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Abstract for the departmental conference paper

Evolutions in State Building and Nation Building in Post-Soviet Moldova and Ukraine: Parallel Stories or Interconnected Processes?

In my article I argue that in the post Soviet countries that had to start both nation building and state building in conditions of multi-ethnicity after Soviet Union collapsed, the establishment of majority-minority relations and the evolution of the form of government have been interconnected. I also argue that the link between the two has not been unidirectional and through process tracing I show that the direction of the influence has changed in different periods of time. I attempt to demonstrate that the element of minority-majority relations linked to the evolution of the form of government is the level of ethnicity politicization. Similarly, the form of government element that links it with majority-minority relation is the degree of political power concentration around the executive branch. *Hence, I attempt to show the general tendency that in the post Soviet space periods with power concentration have been characterised by depoliticised ethnicity, while periods with power fragmentation have been characterised by politicised ethnicity.*

I focus on post Soviet Ukraine and Moldova during the period of transition. The relevance of these cases results from their lack of previous experience of statehood and nation building, from their multi-ethnicity and from their diversity in executive-legislative relations during different presidencies. Even if the minority-majority relations have followed a constant path since Independence in these countries, the political salience of ethnic related issues kept appearing and disappearing on the agenda in different moments of time. Also, even if these two countries have stayed within the framework of semi-presidential and presidential forms of government, the degree in which the power was fragmented or concentrated varied in time and under different presidencies. Hence even if the study is limited to two countries, the internal variation of each of them offers good material for exploration.