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The politics of the Ukrainian oligarchy, post-Maidan

I am about to start the second year of my MPhil/PhD. My thesis is on the economic impact of the politics of Ukrainian oligarchy, focusing especially on the post-Maidan period. To help explain Ukraine's poor economic record in the independence period, I have meshed a theory of oligarchy as financial power with one of dysfunctional political institutions as a crucial barrier to economic prosperity.

My proposed conference paper would outline the findings of the "political sociology" component of my research, focusing on changing patterns of oligarchs' wealth, network composition and configuration, and practices of political influence of the wealthiest business leaders.

The purpose of producing a detailed description of oligarchs' wealth relative to Ukrainian society, and in international comparison, will be to establish that the basis for an analysis of oligarchs as wielders of financial power exists. My argument is that the capacity of business and political networks to reconfigure and realign themselves in the wake of severe political crises helps to explain the resilience of "behind the scenes" or informal oligarchic political rule in Ukraine. One case study, for example, will look at evidence for continued oligarchic policy influence in the Rada (Ukraine's parliament) by analysis voting patterns on key pieces of economic legislation to see if these align with purported oligarchic factions.