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"The Winner Takes It All": Crony Capitalism After Post-Communism

Governing actors in post-Communist states faced similar challenges after gaining independence in 1991, including integration into the supra-national formations other than the USSR. The obstacle to this challenge was that the national elites raised during the decades of the Soviet governance were embedded into the networks of the former regime. During the last two decades Ukraine and Georgia faced non-violent public protests of the years 2004-2005 ('color revolutions') and their leaders became recognizable globally, Ukraine also experienced another 'revolution' known as Euromaidan resulted in the radical changes in political elite; while Lithuania joined the European Union. Therefore, the first research question is about transnational ties traced as drivers and constraints of the former (in Lithuania) and further (in Georgia and Ukraine) European integration. The second research question is about the connections between politics and business under post-Communism. There is an economic rationale in political consensus of economic actors. The assumption is that in all three post-Communist countries economic dimension will significantly overlap with political, moreover businesses affiliated with politicians should demonstrated profits when their affiliates are in power, or occupy top-positions in the government. Data on elites for three post-Soviet states (Georgia, Lithuania and Ukraine) is compared for top-executives and legislators who were in power during 1998-2017. Network analysis based on biographical and positional approach is applied to define the structures of governing elites, or the "ruling class" as well as the brokers and clusters within the national and supra-national elites during the last 20 years.