



Call for papers:

**The Economic Elites of Ukraine and Central-Eastern Europe:  
a Comparative Historical Perspective**

Ukrainian Catholic University, Department of Modern Ukrainian History,  
March 29, 2019

The workshop aims to initiate interdisciplinary exchange on the economic elite of CEE and the Eastern European region from a comparative historical perspective. The influence of economic elite on politics, economy, social structures, and culture will be central to the workshop. The public perception of wealth and the power of the wealthy will also be discussed.

**Keynote lecturers and moderators:**

Dr. Tracy Dennison, professor of Social Science History at California Institute of Technology: “Elites as Obstacles to Economic Reform in Pre-Modern Eastern Europe.”

Dr. Max Schulze, professor of Economic History, Department of Economic History at the London School of Economics and Political Science: “Growth and Development Compared: Austria-Hungary and Russia in the Late 19th Century.”

Dr. Jacob Weisdorf, professor of economics at the University of Southern Denmark, research fellow at the CEPR in London, research associate of the CAGE in Warwick, and research affiliate at the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa: “Top Down or Bottom Up: Understanding Long-Run Economic Differences between West and Eastern Europe.”

The history of political and economic elite is a frequently studied topic in social sciences, with scholars traditionally focusing on leaders’ success stories as well as on their influence on politics, economy, and culture. Recently, however, a number of new topics began to attract scholarly attention, such as the role of economic elite in wealth and income inequality and the relationship between money, politics, and inequality.

The concept “economic elite” in a modern Eastern European context is primarily associated either with the “robber barons” at the turn of the nineteenth century—railroad kings, textile and sugar tycoons—or with modern oligarchs. But elites can exist in any number of economic contexts, including rural ones. There were elites among the peasantry, as there were in trade and industry. Essentially, the question is about the real relationship between wealth and power.

We define the “economic elite” as individuals or groups of people, who have managed to accumulate considerable economic assets and have used them as a means to influence politics and society. We would like to focus on the economic elites in Ukraine, as well as in historical polities that formerly included the territories of modern Ukraine, for example, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires, and the USSR.

Case studies on other countries or regions are also welcome to deepen our understanding of the relations between economic elite and society in Ukraine. Since the interaction of wealth and power concerns various disparate disciplines such as economics, political science, history, and anthropology, multi- or interdisciplinary contributions are particularly welcome.

The call is open to all topics that fit the general scope of the workshop. However, we wish to suggest potential themes that are of special interest. For instance, papers may address one or more of the following questions:

1. Do existing theoretical and conceptual approaches of economic history and political science “work” for studying the economic elites of Eastern Europe? Is the history of economic elites in Eastern Europe merely a new setting to explore established core debates, or is it an alternative economic history?
2. How do economic elites of Eastern Europe apply their resources to influence political outcomes and how do they adapt their strategies of influence to societal changes?
3. What is the relationship between economic elites, their political influence, and economic inequality?
4. How did the social perception of economic elite evolve through history in different cultural contexts? How did the economic elite influence the perception of success and the behavior of successful people in society?
5. What was the role of economic elite in the distribution of natural resources and sustainable development in Eastern Europe?
6. What is the role of economic elite in international and regional conflicts?
7. How does the life course of Eastern European economic elites compare to that in OECD countries?

We invite scholars of any relevant discipline to submit paper proposals relating to the wide range of topics that come under the theme of “economic elites.” Abstracts of 500 words presenting the subject, the conceptual framework and the analytical approach along with a one-page CV should be sent to [kowalskyprogram@gmail.com](mailto:kowalskyprogram@gmail.com) by November 20, 2018.

Limited funding is available to assist presenters with travel and accommodation costs. Priority will be given to PhD students and early career scholars.

Please feel free to contact the organizers if you have any further questions: Oksana Huss, [oksana.huss@stud.uni-due.de](mailto:oksana.huss@stud.uni-due.de) | Volodymyr Kulikov [kulikovv@ceu.edu](mailto:kulikovv@ceu.edu) | Olena Petrenko, [olena.petrenko@ruhr-uni-bochum.de](mailto:olena.petrenko@ruhr-uni-bochum.de)