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- Subnational Governance Reform in Ukraine: A Tangled Story with a Polish Twist
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Since independence, Ukraine has struggled to define its subnational system of governance. During Russia's first invasion (2014-21), Ukraine rather remarkably succeeded in creating a universal and comprehensive tier of municipal self-governments. And in line with the "Polish Model" of subnational governance, Ukrainian 'decentralizers' have sought for many years to transform Ukraine's regions (oblasts) and districts (rayons) into self-governments as well. But these efforts have repeatedly failed, not least because they require contentious amendments to the constitution. In this talk, I explain the evolution of this stalemate and its costs. Equally importantly, I argue that the challenges of post of post war reconstruction and recovery strongly suggest that that Ukraine would be better off conceiving of itself as a unitary state with a single strong level of municipal self-government, and regional and district governments that remain territorial arms of the national government, but whose responsibilities and powers clarified and restructured.

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