

# INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY AS A MAIN FACTOR OF INCREMENTAL INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: THE CASE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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**Abstract:** *In this article I explain why during the transition the governance of higher education system in Moldova remained to be achieved through institutional arrangements which were institutionalized and strengthened during the Soviet period. In order to describe this phenomenon I'm using the path dependency approach, which offers several leads on the interpretation of how incremental institutional change occurs. I argue that the persistence of the phenomenon of maintaining old institutional arrangements is due to institutional memory, which unlike other countries of the former USSR, is virtually non-existent for processes specific to the modern or interwar period when the foundations were laid for institutional arrangements based on the principle of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The analysis uses some comparative situations which occurred in the Baltic States as examples which offer a number of demonstrative references like what would have happened if the institutional memory of institutional forms and arrangements in the interwar period were more consistently retained over time.*

**Keywords:** *institutional change, incremental change, path dependency, governance in higher education*