

Title: Institutional formation effects on memory projects of post-communist democratic regimes

## Abstract

Since the emergence of the institutionalist perspective in political science, there has been a shared understanding of institutions as instances of self-regulating, rule-bounding and behavior-shaping structures. This particular paper tries to argue that an encompassing definition or conceptualization of institutions is ineffective and to some extent in contradiction with the empirical reality of institutional emergence, endurance and effects. One could argue following Mahoney and Thelen's (2010) recognition that there are different types of institutions with various mechanisms of change and effects. Rather than engaging in a tedious inconclusive debate among different streams of institutionalist theorizations, I propose in this paper to look at the empirical cases of institutional effects on producing an official memory representation on non-democratic regimes. In post-authoritarian regimes there are a variety of institutional forms, or mechanisms used as vehicles for addressing a past of a non-democratic regime incompatible with a democratic regime's values or ideology. I distinguish between these institutional forms, arguing that specific to the post-communist institutional forms, Institutes of Memory, is their endurance through time and as being sites of contestation between vested interests on what type of representation deserves to be institutionalized. The research question I address in the paper is that of responding to how institutional formation effects similar anti-communist political projects of memory. Here I look at institutional formation trajectory, organizational antecedents, internal crisis of legitimacy within institutions, and areas/visions of contestation to help explain variation in institutionalization of memory of state socialist regime. An alternative explanation could be that agents of institutional formation have clear delineated memory projects in the public sphere and the established institutes are a mirror-image of their ideology and memory projects. In order to address partly this alternative explanation I incorporate in the explanatory model environmental or power effects, incorporating Bourdieusian field theory. I rely on a qualitative cross-case comparison of institutionalization dynamics across time to come up with some typological explanations of weak institutionalization and strong institutionalization in post-communist countries. The findings indicate that the reality is more complex than being bifurcated between weak versus strong institutionalization.