

## Abstract

In newly independent countries in the process of shaping new governmental systems, as requisites of a certain statehood and political philosophy new types of institutions come to existence; distinct from those present in the previous regime. These institutions usually represent the mirrors of the intuitions present in the developed countries.

A great deal of literature that explains this process of institutional homogeneity across the countries derives from the Institutional Isomorphism (II). Focusing on education systems the theory argues that during the institutional building, the patterns of the institutions are *deliberately* borrowed by the countries from the outside, based on the assumption that these institutions have proved to be successful elsewhere. An education system reform usually becomes a priority in countries at transition, as the nation-states rationalize education as instrument for *progress-with development* and *justice-with equality* – two broad modern doctrines advocated by a world society (J. Meyer, F. Ramirez 2002). Therefore, these institutions are not created to better educational practices, but because they hold an ideational value, i.e. education is a human capital and a universal human right.

The current research project aims to apply isomorphism theory to the higher education system reform in the post-Soviet region, as there is a reason to believe that the conditions under which the institution building has taken place in the post-communist context are different; thus, an examination of the emergence of key institution as quality assurance/control in one of the post-Soviet states – Georgia may contribute to the refinement of the II theory.

The project argues that there are other causal pathways than just deliberate mimicking in institution building in the region. Specifically, it is the *financial aid of International Organizations* (USAID, World Bank, UNESCO, OECD) that is made conditional upon certain institutional forms that the governments commit to introduce in order to ensure financial support. Therefore, the project demonstrates that the reforms are not only indigenously driven, but also are externally imposed through the pathway of aid conditionality, therefore introducing a certain degree of (soft) coercion, rather than pure deliberate change.