
Populism in Ukraine in a Comparative European Context

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Discussions of populism usually focus on Latin America, Western Europe, and Central-Eastern Europe, but the leading political parties in Ukraine all exhibit elements of populism, such as economic protectionism, ideological swings, and, in some cases, xenophobia.

THE term “populist” has been applied to a heterogeneous group of political groups ranging from the anti-globalization left and greens to the nationalist right. These include parties opposed to immigration, those that see globalization as “Americanization,” and those that believe taxes are too high or oppose excessive government interference in the private lives of citizens and business. Politicians advocating a “third way” between capitalism and socialism are often labeled as “populists.” Populism has deep roots in Latin America, where it is usually found on the left of the political spectrum, virulently nationalist and anti-American. Parties labeled “populist” have grown in popular support throughout the 1990s in Western and Central-Eastern Europe and have won electoral victories in Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Slovakia, Poland, and Bulgaria.

Western studies of populism have focused on Western and Central-Eastern Europe, not on Eurasia, and this article is the first to analyze the phenomenon of populism in Ukraine. The term “populist” was not used to describe Ukrainian politics during Leonid Kuchma’s decade-long presidency (1994–2004) and only began to be used after Viktor Yushchenko, Kuchma’s prime minister from December 1999 to May 2001, won the January 2005 presidential election. The term primarily was used when criticizing Yulia Tymoshenko and her eponymous bloc (Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko, or BYuT). The discussion in this article analyzes the phenomenon of populism in Ukraine, comparing its development with the growth of populism in Western and Central-Eastern Europe. It uses the list of ten attributes of populism as defined by Ivan Krastev, director of the Center for Liberal Studies in Sofia, Bulgaria, and asks whether the attributes found

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Table 1

Ten Attributes of European Populism in a Ukrainian Context

1. Charismatic leader	Tymoshenko/BYuT, Tyahnybok/Svoboda
2. Socioeconomic discontent, "transition losers"	BYuT, Yushchenko (2004), Our Ukraine, Party of Regions, Tyahnybok/Svoboda
3. Anti-elite and anti-establishment	Tymoshenko/BYuT, Svoboda
4. Anti-corruption	Tymoshenko/BYuT, Yushchenko/Our Ukraine, Svoboda
5. Anti-American	Yanukovich, Svoboda
6. Opposition to NATO membership	Party of Regions, Svoboda
7. Defense of sovereignty; opposition to IMF and European Union	Party of Regions, Svoboda
8. Xenophobia	Svoboda
9. Anti-immigration	Svoboda
10. Anti-multiculturalism, support for assimilation	Yushchenko/Our Ukraine, Svoboda

in Western and Central-Eastern Europe are also present in Ukrainian politics. Krastev's set of ten elements of populism includes authentic anger, unrestrained hatred for elites, policy vagueness, economic egalitarianism, cultural conservatism, compassionate radicalism, measured euroskepticism, declared nationalism, undeclared xenophobia, and anti-corruption.¹

Taking the election platforms and rhetoric of populist party leaders in Poland, Slovakia, and Bulgaria, Krastev believes that these ten issues can be synthesized into four key areas for populism: anti-corruption rhetoric, hostility to privatization, anti-elite sentiments, and efforts to reverse the social inequalities arising from the transition from a communist economic system to a market economy. In Ukraine, populism has evolved around criteria similar to Krastev's factors.

The ten attributes of populism developed in this article include:

- Charismatic leader
- Socioeconomic discontent among "losers" in economic transitions
- Anti-elite (anti-oligarch) and anti-establishment sentiments
- Strong emphasis on battling corruption
- Anti-Americanism
- Hostility regarding NATO membership
- Opposition to joining, and delegating sovereignty to, international and supranational structures, such as the International Monetary Fund and European Union
- Xenophobia
- Anti-immigration
- Criticism of multiculturalism and support for policies of assimilation.²

The nature of populism in Ukraine is analyzed more thoroughly by comparing the election platforms of the country's political parties and the rhetoric of its party leaders. Table 1, which compares Krastev's ten factors defining European populism with Ukrainian political

parties, shows that the Party of Regions, Yushchenko/Our Ukraine, and BYuT fit three to four, with the highest number found in Svoboda (Freedom), whose populist-nationalist profile matches all ten factors. Populism can be found across the Ukrainian political landscape, with three mainstream parties matching an average of between four and six of the ten attributes commonly found in European populist parties. The populist-nationalist Svoboda party most closely resembles European populist parties. Ukrainian political parties and governments (*see Table 2*) are all to some degree populist, but less than their European populist counterparts.

Populism in Western and Central-Eastern Europe

Populist parties on both the left and right have come to power in Western and Central-Eastern Europe. The populist agenda is at the center of national politics in many countries, and it is encroaching upon establishment parties. Populists in Western Europe have scored electoral victories in the Netherlands (Lijst Pim Fortuyn), Belgium (Vlaams Blok), Denmark (Danish People's Party), Switzerland (Swiss People's Party), and Italy (Lega Nord). The most electorally successful populist-nationalist party in the EU is Austria's Freedom Party (FPA). The Freedom Party and its offshoot, the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZA), were closely associated with the charismatic politician Jörg Haider until his death in 2008. The FPA and BZA exhibit ideological tenets similar to other European populists, such as anti-elitism and opposition to immigration.

Austria, Italy, and Xenophobia. Immigration does not dominate public sentiment in post-communist societies, because few immigrants desire to stay in Central-Eastern Europe merely using the region as a transit route to the West. In Western Europe, by contrast, populist parties are

hostile to immigration, and the issue has entered the election platforms even of establishment center-right parties, such as the British Conservative Party. Anti-Roma policies have been introduced in established democracies such as France and Italy. In the Netherlands, populists defended the country's traditions of tolerance and multiculturalism against what they perceived to be intolerant Islamic immigrants. The growing support for West European populist parties has partly arisen from widespread public disquiet at immigration levels and particularly from the presence of Islamic immigrants. Islamophobia is on the rise throughout Western Europe in response to the perceived unwillingness of Muslims to integrate and a terrorist threat from homegrown Islamic extremists. In the run-up to Norway's 2009 elections, Islam became an important issue when the opposition Progress Party argued that the governing Labour Party was pandering to the Islamic community.³ The issue of Islam has also turned a majority of the voters of France, Germany, Denmark, and Austria against Turkish membership in the European Union (EU), believing that, if allowed to join, Turkey would become the largest EU member. The backlash has spread to the nationality policies of European governments that have shifted away from the multiculturalist policies dominant in the 1970s and 1980s toward an emphasis on integration of nontitular ethnic groups.⁴

Austria is different from other European countries because populism has manifested through the country's unwillingness to deal with its past; unlike, for example, West Germany before unification with the German Democratic Republic in 1990. Austrians see themselves as history's victims, and the FPA and BZA capitalize on Austria's competing national identities between pan-Germanism and Austrian separateness, an identity developed since World War II. Haider described Austria as a "cultural miscarriage." In Bulgaria another pan-populist movement (ATAKA) is pan-Slavic, which similarly looks to cultural affiliation beyond the nation within a larger civilization, whether German or Slavic. The FPA and BZA have fomented xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, and cultural nationalism, and draw support from unrepentant former Nazis and supporters of rural, romanticized Austria, giving them widespread popular support that increased to nearly 30 percent of the vote by the late 1990s.⁵ In October 2010 the FPA won 27 percent of the votes in Vienna, up from 15 percent, putting it second only to the Social Democrats.

Since the collapse of the Christian Democratic Party in the early 1990s, Italy has been dominated by right-populist politics, but without the backlash from the EU that was delivered to Austria. In March 2009 Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi launched the People of Freedom Party through

Table 2

Ukrainian Presidents and Prime Ministers, 1991–2010

Year	President	Prime minister
1991	Leonid Kravchuk	Vitold Fokin
1992		
1993		Leonid Kuchma
1994	Leonid Kuchma	Vitaly Masol
1995		
1996		Pavlo Lazarenko
1997		Valeryi Pustovoytenko
1998		
1999		Viktor Yushchenko
2000		
2001		Anatoliy Kinakh
2002		Viktor Yanukovych
2003		
2004		
2005	Viktor Yushchenko	Yulia Tymoshenko
		Yuriy Yekhanurov
2006		Viktor Yanukovych
2007		Yulia Tymoshenko
2008		
2009		
2010	Viktor Yanukovych	Nikolai Azarov

a merger of his populist right Forza Italia, established in 1993 as the successor to the Christian Democratic Party, which had dominated Italian postwar politics but collapsed in 1991, and the post-fascist National Alliance (formerly the Italian Social Movement). The *Guardian* newspaper described the launch of Italy's new party of power as the merger of Berlusconi's Forza Italia with, "the spiritual heirs of Mussolini's fascist blackshirts."⁶ Meanwhile, "the merger caps his fifteen-year attempt to lose the post-fascist tag and transform his party into a mainstream conservative force." The populist Northern League, which had joined coalitions with Forza Italia and the National Alliance, refused to merge into the People of Freedom Party. This would not be the first instance of a former fascist party moving to occupy the center-right niche—in Spain the conservative People's Party (AP) grew out of the moderate wing of the Francoist fascist regime that ruled Spain from the 1930s to the 1970s.

Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria. Krastev believes that the "capital" of the new populism is Central-Eastern Europe, a claim that is open to question in the light of the greater electoral victories by populist-nationalists in Western Europe.⁷ If Austria is the center of West European populism, then Poland is the center of populism in Central-Eastern Europe, Krastev argues. Bugaric agrees that populism can be found in Western as well as Central-Eastern Europe

but argues that it is more of a threat to the new liberal democracies in the post-communist states. Tismaneanu points to the reasons why populism has grown in Central-Eastern Europe: The Leninist past left a legacy of intolerance, exclusiveness, rejection of compromise, search for charismatic leaders, extreme personalization of political discourse and ideological chaos. "Uprootedness, status loss and uncertainty about identity provide fertile ground for paranoid visions of conspiracy and treason; hence the widespread attraction of nationalist Salvationism," Tismaneanu argues.⁸ Post-communist societies include sizable groups that feel marginalized by the rapid transition to a market economy and, as a result, become disaffected and traumatized. Tismaneanu believes that populism draws on these societal feelings, which create "fragmentation, divisiveness, political convulsions and instability."⁹ Unlike in Western Europe, where populists face well-developed establishment mainstream parties, the post-communist environment of Central-Eastern Europe has a legacy of weak political parties, vague political ideologies, overlapping programs, and liberal democratic parties under siege. This statement does not apply to Italy, where the moderate center-right disintegrated in the early 1990s and Berlusconi's populism dominates Italy's political right.

In the October 2007 Polish elections, the liberal Civic Platform opposition defeated the populist Law and Justice (PiS) by 42 to 32 percent. The election results showed that PiS retained wide public support, unlike its two populist allies, Self-Defense and the League of Polish Families (LPR), whose support collapsed to a combined 2.8 percent. The communist successor Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and Peasants Party came in third and fourth, respectively, with a combined 22 percent of the vote. Poland's 2007 election results represented a major defeat for Self-Defense, which had as much as 30 percent support in polls conducted prior to the 2004 election. The collapse of the Self-Defense constituency showed the degree to which voter support for populists is unstable.

In Romania the second-largest party for much of the 1990s was the extreme-right populist Greater Romania Party (PRM), founded in 1990 on a platform of ultranationalist, anti-Hungarian, and anti-Roma sentiment. In the 1990s, Greater Romania aligned with the communist successor Social Democratic Party against the pro-Western liberal opposition. PRM leader Corneliu Tudor reached the second round in the November 2000 presidential elections, in which he obtained 28 percent of the vote but was defeated. The PRM subsequently declined in popularity. The extreme or populist right has rarely managed to reach the final round of presidential elections in Western

Europe, with the exception of National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, who entered the second round of the 2002 French presidential elections, where he garnered only 18 percent of the vote and lost to Jacques Chirac, leader of the center-right Rally for the Republic party.

In Central-Eastern Europe, populist parties in Poland have been drawn from both the left (Andrzej Lepper's Self-Defense)¹⁰ and the right (PiS and LPR). Szczerbiak includes the Polish Peasant Party as a fourth Polish populist party. He groups it with Self-Defense as a party that attracts votes from "transition losers" in Polish rural areas and small provincial towns. Using such a classification, Ukraine's left (Socialist Party, Peasant Party, Progressive Socialist Party, and Communist Party) could be defined as populist. (Tymoshenko's voters include inhabitants of rural areas and small towns.) Szczerbiak defines Self-Defense and the LPR as "radical-populist" and the LPR as Poland's "religious right." Religion plays no role in the platform of any major Ukrainian political party, although Viktor Yanukovich is the first Ukrainian president to establish a close relationship with a church, in this case Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church. The "religious right" LPR and PiS are anti-abortion and homophobic, again two issues that are not raised by Ukrainian parties. Self-Defense has drawn voters from the SLD; the closest equivalent in Ukraine would be the populist Progressive Socialist Party, an offshoot of the Socialist Party. As left-populist parties, Self-Defense and the LPR are euroskeptical, protectionist, hostile to foreign investment and privatization, and their rhetoric (as seen from Radio Maryja) is at times anti-Semitic but camouflaged as "anti-cosmopolitanism."¹¹ Anti-Semitism only permeates Ukraine's far-right parties, such as Svo-boda. The LPR and the PiS have been prominent in anti-communist *nomenklatura* rhetoric and the adoption of the law on lustration. Lustration was discussed immediately after the democratic 2004 Orange Revolution at <http://maidan.org.ua> (a Web site prominent during the Orange Revolution and run by activists from earlier anti-regime protests), and radical youth NGOs, such as Pora (It's Time), demanded lustration. Nevertheless, lustration never became a serious contender for Ukrainian government policy and was never supported by any of the four governments under President Yushchenko or by the president himself. Polish populist parties seek to spend more on social policies, such as health, education, and pensions; a form of social populism that permeates *all* of Ukraine's parties.¹²

Populism in Bulgaria has deep roots and has grown in reaction to the 1990s, when Bulgaria was governed by

the communist successor Socialist Party (BSP) and the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF). In 2001, the “centrist-populist” National Movement of Simeon the Second (NMSS) emerged as the first manifestation of a populist counter-reaction to the BSP and UDF monopolization of Bulgaria’s post-communist politics. Current Bulgarian populism manifests itself in the ATAKA party, which placed fourth in the 2005 and 2009 elections. The 1990s represented “fifteen years of national betrayal, frauds, and criminal plundering,” ATAKA leader Volen Siderov told the Bulgarian parliament.¹³ As in other regions of Central-Eastern Europe (and increasingly in Western Europe), the Roma are a target of ATAKA’s hostility, but specific to Bulgaria are ATAKA’s additional xenophobic and racist attitudes toward the Turkish national minority. Like other populist parties, ATAKA has a charismatic leader (Siderov), is anti-elitist/establishment, and holds left-wing socioeconomic views.

Although ATAKA is typically antagonistic toward Bulgaria’s NATO and EU membership, as are most European populist parties, only ATAKA has embraced the pro-Russian, pan-Slavic orientation that dates back to Bulgaria’s nineteenth-century struggle against Ottoman rule. ATAKA’s anti-Americanism is therefore more pronounced, and the party has demanded the withdrawal of Bulgarian troops from Iraq and the closing of foreign (i.e., U.S./NATO) military bases on Bulgarian soil. (Yushchenko’s 2004 program called for the withdrawal of Ukrainian troops from Iraq, which was implemented in the fall of 2005, but this had nothing to do with anti-Americanism.) ATAKA’s pro-Russian/Slavic orientation and anti-Americanism ensure that it possesses a strong base of support among BSP defectors. Anti-Americanism manifests itself in many—but not all—European populist parties as “anti-globalization” rhetoric, because globalization is understood as creeping Americanization. Anti-Americanism manifests itself on Ukraine’s left and in the Party of Regions, but not with Yushchenko or the national democrats who supported the Orange Revolution.

Referenda and the Rule of Law. Populists champion referenda as a way for voters to overcome “corrupt elites.” However, these polls can undermine democracies, and Schopflin believes that populist support for referenda is not an instrument of democracy, because “they pull the voters into the pre-political stance that lies at the heart of populism.”¹⁴ In Ukraine all of the main political parties have argued in support of using referenda—the Party of Regions on NATO membership

and the Russian language, and Our Ukraine and BYuT on constitutional reforms and the continuation of the Black Sea Fleet base in Sevastopol—but few referenda have ever actually taken place in Ukraine’s two decades as an independent state. During the Yushchenko presidency (2005–10), the Party of Regions insisted that Ukraine hold a referendum on joining NATO before accepting a Membership Action Plan (MAP). Referenda are traditionally held at the conclusion of MAPs on the eve of joining NATO. BYuT’s 2006 election platform stated, “The more referendums a country holds, the more honest will be the authorities. So we will build legislation so that referendums become something just as normal as breathing fresh air.” Yet ultimately Ukraine did not hold any referenda during Yushchenko’s presidency.

Populists have little respect for the legal institutions of a liberal democracy, particularly the judiciary. In Ukraine the already weak and corrupt rule of law has been undermined further as *all* parties and the executive have meddled in the courts and the prosecutor’s office. During the first year of Yanukovich’s presidency, the Constitutional Court twice overturned decisions it had reached two years earlier on the manner in which parliamentary factions are formed and whether the 2006 constitution was constitutionally enacted. Populists see society as divided into the “honest people” and a “corrupt elite” that claims to speak on behalf of ordinary people. Populist language of “popular sovereignty” romanticizes the people through the “politics of simplicity.”¹⁵ Bugaric noted this polarity in Poland, describing the country’s lustration law as a “witch hunt” against the former communist elites.¹⁶ Although the 2004 Ukrainian populist election slogan of “Bandits to Jail!” never clearly elaborated who the “bandits” were, it was widely assumed that it referred to oligarchs and President Kuchma.

Solidarism: A Third Way?

Proponents of a so-called third way are often—but not always—labeled as populists. Former British prime minister Tony Blair’s New Labour is often described as third way politics, but it is not seen as populist. Third-wayism has a long pedigree in Ukrainian politics on both the left and the right. In November 2003, Tymoshenko invoked the term to explain her differences with Yushchenko: “I believe that Ukraine should take its own ‘third way’ between ideological extremes in theory and practice to a more harmonious model and new societal standard.”¹⁷ Tymoshenko’s third-wayism has its roots in the ideology of the Hromada (Community) party, which was reinvented as “solidarism” in the 2006 BYuT election platform.¹⁸

Aleksander Smolar has pointed out that the early Polish Solidarity movement also supported Poland's third way, describing the West as lacking spirituality and excessively materialist in rhetoric reminiscent of the Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's complaints after he was expelled to the West. "In Poland there was also the hope, currently forgotten, that the Solidarity movement could overcome the tensions between the elites and the people, the intelligentsia and the nation, and the workers and the middle class," Smolar writes.¹⁹ Solidarity sought to "combine what were perceived as the good sides of both capitalism and socialism, of both individualism and collectivism."²⁰ Such language is reminiscent of Tymoshenko's and BYuT's rhetoric and election platforms on solidarism. Harmoniously balancing the interests of workers and owners is a theme that is also raised in the British Labour Party's third-wayism.

Jasiewicz describes the competition between two outgrowths of the Polish Solidarity movement—Civic Platform (PO), representing liberal Poland, versus Law and Justice (PiS), representing the "politics of social solidarity." PiS emphasizes the importance of shared values and traditions (social solidarity) and an exclusivist, homogenizing view of Polish identity and culture. BYuT, like PiS, supports social solidarity. PiS calls for a moral rejuvenation of society and is economically nationalist, euroskeptical, and anti-elitist. Its allies on the left (Self-Defense) and right (PLR) hold populist-nationalist inclinations, and are both anti-communist and clerical, with the PLR representing, "the reincarnation of Polish extreme nationalism in its ideologically purest form."²¹ The competition between "liberal" and "social solidarity" Poland could be contrasted with Yushchenko/Our Ukraine and Tymoshenko/BYuT, respectively but only up to a point. Tymoshenko/BYuT do not incorporate many of the programmatic principles common to populist parties in Europe, such as euroskepticism, xenophobia, and economic nationalism, and, on the part of Self-Defense and LPR, anti-Semitism and homophobia. Ukrainian political parties that supported the 2004 Orange Revolution (Our Ukraine, BYuT, and the Socialist Party) recognized the need to morally rejuvenate Ukrainian society following a decade of corrupt transition to a market economy. This pragmatic view was widely supported in Ukrainian society in response to a decade of Kuchma's presidency, the "Kuchmagate" scandal during which the president was accused of murder and abuse of office, and the rise of a small clique of oligarchs alongside an impoverished population.

The first Ukrainian politician to introduce solidarism

into Ukrainian elections was in fact Kuchma, who included "A Social state—a society built on solidarism" in his 1999 reelection program. Solidarism made its debut in the section titled "We Will Build a Socially Responsible State," in which Kuchma promised that economic growth would come about through "an active social policy." Nearly word for word, the Party of Regions repeated the same phrase in its 2006 election platform: "social policies on the basis of a stable growth in the national economy."

BYuT's 2006 election platform included "economic solidarism" and a "just social policy" and explained: "A person does not exist by himself—his knowledge, culture, and the product of his environment is [*sic*] tied to other people." Our Ukraine's 2006 platform promised an equally populist "Everyone—Justice!" and in the 2007 preterm elections the Our Ukraine–People's Self-Defense bloc (NU–NS) expended much of its energy on the populist slogan of removing parliamentary immunity.²² BYuT's third-way ideology between capitalism and socialism—solidarism—was similar to what Smolar defined as the original ideological orientation of Poland's Solidarity. BYuT's 2006 election platform explained, "We must build a harmonious path of love. I would like for our Ukrainian idea to gain a specific content. Therefore today, I can pronounce, perhaps for the first time at such a high gathering, the word 'solidarism'—an ideology that was born at the beginning of the twentieth century and was presented to society by the world's greatest philosophers, including Ukrainians. In fact, solidarism in its pure form is harmony and justice."

After Prime Minister and Our Ukraine leader Yuriy Yekhanurov and others complained about the use of the term "solidarism," BYuT dropped it and did not use it in its 2007 preterm election platform. A leading member of Our Ukraine, Roman Bessmertny, when asked about his view of Tymoshenko, replied, "Love in politics is out of the question. There exist political interests. Our interests do not coincide. I've never supported advocates of ideologies that verge on radical trends. Solidarism, proclaimed by Yuliya Vladimirovna, was the foundational element of Fascist ideology in its time."²³ Former president Kuchma described Tymoshenko's views as "neo-Bolshevik slogans," while Viktor Baloga, the head of the presidential secretariat, described BYuT's policies as "undertaken by the ideologists of totalitarian regimes."²⁴ Ukrainian politicians had little understanding of alternative roots of solidarism other than those of 1930s fascism, such as those found in the Polish Solidarity movement or the British Labour Party's third-wayism.

Flexible, Pragmatic, and Amorphous Ideologies

Ideological flexibility and pragmatism have been the hallmarks of populist parties throughout Europe. The ideological flexibility of populists means that they can be found on the left or the right, and can combine right-wing nationalism with left-wing socioeconomic policies. Heinsch describes Haider's FPO as ideologically subordinated to political expediency and opportunism, as seen in the dramatic shifts in its program. Taggart defines populists as "highly chameleonic" and describes them as "reluctantly political" individuals who only enter politics when they feel "threatened by crisis."²⁵

Populism in Ukraine

Ukrainian politicians use the term "populist" as a means of negative criticism but without an understanding of its Europe-wide meaning. As leader of the Party of Regions opposition, Viktor Yanukovich regularly described *all* his orange opponents as populists. Asked about the orange camp, Yanukovich replied, "Total populism and a pack of lies—that is their essence."²⁶ In the 2010 elections, the Yanukovich campaign had by far the most populist billboards of all candidates.²⁷ An election leaflet issued during the October 2010 local elections by Silna Ukraina (Strong Ukraine), a party led by Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Tigipko, denounced populism but at the same time proposed a host of populist positions.²⁸

BYuT and Tymoshenko personally have been wrongly singled out and criticized by Ukrainian analysts for both ideological amorphousness and populism.²⁹ Karatnycky and Motyl describe Tymoshenko as "something of a political chameleon, her Fatherland Party flirting with social democracy and then joining the center-right European People's Party (EPP) political group in the European parliament."³⁰ Ukrainian analyst Leshchenko finds it ironic that Tymoshenko wears Louis Vuitton as she promotes solidarism.³¹

But all of Ukraine's political parties are "chameleonic" and ideologically vacuous to varying degrees, and, more important, there is little connection between their election platforms and their postelection policies. These twin factors could explain why Ukraine's political parties are distrusted by 70 percent of the population.³² Yanukovich campaigned on a socially populist platform in 2010, but proceeded to ignore it after coming to power. If Yanukovich had included any of the three contentious issues he faced in his first year in office (extending the Black

Sea Fleet base in Sevastopol until 2042–47, increasing household utility prices by 50 percent, or changing the constitution to a presidential system), he would have lost the 2010 elections, especially as he won by only a 3 percent margin.

Yushchenko and Tymoshenko are divided by personality, politics, and gender. Tymoshenko explained, "I am not a fan [of the president] if I can say so honestly. This is because I know a lot more than you do," a hint at the president's alleged corruption.³³ Tymoshenko's center-left views, first seen when she entered politics in the 1998 elections in the Hromada party, are different from Yushchenko's Christian democracy, but both politicians have exhibited ideological flexibility during their political careers.³⁴ Yushchenko's moderate center-right patriotic views in the 2004 elections moved over the course of his presidency to nationalism, shrinking Our Ukraine's and his popularity to Galicia in the 2006 and 2007 parliamentary and 2010 presidential elections.

Tymoshenko remains an unusual politician in the post-communist world by virtue of her gender. Few women have reached the pinnacle of party politics and government in long-established Western democracies, let alone in young democracies such as Ukraine. Across the post-communist states, women's rights have not progressed to the extent that they have in the West.³⁵

Tymoshenko entered politics during the 2000–2001 Kuchmagate crisis, when she was briefly imprisoned after becoming a co-leader of the Ukraine Without Kuchma movement. It is arguable whether Tymoshenko is a "reluctant politician" in Taggart's definition of populists, because she is Ukraine's most accomplished politician and most successful election campaigner, increasing the vote of BYuT in each successive election since it first stood for election in 2002. Her narrow defeat (just 3 percent) in the 2010 elections was her first major political setback.

Ukraine's most reluctant political leader was actually Yushchenko, who refused to join the Ukraine Without Kuchma protests (2000–2001) and was pushed into opposition in April 2001 only after parliament voted no confidence in his government. Between then and the 2004 elections, Yushchenko wavered between working with BYuT and the Socialist Party in opposition or negotiating a backroom deal with the Kuchma regime. Yushchenko acted similarly during the Orange Revolution, joining the mass protests while negotiating deals with the regime at three roundtables that sidelined regime and opposition hardliners.

As president, Yushchenko repeatedly accused the two Tymoshenko governments (2005, 2007–10) of populism:

Table 3

Viktor Yushchenko's 2004 Election Program

Ten Steps Toward the People	Fourteen draft decrees
1. Create 5 million jobs	1. Promote social defense of citizens
2. Ensure priority funding for social programs	2. Ensure return of lost savings to citizens
3. Increase budget by decreasing taxation	3. Increase support for child allowance
4. Force government to work for people and battle corruption	4. Establish criteria for analyzing activities of heads of local state administrations
5. Create safe living conditions	5. Reduce term of military service
6. Protect family values, respect for parents, and children's rights	6. Create system of people's control of activities of state authorities
7. Promote spirituality and strengthen moral values	7. Struggle against corruption of high-ranking state officials and civil servants in local governments
8. Promote development of countryside	8. Reduce number of inspections of businesses and ease registration process
9. Improve military capabilities and respect for military	9. Withdraw peacekeeping troops from Iraq
10. Conduct foreign policy that benefits Ukrainian people	10. Defend citizens' rights to use Russian language and other minority languages
	11. Ensure basis for good relations with Russia and Belarus
	12. Ensure rights of opposition
	13. Adopt first steps to ensure individual security of citizens and halt crime
	14. Strengthen local government

"The economic course proposed to Ukraine is the warlike populism of 1917."³⁶ But to be fair, elements of European populism permeate the politics and economics of *all* Ukrainian political parties, while, at the same time, the most egregious elements of European populism are *not* to be found in Ukraine, with the exception of the populist-nationalist Svoboda party.³⁷ The criticism of the "populist policies" of the Tymoshenko government by the leader of Svoboda, Oleh Tyahnybok, is additional evidence of a lack of understanding of the concept. Tyahnybok praises the president's proposals for "social justice" because it allegedly complies with Svoboda's program of "economic nationalism and social justice."³⁸ Svoboda's program fits all ten of Krastev's characteristics (*see Table 1*).

Yushchenko's 2004 Platform. One of the most persistent critics of Tymoshenko/BYuT's populism was President Yushchenko, and the criticism was ironically directed at her government's implementation of his own 2004 election program. Anatoliy Grytsenko, head of Yushchenko's analytical center for the 2004 election, pointed out that Yushchenko had no program until the summer of 2004, when the Razumkov Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Studies, a think tank then headed by Grytsenko, developed Yushchenko's platform.³⁹ In the 2004 elections, opposition candidate Yushchenko was allied with Tymoshenko. After round two this alliance was joined

by the Socialist Party and the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs. Yushchenko laid out his "Ten Steps Toward the People" election program in July 2004 and published fourteen draft presidential decrees between October 12 and November 4, 2004 (*see Table 3*). The Ten Steps and fourteen decrees became the basis for the Tymoshenko government program approved by parliament in February 2005. The program's preamble clearly stated, "The government program is based on, and develops the basis of, the program of Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko's 'Ten Steps Toward the People.'"⁴⁰

The Ten Steps and fourteen draft decrees are replete with what can be understood as social-populist policies, but scholars of democratic revolutions largely ignore this aspect of Yushchenko's 2004 election program. The Ten Steps explains, "social programs are not a devastation of the budget, but investments in the people, in the country, and the nation's future." Yushchenko pledged in Step 2 that if he were elected, "My Action Plan will ensure priority funding of social programs. The way of finding budgetary money for this purpose is easy: not to steal, not to build luxurious palaces, and not to buy expensive automobiles."

Maksymiuk analyzed the Ten Steps and fourteen draft decrees and found them to be lavish populist promises. Yushchenko promised to keep the pension increase of the 2002–4 Yanukovich government, which had doubled

the minimum monthly pension from 137 (\$17) to 285 hryvni (\$36), adding \$207 million each month to the government's pension costs. Yushchenko promised to establish a minimum wage of 423 hryvni (\$53) a month and outlined a twelvefold increase from 725 (\$91) to 8,460 (\$1,062) hryvni for each newborn child. Most controversially, a draft decree promised to compensate Ukrainians for lost Soviet bank savings by classifying the funds as Ukraine's internal debt and repaying them in part with funds received from one-off, top-up payments made by businessmen for enterprises obtained during Ukraine's privatization. The draft decree drew on the Ten Steps in Our Ukraine's 2002 election platform that had called for the creation of a "working mechanism to return debts to Ukrainian citizens" lost in Soviet bank savings from top-up payments paid by businessmen after a review of "dishonest privatizations." Reviewing Yushchenko's extensive social-populist 2004 election program, Martyniuk asks, "Where is Yushchenko going to get money to finance his generous social payments?"⁴¹

Charisma Gap. "Populist" parties and movements require charismatic leaders, but such figures are in short supply in Ukraine. The most charismatic Ukrainian politician is Tymoshenko, while the leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties (Oleksandr Moroz and Piotr Symonenko, respectively), Our Ukraine (Vera Ulianchenko during the latter part of Yushchenko's presidency), and the Party of Regions (Yanukovych [2003–10] and Nikolai Azarov [2001–3, 2010–]) lack charismatic leaders. Yushchenko has little charisma and during the Orange Revolution was overshadowed by Tymoshenko, whose speeches played a major role in mobilizing popular protests. Yanukovych admitted, "I have said more than once that I have not learned to speak as eloquently as some. I was raised in an atmosphere that valued work over talk, and I was shy about seeking a lot of words. This was my failing." Yet a weak intellectual background or inability to speak eloquently has not prevented Silvio Berlusconi, George W. Bush, or Yanukovych from obtaining popular support. In Ukrainian elections, parties and blocs invariably add the name of their leaders to the party or bloc in the hope of adding votes by drawing on the name and popularity of leaders.

Crisis Situation. Populism is often associated with times of crisis, where it injects a sense of urgency into politics by refusing to undertake business "as usual." Taggart argues, "Populism is not the politics of the stable, ordered polity but comes as an accompaniment to change, crisis and



Viktor Yushchenko campaign billboard in the 2010 presidential elections. The billboard promises "We will introduce a 20% tax on yachts, villas, and limousines." (Photo by the author, Kyiv, January 2010)

challenge."⁴² Everyday politics, and establishment parties, particularly in young democracies such as Ukraine, find it difficult to deal with crisis conditions that may emerge. Populists have been successful in drawing on "that sense to inject an urgency and an importance to their message."⁴³ Ukraine was in crisis for much of President Kuchma's second term in office (2000–2004), and the regime proved unable to halt the rise of the opposition. Integrating crises into discussions of populism could mean that the democratic revolutions in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003), and Ukraine (2004) should instead be grouped with European populism, for they were as much social-populist and anti-elite as they were democratic.

Anti-Elite Hostility. The Serbian, Georgian, and Ukrainian revolutions drew on populist anti-elite/anti-oligarch rhetoric in the name of the people, who had watched corrupt elites steal their votes through election fraud. Public anger at Ukraine's 1990s transition to a market economy and its beneficiaries was deep and profound. Annual surveys by the National Academy of Sciences



Ukraine's Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko speaks to the press in Kyiv, Ukraine, September 26, 2008. Few Ukrainian politicians have her charisma. (AP Photo/Sergei Chuzavkov)

asked Ukrainians which group they believed had most influence in Ukrainian society, and the largest response until 2004 was always “organized crime and the mafia.”⁴⁴ Anti-elite rhetoric is common across the Ukrainian political spectrum, and anti-oligarch sentiment ran deep in the 2004 elections and the Orange Revolution. As opposition candidate, Yushchenko raised the issue of putting “bandits in jail” throughout the 2004 election campaign, and his Ten Steps election program supported a tax on Ukrainian entrepreneurs who allegedly had illegally privatized enterprises at knockdown prices.

Populists are often seen as seeking the moral purification of society, and therefore define politics in terms of a struggle of good against evil where compromise is difficult. In the 2004 Ukrainian presidential elections, *both* sides depicted the elections as a fundamental choice between good and evil. The opposition saw a Yanukovich

victory as the triumph of criminal clans and Ukraine's turn toward authoritarianism, while the authorities brought out the specter of civil war arising from Yushchenko's election because he was an “American satrap” and an anti-Russian “Ukrainian nationalist.” In the 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2010 presidential elections, the campaign rhetoric of *both* leading candidates resounded with warnings of dire consequences if the other candidate were to win. In the 1994 elections, Leonid Kravchuk warned of the threat to Ukraine's independence if the “pro-Russian” Kuchma won, while in 1999 Kuchma warned of the same threat if the communist leader Petro Symonenko came to power. In the 2010 elections, Tymoshenko warned of the threat to Ukrainian independence if Yanukovich was elected. Kuchma and Yanukovich warned Ukrainians against permitting the “nationalist” Kravchuk (1994) or the “nationalist” Yushchenko (2004), respectively, to come to

power. In the 2002 parliamentary and 2004 presidential elections, the authorities revived Soviet-era denunciations of western Ukrainian nationalism reminiscent of Soviet ideological tirades against “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism.”⁴⁵

Social populism is common in Ukrainian politics. As former Razumkov analyst and Yushchenko 2004 election program author Zhdanov writes: “Social populism became an aspect of and the main basis of our politics. The situation is developed in a closed circle: politicians year by year, from election to another election, make promises and again more promises. Voters again and again demand such promises. The promises are not fulfilled.”⁴⁶ Election platforms have little value beyond the campaign and are stuffed with lists of empty promises that are routinely ignored after the election. Yushchenko’s 2004 platform is an example of Ukrainian politicians’ lack of accountability to their voters, and both President Yushchenko and President Yanukovich abandoned key campaign promises. Davyd Zhvannia, a business supporter of Our Ukraine and Yushchenko’s 2004 campaign and a NU–NS deputy asked, “But ten steps toward the people—is it not populist? And when Yushchenko promised to return Oshadbank savings when he was a candidate for president? And this is not populism?”⁴⁷

Ukrainian parties often claim to be political outsiders defending ordinary people against a corrupt elite. Consequently, many Ukrainian parties claim to represent the people and use the word *narodniy* (people’s) in their names. On the eve of the 2004 election campaign, Prime Minister Yanukovich invoked popular needs, “The authorities should be effective, and act first of all in the interests of people.” On the eve of the second round of the 2004 elections, Yanukovich claimed that he, unlike Yushchenko, was a “new man” in Kyiv: “I was wondering when they would start caring about the people and the country. I came to Kyiv with one goal in mind—to figure everything out and try to restore justice.”⁴⁸

All of Ukraine’s political parties adopt social-populist rhetoric, especially the ideologically amorphous and centrist political parties popular in Russophone eastern-southern Ukraine. In 1994 Kuchma wooed this constituency by promising to upgrade the status of the Russian language, yet he never made it clear whether this meant Russian would become an “official” regional language or a second state language in addition to Ukrainian. In the 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2010 elections, Yanukovich and the Party of Regions campaigned on the populist slogan of upgrading Russian to a second state language. However, neither the president nor the prime minister can unilaterally amend the constitution; that requires at least 300

votes in parliament. Ukrainian politicians conveniently forget about the issue after winning elections. Six days after becoming prime minister, Yanukovich dismissed it, saying, “The language problem has been artificially created by politicians.”⁴⁹

Economic Carrots. Social populism is common to *all* political forces in Ukraine during election campaigns. In October 2004, the Yanukovich government doubled wages and pensions to attract voters, particularly Communist Party voters, the majority of whom had voted for him in round two and the repeat of round two of the elections. The 2002–4 Yanukovich government cut fuel prices, increased state pensions, and gave coal miners back pay. In 2002 and 2004, Yushchenko focused heavily on the socioeconomic gains of his 2000–2001 government, such as repaying wage and pension arrears. Yushchenko vetoed the 2007 government budget, complaining that the provisions for pensions were low. In the 2002 elections, Our Ukraine placed Oleksandr Stoyan, head of the Federation of Trade Unions, second on its party list in a bid to attract union voters. Presidential candidate Yanukovich signed a “Social Contract” with the Federation of Trade Unions to attract union voters, and Stoyan was elected to parliament in the 2006 elections as a member of the Party of Regions.

President Yushchenko unveiled a new “Social Initiative” in 2006–7 to counter Prime Minister Yanukovich’s “Anti-Crisis” government. Pavlo Rozenko, head of the social policy department of the presidential secretariat, reports that during a meeting in March 2007, “The president said he was ready to support their ideas aimed at developing the social sector together with the government and parliament,” adding that the absence of such a program showed that the social ministers “lack competence.” During the 2006 budgetary debates, Yushchenko insisted that the government should not cut social spending and criticized the fact that “No social initiative was put forth.” Yushchenko complained that the Yanukovich government’s policies would have reduced pensions, family allowances, and wages.⁵⁰ At the time, the deputy head of the presidential secretariat, Bessmertny, declared that one of the new priorities for governors (heads of local state administration) would be to minimize job losses and unemployment during the 2008–9 global financial crisis.⁵¹ Baloga, the head of the presidential secretariat, frequently threatened Mayor Leonid Chernovetsky of Kyiv during the global crisis because of his attempts to reduce subsidies in order to reduce gaps in the city’s budget.⁵² On October 20, 2009, the Party of Regions

proposed a law that would raise social payments and pensions. The Tymoshenko government denounced the bill as a blatantly populist move in anticipation of the 2010 elections. When the International Monetary Fund unsuccessfully lobbied for President Yushchenko to veto the bill, the fund suspended the disbursement of further tranches of the October 2008 Stand-by Agreement that imposed strict economic and budgetary discipline on Ukraine. The Party of Regions and the Communist Party provided the main votes for the law's adoption.

Reprivatization. Reprivatization, as Krastev points out, is a key area of the populist policy arsenal because it responds to the public expectation of “a revision of the most scandalous, privatization deals.”⁵³ Karatnycky and Motyl have described Tymoshenko's flirtation with nationalization and then rapid privatization as an example of her chameleon populism.⁵⁴ The 2005 Tymoshenko government's program of reprivatization grew out of Yushchenko's 2004 election campaign program and the radicalized rhetoric of the Orange Revolution. The 2005 Tymoshenko government was lambasted for seeking to implement a program that Yushchenko and Our Ukraine had supported during the 2004 elections. Before any reprivatization, the government would need to undertake an audit to ascertain which enterprises were illegally obtained during Ukraine's privatization, a step that Yushchenko's 2004 election platform specifically called for.⁵⁵ Petro Poroshenko, then secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, was an ardent but duplicitous critic of Tymoshenko's ideas for reprivatization. In April 2005 Poroshenko made an offer to Borys Kolesnykov, a senior Party of Regions deputy, after advising him that he was about to be criminally charged. Poroshenko's offer was simple but crude: In exchange for no criminal charges, Kolesnykov and his business associates in the Party of Regions would transfer to Poroshenko and his colleagues two television stations (TRK Ukraina and NTN) as well as an undisclosed number of other enterprises. Kolesnykov rejected the offer, was arrested, and spent four months in prison.⁵⁶

The Tymoshenko government was criticized throughout 2008–9 by the president and presidential secretariat for being “populist.”⁵⁷ Anders Åslund, an economist who is a staunch critic of the 2005 Tymoshenko government, praised the sound policies the second Tymoshenko government used to deal with the global financial crisis: “Ukraine has shown exemplary crisis management thanks to a few Ukrainian top officials—notably Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko—and a good job by the international financial institutions.”⁵⁸ Tymoshenko—unlike European

populists—was amenable to cooperating with the IMF and negotiated a \$16.4 billion Stand-by Agreement in October 2008. Tymoshenko balked at increasing household utility prices, an IMF demand to reduce the budget deficit of the state-owned Naftohaz Ukrainy before the 2010 elections. Yanukovich took this step *after* he was elected following the signing of a new assistance agreement with the IMF in July 2010.

In 2005, Western and domestic critics lambasted the first Tymoshenko government as a supporter of reprivatization, although only one reprivatization took place—Kryvorizhstal. In July 2004 the firm had been privatized by the Yanukovich government to two Ukrainian oligarchs, Viktor Pinchuk and Renat Akhmetov, for \$800 million. The Tymoshenko government facilitated its transparent reprivatization for \$4.8 billion. The Party of Regions and Yanukovich used economic protectionist arguments to oppose the sale of Kryvorizhstal to a foreign company. Yushchenko's 2004 election program included a provision to force Ukrainian oligarchs pay a one-off surcharge on enterprises they had privatized. These additional funds would be partially used to finance repayment of Soviet bank savings lost by Ukrainians, a proposal that was first included in the 2002 Our Ukraine program. The second Tymoshenko government (2007–10) began to implement this policy in January 2008, but President Yushchenko immediately criticized this step as populist. Defense Minister Yuriy Yekhanurov said, “One thousand hryvni is not a resolution of the poverty question. And, more important, not that of justice. This is a question of the formation of an electoral base of populism.”⁵⁹ BYuT included the repayment of Soviet bank deposits in its 2007 platform, and the Tymoshenko government acted on this campaign promise. Oleksandr Morozov, one of the founders and financial sponsors of Our Ukraine in 2002, pointed out that the return of these deposits was in Yushchenko's 2004 election program and represented “the renewal of trust by citizens to the state and to the banking system.”⁶⁰ President Yushchenko and the presidential secretariat disagreed, lambasting the government for returning the bank savings:

As the president, I took direct personal control of the situation. One of the main principles was to force the government and political elites to abandon economically unsound and politically populist social subsidies. The government made some mistakes that need to be corrected. Thus, disbursement of money triggered inflation, especially since this summer.⁶¹

After Tymoshenko was fired in September 2005, President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yekhanurov,

then head of Our Ukraine, established close relations with “Ukraine’s national bourgeoisie”—namely, the oligarchs—and closed the issue of payment of surcharges for enterprises that were privatized cheaply in the 1990s. Yekhanurov, who had headed the State Property Fund in the 1990s, became one of Tymoshenko’s fiercest critics.

President Yushchenko undermined the second Tymoshenko government’s attempt to continue transparent privatization policies: “The leadership of the SPF [State Property Fund] with the support of the presidential secretariat is blocking the privatization process.”⁶² Åslund writes that in 2008 Yushchenko “spoke like an old-style socialist, even vetoing Tymoshenko’s decree allowing private sales of land as contrary to the constitution.”⁶³

The government planned to privatize 400 assets in 2008 with proceeds of 8.6 billion hryvni (\$1.08 billion) transferred to the budget, a portion of which would cover the repayment of Soviet bank savings. On January 26, 2007, President Yushchenko signed legislation to privatize the Odessa Port Plant and scheduled the relevant tender for August 15, 2007. But plans changed after Tymoshenko returned to head the government in December 2007. A March 2008 presidential decree ruled that energy, the military-industrial complex, and transportation were “strategic” sectors of the economy and thus exempted from privatization. The Tymoshenko government’s privatization plans were thwarted because the government’s very popular plan for repayment of Soviet bank savings increased Tymoshenko’s popularity and set her up for a possible presidential run against Yushchenko. In a May 6, 2008, statement, Baloga, the head of the presidential secretariat, complained that the proceeds from the privatization of the Odessa Port Terminal should go toward economic growth and societal needs, and not for a “one-off PR stunt” for Tymoshenko.⁶⁴

Protectionism. European populists advocate economic protectionism and nationalism, which often lead to euroskepticism. Ukraine’s economic nationalists are to be found in the extreme right (Svoboda) and centrist parties that propagate economic nationalism and economic protectionism. In Donetsk, a stronghold of Yanukovich’s Party of Regions and one of the most protectionist regions in Ukraine, foreign investors, whether Western or Russian, have been excluded. In 2005, then opposition leader Yanukovich condemned the sale of the reprivatized Kryvorizhstal plant to a foreign owner and supported its retention in Ukrainian hands. Protectionism also explains why in 2005–6 the Party of Regions sided with left-wing parties to kill legislation required to join the WTO.⁶⁵

All Ukrainian governments have continued household gas subsidies. Since household utility prices only covered 20 percent of the cost of imported gas, the subsidies pushed Naftohaz Ukrainy into near-bankruptcy, as they added 2 percent to the budget deficit. The price of gas sold by Russia to Ukraine has increased each year since 2005 and was scheduled to reach “market” prices (i.e., the European average) in 2011 under the January 2009 gas contract negotiated by prime ministers Tymoshenko and Vladimir Putin. However, Yushchenko sought to maintain subsidized gas prices by using the opaque gas intermediary RosUkrEnergo, and he instructed the National Security and Defense Council to criticize the Tymoshenko-Putin contract. No government proposed reducing subsidies on household utility prices because “both Yushchenko and Tymoshenko have so far baulked at such an electorally unpopular move.”⁶⁶

In 2009, the IMF pushed the Tymoshenko government to reduce household energy subsidies, but this highly unpopular step was impossible due to growing unemployment and the approaching presidential elections. The Party of Regions voted against the IMF-mandated legislation required to release the second tranche of the Stand-by Agreement because it would increase household utility prices: “The Party of Regions will not permit the adoption of those policies that transfer all the weight of the crisis onto the shoulders of the poorest category of our citizens. We state that we categorically protest at the policies of the current authorities and will defend those people with all lawful methods at our disposal.”⁶⁷ A year later, with no major elections in sight, the Nikolai Azarov government raised household utility prices by 50 percent.⁶⁸

Political Parties. Traditionally, individuals labeled as populists are seen as opposed to organized political parties. Ideologically vacuous political groupings are common in Ukraine—and in Eurasia more generally—because these countries have not been able to revive pre-Soviet political parties. Communist parties, for example, were transformed into social democratic or nationalist-populist parties in Central-Eastern Europe, whereas in Eurasia they remained communist. Ukraine’s Socialist Party, which emerged in 1991–93, when the Communist Party was illegal, was an exceptional case of a popular center-left party in Eurasia.

The Party of Regions, Ukraine’s most well organized party, represents Russophone Ukraine and brings together pan-Slavists, ex-communists, trade unionists, oligarchs, former Soviet functionaries, and red directors (industrial managers during the communist era). In October 2010 the

party signed a cooperation agreement with the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament. “The marriage between the Party of Regions and the Party of Europe’s Socialists isn’t a match made in heaven,” the *Kyiv Post* wrote.⁶⁹

Tymoshenko’s Fatherland Party has the second-largest number of party branches in Ukraine, and BYuT is one of Ukraine’s best-organized political forces. Fatherland maintained a center-left profile from its establishment in 1999 until it joined the center-right European People’s Party as an associate member in 2005.

Foreign Policy. Ukrainian political party platforms and rhetoric on foreign policy issues tend to be vague, devoid of substance, and purposely ignore difficult issues, such as NATO membership. In the 1999 elections, Kuchma’s reelection platform called for a “pro-Ukrainian” foreign policy and Ukraine’s nonbloc status. In the March 2002 elections, the propresidential For a United Ukraine bloc, which incorporated the Party of Regions, did not mention NATO or EU membership, merely emphasizing Ukraine as a “European country by its geopolitical location and cultural traditions.” In July 2002, President Kuchma announced that Ukraine would seek NATO membership, and he took steps designed to encourage a Membership Action Plan in 2002 and 2004, years when Yanukovych headed the government. Yanukovych’s 2004 election program devoted only three lines to foreign policy, supporting Ukraine’s participation in world and regional integration processes and “progress in Euroatlantic integration.” The Party of Regions’ 2006 election program also glossed over foreign policy, emphasizing merely the need for “defense of national interests” and completing the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States Single Economic Space. The Party of Regions’ 2007 election platform returned to the concept of Ukraine’s nonbloc status and demanded a referendum before Ukraine could join NATO. It supported membership in the WTO, the EU, and the CIS Single Economic Space, although the WTO and the Single Economic Space are mutually exclusive customs unions. Yanukovych’s 2010 election program again called for Ukraine’s nonbloc status; after he was elected, parliament voted for changes to Ukraine’s foreign policy to reflect this campaign policy, making Ukraine a non-bloc state that no longer seeks NATO membership.⁷⁰

In the 2002 elections, Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine bloc gave little attention to foreign policy but supported joining the WTO. Yushchenko’s 2004 election platform did not support NATO or EU membership, mentioning only the WTO and good relations with Russia. Yushchenko supported a

vacuous, “honest, transparent, consistent, profitable foreign policy,” and the last of his Ten Steps program laid out an even vaguer statement that he would “Conduct Foreign Policy That Benefits the Ukrainian People.” Our Ukraine’s 2006 platform supported “integration into European structures,” such as the World Trade Organization and the EU, whereas the 2007 NU–NS program completely ignored foreign policy. In fact, Yushchenko and Our Ukraine have *never* once included NATO membership in any of their election platforms between 2002 and 2010. The foreign policy views of Arseniy Yatseniuk, a NU–NS deputy, who was initially touted as “Ukraine’s Obama” in the 2010 presidential elections, completely flip-flopped from support for NATO and EU membership when he was foreign minister and parliamentary speaker to isolationist nationalist third-wayism in the 2010 elections.⁷¹ At public forums Yatseniuk was incapable of outlining his views on key foreign policy issues such as NATO and the Black Sea Fleet.⁷²

BYuT’s foreign policy platform has been similarly vague. The 2002 platform outlined a foreign policy “undertaken in the name of one’s nation.” The same phrase was repeated in BYuT’s 2006 election platform without further elaboration. BYuT’s 2007 election platform reproduced the exact same formula yet again. As with Yushchenko and Our Ukraine, BYuT omitted support for NATO or EU membership in three separate election campaigns. The centrist Volodymyr Lytvyn bloc wavered on membership in the 2008–10 democratic coalition, and the pro-Yanukovych Stability and Reforms bloc, established in the spring of 2010, had even vaguer foreign policy prescriptions in its election platforms. Besides the stock phrases of “good neighborliness” and “balance in relations with countries that are strategic partners,” the Lytvyn bloc took one step further by calling for a “strategy of special relations with Russia, and strengthening Slavic solidarity,” something that Yushchenko/Our Ukraine and BYuT never proposed. The Lytvyn bloc’s contribution to foreign policy is to “put an emphasis on people’s diplomacy” as an effective means of “broadening international cooperation in all spheres.”

Euroskepticism unites populist parties in Western and Central-Eastern Europe, but it is not present in Ukraine, except on the extreme right and left. *Both* BYuT and Our Ukraine support NATO and EU membership even though neither objective was ever included in their election programs. In January 2008 Prime Minister Tymoshenko, parliamentary speaker Arseniy Yatseniuk, and President Yushchenko wrote to NATO seeking a Membership Action Plan at the April 2008 NATO summit. The main party that meets the foreign policy criteria of a populist party is Svo-

boda, which is euroskeptical, opposed to NATO membership, and seeks to build Ukraine's security independently of military blocs. Svoboda's platform is similar to the nonbloc status advocated by the Party of Regions, except that Svoboda is virulently anti-Russian. Tymoshenko and BYuT cannot be classified as euroskeptical; BYuT has been the most active Ukrainian party in the European parliament, and the European People's Party called upon Ukrainian voters to back Tymoshenko in the second round of the 2010 elections. The Party of Regions is moderately euroskeptical, as seen in its position of "europragmatism," which it contrasts with the opposition's "euroromanticism."

Yanukovich has repeatedly changed his position on the question of Ukraine's joining NATO, moving across the entire range of possibilities. He did not oppose NATO membership when he headed the 2002–4 government, but has opposed membership since 2005, whether in opposition, in the government, or as president. The Yanukovich campaign's populist anti-Americanism in the 2004 elections flatly contradicted the fact that President Kuchma and the Yanukovich government had sent Ukrainian troops to join the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq a year earlier.

Conclusion

Western academic discussions of European populism have ignored Eurasia, focusing instead on the rise of populism in Western Europe and post-communist Central-Eastern Europe. This article seeks to integrate Ukraine within the discussion by surveying different manifestations of populism in Ukraine. The article finds that three or four of Krastev's ten aspects of populism in Europe are to be found in the Party of Regions, BYuT, and Our Ukraine. The Ukrainian party most closely resembling European populism is the populist-nationalist Svoboda, which incorporates all ten of Krastev's aspects in its election platform and the rhetoric of its leaders. Tymoshenko's two governments were undermined and condemned as populist for introducing policies laid out in Yushchenko's 2004 Ten Steps Toward the People and fourteen draft decrees. Our Ukraine and BYuT are committed to EU and NATO membership, cooperation with the IMF, and support for foreign direct investment.⁷³ The Party of Regions led a parliamentary coalition in 2006–7 with the Communist and Socialist parties that was lukewarm to EU membership, suspicious of the United States, and opposed to foreign direct investment and land privatization. The 2006–7 Yanukovich and 2010 Azarov governments both included the Communist Party. In the realm of foreign policy, all of Ukraine's political parties have

ignored contentious issues like NATO membership and have failed to explain to Ukrainian voters the merits of joining the WTO and the EU. Many Ukrainian political parties are euroskeptical based on their doubts that Ukraine will ever be permitted to join the EU, a view touted as europragmatism by Yanukovich.

Ukraine's political system remains weak, fractured, highly personalized, and ideologically vacuous, while the judiciary and media fail to hold politicians to account. Such an environment permits social populism to flourish across the entire Ukrainian political spectrum and does not punish politicians for writing one thing, saying another, and ignoring everything that went before. Populism is a broader phenomenon in Ukraine, perhaps, than in Central-Eastern Europe, especially on social issues, but at the same time it does not include many of the abrasive aspects of populism found in the EU.

Notes

1. Ivan Krastev, "The New Europe: Respectable Populism, Clockwork Liberalism" (March 21, 2006), www.opendemocracy.net.
2. See Paul Taggart, "Populism and Representative Politics in Contemporary Europe," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9, no. 3 (October 2004): 269–88; Cas Mudde, "In the Name of the Peasantry, the Proletariat, and the People: Populism in Eastern Europe," *East European Politics and Society* 14, no. 2 (March 2000): 33–53.
3. Thomas Buch-Andersen, "Islam a Political Target in Norway," BBC News (April 20, 2009).
4. See Rogers Brubaker, "The Return of Assimilation: Changing Perspectives on Immigration and Its Sequels in France, Germany, and the United States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 4 (July 2001): 531–48; Ellie Vasta, "From Ethnic Minorities to Ethnic Majority Policy: Multiculturalism and the Shift to Assimilation in the Netherlands," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 5 (September 2007): 713–40.
5. Reinhard Heinisch, "Right-Wing Populism in Austria. A Case for Comparison," *Problems of Post-Communism* 55, no. 3 (May/June 2008): 40–56.
6. John Hooper, "Silvio Berlusconi Realises Dream with New Rightwing Party," *Guardian* (March 28, 2009), www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/mar/28/freedom-people-silvio-berlusconi-italy/.
7. Krastev, "New Europe."
8. Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Leninist Legacies, Pluralist Dilemmas," *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 4 (October 2007): 36.
9. Ibid., p. 37.
10. Unfortunately similar in name to Yuriy Lutsenko's Self-Defense party, which gave its name to President Yushchenko's 2007 election bloc, Our Ukraine–People's Self-Defense (NU–NS).
11. Clare McManus-Czubinska, William L. Miller, Radoslaw Markowski, and Jacek Wasilewski, "The New Polish 'Right'?" *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 19, no. 2 (June 2003): 1–23.
12. Aleks Szczerbiak, "Old and New Divisions in Polish Politics: Polish Parties' Electoral Strategies and Bases of Support," *Europe-Asia Studies* 55, no. 5 (July 2003): 729–46.
13. Kristen Ghodsee, "Left-Wing, Right-Wing, Everything: Xenophobia, Neo-Totalitarianism, and Populist Politics in Bulgaria," *Problems of Post-Communism* 55, no. 3 (May/June 2008): 26–39.
14. George Schopflin, "The Referendum: Populism vs. Democracy," www.opendemocracy.net (June 16, 2008).
15. Taggart, "Populism and Representative Politics in Contemporary Europe," p. 278.

16. Bojan Bugaric, "Populism, Liberal Democracy and the Rule of Law in Central and Eastern Europe," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 41, no. 2 (June 2008): 191–203.
17. Yulia Tymoshenko, cited in *Ukrainska pravda* (November 19, 2003).
18. The Hromada party, led by former prime minister Pavlo Lazarenko, entered parliament in March 1998. Tymoshenko entered parliament as a member of Hromada but created the Fatherland party in 1999 after Lazarenko's parliamentary immunity was lifted and he fled to the United States.
19. Aleksander Smolar, "History and Memory: The Revolutions of 1989–91," *Journal of Democracy* 12, no. 3 (July 2001), p. 11.
20. Ibid.
21. Krzysztof Jasiewicz, "The New Populism in Poland. The Usual Suspects?" *Problems of Post-Communism* 55, no. 3 (May/June 2008): 8.
22. Ukrainian election programs are cited from the Central Election Commission Web site, www.cvk.gov.ua.
23. Online chat with Roman Bessmertny at www2.pravda.com.ua/conf/bezsmertny_2006.htm?rnd=0.2494127808453684/, February 24, 2006.
24. Interview with Leonid Kuchma in *Fakty* (September 3, 2005); statement by Viktor Baloga at www.president.gov.ua (January 28, 2009).
25. Taggart, "Populism and Representative Politics in Contemporary Europe," p. 278.
26. Interview with Viktor Yanukovich in *Izvestia* (September 23, 2008).
27. Personal observation based on research conducted in Ukraine from August 2009 to February 2010.
28. See Anatoliy Grytsenko's blog in *Ukrainska pravda* (October 25, 2010), <http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/grytsenko/>.
29. On BYuT's ideology, see the interview with Yulia Tymoshenko in *Zerkalo nedeli/terkalo tyzhnia* (August 21–27, 2004); Olga Kryzhanovska, "Spitting on the Memory of Independence Square," *Kyiv Post* (October 6, 2005); interview with Tymoshenko in *Kommersant-Ukraina* (December 22, 2006).
30. Julia Ioffe, "Kiev Chameleon," *New Republic* (January 5, 2010), www.tnr.com/article/world/kiev-chameleon/; Adrian Karatnycky and Alexander J. Motyl, "The Key to Kiev: Ukraine's Security Means Europe's Stability," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 3 (May/June 2009): 110. Fatherland is part of the larger Yulia Tymoshenko bloc.
31. Serhiy Leshchenko, quoted in *Ukrainska pravda* (September 5, 2008).
32. Poll cited in *Ukrainska pravda* (April 21, 2009).
33. Tymoshenko, quoted in *Ukrainska pravda* (May 29, 2008).
34. Olha Dmytrycheva, "Sertse, tebe ne khochetsia pokoya?" (Does your heart not want peace?), *Zerkalo nedeli/terkalo tyzhnia* (December 10–16, 2005). See also Serhiy Rakhmanin, "Doroha yaka ne vede do Maydanu" (The Road That Does Not Lead to Maydan), *Zerkalo nedeli/terkalo tyzhnia* (November 26–December 2, 2005).
35. Alexandra Hrycak, "Gender Biases Are a Factor in Yulia's Defeat," *Kyiv Post* (March 16, 2010). See also Alexandra Hrycak, "Coping with Chaos: Gender and Politics in a Fragmented State," *Problems of Post-Communism* 52, no. 5 (September/October 2005): 69–81.
36. Interview with Viktor Yushchenko on Inter television (March 5, 2009).
37. Owen Matthews, "The Breadbasket Becomes the Basket Case," *Newsweek* (March 23, 2009), www.newsweek.com/2009/03/13/the-breadbasket-becomes-the-basket-case.html.
38. Quoted from Oleh Tyahnybok's blog (March 31, 2009), <http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/tiahnybok/>.
39. Anatoliy Grytsenko was president of the Razumkov Ukrainian Center on Economic and Political Studies, minister of defense in 2005–7, and has been head of parliament's committee on national security and defense since 2008. See www.uceps.com.ua.
40. The 2005 Tymoshenko government's program is reproduced in O.D. Yanevskyi, *Viktor Yushchenko. 100 dnyv prezydentstva: priama mova* (Viktor Yushchenko. 100 Days of His Presidency: Straight Talk) (Kharkiv: Folio, 2005), pp. 40–87.
41. Jan Maksymiuk, "Analysis: Promises, Promises, Promises," RFE/RL (February 3, 2005), www.rferl.org/Content/Article/1057249.html.
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48. Quoted in Kuzio, "Who's Populist in Ukrainian Politics?" *Kyiv Post*, July 4, 2007.
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51. Bessmertny, quoted by www.president.gov.ua (January 30, 2009).
52. Baloga, quoted in *Ukrainska pravda* (February 11, 2009).
53. Krastev, "New Europe."
54. Karatnycky and Motyl, "Key to Kiev," p. 110.
55. See interview with Tymoshenko in *Ukrainska pravda* (September 18, 2007).
56. Borys Kolesnykov's testimony to a parliamentary commission is discussed in S. Leshchenko, "Poroshenko otrymav chornu mitku vid Kolesnykova" (Poroshenko Received a Black Mark from Kolesnykov), *Ukrainska pravda* (April 23, 2009).
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58. Anders Åslund, "Ukraine Above the Rest in Crisis Management," *Moscow Times* (April 22, 2009). See also idem, *How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy* (Washington, DC: Petersen Institute of International Economics, 2009).
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60. Interview with Oleksandr Morozov in *Ukrainska pravda* (April 8, 2008).
61. Viktor Yushchenko, "Ukraine Will Not Be Weak Link in Global Economy," *Financial Times* (November 17, 2008).
62. Interview with Oleksandr Turchynov in *Ukrainska pravda* (May 7, 2008).
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