemes at the faculties for financing research, whether the system of financing is fair and transparent, whether HEIs have their preliminary priorities, etc."

NCEQE: "During the visit, experts meet professors, and we ask them how much supported and encouraged they feel by University to conduct academic research, to what extent academic freedom is protected, etc."

".

### **Sources of funding research: commercialization of the research and involvement of private stakeholders:**

**Findings:** Interestingly, I also found that knowledge production sites are multiplying and social sciences faculties are not dominant on the scene. The especially non-governmental sector is very active in the research field. This was explained from administrative-bureaucratic perspectives by my respondents. Professors prefer to operate as NGO-

representative than representatives of the University because they find it more flexible, less time and money-consuming.

In terms of attracting business-sector, I received only pessimistic answers; some of them were formulated in radical terms. I also found differences between the expectations of region-based professors and capital-based ones. Regional professors seemed to be more optimistic about involving the private sector in funding social sciences. Generally, it applied to the so-called "applied research." The respondents also differentiated the fields in social sciences in which commercialization is more expected and less expected. The hindering factor for commercialization is that the majority mention that the private sector is not ready for it; it is not mature enough to realize the importance and value of University-based knowledge and research. However, it is the matter of consensus, that enhancement of quality in social sciences and development of contemporary Universities should not be dependent only on the effort of the state and multiple private actors should be interested in it.

TBS: "It seems that Universities in Europe go through the commercialization phase, opposite to US Universities, where Universities were commercial always. because state funding is not enough...(…) In the case of Georgia, Tbilisi State University, I would not say that it is dependent on state funding because it is dependent on student fees."

TBS: "The problem has two sides: for example, it is hard to manage the grant at the University, the University will take much more money from the total grant, while if the professor applies for the grant by non-governmental organizations it is more manageable for them."

REG: "Because the business sector is weak in Georgia, we do not have any offers that would enable us to commercialize our research. But we have both relevant experience and capacity to do it. "

TBS: "Commercialization of research in social sciences? It is the world of a fairytale; one should forget about it."

TBS: "It is prevalent that research in social sciences has become appropriated by the so-called non-network of governmental organizations. Many people think that it is better if social research is developed outside the University, by non-governmental organizations. Although research is conducted at social sciences faculties, it institutionally very weak. It is very often also that professors conduct social research or do training as NGO-representatives and not University representatives."

REG: "I think that we have the perspective to commercialize the research and I see the signs of it in sociological and psychological research. There are direct offers by business sectors and other representatives (advertising sector, marketing, recruitment, behavior management of low-violators, etc.) I think the interest and commercialization increase if more information is disseminated that University has such a capacity".

#### **4.2.4. The role of the professors, interrelationships among professors: career growth, testing "Matthew Effect."**

During the interviewing, I found that the status or prestige of professors is not the guarantee of their success in obtaining more resources. The principle "more you have, more you get" do not work in Georgian case. I have not explored how it works beyond the Georgian context, in this case, I would need to interview or do quantitative research with international scholars, but at the local level, I could not find any supportive claims to the Matthew effect. Both quantitative survey and qualitative interviewing have shown that professors have equal opportunities for professional development. Especially, region-based professors claimed that internationalization had a positive impact on the equality of opportunities and beginners have now more chances of career growth. There is no dilemma of "publish or perish." Moreover, if region-based professors are required to have

internationally recognized publications, the whole University would need to perish, because the majority of lecturers at Social Sciences especially do not have such publications.

TBS: "The dominance of powerful professors is not at stake. For example, In the process of receiving grants, the attention is paid how the project is written and not who wrote it. There were cases when some more established professors did not get the funding".

TBS: "The fact that somebody has a higher number of citations does not mean that she or he gets all the research funding."

REG: "I think both beginner researchers and established researchers have equal chances of development. I can't see any discrepancy and inequality in this case".

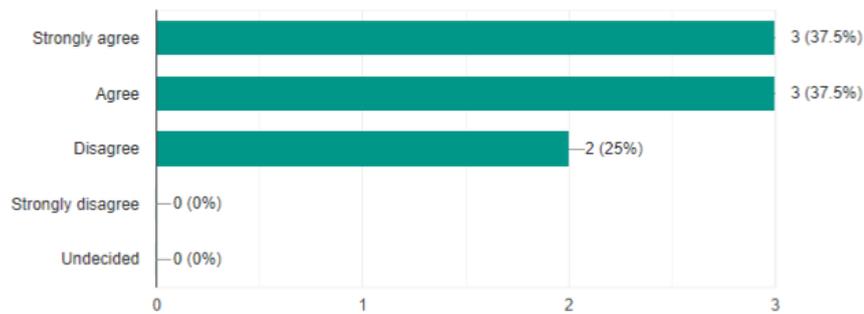
REG: "After Internationalization and Bologna process it has changed. I think now all professors have more opportunities, especially when it comes to professional training, international conferences and any event that is held abroad.

## 4.8. Survey Results

Disclaimer: I do not assert that the used survey is generalizable statistically. The purpose of the survey in my research is next: To test theoretical claims that were presented in Chapter I among selected interviewees. The majority of questions are copied from the theoretical assumptions of Chapter I.

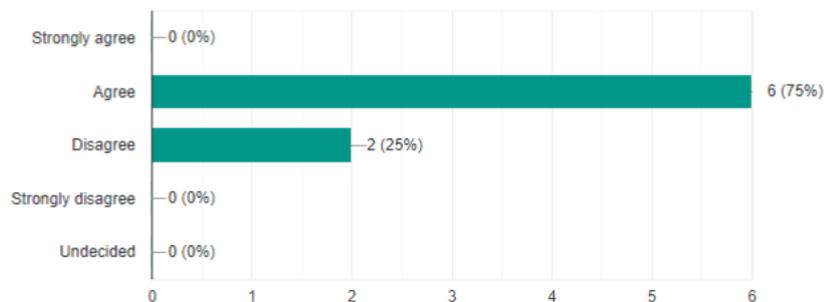
### 1) Academic activity and administrative activity of professor is greatly separated from each other

8 responses



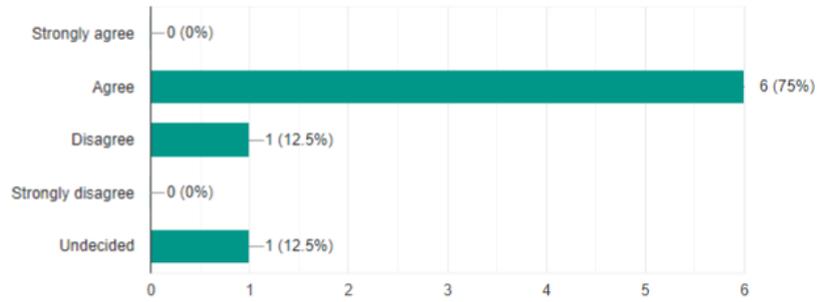
### 2) Managers/administrative bodies have more power to regulate and control academic work

8 responses



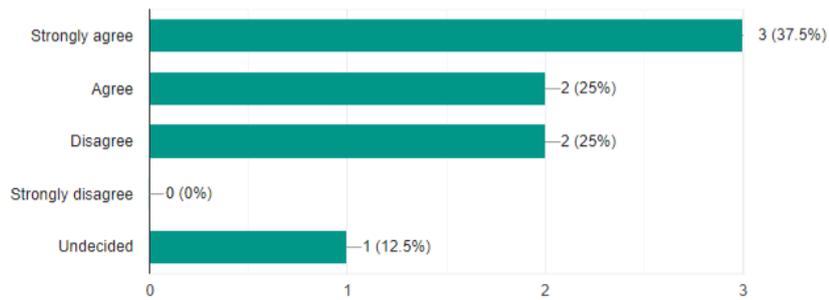
### 3) The professional status of academics have been decreased in the last two decades

8 responses



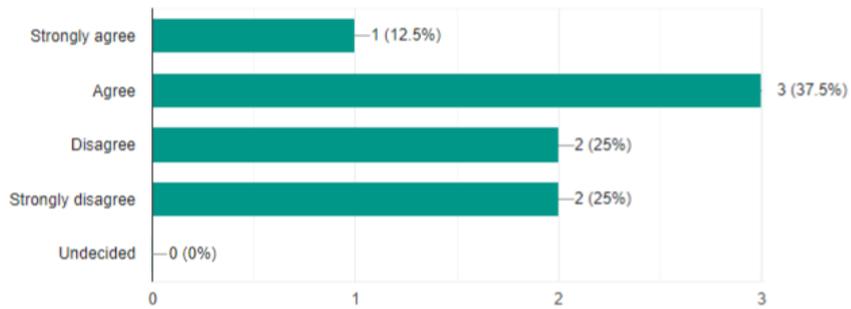
### 4) State Universities are competing with each other for resources

8 responses



5) State policy aims at encouraging State Universities meet social-economic needs of the country

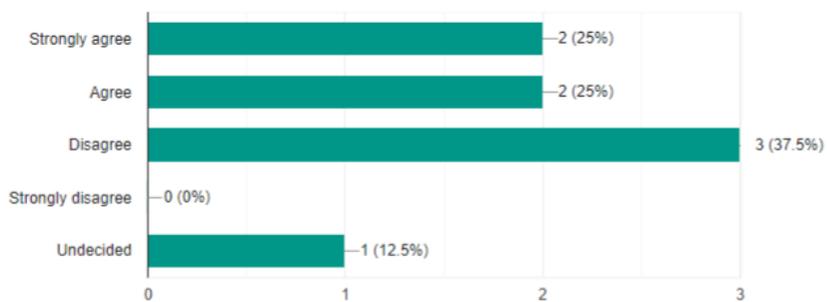
8 responses



6) University operates by an ethos of market orientation (at which you are employed)

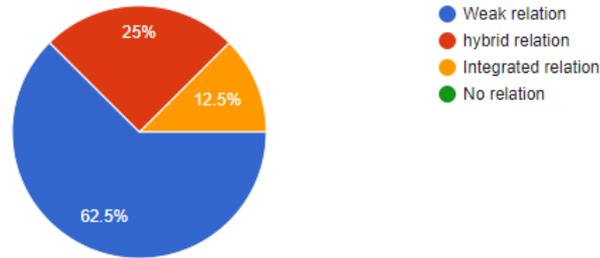


8 responses



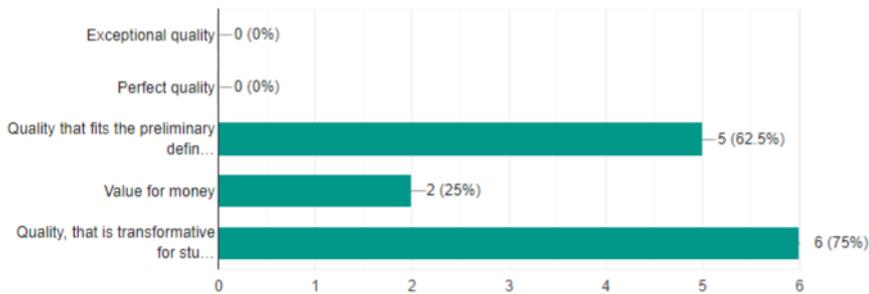
7) How would you evaluate the relationship between the research and teaching at your department

8 responses



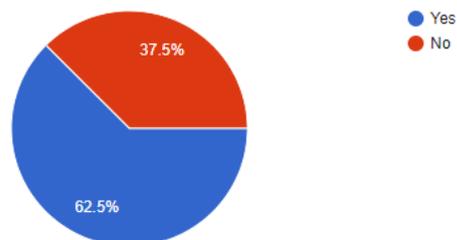
8) Please choose the criteria(s) that you think are relevant for the education quality at your faculty

8 responses



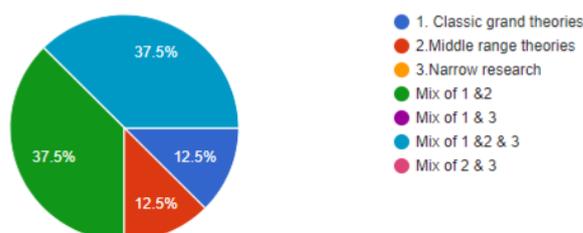
9) Have you ever participated in the meeting at your department that is held by National Quality Enhancement Center during the accreditation process of the program

8 responses



10)The majority of the content of the subject(s) you teach at the faculty consists of

8 responses



#### 4.9. Comparative Summary of Analysis of the results of Document Analysis and interviewing:

In the comparative analysis, I excluded EULAW documents based on the assumption that GEOLAW itself is supposed to have reflected the EULAW guidelines. I do not judge whether this is so or not, in the conceptual analysis I made some indications about the non-integrated relation of GEOLAW and EULAW. The more important for my thesis was the interview results, so I would like to pay more attention to it. As I have already stated I perceive the analysis of documents as the secondary supportive tool and primary is interviewing. The legislative documents are very limited in terms of issues and questions I was interested in, and this is one additional argument for my preference. I divide the analysis into several sections.

I could not claim, that professors are not seen as the major actors of the University, because GEOLAW does not define that much the role and power of the University, so I asked the question: “why should I assume that it is so?” As it is shown by quantitative analysis, the term professor is mentioned only 12 times in GEOLAW. The issue of academic freedom is acute, there are no guarantees of non-interference, but during the interviews, nobody said that it happened to them. Insecurity of professors were mainly related to the short-term employee contracts. It distracted them to participate in the process

of University governance or shaping the legislative framework of the country regarding the HE quality. None of my respondents belong to the “academic council” that is the most powerful governing body of the University. Two professors belonged to the “faculty council”, that mainly deals with internal issues of the faculty management. Interviewees think that their position is accepted at the faculty level and have no problem with faculty council.

Generally, I could not see the Quality assurance bodies at the University as the governing bodies as it is described by law. The involvement of professors in defining the priorities of these departments are not proved; these departments try to take NCEQE guidelines as an unconditional reference point and do not focus on their internally specific problems and priorities.

There is a lack of field-specific standards for the social sciences in the process of accreditation. The law assigns field-specific standards only to so-called "regulated professions" (for ex.: medicine) and not Social Sciences. But it is vital that it is acknowledged as a problem both by NCEQE representative and University professors. There is also scarce information about how the state should support or regulate scientific research activities at HEIs.

#### **4.10. Summary of Key findings of my research:**

##### **Ideological and Metalevel conclusions:**

- △ No robust patterns of New Public Management are found at any selected University.
- △ The majority of Social Sciences Professors do not agree that University knowledge in social sciences undergoes marketization.
- △ Knowledge production in Social Sciences is assumed to have more prospects of being acknowledged by international academic society if it is focused on the Caucasus region or Georgia.
- △ The division of professors about regionalization of social sciences: some scientists see it from the lenses of post-colonialism and strongly disagree.
- △ Shift to from "input" to "outcomes responsibility" is dominant and makes quality assurance technical and formal.

##### **Institutional level:**

- △ The most important factors that are impeding the enhancement of quality and knowledge production are both material and immaterial: inadequate financial support and remuneration of professors and demotivation of professors.
- △ Internal Quality Assurance department seems more supportive to professors, but simultaneously in obedience with NCEQE requirements.
- △ The majority of professors have not participated in the legislative process aimed at quality enhancement at the state level.
- △ The majority of professors have participated in formulating University-level strategies of development.
- △ 'Quality culture' at the faculty level is weak, but some tendencies of improvement are visible.
- △ The relationship between research and teaching is weak.

**Peer-to-peer individual relationships:**

△ “Matthew effect” is not confirmed.

△ The academic community is fragmented.

△ Lack of solidarity and coordination of research of academics contributing to the general aims of faculty, University of Society

△ Chances of building a career at the faculty of Social Sciences are more equal for early-researchers and established professors, rather than unequal.

## Conclusion

The education quality at Social Sciences faculties at Georgian Public Universities have various angles of view. The problems of education quality are both administrative and law-related, personal and financial. I found scarce proof that the freedom of professors is restricted by management ideology (NPM). The failure of New Public Management is not explained by theories that posit corruption, patron-clientele relationship, Nepotism, etc. as a reason for the failure of NPM in developing countries. I hypothesize that one unified management model can't be suitable in the case of Georgia. It shares hybrid elements from different management patterns.

The academic community at the faculties of Social Sciences is fragmented and lacks a sense of solidarity in terms of aspiring to the common goals of the faculty or the University. This can be partly explained by short-term employee contracts of professors at Universities. Academics do not feel motivated to participate in the scientific and general life of the faculty. Demotivation of professors are also explained by a lack of state financial-material support and outdated infrastructure for teaching and research. Georgian social scientists are also weakly represented in international academic communities and analysis of citation indexes given in this thesis is one of the examples of it. What can today's University be called in relation to the mentioned theoretical perspective? I suggest to call it "A-historical", rather than post-historical, because it does not coincide with the European context in a comprehensive manner. The same can be said, about "Marketisation of University" theoretical standpoint, it seems to be utopian project at least for the large part of the interviewed professors.

Research capacities of professors are limited due to the scarcely allocated state funds to the Social Sciences. The commercialization of the research does not seem to be perspective because of the weakly developed private sector in Georgia and its disinterestedness. Research in Social Sciences is mainly appropriated by the new sites of knowledge, by so-called non-governmental organizations. University is not the leading power in this case, and it has never addressed this issue to solve it. The knowledge production at the faculties of Social Sciences are explained by both scarcity of material-financial resources and

personal demotivation of professors to be active on the research frontier. The majority of academics see the role of the knowledge produced at Social Sciences as a supplementary or “secondary” to the International scholarship that has significance only on the regional or country level. In other words, if Georgian scholars in Social Sciences want to get acknowledged by an international academic community, they should work on local issues about Caucasus or Georgia.

All the efforts that are aimed at Internationalization, the Bologna process is seen from the positive perspectives. It promotes the application of new knowledge at the faculty of Social Sciences. However, Internationalization is an on-going process and still incomplete. Especially, at the level of legislation, significant improvements are necessary to be made in order to apply the European frameworks at local level. Cross-country analysis proves that education quality assurance at Georgian Public Universities share the similar problems with the Eastern Europe (in my thesis, Romania), rather than with Nordic countries.

External Quality Assurance agency in Georgia is trying to improve the standards of evaluation from “input” accountability to “output” accountability. Newly adopted standards of accreditation in 2017 are aimed at challenging the quality criteria substantially – shift from formal analysis of documents to substantial evaluation of quality. However, I find it difficult to evaluate at this moment how helpful it is for professors, because it is rather new. There is a lack of field-specific criteria against Social Sciences and measurable criteria for evaluating research activities done by professors, that impedes the quality enhancement in education and research production.

## Summary

The proposed MA thesis aimed at uncovering the problems of education quality and research at Public Universities of Georgia. The goal of mine was to investigate the problems at Social Sciences Faculties and I took the professors as main respondents for my research. Besides, I used some quantitative data about the performance of professors at an international field, tried to flesh out how the Internationalization process and establishment of Quality Assurance bodies have affected the enhancement of education quality. Besides, I observed managerial and administrative patterns at the Universities. I found differences between regional and capital-based Universities. Also, I found little support to my research problem from the national legislation of Georgia and European level frameworks. On the one hand, national law statements are procedural, On the other hand, European frameworks are based on broad vision. The majority of the problems that I found during my research are related to the scarcity of material-financial resources, that affects also the motivation of professors. The engagement of private sector in terms of funding research in social sciences is weak and almost improbable evaluated by respondents. The state efforts in terms of improving the external quality assessment standards is positive, but needs more elaboration and focus on field-specific criteria. The performance of Social Sciences Faculties is not praiseworthy, it has slight, but minor progress thanks to Internationalization efforts, but academic community needs more support from the side of the Georgian state.

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## **Appendix no. 1: Interview Questions**

### **“Text Content”**

- 1) What effect did the establishment and existence of QA department have at your faculty on your daily work? Does it have a consultative function?
  
- 2) How does the internal QA department help you to improve the quality of the subjects you teach?
  
- 3) How did the Process of Bologna affect the education quality enhancement at your faculty? What did change positively? What were the negative sides of it?
  
- 4) How do you think, internal QA proceedings are oriented on permanent improvement or only meeting set standards?
  
- 5) How do you think, external QA proceedings are oriented on permanent improvement or only meeting set standards?
  
- 6) How do you integrate research into teaching in class?
  
- 7) How does the massification of Universities affect the quality of subjects you teach?
  
- 8) Does the attitude of student and motivation, expectations influence what you teach and how you teach? Have you ever simplified materials and made more straightforward assignments?
  
- 9) Considering the existing situation in the social science research frontier, would the commercialization of research be recommended? If no, why? If yes, why?
  
- 10) How do you think, are there equal opportunities for beginner researchers and full professors at the faculty?

11) How do you think the status of the professor is influential in the case of academic activities? For example: receiving grants for new research, money for attendance of the international academic conference, etc. ?

## **Appendix no. 2: Law statements**

### **“Text content”**

#### **Education quality provision at HEIs:**

Quality assurance – the procedures of internal and external assessments that promote education quality enhancement at educational institutions.

The accreditation aims at establishing systematic self-evaluation to enhance the quality of education and promote the development of quality mechanisms.

The standards of accreditation are:

- a) The aim and outcomes of the educational programs and their relevance.
- b) Methodology and organization of teaching, the adequacy of assessment of how the learner acquires the program.
- c) Achievements of students and working with them individually.
- d) Provision of learning resources.
- e) The opportunities for education quality enhancement.

National Qualifications Framework aims at supporting the internal and external mechanisms of quality assurance and promoting the enhancement of quality of education.

National Qualifications Framework supports the improvement of existing educational programs and creating new programs.

The ministry of education and sciences of Georgia approves the authorization and accreditation decrees after submission of orders by NCEQE.

The ministry of education and sciences of Georgia cooperates with international organizations, foreign countries, and their HEIs in the sphere of education quality assessment and assurance.

The decision about the authorization of HEIs is made by authorization council, the members of the board are introduced by the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Georgia and are appointed and dismissed by Prime Minister of Georgia.

NCEQE creates the group of accreditation experts; the decree of accreditation defines the statute of the groups.

The first stage of accreditation is self-evaluation reports presented by a seeker of accreditation. The second stage is site visits by experts.

NCEQE promotes the enhancement of education quality at Heis and issues recommendations for this purpose.

### **Learning outcomes of HE:**

Higher education qualification is the learning outcome, attainable through successful completion of an academic educational program and is certified by a diploma, issued by a higher education institution.

The higher education qualifications framework ensures the description of higher education qualifications through learning outcomes.

Higher education qualifications descriptor defines the scope of knowledge, skills, and values to be attained at a relevant level according to the following six criteria: I

a) knowledge and understanding - Advanced knowledge of the field of study, including critical analysis of theories and principles; understanding of complex matters of the field of study.

b) Application of knowledge - Ability to use field-specific methods and also specific selected methods for the solution of problems; ability to carry out research and practical projects under predetermined directions;

c) Judgment skills - – Ability to select and interpret field-specific data, also to analyze abstract data or situations using standards and specific selected methods, ability to make sound judgment;

d) communication skills- Ability to prepare a detailed written report on ideas, current problems and solutions to them and to communicate information orally to specialists and non-specialists in the Georgian and foreign languages; ability to creatively use modern information and communication technologies;

e) Learning skills- Ability to evaluate own learning process coherently and comprehensively; ability to identify further learning needs;

f) values- Ability to participate in the formation of values and strive for their establishment

The learning outcomes of educational programs are described by field competencies and general competencies.

The learning outcomes are hierarchical and constructive.

The learning outcomes are knowledge and skills that are acquired by student after the completion of education program, learning course or module.

### **Management/Administration of the University:**

The head of the University administration conducts financial and budget-related issues.

The head of the University administration is responsible with the council of regents and collegial organ or representative council and academic council.

The University administration does not have the right to interfere with the business of student self-government,

The governing bodies of HEIS are an academic council, representative council, rector, the head of administration and the department of quality assurance.

The academic staff has the right to:

a) participate in governing the HEI according to the law b) conduct research, teaching, scientific activities, publish academic works without interference.

c) Determine the syllabus, teaching methods of the course and means of teaching independently.

Academic freedom is restricted in the next cases:

For freedom of academic research in terms of organizational issues and priorities”;

For the purpose of freedom of teaching- for the organization of the learning process including organizing program curriculum and schedules",

For freedom of learning- for organizing of learning process and high quality of education”.

### **The integration of research and teaching:**

Standards of authorization are about research activities as well.

Higher Educational Institution: – The institutional that conducts scientific research or teaching or creative activities

The academic council promotes the integration of higher education into the European area, cooperation among HEIS, mobility, and creation of scientific research programs.

## **EULAW**

### **Education quality:**

Since 2005, considerable progress has been made in quality assurance as well as in other Bologna action lines such as qualifications frameworks, recognition and the promotion of the use of learning outcomes, all these contributing to a paradigm shift towards student-centered learning and teaching.

Higher education institutions themselves also become more diverse in their missions, mode of educational provision and cooperation, including the growth of internationalization, digital learning and new forms of delivery.<sup>2</sup> The role of quality assurance is crucial in supporting higher education systems and institutions in responding to these changes.

Any outcomes or judgments made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include

- a self-assessment or equivalent;
- an external assessment normally including a site visit;
- a report resulting from the external assessment;
- a consistent follow-up.

Stakeholders should be involved in the design and continuous improvement of external quality assurance.

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity.

While experts from relevant stakeholder backgrounds, particularly students, take part in quality assurance processes, the outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

External quality assurance is operated in an open and accountable way.

Quality Assurance external monitoring bodies or agencies should themselves be subject to regular review.

The report of experts should include:

- context description (to help locate the higher education institution in its specific context);
- description of the individual procedure, including experts involved;
- evidence, analysis, and findings;
- conclusions;
- features of good practice, demonstrated by the institution;
- recommendations for follow-up action.

Quality, whilst not easy to define, is mainly a result of the interaction between teachers, students, and the institutional learning environment. Quality assurance should ensure a learning environment in which the content of programmes, learning opportunities and facilities are fit for purpose.

At the heart of all quality assurance activities are the twin purposes of accountability and enhancement.

. Quality assurance and quality enhancement are thus inter-related. They can support the development of a quality culture that is embraced by all: from the students and academic staff to the institutional leadership and management.

stakeholders, who may prioritize different purposes, can view quality in higher education differently and quality assurance needs to take into account these different perspectives

A single monolithic approach to quality and quality assurance in higher education inappropriate.

The system for external quality assurance might operate more flexibly if institutions can demonstrate the effectiveness of their internal quality assurance.

Four principles for quality assurance in the EHEA are:

- Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
- Quality assurance responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students;
- Quality assurance supports the development of a quality culture;
- Quality assurance takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society

Institutions should undergo quality assurance on a cyclical basis.

External quality assurance in its various forms can verify the effectiveness of institutions' internal quality assurance, act as a catalyst for improvement and offer the institution new perspectives.

Quality assurance is a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback or report or its follow-up process within the institution.

External quality assurance experts include student (s), peer experts, academics and employers.

The involvement of international experts in quality assurance is desirable.

Depending on the external quality assurance system, outcomes may take different forms, for example, recommendations, judgments or formal decisions.

Question-related to quality development can only to a limited extent be treated in the context of single (isolated) national or sectoral frameworks.

All qualifications frameworks, however, establish a basis for improving quality.

European Qualifications Framework functions as a standard reference for quality assurance and development in education and training.

Quality assurance does not guarantee improved quality.

Given the diversity and complexity of quality assurance approaches within and across The Member States, there is a need to improve the transparency and the consistency of policy and practical developments in this field

Member States, institutions and relevant stakeholders remain fully responsible for the definition of QA policies, systems, and procedures

In order to maximize the contribution of Europe's higher education systems to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, reforms are needed in key areas: to increase the quantity of higher education graduates at all levels; to enhance the quality and relevance of human capital development in higher education.

the growing internationalization of higher education, have a strong impact on quality.

There is a strong need for flexible, innovative learning approaches and delivery methods: to improve quality and relevance while expanding student numbers, to widen participation to diverse groups of learners, and to combat drop-out.

Attracting the best students, academics, and researchers from outside the EU and developing new forms of cross-border cooperation are key drivers of quality.

Public investment must remain the basis for sustainable higher education. But the scale of funding required to sustain and expand high-quality higher education systems is likely to necessitate additional sources of funding, be they public or private.

*Bergen Communiqué:*

“we urge higher education institutions to continue their efforts to enhance the quality of their activities through the systematic introduction of internal mechanisms and their direct correlation to external quality assurance.”

“We emphasize the importance of research and research training in maintaining and improving the quality of and enhancing the competitiveness and attractiveness of the EHEA.”

“We, therefore, renew our commitment to making quality higher education equally accessible to all.”

“we wish to establish a European Higher Education Area based on the principles of quality and transparency.”

*Yerevan Communiqué:*

"Enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching is the main mission of the EHEA "

It is essential to recognize and support quality teaching and to provide opportunities for enhancing academics' teaching competencies.

A common degree structure and credit system, common quality assurance standards and guidelines, cooperation for mobility and joint programmes and degrees are the foundations of the EHEA.

Quality assurance is key in developing mutual trust as well as increasing mobility and fair recognition of qualifications and study periods throughout the EHEA.

*Paris Communiqué:*

In 2018-2020, thematic peer groups will focus on three key commitments crucial to reinforcing and supporting quality and cooperation inside the EHEA:

--- a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the

EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS

--- compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention,

--- and quality assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

As high-quality teaching is essential in fostering high-quality education, academic career progression should be built on successful research and quality teaching.

## **Learning outcomes:**

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programs. The programs should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes.

Student assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.

Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content, and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including the programs they offer and the selection criteria for them, the intended learning outcomes of these programs.

The programs should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes.

Qualifications at each level in a possible EQF are described in terms of three types of learning outcomes:

- knowledge;
- skills; and
- wider competencies described as personal and professional outcomes.

The learning outcomes do not include details of specific qualifications as these are national or sectoral responsibilities.

Learning outcomes are a set of knowledge, skill or competence an individual has acquired and/or can demonstrate after completion of a learning process. Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.

Learning outcomes can be formulated for a number of purposes; in relation to individual courses, units, modules, and programs. They may furthermore be used by national authorities to define entire qualifications.

International bodies may, finally, use learning outcomes for the purposes of transparency, comparability, credit transfer and recognition.

learning outcomes move us away from our traditional position of considering learning programs and delivery as the definitive elements of qualifications.

ECTS must allow for diverse methods of assessment of learning outcomes.

ECTS must build on learning outcomes acquired through learning processes in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

Quality Assurance includes context, input, process and output dimensions while giving emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes.

### **Management/Administration of HEIs:**

In delivering support services, the role of support and administrative staff is crucial, and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyze and use relevant information for the effective management of their programs and other activities.

HEIs should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management.

Investment in professional management can provide strategic vision and leadership while allowing teachers and researchers the necessary academic freedom to concentrate on their core tasks.

HEIs should Encourage partnership and cooperation with business as a core activity of higher education institutions, through reward structures, incentives for multidisciplinary and cross-organizational cooperation, and the reduction of regulatory and administrative barriers to partnerships between institutions and other public and private actors.

The challenges faced by higher education require more flexible governance and funding systems which balance greater autonomy for education institutions with accountability to all stakeholders.

Legal, financial and administrative restrictions continue to limit institutional freedom to define strategies and structures and to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Academic freedom and integrity, institutional autonomy, participation of students and staff in higher education governance, and public responsibility for and of higher education form the backbone of the European Higher Education Area.

### **Teaching and Research integration:**

Academic career progression should be built on successful research and quality teaching.

Better recognition and reward of teaching and research excellence are essential to ensure that Europe produces, attracts and retains the high-quality academic staff it needs.

Efforts to introduce structural change and improve the quality of teaching should not detract from the effort to strengthen research and innovation.

Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach.