Logic of Populism
Case of Ukraine

Dr. Mykhailo Minakov, Docent at University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and Lecturer at Ukrainian School for Political Studies

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populism : today's topic

we will **<u>NOT</u>** speak about populism as:

"narodnichestvo" in Russia, XIX century

name of a political movement in contemporary USA

we **<u>WILL SPEAK</u>** about populism in politics that usually does not name itself 'populism'

structure of this presentation

definitions of populism

logic and types of populism

impact of populism on emerging democracies:
Ukraine's case

populism : invention

in 1969 Ernest Gellner and Ghita Ionescu
opened their edited collection on populism by words :

'A Spectre is haunting the world − populism'

populism : definitions
in political science & philosophy

a deviation of democracy in the standard path from traditional to modern society in some countries of the developing world (e.g. Germani 1969)

alternative road to modernize traditional societies
(e.g. Lash 1995)

a radical alternative to politics and a construction of 'the people' as a political force (e.g. Laclau 2005a; 2005b)

populism : definitions
in political science & philosophy

'an ideology which pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice'
(Albertazzi & McDonnell 2008:3)

'populist mobilization that follows democracy like a shadow'

(Canovan 1999: 7)

populism : way of thinking

pretend to solve difficult problems by simple remedies

promise to defend the common people against entrenched elite

provoke distrust to representative democracy

philosophy on populism

Slavoj Zizek

"the demise of political reason,…
    outburst of blind utopian passions"

a global antagonistic struggle between
    "us" (people) and "them"

Ernesto Laclau

the conceptual opposition between
    populism and politics

in populism, the enemy is
externalized/reified into a positive
ontological entity

populism : style & logic

- use simplistic argumentation

- propose final solutions

- aim at irrational consensus

simplistic argumentation

refer to biases and "common knowledge" : share the bias

establish personal contact with voter : use emotions

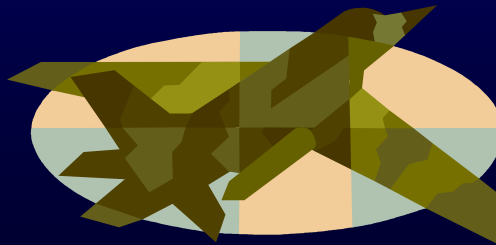do not request judgments : be identified as one of them

do not refer to difficult choices: "yes" or "no" logic

final solutions

address the need : reinforce dissatisfaction

speak of noble aim : don't mention tools

promise final solution : ignore reality

irrational consensus

base agreement on shared beliefs, biases and prejudices

form the expectation, then promise to fulfill it

rely on political technologies and mass media

build consensus within majority, separate those opposed

populism : everything's personal

an organic match

leader   citizen

requires personal trust   trusts person, not
and loyalty   institution

declares to take   eager to get rid of
responsibility   responsibility

calls against politics   hates the politics

is a show-person   is a show-fan

populism : conditions

crisis of the structures of political intermediation and communication

personalization of political power:
person vs content of politics

increasing role of the media in political life

(Meny & Surel 2000: 23-33)

populism : undermine 'democratic political culture'

denial of achievements of "the rational politics":

individual rights

minority rights

pluralism-based politics

populism : undermine 'democratic political culture'

substitution of institutionalized politics with 'identitarian' democracy:

- identity logic: if you identify yourself with X group, and X leader is believed to be a representative of the X group' interests, than it is inevitable for you to support X leader

- X leader proposes solutions to problems that are directly connected with interests of the well-identified group ; these solutions need no applicability to the issue, the should respond to the identity

- X leaders have charisma based on responsiveness of the group

populism : role of media

media support to populists:

one-way communication with audience

making politics A Show

substitution traditional political modes of communication
with more aggressive, targeted and manipulating

populism : role of media
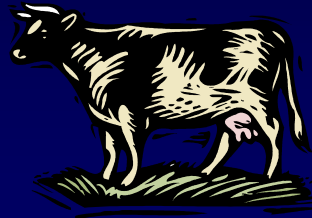
media as limiting factor for populism:

media not only help populists become influential, but it can kill them in a moment

'populist' media involve citizens into political life and in a long run diminish influence of populists

populism : also non-political strata

- pastoral

- economic

- cultural, etc.

pastoral populism

utopian visions of good old times in the countryside

paternalistic trends and neotraditionalism

rural racism / nationalism

"war of cities and villages"

economic populism

local market for local producers

budget should be spent on those who pay taxes

income should go to those who work

"war of poor and rich"

cultural populism

narcissism of small differences

what makes **US** different is substantial

OUR cultural peculiarities have "ontological" value

"war of cultures"

populism : ontological oppositions

US   **THEM**

locals   newcomers

working people   idlers
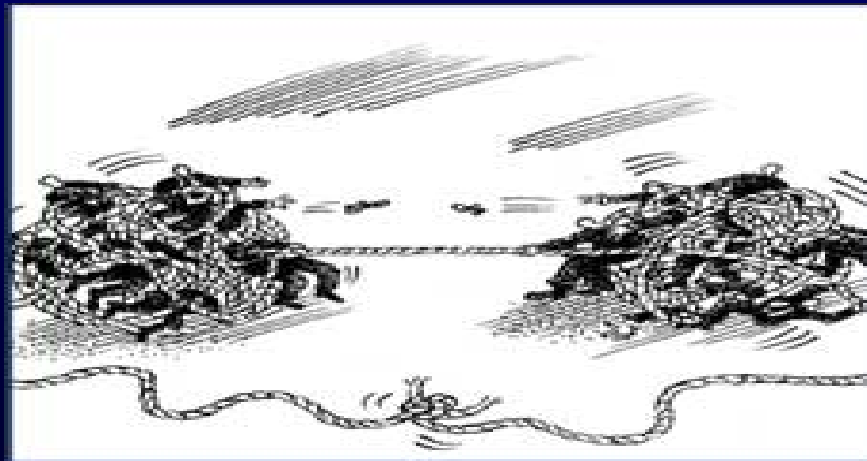
trustworthy   dangerous
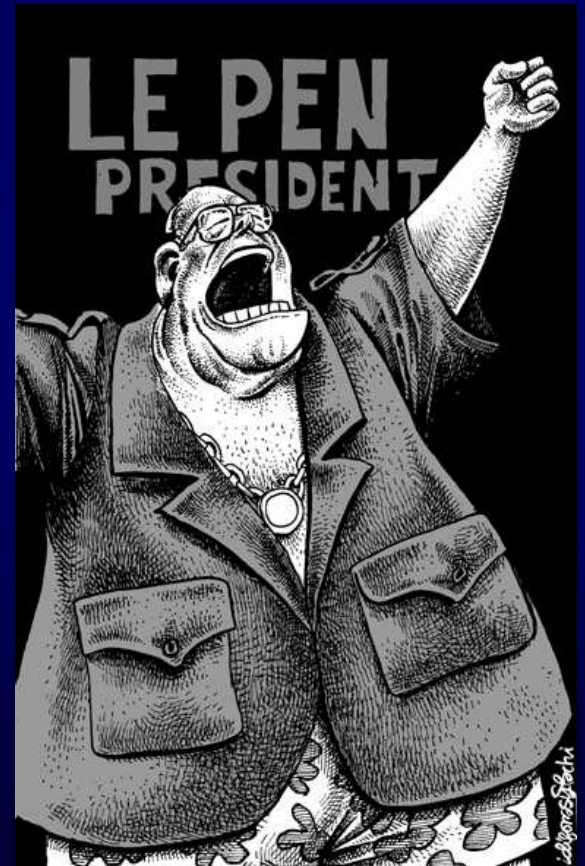
majority   minority

loyal   traitors

danger of populism

ruins trust in democratic institutions

provokes civil conflict

ruins political rationalism, tempts with simple
solutions to difficult problems

most successful populists
(in Council of Europe countries)

- Silvio Berlusconi, Italy

- the Kachinski brothers, Poland

- Vladimir Zhyrinovsky, Russia

- Jörg Haider, Austria

- Jean-Marie Le Pen, France

populism in Ukraine : regional phenomenon

in Eastern Europe it is a mobilization of the people around the
idea of '*national emancipation* and *collective autonomy*'
and an open call for the participation of the people in poorly
institutionalized politics

(Blokker 2005: 384)

populism in Ukraine : conditions

new democracy in the East

systemic antagonism of Parliament and President

influence of Soviet Legacy in the new era

populism in Ukraine : realpolitik

populists are a core of establishment :
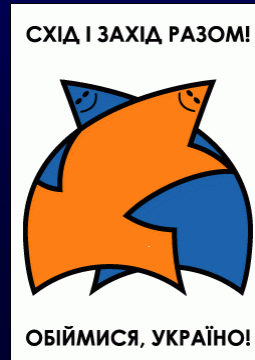usual political tactic

being a new democracy, populism is especially
dangerous for citizens' trust in democratic institutions
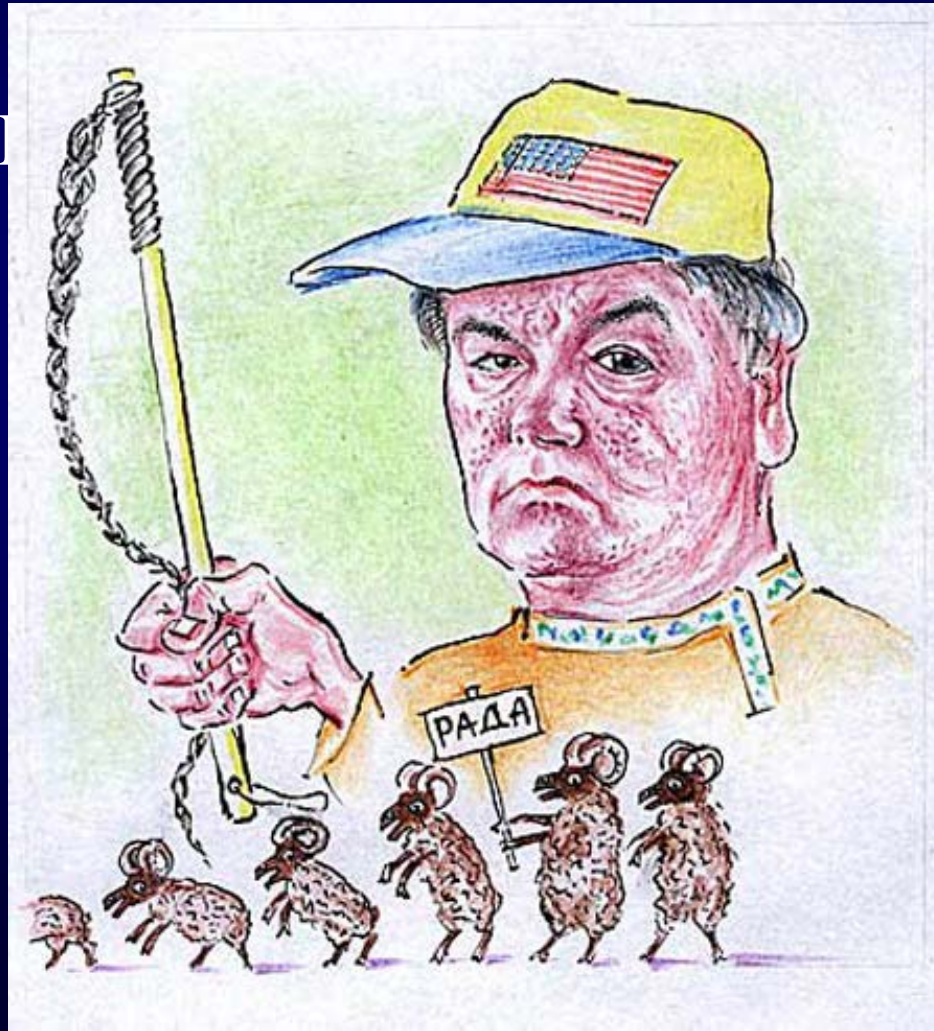in Ukraine

populism in Ukraine

supports myth of ontologically different East and West

ruins roots of ideology within existing parties

growing civic distrust of any political plans and programs

СХІД І ЗАХІД РАЗОМ!

ОБІЙМИСЯ, УКРАЇНО!

examples : personalized power

examples : personalized power

examples : media politics

examples : critique of dem. institutes

examples : use of identities

examples : in quest for power

Party of Regions

promotes increase of minimal salary level as main issue for political agenda in time of economic crisis
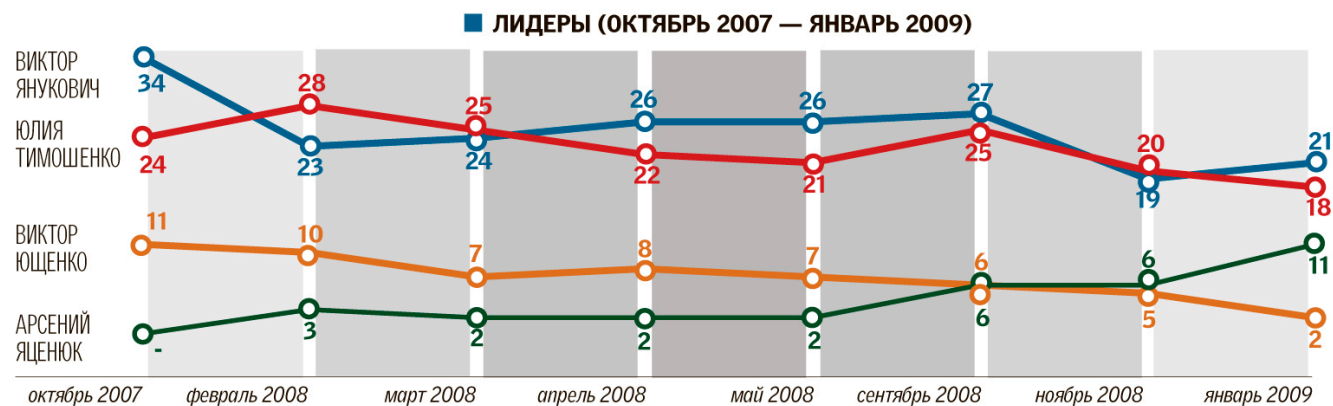
gets biggest support around Ukraine on the eve of presidential elections

examples : in quest for power

Президентская гонка: за год до выборов

Результаты опросов общественного мнения о предстоящих президентских выборах

ЛИДЕРЫ (ОКТЯБРЬ 2007 — ЯНВАРЬ 2009)

ДЕКАБРЬ 2008 — ЯНВАРЬ 2009

examples : preserving power

Block of Yuliia Tymoshenko

condemned public officials in being ineffective implementers of CabMin decisions: salaries were decreased 25% (2008)

public dissatisfaction channeled on public service

populism : conclusions

populism is

a cumulative descriptive notion that refers to a toolkit of a politician who seeks or preserves power through direct – non-institutionalized – support of voting citizens

a self-promoting deficit of trust to democratic political institutes and misuse of democratic procedures, an abuse of trust to leaders

a deficit of political responsibility

a corruption of democracies

populism : conclusions

populism is a reminder to us that
modern democracy is still just one of phases in
evolution of political sphere and
its rationality is very fragile

cited books and literature for further reading

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