



Comparative Pathways of Belarus and Ukraine (1991-2007)

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Abstract

This thesis explains the divergent outcomes in the evolution of political and economic institutions in two neighbouring countries — Belarus and Ukraine between 1991 and 2007. Beyond the principal focus on these two pathways, the thesis also incorporates the examination of a third one, that of *Russia*, for various empirical, theoretical and methodological reasons. It explores in detail how the disparity in a quality of domestic political competition (largely determined by the strength of nationalist movements, the constellation of elites, and the European leverage and linkage) together with the variables of the external rent flows (*timing* of the external rent-expansion, *costs*, *ownership* and the *perceived stability* of rents) set the two countries on divergent paths. Going deeper, it analyses the logic behind both reproduction and change of political and economic institutions in Belarus and Ukraine. The focus on the dimension of external rents is the main added value and that what contributes to the uniqueness of this project, for it explains — why, when, how and in conjunction with what other factors, external economic rents steered the pathways away from autocratic socialism.



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