



Caucasus Institute Research Papers
4, February 2011

AN ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH
CAPACITIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES
AND HUMANITIES IN ARMENIA

Yerevan, Caucasus Institute, 2011

UDC 341. 231. 14 : 30

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Design and layout: “**Collage**” / www.collage.am

An Assessment of Research Capacities in Social Sciences and Humanities in Armenia.
Caucasus Institute Research Papers, #4. – Yerevan, February 2011. – 48 p.

The research paper assesses research capacities in the field of social sciences and humanities in Armenia. The paper reviews the overall scope of research being carried out in Armenia, available human resources and existing funding priorities. It aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research environment in Armenia, and the prevalence or scarcity of particular topics and dimensions. The paper proposes a set of recommendations on how existing problems may be mitigated.

ISBN 978 – 99941 – 2 – 511 – 1

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This publication was made possible by the support of the European Union, the Academic Swiss Caucasus Net and the Open Society Think Tank Fund

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Introduction

i. Objectives of the Paper

The aim of this research paper is to assess research capacities in the field of social sciences and humanities (SSH) in Armenia. The paper reviews the overall scope of research being carried out in Armenia, available human resources and existing funding priorities. It aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research environment in Armenia in the field of social sciences and humanities. It also aims to identify existing gaps in research and the prevalence or scarcity of particular topics and dimensions. For each issue, the study identifies its underlying causes and proposes remedies.

Chapter 1 describes the institutional and policy framework for research in Armenia, looking at government policies with regard to humanities and social sciences in Armenia, and the hierarchy of public bodies regulating and coordinating research. It also identifies main stakeholders and funding sources.

Chapter 2 analyses the overall situation with research in the sphere of humanities and social sciences in Armenia, its strengths and weaknesses, overall quality and development trends.

Based on the assessment, the paper proposes a set of recommendations concerning the capacity-building needs of Armenia in this field and the priority areas for assistance and cooperation.

ii. Selection of Disciplines

Armenian legislation and practice do not make a distinction between humanities and social sciences. For the purposes of this study, based on traditions existing in other countries, on the research goal and the situation on the ground in Armenia, we used the following categorization of disciplines into humanities and social sciences:

Humanities

Anthropology
Archeology
Armenian Studies
Cultural Studies
Ethnography
History
Linguistics/Languages
Literature Studies
Oriental Studies
Philosophy
Religion Studies

Social Sciences

International Relations
Political Science
Public Administration
Sociology
Social Work

Some disciplines traditionally included under humanities, such as economics, law, psychology and art studies, are not on the list as they were not the focus of this study.

Armenian Studies include research on the history, language and culture of the Armenian nation and Armenian Diaspora communities, the history of the Armenian Church etc

iii. Research Methodology

The basic research methods were desk research, in-depth interviews and comparative analysis.

The aim of desk research was to identify and analyze existing hardcopy and online sources on the state of social sciences and humanities in Armenia. The desk research also assessed the quality of

research produced in various areas and the reasons for better/lower quality of research and publications.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the staff of state bodies, research institutions, donor agencies and experts from the sphere of humanities and social sciences.

Comparative analysis was used to assess the overall situation in the field of social sciences and humanities based on data collected during interviews and desk research. It formed the basis for the paper's conclusions and recommendations.

The research sample included the following types of actors:

- Official bodies regulating or coordinating research activities;
- State, private and international universities;
- The Academy of Sciences and bodies affiliated with it;
- NGO including think-tanks;
- Commercial research bodies;
- Donor agencies.

Of bodies engaging in research, we only selected ones active in the disciplines on our list (see ii above). We did not include research bodies whose functioning is closed to the research community, such as the Drastamat Kananyan Institute of National Strategic Studies affiliated with the Ministry of Defense, the Institute of Policy Research affiliated with the Presidential Staff etc.

Representatives of some donor agencies in our sample did not consent to an interview on the grounds that they have political agendas or that research is auxiliary to their work. Consequently, data on these organizations was based on desk research only.

A special type of stakeholder interviewed for this study was the Armacad (the Armenian Association for Academic Partnership and Support), an online network of over 3800 scholars from Armenia and Armenian Diaspora engaging in research in various fields including social sciences and humanities. Armacad does not directly engage in or organize research but plays a role in networking between scholars, especially young people wishing to be in touch with colleagues abroad.

iv. The Development of SSH in Armenia: Brief Overview

At the time Armenia became an independent state in 1991, its institutional framework for academic research was standard for a post-Soviet country, entirely controlled by state and communist party bodies.

Two key factors need to be mentioned here. First, in the USSR in general, natural sciences and technology had priority over humanities and social sciences; the Soviets' main focus was on industrial development and militarization. The small Soviet Republic of Armenia was until its independence an important component of the Soviet military industry, hosting a lot of research, technology and project development in chemistry, physics, engineering, IT etc. There was little investment into social sciences and humanities, and much fewer jobs for holders of degrees in those areas, whereas graduates in natural sciences and engineering could easily count on a job in one of the numerous institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Defense.

Second, Soviet social sciences and humanities – and education in general - were permeated by Marxist-Leninist ideology. Two disciplines, Philosophy and Modern History, the pillars of humanities and social sciences in the USSR, were almost entirely reduced to propaganda tools. The role of philosophy was to ensure the dominance of historical materialism in science and education, whereas modern history was a tool for imposing ideological perceptions of the past and justifying the existence of the Soviet system. A number of humanities were also heavily ideological: economics was entirely based on Marxist economic theory, art and literature studies used “socialist realism” as the sole measure of artistic merit, and religion studies were chiefly concerned with the propaganda of atheism. Some social sciences, including political science and theory of international relations, were simply nonexistent.

The humanities that do not lend themselves very well to propaganda – such as archeology, ethnography, geography, linguistics/lan-

guage studies and culture studies – were privileged in that ideological pressure was relatively low and there was some room for genuine academic research. Ancient history and the history of the Middle Ages were also significantly less politicized than modern history. In Armenia, this created an opening for rather intensive research on Armenian history, with a focus on ancient and medieval times. Traditionally strong in Armenia since pre-Soviet times, history ended up playing a special role in Soviet Armenia; in fact, Armenian history as a discipline had the tendency to usurp the resources of other humanities. Even now, historians continue to dominate in the humanities and social sciences of post-Soviet Armenia, with historical methods being applied to other, newly emerging fields of study, such as political science and sociology, in fact calling for entirely different approaches.

The structure of Soviet science continues to impact the development of research in modern Armenia. Until the fall of the USSR, only state-regulated research bodies were allowed to exist in Armenia. These included universities and educational institutes (focused on education and having few resources for research), and research institutes affiliated with the Academy of Sciences at which most of the research was done: the Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, the Institutes of History, Oriental Studies, Ethnography and Archeology etc. Many of these institutes had a strong reputation in the USSR and some had international purport (such as the Matenadaran).

At universities and educational institutes, each faculty had bodies regulating research activities, called chairs. The Faculty of History at Yerevan State University thus had Chairs of Armenian History, World History etc. Yerevan State was the largest university in Soviet Armenia in general and in the sphere of humanities in particular. It had Departments of History, Philosophy, Psychology, Law, Journalism and Philology (with sub-departments of Russian, Armenian and Romance/Germanic Studies). The Faculty of Oriental Studies at Yerevan State, subdivided into Turkish, Arabic and Iranian Studies, had

a strong reputation in the former USSR in general.

Some research in the sphere of humanities was also done at the Pedagogical Institutes of Yerevan and of the two major cities of Armenia, Gyumri and Vanadzor (called respectively Leninakan and Kirovakan in the Soviet times), however, the research done in at pedagogical institutes was mostly about methodology of teaching humanities (chiefly history) and did not involve original studies in humanities or social sciences.

With the fall of the Soviet system, new private and international universities were established in Armenia. At the same time, new chairs were opened at existing state universities, including in disciplines banned in the USSR, such as Political Science and International Relations. Moreover, independent research bodies began to appear, including think-tanks, commercial organizations and watchdog NGO some of which engage in research to some extent. International actors, including universities, research institutes and think-tanks, began to engage with Armenia, and so did international donors, ranging from embassies and international organizations to Armenian Diaspora foundations.

Several typical post-Soviet trends are currently affecting the development of research in Armenia. First, now that research in the sphere of humanities and social sciences is no longer subject to ideological restrictions, the sparse and discrete texture of Soviet science is gradually filling in and becoming more consistent. However, there is a distortion the opposite way, with issues and areas banned in the USSR attracting exaggerated interest.

Second, although the old system of institutes affiliated with the Academy survived, its meager state funding is barely sufficient for subsistence. Non-state funding has become increasingly important for the survival of independent research institutions and individual scholars. The agendas of international donors and market demands stimulate the development of some social sciences, such as political science and sociology, whereas most humanities, such as archeology and ethnic studies, remain very poorly funded and unattractive for

young scholars.

Third, some disciplines, including ones for which there is special demand from external donors and the local market, were nonexistent just 20 years ago, and have to develop from scratch, with newly established bodies too often staffed with former professors of Marxist disciplines who are in fact not scholars but propaganda workers by background.

In the sphere of state-funded research, an important post-Soviet development was the institutionalization of Armenian Studies - a bunch of disciplines studying the history, culture and language of Armenians and Armenian Diaspora communities. Research in these areas was quite active in the Soviet era yet subject to ideological restrictions; with independence, Armenian Studies got a new impulse. In fact, it became privileged among humanities in Armenia in terms of state funding, getting a substantial share of budgets allocated to humanities and to scholarly research in general. A new research body, the Institute of the Armenian Genocide, was even established by the Academy in 1995.

v. Education and Awarding of Degrees in Armenia: Basics

The structure of higher education in Armenia is a combination of Soviet legacies and the results of post-Soviet economic and social transformations. In Soviet Armenia, with little arable land and well-developed industries and technology, a university diploma was the guarantee of a steady job and high social status. Young people were motivated to go to university; competition was intense and procedures very corrupt, with admittance to some institutions such as the medical school costing a fortune in bribes. After independence, Armenia ended up with a typically third-world economy in which most jobs are in the food industry, construction, services, agriculture etc., requiring secondary-school level education at best. However, the incentive to get a university degree remains strong. There are a few reasons for this apart from obvious post-Soviet inertia: the economic system is in transition and no one really knows what to expect; many

people see emigration as a potential solution and want to be competitive on job markets abroad; finally, there is a tradition to school one's children well into maturity, dating from long before the Soviets. Girls are a special case; many are brought up to be housewives but still sent to university as a method of socialization and a way to keep them busy until they are married off.

Moreover, the Soviet system of professional training was inadequate to the new reality and collapsed entirely; efforts to rebuild it from scratch only started in the mid-2000s. After graduating from school at the age of 16 or 17, almost the only way an Armenian citizen can go on with their education is to go to university. Professional schools are few; the other closest option is an informal apprenticeship in a menial job.

As a result, the number of people graduating every year from universities in Armenia is totally out of proportion with the needs of the current Armenian economy. Although the new economy has fewer educated jobs, new universities were established in post-Soviet years, and old ones were enlarged. In 2010, 3-million strong Armenia had 17 state universities, 3 inter-state universities, 8 affiliates of foreign universities, and 55 private universities. About 11,500 students were enrolled in 2010 in state universities only. The country has thousands of holders of degrees in fashionable post-Soviet specializations such as law, economics and international relations, most of them unemployed or working menial jobs. As the link between education and the job market is weak, students are often poorly motivated to learn, which prevents universities from raising academic standards.

The structure of all state and most private universities in Armenia dates back to Soviet times. A university is subdivided into faculties (*fakultet* in Armenian) on thematic basis (Faculty of History, Faculty of Sociology etc) which administrate the educational process. The students of faculties are subdivided into departments (*bazhin* in Armenian): for example, the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Yerevan State has three departments: Iranian Studies, Turkish Studies and Arabic Studies. Some faculties only have one department.

The teaching staff of universities is organized into chairs (am-

bion in Armenian) responsible for both teaching and research. Some chairs are affiliated with the university as a whole, such as Chairs of Armenian History, Chairs of English and Chairs of Philosophy, because their staff teaches subjects that the students of every faculty of a university have to take.

Most chairs are specialized and only teach the students of one or several departments of a particular faculty. Since teaching staff is organized into chairs and students are organized into departments, the number of departments and chairs in a particular faculty does not always coincide. For example, the Faculty of International Relations has four chairs – International Relations and Diplomacy, Political Institutions and Processes, History and Theory of Political Science, and State Administration – but only three departments: International Relations, State Administration and Political Science.

The system of tuition fees differs a lot from European countries and is typically post-Soviet. At all levels, from BA to doctorate, state universities have “free” and “paid” places; the free places are given to applicants with the highest school grades, and redistributed each year to students with best exam results¹. The rest pay a fee. The opportunity to study for free does not correlate with the financial situation of a student; as a result, young people from well-to-do families have better chances to become non-paying students because they can afford better schooling and tutors. The number of free places varies from specialization to specialization, and is determined by the Ministry of Science and Education.

In the Soviet system, education at universities took five years to complete in most disciplines; graduates received diplomas not degrees. Now Armenia is in transition to the Bologna standards, and most state universities award BA degrees after four years of study, and MA degrees after another two. However, some private universities and the Russian-Armenian University (in some disciplines) still use the old Soviet system; their graduates' diplomas are so far considered equivalent to MA degrees.

¹ There are preferences and waivers for male students who have completed army service and for some other categories.

In humanities and social sciences, a student can sign up for an MA course even though their BA degree was in a different area; for example, holders of BA degrees in languages often get MA degrees in international relations.

An important characteristic of the educational system is that students at most universities are not required to do research as part of their coursework; in many universities and specializations, a student is allowed to take additional exams instead of submitting research papers (including degree papers). As a result, quite a few students get a BA or MA degree without ever having done any independent research.

Holders of MA degrees can apply to doctorate courses (“*aspirantura*”) which last three years (or four if it is a part-time course); successful graduates can receive the degree of “candidate of sciences”. About a third of all doctorate graduates get this degree; for example, in 2008, 423 students graduated from doctorate courses in all specializations (not limited to social sciences and humanities); of them, 149 were awarded “candidate” degrees. Although being a student of a doctorate course is not obligatory for becoming a “candidate,” it is the most common procedure. Free places at doctorate courses are few, most students have to pay tuition. Doctorate students get no significant support from universities or Academy institutes; only a few manage to get study grants from international organizations or participate in international student exchange programs.

The degree of “candidate of sciences” is similar but not fully equivalent to a PhD, although the holders of these degrees usually describe themselves as PhDs abroad. The procedure for the awarding of “candidate of sciences” degrees in Armenia is rather cumbersome and bureaucratic due to the persistent Soviet legacy in this sphere. The awarding of these degrees is regulated by a national Supreme Attestation Commission (SAC) which has the status of a state agency affiliated with the Ministry of Education and Science.

In order to become a “candidate of sciences”, one needs to fulfill the following requirements:

- Pass three “candidate exams” (in philosophy, in a foreign language and in the chosen field of study), plus a test for computer literacy;
- Have two scientific papers published in scientific journals accredited by the SAC, or in international journals;
- Write a thesis (dissertation); in social sciences and humanities it is usually 120-150 pages long;
- Present (defend) this dissertation in front of a Specialized Science Board, usually at an institute affiliated with the Academy or at a university chair.

The applicant must have a scientific supervisor and two opponents who review and criticize the dissertation. Even after a successful defense, the awarding of the degree must be approved by the SAC which sometimes does not give its approval based on bureaucratic or technical arguments. At any rate, the scientific merit of a dissertation is by no means the main criterion for the awarding of a degree. In fact, in very many if not in the majority of cases, a dissertation is not a piece of independent research but rather, a review paper based on existing sources, mostly books in Armenian or Russian. Most dissertations do not contain any original findings and are not even expected to. The use of varied sources, including interviewing and online resources, is unusual and not a criterion of excellence.

Apart from the “candidate of sciences,” there is a higher degree, called “doctor of sciences”, a Soviet legacy surviving in a number of post-Soviet countries. To become a “doctor”, one needs a larger number of publications (including abroad) and a longer dissertation; the procedure is similar to the one for becoming a “candidate” except that it does not involve taking an additional study course.

The SAC also awards titles to educators: “docent” (roughly equivalent to reader or assistant professor or associate professor) and “professor.” To become a docent, one must teach at a particular university

for at least three years, have a degree of “candidate” or “doctor” and a certain number of publications. The procedure for becoming a professor is different for “candidates” and “doctors”. A “doctor” needs 5 years’ teaching experience at a particular university and at least 5 publications. “Candidates” wishing to become professors must have at least 30 years’ teaching experience with the last 5 at a particular university, and at least 5 publications. There are a number of other requirements too.

Apart from universities, some institutes affiliated with the Academy of Sciences have started their own MA courses (history at the Institute of History, oriental studies at the Institute of Oriental Studies, political science at the Chair of Political Science of the Academy).

Doctorate courses in social sciences and humanities are taught at state universities and at institutes affiliated with the Academy of Sciences.

Chapter 1. Institutional and Policy Framework

a. Laws Regulating Research in Armenia

The main law regulating research in Armenia is the Armenian Law on Scientific and Technical Activities adopted in 2000 and last amended in 2010.

Since some research is carried out by bodies (such as think tanks) registered in the form of NGO or foundations, two other laws are relevant to this sphere: the 2002 Law on Foundations, last amended in 2008, and the 2001 Law on Public Organizations which is currently being amended.

According to the Law on Scientific and Technical Activities, research bodies can have any legal form, including that of a state body, public organization, foundation or commercial organization. This law prescribes the functions of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, which chiefly consist in “uniting the research bodies affiliated with it” and “coordinating fundamental research conducted in Armenia”. The Academy also has preferential status with regard to strategic planning of research and its implementation, and is linked to the Prime Minister. This law also defines the legal status of institutions affiliated with the Academy.

Some bodies which engage in research or support research in Armenia are registered as NGO (public organizations or foundations). Their activities are regulated by the Law on Foundations and the

Law on Public Organizations. Public organizations have membership and membership fees; they engage in various societal activities, including human rights, environment etc. Most watchdog NGO are registered as public organizations. Foundations do not have membership and rely on donations or grants; their activities are defined as education, research, cultural activities etc. NGO registered as foundations include think tanks and educational institutes. The Armenian NGO community has for several years been negotiating the adoption of an Endowment Law to enable NGO to establish endowments which would be allowed to generate incomes and thus ensure the financial sustainability of NGO.

Other laws relevant to the sphere in hand are the 1999 Law on Education and the 2004 Law on Higher and Post-University Professional Education. Under the latter, all state and private universities are subject to state licensing. Licensing procedures and requirements have for several years been under constant revision from the Ministry of Education.

The rights of researchers are regulated by Part 2 of the Civic Code of Armenia and the 2006 Law on Copyright. State funding of research is subject to the 2006 Law on State Support of Innovative Activities.

The Standing Parliamentary Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport is currently discussing a draft Law on the Academy of Sciences.

b. State Policy and Key Players

The structure of state bodies engaging in and regulating research in Armenia is still part of its Soviet legacy. This structure is defined by the rulings of the president and government of Armenia as well as laws and by-laws.

The government defines state policies and funding strategies in the sphere of research via the State Committee on Science affiliated

with the Ministry of Education and Science. In fact, the division of labor and responsibility between the State Committee on Science and the Ministry of Education and Science is not clearly defined. While technically being part of the Ministry, the Committee has the status of a state body which defines government policies in the area, an arrangement which creates many grey areas.

The Armenian Parliament has a Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport responsible for drafting and processing laws and state budget allocations in the area of its competence. The Standing Committee is also in charge of parliamentary supervision of science and education in Armenia; on the suggestion of the government, or on its own initiative, the Standing Committee can convene parliamentary sessions on particular issues and commission expert assessments.

All higher educational institutions (universities and educational institutes) and the Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts report to the Ministry of Education and Science.

All other state bodies engaging in research in the sphere of humanities and social sciences report to the Academy of Sciences – the primary body that conducts research and coordinates activities in the fields of science in Armenia. Founded in 1943, the Academy of Sciences is based in Yerevan and has branches in five other cities: Gyumri, Sevan, Goris, Vanadzor and Ghapan. Overall, the Academy employs 3700 people, including 323 holders of the degree of “doctor of sciences” and 1006 “candidates of sciences.” The Academy consists of a Presidium and 36 affiliated research bodies. The Presidium of the Academy has five divisions that supervise the research bodies affiliated with the Academy:

- Mathematical and Technical Sciences: 3 institutes
- Physics and Astrophysics: 4 institutes and 1 center
- Natural Sciences: 5 institutes and 5 centers
- Chemistry and Earth Sciences: 6 institutes and 2 centers

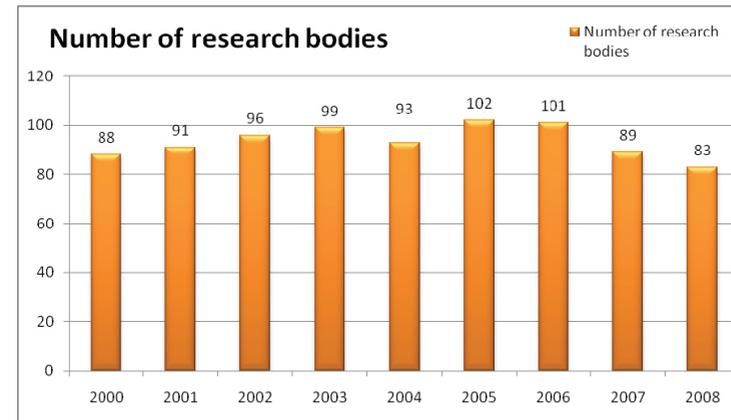
- Armenian Studies and Social Sciences: 9 institutes and 1 center. It is these ten bodies that engage in social sciences and humanities within the Academy:
 - o the Institute of History,
 - o the Institute of Philosophy and Law,
 - o the Kotanyan Institute of Economics,
 - o the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography,
 - o the Institute of Oriental Studies,
 - o the Acharyan Institute of Language,
 - o the Abeghyan Institute of Literature,
 - o the Institute of Art,
 - o the Museum-Institute of Genocide,
 - o the Shirak Center of Armenian Studies.

The Presidium of the Academy also has an affiliated Fundamental Scientific Library, Scientific Information Center, International Scientific Educational Center and two publishing houses, Gitutyun (Armenian for “science”) and Armenian Encyclopedia.

The Academy has a membership system dating back to Soviet times. As of early January 2011, it had 69 full members (“academicians”), including 10 in social sciences and humanities, and 52 “corresponding members” including 17 in social sciences and humanities. Together with the directors of Academy-affiliated institutes, they form the General Assembly which is the main decision-making body of the Academy. In between Assemblies, the Academy is managed by its Presidium of 9 persons.

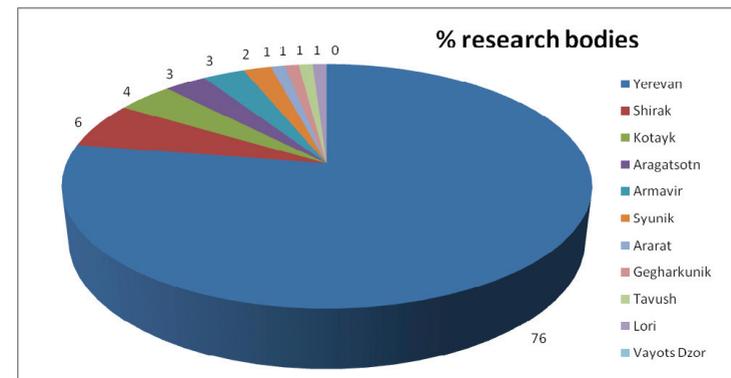
According to the State Committee on Science, most research bodies in Armenia are located in Yerevan (78%); 65% are state-funded bodies, including research institutes and university chairs.

The number of research bodies in Armenia, 2000-2008



Source: Statistical Yearbooks 2002, 2005, 2009

Research bodies per region in 2008



Statistical Yearbook 2009; the total figure is 98, including branches and affiliates

The leading state universities in Armenia that engage in research in the sphere of social sciences and humanities are Yerevan State University, Brusov Linguistic University and the Pedagogical Institute of Yerevan. Of the international universities, some research in social sciences and humanities is done at the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University. The American University of Armenia has a number of research centers, two of them active in areas of concern to this study: the Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis which conducts surveys on behalf of USAID, UNICEF, UNDPD etc, and the Center for Research and Development in Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching. At the European Academy and the French University of Armenia, no research is conducted.

Private universities scarcely do any research in SSH. Many of the private universities in Armenia are businesses which award degrees and offer little education. Even those private universities that teach a sound curriculum are not motivated to invest in research. Non-state bodies have been playing an increasingly important role in SSH in Armenia in recent years. For most, research is not the focus of their activity, as they are chiefly watchdog bodies. NGO closest to being think tanks are the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS), the International Human Development Center (IHD), the Civilitas Foundation (CF), the Caucasus Institute (CI), the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC), and a few others.

A special case is Noravank, a think tank registered as a foundation affiliated with the Prime Minister and largely funded by the government. However, it also receives grants from Armenian and international donors to conduct research projects.

Some think tanks are affiliated with political parties or groups. The Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS), was founded in the early nineties by former Foreign Minister of Armenia Raffi Hovannisian who was by that time an opposition actor. Another former Foreign Minister of Armenia, Vartan Oskanian, recently founded the Civilitas Foundation.

c. The Funding System

The first decade of independence was tough for science, with meager budget funds allocated to research institutions at a time of war, post-Soviet crisis and economic collapse. Funding from Moscow stopped, the new state was poor, businesses were only starting to develop, and international and Diaspora donors were too busy helping the poor, refugees and war victims.

By the late nineties, international donors began to develop an interest in post-Soviet research bodies. However, most projects they supported had societal or political focus and only indirect relevance to SSH such as sociology, political science or anthropology. As a result, most NGO established locally at that time had political focus.

Scholarly research in the field of humanities and social sciences was scarcely financed in Armenia until 2000 when state financing of science began to grow. The Law on Scientific and Technical Activity passed in 2000 prescribed the allocation of at least 3% of the state budget expenditures to science starting from 2002. Yet in reality the funding of research never reached that amount. In 2001, the relevant chapter of the law (Chapter 23.2) was edited to say that the state funding of science must be increased each year in proportion to the growth of state revenues.

With economic growth in the last decade, state financing of research has increased; for SSH, this has meant more funds for Armenian studies, including history, anthropology, archeology, language and culture studies. The 2006 amendments to the Law on Scientific and Technical Activity place special attention on Armenian studies. In 2005-2007, Armenian studies are financed much more than “social sciences” (which in fact include some disciplines traditionally listed as humanities) or “education studies” (also including humanities).

However, starting 2008, “Science” stopped being a separate budget item, and the “Science and Education” section was renamed “Education”. Budget allocations to research are spread over various sections of the budget and difficult to follow. In September 2010, the

President of the National Academy of Science said in an interview to the media that current financing of science amounted to 0.2% of the GDP.

Financing of research in % of GDP, planned and actual, in mln Armenian dram

	1996	2000	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Planned budget expenditures for science	1802.5	2629.4	2730.1	2961.5	3321.6	4102.6	5193.1	5835.2
Total budget expenditures	127158	252780	247232	334239	317039	394600	482194	558677
% of budget expenditures	1.42%	1.04%	1.1%	0.89%	1.05%	1.04%	1.08%	1.04%
Actual expenditures, based on reports of research bodies		1519.1	1797	1896.3	2096.6	2593.2	3062.2	3341.2
% of budget expenditures		0.578	0.658	0.640	0.631	0.632	0.590	0.573

Sources: *parliament.am* (planned budgets); *Armstat* (statistics) and *edu.am* (actual budgets)

State funding of science in Armenia has three formats:

- basic financing of state research institutions and infrastructure for fundamental and applied research;
- tender-based financing of projects which have priority for the state;
- thematic financing of projects proposed by scholars or research teams, selected based on a competition (a quasi-grants system).

The proportions in which state funding is allocated to the three formats is prescribed by the law on the state budget. In reality, the first type, basic financing, is just sufficient to sustain an infrastructure and staff for research on a very meager level. As to the second type, in the area of humanities and social sciences, the only projects which have “priority” for the state and get state financing lie in the field of Armenian studies. Finally, the third type of financing implies the awarding of state grants for specific projects.

As can be seen from the table below, thematic funding of Armenian

Studies was over four times that of Social Sciences in 2005-2007, and three times that of Social Sciences in 2008; most of it was spent on salaries.

Thematic (Quasi Grants) Funding

	No of full-time positions		Funding, USD		% of salaries	
	2005-2007	2008	2005-2007	2008	2005-2007	2008
Armenian Studies	259 (9.9%)	265.6 (11.3%)	111.5 (10.8%)	151.5 (10.6%)	76.1%	92.3%
Social sciences	68 (2.6%)	89.5 (3.8%)	26 (2.5%)	50 (3.5%)	85.6%	95.8%
Total	2609.5	2352	1028	1429	83.1%	93.1%

Source: *State Committee on Science of Armenia*

Meanwhile the number of post-graduate students and candidate of sciences degrees in social sciences has been much greater than in Armenian studies:

Candidate degrees awarded in 2007 by area

Area	number	%
Maths, mechanics, IT	30	6.3
Physics	24	5.1
Technical sciences	45	9.5
Chemistry	13	2.7
Biology	26	5.5
Geology, geography	3	0.6
Armenian Studies	89	18.7
Social Sciences	148	31.2
Education Studies	32	6.7
Architecture	6	1.3
Medicine	49	10.3
Agriculture	10	2.1
	475	

Source: *State Committee on Science of Armenia*

The official from the Ministry of Education and Science interviewed for this study stated that the current system of state financing of science, in which salaries account for up to 90% of all funds, does not stimulate good quality research. In 2010-2012, it is planned to augment the volume of grants for projects, and to increase the percentage of funds for infrastructure and direct costs, reducing the

percentage of salaries to 55-60%. Starting 2011, it is also planned to create science boards in various areas that will assess projects and decide on priorities.

Apart from state funds, international grants and international co-operation projects play an important role in the development of research in Armenia. Direct international funding of research bodies has gone down in recent years in favor of joint projects. Armenian research bodies frequently implement parts of large-scale projects carried out by international universities or research centers.

International bodies that support research in Armenia fall into several categories.

The first category are local or regional bureaus of international or European organizations for which support to research is not a priority. These include UN bodies, the EU, Council of Europe, OSCE, NATO, the World Bank, EBRD, IMF etc. For a number of years, the EU financed the TACIS program which supported post-Soviet development, including in science and education, but has been closed down.

These organizations award grants to local NGO; the amount of support going towards research varies depending on the agenda of the organization and focus of its projects. For example, in the case of UNDP it amounts to 1-3% of the total expenditure in Armenia.

There is an office in Armenia of the TEMPUS program, the main EU tool for educational exchange and cooperation. However, most projects submitted by Armenian educational institutions to TEMPUS have been in the field of IT, business, management, architecture, environment, biology and other natural sciences.

The second category includes foreign embassies to Armenia. Some embassies, including the embassies of the U.S., the UK, France, Germany, Poland, Switzerland and Greece to Armenia, award grants for projects, chiefly small ones (average 5,000 – 10,000 USD) that can involve research, publications, translation of books, student and teacher exchange, organization of conferences and roundtables, study trips etc. The embassies have political agendas, and their grants pro-

grams are often sporadic.

The third category includes development agencies (USAID, SDC, DFID GTZ, SIDA etc) and cultural organizations (British Council, American Council etc). These bodies do not prioritize research; however, the grants they award are often large-scale, long-term and involving support to and creation of infrastructures. They support research as part of projects focusing on human rights, civil society development, conflict resolution, rural development etc. These projects promote the capacity building of social sciences and humanities, expert and student exchange, and scholarships for young scholars. For example, USAID has supported many projects promoting Armenia-Turkey relations and thus benefited the development of political science, conflict resolution and Turkish studies in Armenia. In recent years, some development agencies have decreased support to NGO in Armenia due to the global recession and some degree of donor fatigue.

The fourth category includes thematic international organizations such as the Open Society Institute, International Organization on Migration, World Vision Armenia, NDI, IREX, Environmental Public Advocacy Center (EPAC) etc. Most of them have been active in Armenia since the mid- or late nineties. Of these, the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation of Armenia (OSIAFA) is the most dedicated to science and education, and the most active. Although it does not finance purely scholarly projects, OSIAFA supports education and exchange including , NGO development, cooperation with European institutions, legal and judiciary reform.. The Budapest-based OSI Think Tank Fund awards some support to think tanks in Armenia.

The fifth category includes German political foundations: the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Heinrich Boell Foundation etc. Due to their special status and funding system (in proportion to the number of seats each party has in the German parliament), their activity is focused on politics and soci-

ety. In Armenia, they fund conferences, training for political party activists, electoral reform, monitoring etc. With the exception of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundations which have offices in Armenia, the other German foundations operate regionally from offices in Tbilisi. The Heinrich Boell Foundation plays a special role in the development of social sciences in Armenia as it has a regional (South Caucasus) scholarship program for young scholars in the field of social sciences, in which several Armenian scholars participate every year.

The sixth category is special for Armenia: it includes Armenian Diaspora organizations, such as the AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union), the Gulbenkian Fund, the Union of Armenians of Russia, the Tekeyan Foundation etc. Some of these bodies support education and science - for example, the American University of Armenia is supported to a large extent by AGBU. Some of these bodies are supported by traditional Armenian political parties which have branches in the Diaspora.

In the sphere of SSH, Diaspora bodies support chiefly Armenian studies, history and religion studies. They fund archeological excavations, education and research. Their role is important in two ways. First, they do not usually support specific projects but rather, infrastructure, equipment and construction, as has been the case for the construction of a new building of Matenadaran, the renovation of the Genocide Museum, libraries and university halls. Second, the areas they fund are the ones that get little support from other donors. In the sphere of Armenian studies and religion studies, Diaspora donors are the main sources of funding apart from state funds.

Chapter 2. The Overall Situation with Research in SSH in Armenia

a. Overview

Many issues are common for all actors in the sphere of humanities and social sciences in Armenia; these include problems with funding, including for publications, low professional standards and the poor development of those social sciences and humanities that did not exist in Armenia in the Soviet years.

Since the economic decline of the 1990s, state support to research has improved in some spheres. Although budget funds are low, they are sufficient to sustain minimal salaries and an impoverished infrastructure; as a result, in some better-developed areas, such as medieval history or archeology, Armenian research bodies are now capable of doing regular quality work and can cooperate with European partners in joint projects. Funding from international donors, on the other hand, is chiefly awarded on project basis and does not enable infrastructure. Diaspora donors are special in that they support infrastructure rather than salaries or projects.

An important problem affecting the quality of education, publications and research is that male full-time students are not drafted into the army until graduation (Armenia is formally still at war with Azerbaijan and has universal draft for males from 18 to 27). Should

an MA student graduate and go on directly to full-time doctorate courses, he will not be drafted until the end of the three-year course. If he is awarded a “candidate of sciences” degree by the end of the three years, he is freed from army service altogether. As a result, full-time doctorate courses have become a tool for avoiding army service; the entire institution of post-graduate study has become corrupt and lost its focus on scientific achievement. This is a major reason for the high number of low quality candidate theses produced and defended every year. As can be seen from the table below, 93% of full-time postgraduate students are males, as compared to just over 35% of part-time students (who study for four years and are not exempt from army service):

Postgraduate students by gender in 2007 in Armenia

	Full-time			Part-time				
	Male	Female	Total	Free		paid		
				male	female	male	female	total
1 st year	155	14	169	51	97	43	32	381
2 nd year	184	13	197	59	108	22	52	423
3 rd year	239	14	253	46	112	16	40	370
4 th year				39	77	16	26	266
Total	578	41	619	317	643	191	289	1440
%	93%	7%	1238	33%	67%	40%	60%	2880

The overall situation with publications is unsatisfactory, especially where science periodicals are concerned. Amongst periodicals, the most prominent ones are the *Journal of History and Philology* and the *Social Sciences Review* published by of the Academy of Sciences, the *Review of Yerevan State University*, and yearly collections of papers published by institutes affiliated with the Academy of Sciences. However, traditionally the best work is published in the form of monographs. Armenia does not have a journal with a strong reputation in the field of social sciences or humanities; existing ones are

mostly used by doctorate students to publish the necessary number of articles required for a degree. Due to the large number of candidate degrees awarded every year, one journal, called Kantekh, exists solely for this purpose: for a fee, a student can publish anything there, without any scholarly supervision or quality control.

Journals in the area of social sciences and humanities published by institutions affiliated with the Academy of Sciences are poorly financed, have ageing staff, see light irregularly and, as can be seen from the table below, are very often not peer reviewed. Most periodicals are published in Armenian, some in Russian, almost none in English. Periodicals and collections of papers produced by universities suffer from another problem: the fact that science at universities is secondary to teaching and no time is allocated for it in the contracts of staff. Many university professors publish the same paper in an international journal and then reprint it many times in Armenian ones. Overall, the number of publications by Armenian scholars in international journals remains low, as seen from this table:

Papers published in periodicals and collections of papers in 2005-2007

	Total no of articles	Of these, peer reviewed	Percent of articles published in international periodicals
2005			
Armenia	5613	3228	12,5
CIS	1208	739	
International	1384	1024	
Total	8205	4991	
2006			
Armenia	5678	3107	12,6
CIS	1486	821	
International	1230	1058	
Total	8394	4986	
2007			
Armenia	6227	3643	11,9
CIS	1333	837	
International	1528	1089	
Total	9088	5569	

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2008

The only periodical regularly publishing papers on political science, history, sociology, international relations and regional security is the *21st Century* journal published by Noravank Foundation. It is usually produced in Armenian but sometimes also in English or Russian; it has an electronic version and its quality is overall better than that of most publications by state research bodies. There is also the Caucasus Yearbook published every year since 2004 by the Caucasus Institute; however, it is not a journal but a collection of papers produced in Russian with a regional focus. Think tanks and NGO, including ICHD and CRRC, publish ad hoc collections of papers on specific issues.

Another issue that concerns publications has to do with the poor quality of printing, small print runs and poor dissemination of publications. The tables below reflect the overall situation in the publishing sphere:

Books published per year

	Number of books	Number of copies, 1000
1940		2700
1981		8100
1995	376	?
1996	396	?
1997	429	?
1998	535	392
2000	672	464
2001	915	970
2002	1011	389
2003	1578	927
2004	1591	699
2005	1341	945
2006	1326	822
2007	1771	2163
2008	1835	2249

Sources: Book Chamber 2008, 2009. Statistical Yearbooks 2000, 1999, Soviet statistics 1982

Books per area (figures in parentheses stand for percentage of books in the Armenian language)

	Number		Number of copies, 1000	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Social sciences, total	461 (81%)	495 (80%)	429.2 (92%)	155.9 (83%)
... General	20	25	8.8	10.5
... Philosophy	35 (63%)	17 (71%)	9.2 (74%)	2.8 (n/a)
... Psychology	7	15	4.0	4.3
... Religion	42 (90.5%)	37 (92%)	26.2 (88%)	17.2 (96%)
... Sociology and statistics	13	23	4.6	6.0
... Politics	57 (72%)	44 (64%)	273.7 (98%)	16.3 (69%)
... Economics and trade	77 (95%)	102 (88%)	19.3 (98%)	21.5 (89%)
... Management	6	9	1.5	1.7
... Law	79 (80%)	84 (84.5%)	41.1 (76%)	33.0 (88.5%)
... Military	12	22	6.3	7.9
... History	86 (83%)	94 (83%)	26.4 (84%)	31.0 (80%)
... Ethnography, Armenian studies	5	3	1.7	0.5
Natural sciences	149	133	29.9	23.6
... Ecology	20 (80%)	18 (83%)	3.7 (86.5%)	3.2 (87.5%)
... Geology, geography	14	24	3.0	3.6
Technical sciences	92	61	11.3	9.3
Industry	11	32	1.4	5.1
Transport, communication	18	16	16.6	5.1
Computers	33	75	4.7	9.8
Construction, architecture	6	9	0.7	1.2
Agriculture	44	41	9.3	7.1
Healthcare, medicine	43	49	11.6	6.7
Sport	28	26	6.5	23.0

Sources: Book Chamber, 2008, 2009.

Philology	154	175	44.2	45.3
... Literature studies	63	69	16.6	18.0
... Linguistics	91 (42%)	106 (33%)	27.6 (39%)	27.3 (48%)
Art	49	43	16.6	11.9
... Culture monuments	10	13	4.3	4.2
... Music, theatre, cinema	29	24	8.3	5.7
... Fine arts	10	6	4.0	2.0
Culture	6	13	1.4	3.0
Media, journalism	8	13	1.8	3.3
Education	140	179	995.8	848.3
... Schoolbooks	56 (80%)	96 (80%)	919.1 (90%)	737.6 (77%)
... Manuals	84	83	76.7	110.7
Fiction	266	246	100.0	72.8
Children's books	70	98	92.0	85.2
General	9	14	2.9	13.3
..... Total	1587 (80%)	1718 (80%)	1775.9 (89%)	1329.9 (82%)

Sources: Book Chamber, 2008, 2009

Books per type

	Number of books		Number of copies, 1000	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Politics	46	49	255.6	17.8
Science	255	250	88.0	63.3
Science popularizing	93	102	37.1	30.7
Official	57	40	31.0	19.4
Manuals for universities	301	284	75.1	83.2
Manuals for practical or laboratory classes	225	273	28.9	34.8
Manuals for schools	56	96	919.1	737.6
Education theory, methodology	49	75	53.7	108.1
Manuals for professional schools	18	6	6.7	1.0
Specialized manuals	22	34	17.4	8.6
Encyclopedias	3	6	2.5	8.8
Dictionaries	21	20	8.2	6.8
Reference books	28	10	20.2	11.2
Bibliographies	14	17	2.8	2.4
Fiction	266	246	100.0	72.8
Children's books	70	98	92.0	85.2
Religion	28	27	17.8	14.1
Popular	54	85	22.6	24.1
... Total	1587	1718	1775.9	1329.9

Sources: *Book Chamber 2008, 2009.*

Clearly many of the issues mentioned above stem from shortage of funds and the fact that at universities, research is low priority compared to education.

Another serious problem is poor access to publications, including periodicals, especially recent publications produced in the West, and the poor state of libraries and resource centers.

Besides, even where access is possible, foreign language proficiency is often lacking; with the exception of students of the American and French Universities, some YSU and most Brusov students, many graduate and postgraduate students in Armenia do not have sufficient command of English or another European language to read let alone contribute to international science publications. Russian which used to be a second mother tongue and the main language of education in Soviet Armenia is also on the decline. Contacts with Russian education and research are down (except at RAU, partly at YSU and Brusov), and school graduates have less command of Russian every year.

Another issue concerns the polarization and politicization of dis-

courses in Armenia, especially in the sphere of social sciences and particularly in history and political science. An overall standard for “patriotism” often interferes with the objectivity and quality of research. Scholars sometimes become the target for nationalistic groups and actors, including ones active within the scholarly community. There were cases when nationalist-minded activists (some of them holding doctorate degrees) sabotaged the presentation of dissertations on Armenian history on the grounds that the study was insufficiently “patriotic.” The work of renowned international scholars of Armenian descent (including Ronald Suny and Richard Hovhannisian) has been condemned for making the Armenian nation look less ancient, less grand or less widely spread. Vulgarization and non-professional discourses in the media make the problem worse; as a result, many scholars, especially young ones, are wary of expressing original ideas or digging into controversial issues.

One approach to dealing with many of these problems would be to intensify contacts with European universities, research centers and donors. There have been a variety of initiatives to connect the Armenian scholarly community to European and international networks. However, these projects have yet to make an impact on the sphere of social sciences and humanities. Back in 1994, an Academic Scientific Research Computer Network of Armenia (ASNET-AM) was established, bringing together the National Academy of Sciences and research bodies affiliated with it, several Armenian state universities and the American University of Armenia. The idea was to enable exchange of information, wireless and fiber optic connections, and access to databases. The Presidium of the Academy is responsible for administration and the development of this network. Based on the infrastructure provided by ASNET-AM, the Armenian National Grid (<http://www.grid.am>) is connecting Armenia to GÉANT, the pan-European data network in the area of education and science. However, so far the Armenian Grid only has user communities in natural sciences, IT and environmental protection, and none in humanities or social sciences. An Armenian e-Science Foundation (

escience.am) was established in 2002. The main goal of ArmeSfo is introduction, development and dissemination of e-science technologies in the Armenian scientific and educational institutions. Once again, humanities and social sciences have not so far been actively embraced by its activities.

Apart from general trends, many strengths and weaknesses are specific for particular groups of actors considered below.

b. Universities

At Yerevan State, the most advanced research areas are Armenian studies, history, sociology and languages; it also does some research in philosophy, sociology, political science and international relations. Alongside with the Institute of Oriental Studies, it does research in the area of Oriental Studies which is of better than average quality for Armenia. It is also doing better than most in terms of international ties. The Brusov Linguistic University is privileged in that its staff has better command of foreign languages and more ties to the rest of the world. Its focus is on language, literature studies, communication studies and to some extent also political studies and philosophy. The Pedagogical University focuses on Armenian studies and history (chiefly Armenian history). It has fewer international contacts and less knowledge of modern methods. The Russian-Armenian University does some research on language, history, political philosophy and political science; its special focus is on Armenian-Russian relations. Many members of its faculty also teach at other universities; the Russian-Armenian University offers them more opportunity to publish their work or conduct additional research. The American University of Armenia does research chiefly in the areas of business, management and law; its Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis conducts surveys on behalf of international organizations. Other state and private universities do little or no research in those fields of social sciences and humanities that are the focus of this study. Most private universities in Armenia do no research at all.

As to the overall capacity of Armenian universities to conduct research, they are very limited, and the product is often low-quality and often not original. The key problem has to do with the working hours of the staff. The faculty of state universities are employed full-time as educators; there are no contracts for research. According to their contracts, they have to teach an average of 720 hours of contact classes per year (a little fewer for holders of “doctor of science” degrees). Some staff work 125 or even 150 per cent. A full-time teaching job amounts to two contact hours every weekday, plus time needed to prepare for classes, check homework (with sometimes over 100 students per class), supervise research papers and degree theses by BA and MA students, and check the monthly written tests taken by every student. Teaching involves a lot of paperwork; a head of faculty has huge additional reporting and planning to do. The syllabus for each course can be up to 50 pages long, most professors teach many courses and have to write up the syllabi. As a result, a professor can only do research during vacations or after hours. Research is not stipulated by contracts as a separate activity and no time is allocated for it. Therefore, state universities are not in the position to ask its staff to do research.

Scholarly contacts and cooperation with universities abroad are also limited. Scientific ties are sporadic, due to a range of factors, including poor proficiency in foreign languages, lack of experience and ties (even ties inside the former USSR have disintegrated during the first post-Soviet decade of chaos and crisis), poor awareness (including by managers of science) of the need for and potential of international cooperation, and lack of funds. Scientific contacts with Russia have been on the decline since the disintegration of the USSR in the early nineties. The only entities in Armenia to have regular contacts with Russian research organizations are the Russian-Armenian University and the departments of Russian philology at Brusov and Yerevan State.

Some of the staff of Yerevan State University and Brusov University is doing much better than the average scholar in terms of interna-

tional contacts. As a result, international cooperation mostly happens on personal basis; some of the faculty of state universities are scholars with international ties and reputations who travel to conferences abroad, publish their work in international journals etc. However, their work is not supervised or reviewed by their universities, and is usually commissioned and supported by international partners on individual basis.

When the time comes to publish university newsletters or collections of papers, the heads of departments ask their staff to bring whatever research papers they have written, either for external projects or on their own initiative. The head of faculty cannot ask a staff member to do research or write a paper on a particular topic, nor can they choose the best papers. They just take whatever their staff have handy. As a result, the collections of papers are not structured thematically and are very uneven in terms of quality, varying from very good to useless.

As part of their Soviet legacy, every state university has a Science Board which decides on which topics should be researched and what must be published. The departments submit proposals and the Board reviews them. However, even if a book is on the publishing plan of the University, in many universities the finance department tells the author that he or she can only get their work published provided they handle the sales themselves, and bring the revenues back to the University. The author is thus in charge of their own marketing, very often leading to a corrupt practice when a professor makes his/her students buy copies of their book as a requirement for a particular course.

Universities organize conferences chiefly on ad hoc basis, sometimes in cooperation with international or local partners. University chairs seldom do their own fundraising or have their own international cooperation projects as this would be too complicated to get through the bureaucracy. Many prefer to cooperate with NGO when it comes to international projects: the NGO organizes an event, study or publication, and the faculty cooperate on individual basis; howev-

er, the involvement can be semi-institutional, with events conducted in the university's halls and with the participation of its students. The staff who take part in projects funded by external donors get additional pay on project basis while also getting their full-time salary at the university.

An important deterrent to overall quality of teaching and research is the dependence of universities on student fees for survival. Up to 90% of the income of state universities comes from student fees, which also provide for the staff salaries. Although fees are not high by international standards, they are as high as the students can afford in a country with Armenia's living standards. The resulting incomes of universities are insufficient for good quality activities, especially given the bulky bureaucracies and messy procedures inherited from Soviet times. Universities compensate by admitting more students, leading to a situation where they cannot afford to expel poor students. For example, according to heads of some university departments, only about 1% of students a year get expelled; in fact, based on the quality of their work, about 30% should be expelled but that would leave the teachers penniless, as salaries are quite low anyway, just about \$400 for a Head of Faculty with a PhD employed full-time and in fact having to work extra hours in order to fulfill their duties.

c. State research bodies

State research institutes (including those affiliated with the Academy and the Matenadaran which has special status) have decades of experience and traditions in research. Some, as the Institute of Oriental Studies, have strong international ties, due to the fact that in Soviet times this institute was commissioned by Moscow to conduct Turkish, Iranian and Arabic studies. Others, like the Institute of History, are international reference centers for Armenian studies but have very narrow focus. Caucasus studies or regional studies are

scarce: for example, Georgian studies scarcely exist at all in Armenia despite the obvious need for such.

The Genocide Museum has recently been successful in fundraising from Diaspora and individual donors, and is improving its staff and scientific standards. Due to the political purport of the Genocide issue, it has the attention of the Armenian government and international bodies. The Genocide Museum conducts more conferences than other institutes, produces more books, and buys new documents for its archives. It has the most functional website of all state research bodies.

Institutes affiliated with the Academy of Sciences suffer from a lame legal base for their functioning in issues such as subordination to and relationship with the Academy, its Presidium and its Division of Armenian Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities. Budgeting is also an issue. One of the reasons is that the Academy has technically the same status as the institutes affiliated with it – that of a non-commercial state organization. This status, amongst other things, prevents the institutes from engaging in any income-generating activities, even selling their books, and opens bleak prospects for financial sustainability.

This situation calls for amendments to the Law on Scientific and Technical Activity and careful elaboration of the Law on the Academy of Sciences which is being drafted at the moment.

Shortage of funds is a chronic concern of all state institutions. The most direct consequence is the ageing of their staff, since young people are not motivated to work for ridiculously low wages. The result is vividly reflected in the following statistics:

Average age of scholars in Armenia in 2007 (DSc/PhD)

Under 30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	Over 70	Average age
0/311	24/484	90/513	249/733	259/580	199/301	61.5/51.0

Source: *Statistical Yearbook 2008*

Apart from being advanced in years, the elderly scholars are more likely to rely on outdated Soviet methodology, be unaware of modern approaches and simply unable to come to grips with modern equipment and technology, even basic things like emails. For social reasons, institutes cannot fire elderly scholars; for contractual reasons, they cannot hire one promising young scientist for the wages of ten older ones. In many cases, institutes with a staff of 100-130 researchers (such as the Institute of History) produce as many or fewer publications than a think tank with just several research staff.

The Genocide Institute, the Institute of Oriental Studies and the Matenadaran are good exceptions. The Matenadaran trains its own young scholars, has sources of non-state financing (including Diaspora bodies such as the Gulbenkian Foundation) and ties to international research centers. Its donors have even sponsored the ongoing construction of a new expensive building for the Matenadaran, estimated to cost dozens of millions USD.

Institutes which specialize in Armenian studies and have few ties to the world except via the Diaspora and individual scholars conducting Armenian studies in universities abroad.

Problems common to all these bodies include outdated methodologies, inability to conduct cross-disciplinary research, excessive academism and lack of opportunity for practical applications of their work. Post-Soviet disproportions are also an issue. Armenian studies get the bulk of state financing whereas the development of fields that did not exist in the USSR, such as political science, is going in the direction of quantity rather than quality, with former Marxist philosophers and communist party historians teaching it and large numbers of below-standard PhD theses produced every year:

d. Non-state bodies

NGO, including think tanks, have only existed in Armenia since the mid-nineties and started to play an important role in society in

the first decade of the 21st century. They are dramatically different from state research bodies in that they are much less academic and learned in theories, very project-oriented and focused on practical application of their work. Reports by NGO get much more political and social resonance than anything produced by state research bodies.

Due to their practical focus, NGO do not engage in fundamental research and only study a limited number of areas. Most studies they conduct are in the field of political science (including transition and democracy studies), political sociology (with emphasis on electoral behavior and institutions), conflict studies (with focus on regional conflicts and integration), international relations, European studies, economics and environment. Some studies assess compliance with EU and other standards in the areas of human rights, media development, education etc. NGO are not usually active in humanities such as history, languages etc.

Strong dependence on donors affects the scope and format of research conducted by NGO while also providing financial means incomparably greater than those of state-funded bodies, and freedom from bureaucracy. International and regional ties amongst NGO are strong; they use modern methodology and technology, have access to Western publications, do not suffer from Soviet stereotypes on a par with state institutions, and have much younger, better motivated and better educated staff, including graduates of Western universities.

The sustainability of NGO and their capacity to conduct thematic research rather than focus on donor-funded projects is constrained by the lack of a Law on Endowments that would enable NGO to conduct income-generating activities and become financially independent.

However, to some extent NGO also suffer from Soviet legacies. Thus, international agencies working with local NGO often complain that the language of their reports is not in line with international standards. The reports are very often politicized, sharply critical of indi-

viduals and institutions (to the point of abuse), biased and generally intolerant. Besides, their approach is often marred by isolationism and an overall lack of openness to the rest of the world. The reports are often focused on the uniqueness of Armenia and its problems, lacking a comparative aspect or global perspective. Technical skills, such as the ability to produce graphs or draft scenarios, though much better at NGO than at state institutes, can still fall below the standard of international partners. Sometimes the results of their work need to be revised with the help of international consultants. Some offices of international organizations in Armenia prefer to combine local and international outsourcing, i.e. create teams in which local and international researchers will work side by side and coordinate their work.

Commercial bodies engaged in research are very new in the Armenian market. Of these, some of the most successful are sociological firms, which have a good market for their services. New commercial bodies are now being established in the sphere of political technologies, PR, media audience research etc.

Recommendations

- *Reforming and decentralizing* the management of the Academy and institutes affiliated with it with the aim of enabling the independent and competitive activity of research bodies;

- *Legal reforms and amendments*, including changes to the Law on Scientific and Technical Activities, adoption of an adequate Law of the Academy of Sciences and a Law on Endowments. The reforms need to ensure the independence and openness of research bodies, the transparency of state funding, access to sources of financial sustainability (such as endowments), minimal bureaucratic procedures, involvement in the international scholarly community, and clear criteria of research quality;

- *Reforming the system of doctorate degrees* in line with European standards: introducing the European system of doctorate degrees, getting rid of Soviet legacies in this area, including the degrees of “candidate” and “doctor”; simplifying bureaucratic procedures, placing emphasis on quality of research and introducing criteria of academic quality in the process of degree awarding, reforming or ideally disbanding the Supreme Attestation Commission;

- *Annulling the connection between doctorate degrees and army service*, thus getting rid of corruption in the system of awarding doctorate degrees and creating an environment in which only students

with ambitions to become scholars will seek doctorate degrees;

- *Boosting skills*: There is an acute need to improve technical skills, including the use of computer software and the Internet, the use of databases and visuals (power point, graphs etc). Language proficiency should be increased, especially where the staff of state research bodies (academic institutes and university departments) is concerned. This should involve a variety of training formats targeting mid-career professionals as well as students and young scholars;

- *Combating Soviet and post-Soviet stereotypes*. This is relevant for both thinking patterns and research methodology, and concerns all type of research bodies, state and private. The most efficient stratagem would rely on joint research and student/scholar exchange with European institutions;

- *Dealing with politicized content and style*. This issue is especially acute for NGO, including think tanks, but concerns state institutions too. Solutions would involve greater exposure to European publications, joint projects with European institutions and having the work of Armenian scholars reviewed by peers from other countries;

- *Developing a culture of scholarly debates and neutral professional discourses in the sphere of social sciences and humanities*. This requires international cooperation and legal regulation, support for independent research bodies, and more active circulation of information on current trends in humanities and social sciences in Europe and worldwide;

- *A reform of the framework of research at universities*, including the contractual base (allocation of time for teaching and research), a system that would allow a change of generations, and procedures for evaluating quality. Universities need to have staff which can focus primarily or only on research rather than administration or teaching;

- *Development of those spheres in which Armenia does not have established traditions* (such as political science or international relations) in cooperation with Western universities and local and international donors;

- *Changes in financing procedures*: state financing must move more actively from basic (infrastructural) financing towards project-based or thematic financing, whereas international and local donors need to make focus on infrastructure as well as projects;

- *Improving quality and raising quantity of publications*, in foreign languages as well as Armenian, with special emphasis on periodicals; the focus should be on establishing authoritative journals with efficient peer-review and an international board which would be also published in English and disseminated electronically.

List of interviews

1. Ara Avetisyan, Vice Minister for Education and Science of Armenia
2. Artak Davtyan, Head of Standing Parliament Commission on Culture, Education, Sport and Youth
3. Hayk Demoyan, Director of the Genocide Institute
4. Hrachyan Tamrazyan, Director of the Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts
5. Hakop Muradyan, Science Secretary of the Institute of History affiliated with the Academy of Science
6. Emil Ordukhanyan, Science Secretary of the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law affiliated with the Academy of Science
7. Pavel Avetisyan, Director of the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography affiliated with the Academy of Science
8. Robert Ghazaryan, Science Secretary of the Institute of Oriental Studies affiliated with the Academy of Science
9. Lavrenty Oganesyanyan, Director of the Acharyan Institute of Language affiliated with the Academy of Science
10. Alexander Markarov, Deputy Vice Rector for International Cooperation and Scientific Policy at Yerevan State University
11. Parkev Avetisyan, Vice Rector for Science of the Russian-Armenian University
12. Robert Ayvazyan, Vice Rector of the Armenian Pedagogical University
13. Vahan Ter Gevondyan, Head of UNESCO Chair of Human Rights, Democracy and European Studies at the Faculty for Linguistics and Intercultural Communication at Brusov Linguistic University
14. Gayaneh Hovhannisyan, Head of Chair of English and Communication at the Faculty for Linguistics and Intercultural

- Communication at the Brusov Linguistic University
15. Alexander Iskandaryan, Director of the Caucasus Institute (CI)
 16. Tevan Poghosyan, Executive Director of the International Center for Human Development (ICHHD)
 17. Artak Kirakosyan, Chairman of the Board of the Civil Society Institute (CSI)
 18. Stepan Grigoryan, Executive Director of the Analytical Center on Globalization and Regional Cooperation (ACGRC)
 19. Boris Navasardyan, President of Yerevan Press Club (YPC)
 20. Zara Martirosyan, Director of the Armenian Branch of the Institute of Eurasian Studies
 21. Anna Sagabalyan, Communications Coordinator of Civilitas Foundation
 22. Richard Giragosian, Director of the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS)
 23. Heghineh Manasyan, Executive Director of the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)
 24. Gevorg Ter-Gabrielian, Director of Eurasia Partnershi Foundation Armenia
 25. Larisa Minasyan, Director of Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation Armenia (OSIAFA)
 26. Ahavni Karakhanyan, Director of Institute for Civil Society and Regional Development (ICSRD)
 27. Gagik Harutunyan, Director of Noravank Science and Education Foundation
 28. Laura Baghdasaryan, Director of Region Center
 29. Aharon Adibekyan, Director of the Sociometer Sociological Center
 30. Lana Karlova, Head of Tempus Office in Armenia
 31. Lianna Haramanyan, Program Officer, Swiss Program Office Yerevan
 32. Dirk Boberg, Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP in Armenia
 33. Monica Papyan, Project Manager, EC Delegation to Armenia

About the Caucasus Institute

The Caucasus Institute (CI) is one of the leading think-tanks and educational centers in Armenia and the entire region. It implements research in the areas of political science, social sciences and media studies with regard to the Southern and Northern Caucasus. The CI also engages in regional studies on a wider scope.

Founded in Yerevan in 2002, the CI has the reputation of a neutral platform for non-politicized debate on acute issues of the region's political and social development. Based on research, the CI conducts expert consultations, roundtable discussions and conferences. CI produces publications in various formats, including Caucasus Yearbooks which sum up various aspects of politics, social life and economics in the Southern and Northern Caucasus every year.

The CI is special in that it combines research and debates with close ties to the news media, actively engaging the media in order to inform the region's societies and political elites of the results of policy research. Its wide public outreach enables CI to influence the public opinion as well as professional discourses, and to propose recommendations to political decision-makers.