REFORMS FOR THE EXTERNAL LEGITIMACY IN THE POST ROSE REVOLUTION GEORGIA.

CASE OF UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY

e. jibladze

Budapest, 2016.06.17
Main parameters of the study

- **Topic**
  - Higher education system change in post-Soviet region
  - Transnational policy and institutional transfer
    - Bologna Process-inspired reforms

- The dissonance between successful institutional redesign and poor outcomes
Research Question

Why did the post-revolution government adopt Bologna-inspired reforms to transform Georgian HE system?

Scope and Methodology

- University Autonomy
- 6 years of reforms: 2004-2010
- Qualitative research: document analysis and 40 semi-structured interviews

Analytical framework

- Sociological New Institutionalism
- World society theory
  - Policies are adopted for external legitimacy
Policy adoption

Legitimacy in the global educational space

Symbolic system change

Decoupled institutions
Decoupled system in Georgian Higher Education

- Transnationally developed institutions mimic Bologna-inspired models with their similar structures.
- Institutions serve different purposes in the local context.
University Autonomy: impartiality with accountability

- UA: relation between the state and the higher education institutions and the degree of control that the state exercises towards the institutions (Estermann & Nokkala, 2009; Estermann et al., 2011)
  - Organizational autonomy
  - Academic autonomy
  - Financial autonomy
  - Staffing autonomy
University Autonomy: impartiality with accountability

- UA: relation between the state and the higher education institutions and the degree of control that the state exercises towards the institutions (Estermann & Nokkala, 2009; Estermann et al., 2011)
- Organizational autonomy
- Academic autonomy
- Financial autonomy
- Staffing autonomy
Organizational autonomy
- Ability and authority of a HEI to determine its goals, appoint governing body, choose and employ faculty and staff.

Academic autonomy
- Capacity to define the academic profile, to introduce degree programs, to define structure and content of degree programs and the extent of control over student admissions.

Financial autonomy
- Capacity of the HEI to acquire and allocate funding, to set tuition fees and to own and manage buildings/infrastructure (Estermann et al., 2011)
Organizational Autonomy

De jure/structural premises: HEI – an independent body
- Separate academic and administrative functions
- Rector – elective figure
- Student involvement

De facto/actual purposes:
- State intervention in rectors' elections
- Overregulation: independence regulated to the procedural nuances
Overregulation

“The system that was designed was quite rigid and applied to all universities. We had to create a system that had not existed before. [...] In absence of the previous experience of the civic responsibility, there was a fear that [HEIs] would not be able to bear this responsibility, unless the law regulated the process of the reform implementation.” (R42 - PA11)
Academic autonomy

De jure/structural premises:
- Freedom to define strategy, methodology and contents of teaching and research (Law on higher education, 2004)

De facto/actual purpose:
- Institutionalise quality assurance system to standardise teaching processes and closely regulate university life.
Financial autonomy

De jure/structural premises:
- Ensure financial decentralisation
  - Revenue diversification: voucher system, block-grants, donations, etc.

De facto/actual purpose:
- Financial efficiency
Decentralisation under supervision

“If guidance is not provided by the state, then the universities look like abandoned children” (R33-PA2)
Summary of findings

- Standardisation
- Overregulation in order to achieve
- System wide effect in a short time
- Minimise the risk of the new systems’ malfunction
Thank you