12 Analysis and Evaluation

My initial position of this analysis is that these expert judgements of the different actors and representatives in quality assurance in higher education and their statements are formulated on partly highly transformative political, societal and economic conditions of the observed countries and partly on the overall international/global setting of higher education within the last decades. These transformations are not only observed in the changing national quality assurance systems but also in a changing attitude towards quality assurance in general all over the world.

For the analysis I followed the successive steps according to Meuser and Nagel (2002, pp.83ff). The work load on the “transcription” (1) of the interviews was quite small as I used a written questionnaire which was filled out by the experts and only three out of 56 interviews where conducted via telephone and recorded with the MP3 Skype Recorder 1.9.0.1.

In the next step, all the information gathered from the experts was “paraphrased and summarised” (2) to cluster and abstract the data. For this, I put all relevant information into separate tables for each country and one for the international experts and institutions following the different questions in the interview guide which I used as “headings” (3) or dimensions for the further analysis:

- name – affiliation – involvement
- challenges
- keyplayers – stakeholders – procedures
- benefits – failures
- accountability – improvement
- internationalisation
- unified – diversified
- future transformation processes
- quality assurance in an international higher education area

Due to the different interpretations of the questions concerning the experts or that not all questions in the questionnaires were answered (especially questions referring to papers and articles), the categories of analysis are not always filled out. Also the different interpretations of keyplayers (at the supply side and also
the key actors in quality assurance) and stakeholders (at the demand side and with their certain interest in quality assurance) made it necessary to put both terms under one heading. If I would undergo such an interview process again, I would also not ask for benefits and failures and rather for successes and drawbacks to formulate a gentler question. The experts also gave their general assumptions on this question. Moreover, the question on accountability and improvement was answered more in general than in detail for both. Concerning internationalisation, I did not specify the distinction of *quality of internationalisation* and *internationalisation of quality assurance* as I wanted to receive both perspectives; a differentiation was not intended. The question concerning a unified vs. a diversified higher system was mainly answered in general. The last two headings are based on the last question of the interview guide on transformation processes on the one hand and regarding the creation of quality assurance in an international higher education area on the other hand.

Concerning a “thematic comparison” (4) I examined all expert interviews, papers and articles along these headings and marked the most important statements of the experts. The views of the experts are put into these different codes which are mainly built on the interview guide. The headings mentioned above are used as my categories to make a final list of all important data from the experts and this list is the start for my “sociological conceptualisation” (5) of the interviews. In the following I will try to point out the main commonalities but also different views of the experts concerning my questions in the interview guide. Only now the terminology of the interviews will be left behind and the commonality within the diversity will be in the centre of the analysis and categories will be defined. The objective of this sociological conceptualisation is to systematise relevancies, typologies, generalisations and interpretations. As Mayring also Meuser and Nagel (2002) always refer to the main research question and object of analysis when going through the material and try to cluster and interpret the data. Finally, along these steps of the analysis a final “theory” will be formulated (6) which will be primarily the objective for the comparative part (chapters 13 and 14).

The following analysis shall provide the answers to the main research question and the sub-questions at international level by experts from internationally operating organisations and different research centers as well as for each country separately by national experts.