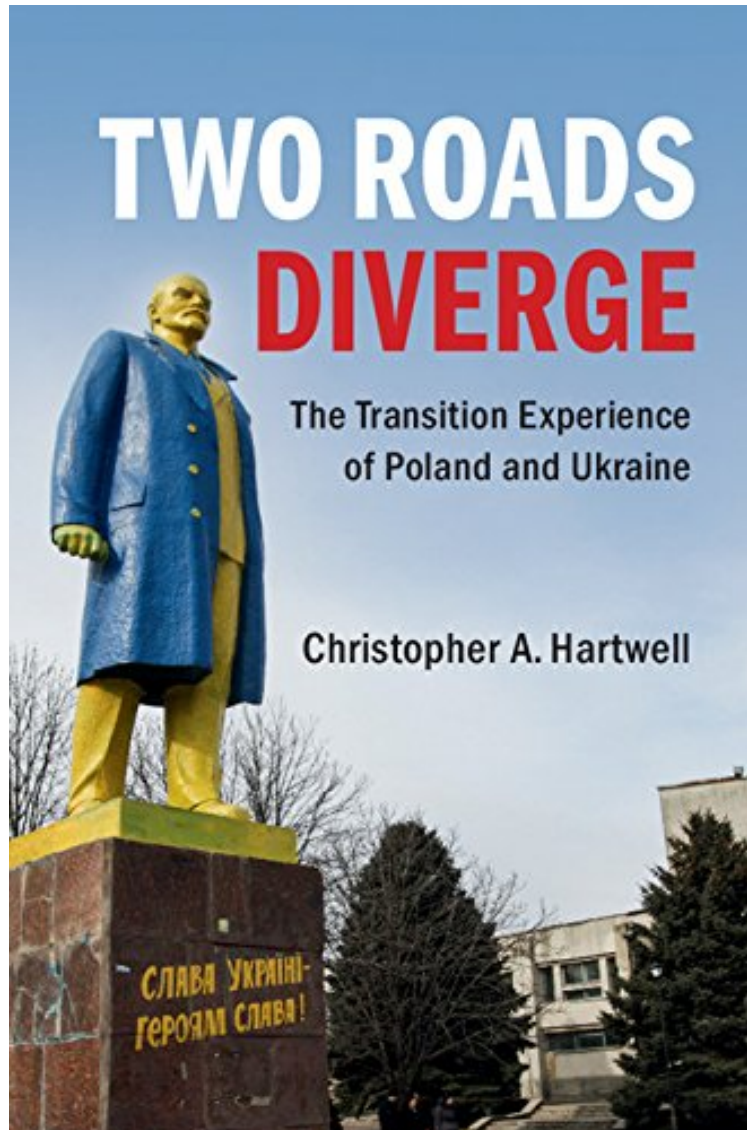


Two Roads Diverge: The Transition Experience of Poland and Ukraine

Christopher A. Hartwell

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Christopher A. Hartwell : Two Roads Diverge: The Transition Experience of Poland and Ukraine before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Two Roads Diverge: The Transition Experience of Poland and Ukraine:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent analysis of how much history matters and how much the present matters. By the way, if I give this book four stars and not five, that's only because of the juvenile definition "I Love it" that chooses to use for five stars. That's silly. Seriously, Hartwell's very readable comparison of Poland and

Ukraine is one of the best histories of the economic transition process so far. It is solidly argued and substantiated with a minimum amount of technical detail and hence accessible for non-specialists. He provides a very thorough and new analysis of how long-term historical factors have resulted in a different choice of economic reform strategy by the leaders of Poland and Ukraine. I do not believe it would have been impossible at the time of the momentous break with history in 1991 as the Soviet Union fell apart, for Ukrainian leaders to take a much bolder approach and do the same as Poland's technocrats and politicians did, moving much faster on reforms. Nevertheless Hartwell is right to emphasize the historical forces. Poland had a much longer and unified history as a nation state, while Ukraine, despite an ancient history as a powerful state, Kyivan Rus, was divided into chunks under the colonial rule of Muscovite Princes and Polish-Lithuanian kings. Though Ukrainians almost inexplicably continued for half a millennium to insist they were not Muscovites or Poles, to use a different, Ukrainian language, these separate colonies could not form the same homogeneous independence campaigns as was possible for Poland. So indeed as Hartwell nicely traces, the evolution of governing institutions was reasonably consistent and continuous in Poland, and rather higgledy-piggledy in Ukrainian territories. Well done, very much worth a read.

The dramatic events of Maidan in February 2014 shone a spotlight on the immense problems facing Ukraine. At the same time that Ukraine was undergoing turmoil, its western neighbor Poland was celebrating twenty-five years of post-communism with a rosy economic outlook and projections of continued growth. How could two countries who shared similar linguistic, cultural, economic and political heritages diverge so wildly in economic performance in such a short span of time? The main argument of this book is that institutions, and more specifically the evolution or neglect of the particular institutions needed for a market economy, explain the economic divergence between Ukraine and Poland. This book discusses the evolution of key institutions such as property rights, trade, and the role of the executive branch of government to explain the recent relative performance of the two countries.

'Christopher A. Hartwell presents a clear and penetrating comparative analysis of Poland and Ukraine, countries which have followed very different policies after the collapse of socialism. He shows the huge social costs of avoiding radical and comprehensive market reforms.' Leszek Balcerowicz, Warsaw School of Economics
Hartwell's fascinating comparison of Poland and Ukraine is a valuable read, and it will appeal to an audience even beyond transition specialists. His starting point may not surprise: Poland has greatly outperformed Ukraine since the Berlin Wall fell, and did so primarily because it moved much more resolutely on market reforms. But Hartwell creates even greater intellectual excitement by arguing that the most important reform differences lay in the relevancy of institutions needed for a market economy, and in the centuries of historical experience which lie behind Ukraine's lag in institutional changes. Hartwell weaves these three points together in a masterly way, providing a colorful book full of historical breadth and depth.' Oleh Havrylyshyn, Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto and advisor to Government of Ukraine
About the Author Christopher A. Hartwell is a leading scholar on the evolution of institutions and President of the Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE) in Poland. He is also an Associate Professor at Kozminski University, Warsaw. He has published in prestigious journals such as the *Journal for Common Market Studies*, *Economic Systems*, *Open Economies*, *Post-Communist Economies*, and *Business Horizons*. In addition to his academic work, he has advised governments and the private sector on economic policy issues in Poland, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Bosnia and Kosovo, among others. He holds a PhD in Economics from the Warsaw School of Economics and a Master's in Public Policy from Harvard University, Massachusetts.