

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

OpenSIUC

Research Papers

Graduate School

2022

POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRUMP'S AND ZELENSKYY'S PRESIDENCIES

Diana Butsko
diana.butsko@siu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/gs_rp

Recommended Citation

Butsko, Diana. "POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRUMP'S AND ZELENSKYY'S PRESIDENCIES." (Jan 2022).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Research Papers by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.

POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRUMP'S AND
ZELENSKY'S PRESIDENCIES

by

Diana Butsko

B.A., Lomonosov Moscow State University, 2015

M.A., National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, 2017

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts

Department of Political Science
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
May 2022

Copyright by Diana Butsko, 2022
All Rights Reserved

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRUMP'S AND
ZELENSKY'S PRESIDENCIES

by

Diana Butsko

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the field of Political Science

Approved by:

Dr. Stephen Bloom, Chair

Graduate School

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

April 4, 2022

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Diana Butsko, for the Master of Arts degree in Political Science, presented on April 4, 2022, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRUMP'S AND ZELENSKYY'S PRESIDENCIES

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Stephen Bloom

Although the recent political surge of populists around the world has raised a new wave of political science interest in populism, political outsiders remain a unique phenomenon. There are dozens of them in big politics, and only a few made it straight path to the presidential office. Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy and ex-president of the United States Donald Trump represent the unique phenomena of populist outsiders who made it from TV shows to the highest position in their countries. However, their policies raised concerns about the influence of populists on democratic institutions. Comparative analysis of their presidencies is meant to analyze the interaction between populism and democracy and to evaluate the potential threat of authoritarian tendencies.

Keywords: Populism, Democracy, Authoritarianism, Zelenskyy, Trump, Ukraine, USA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
ABSTRACT	i
LIST OF TABLES	iii
CHAPTERS	
CHAPTER 1 – Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER 2 – Populism and democracy	6
CHAPTER 3 – Methodology.....	14
CHAPTER 4 – Results.....	27
CHAPTER 5 – Discussion.....	30
REFERENCES	33
VITA	36

LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Table 1 - Democracy in the United States (2016-2020)	16
Table 2 - Democracy in Ukraine (2018-2021)	16

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On the 27th of September 2020, President of the United States Donald Trump wrote a post on Twitter offering his rival Joe Biden to take a drug test before the debate. The Democratic Party nominee took it as a joke, but such a “joke” had become a reality during the presidential campaign in another country (Caputo 2020). Ukrainian comedian Volodymyr Zelenskyy made the same demand to his opponent, incumbent President Petro Poroshenko in 2019. Before the debate, both candidates got tested (Steshenko, Butsko 2019). A month later, Poroshenko lost the election to an inexperienced opponent, who portrayed a president in the comedy series “Servant of the People.”

The widely discussed Burisma case¹, which almost led to the first impeachment of the 45th American president, is not the only issue that connects Trump and Zelenskyy. They had many more similarities in their careers. Both of them used populist rhetoric to attack their opponents, who were professional politicians. Both obsessively used social media to communicate with their electorate. Both of them had some issues with understanding democratic institutions. Both leaders starred in TV shows and ran their own businesses before the presidency.

In early 2015, the American network NBC ran “The Apprentice 14,” the last season featuring Donald Trump as a host for the reality show. The same year later, the Ukrainian channel “1+1” broadcasted the first episode of “Servant of the People” (“Sluha narodu”) where Volodymyr Zelenskyy portrayed a history teacher Vasyl Holoborodko who was elected president

¹ Hunter Biden, the son of Joe Biden, sat on the board of a Ukrainian natural gas company Burisma that was investigated by the Ukrainian anti-corruption bureau. During the July 2019 call, Trump asked Zelensky to “look into it [investigation].”

of Ukraine. These shows became important steps on the way to their political careers.

A Canadian journalist Naomi Klein defines “The Apprentice” as a breakthrough in Trump’s career that helped him create his brand which he started selling to developers around the world. “After you have pulled off a feat like that, what’s your next trick? Merge your brand with the ultimate symbol of power and authority: the White House,” Klein writes in her book. “But Trump’s market wasn’t just the rich. His Apprentice-era brand empire allowed him to appeal to wealthy and middle-income consumers simultaneously. For the well-heeled and flashy, there was membership at his beach and golf clubs, or a unit in a Trump-branded tower, with furnishings from the Trump homeware collection. For the masses who don’t have that kind of cash, Trump auctioned off little pieces of the dream—a glossy red Trump tie, a Trump steak, a Trump book.” (Klein 2017, 30-31).

A TV show also helped Zelenskyy to build his political career. Around half of Ukrainians said they had watched the “Servant of the People” before the election campaign. The number was higher among Zelenskyy’s electorate. 64% of them said they watched the show. Zelenskyy’s political support also came from his other shows and sharp satire. 85% of respondents said they watched performances of Kvartal 95, the Zelenskyy team that produced a late-night talk show “Vechirniy Kvartal” (Evening Quarter) (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation 2019).

“There is Zelenskyy, and there is Holoborodko. The country voted for Holoborodko. He did only one brilliant thing—the “Servant of the People” show. Zelenskyy became president, not as a side effect of the “Servant of the People,” but the “Servant of the People” appeared as a genius and promotional action for Zelenskyy to become president,” said Yulia Mostova, the editor-in-chief of Ukrainian media Dzerkalo Tyzhnia. She is sure that Zelenskyy ran his show as a part of the presidential campaign (Butsko 2021a).

The political outsider image helped both Trump and Zelenskyy to build successful campaigns based on sharp criticism of established elites. They took advantage of the distrust in governments and promised to change the elites with real people's representatives, themselves. The opposition between the elites and the people is a typical component of populist campaigns. Populists aim to convince voters that they are "the people" deceived by "the corrupted elite," and the only true representatives of "the people" are populists themselves. Critical sentiments towards establishment may remain dormant among the electorate but may be woken up under certain circumstances such as policy and economic failures or corruption scandals (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 99).

Canovan argues that grievances of distrusting voters may be best addressed by outsiders. As she wrote, "Although this kind of appeal plays upon popular distrust of conventional politics, it is itself, of course, very much a political device. In the nature of things it is the political outsider, not himself stamped with the brand of faction, who is best placed to make such an appeal away from the squabbling politicians to the neglected people" (Canovan 1981, 268).

Although populists oppose established politicians, just a few are real outsiders who have never had any experience in politics (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017: 74-74). Hugo Chávez (late Venezuelan president had been a career military officer before he won elections in 1998), Alberto Fujimori (Peruvian ex-president was a dean of the university), Pedro Castillo (a current Peruvian president was a school teacher) are examples from Latin American politics. Italian politician Beppe Grillo and ex-mayor of Reykjavík Jón Gnarr, both comedians in the past, could be added to the list of populist outsiders in Europe. Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelenskyy are the only celebrities that became presidents bypassing other political careers. It makes them special among political counterparts but at the same time, they represent a growing trend of

populists coming into power. Between 1990 and 2018, 46 populist leaders or political parties held executive office in 33 countries. During this period, the number of populists in power increased fivefold. Populism spreads its geography from Latin America to Eastern, and Central Europe, where it has been prevalent, to Asia and Western Europe (Kyle and Gultchin 2018).

The growing number of populists in power raises questions about their influence on the political system. In Latin America, for example, five out of all 15 presidents elected between 1990 and 2012 were populists. All five ended up weakening democracy (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 22).

Some of Trump's and Zelenskyy's policies also concerned scholars and journalists. Donald Trump violated norms of American democracy with attacks on the press, opponents, and established institutions; appointing members of his family as his advisors; and refusing to recognize the results of elections.

“If twenty-five years ago, someone had described to you a country in which candidates threatened to lock up their rivals, political opponents accused the government of stealing the election or establishing a dictatorship, and parties used their legislative majorities to impeach presidents and steal supreme court seats, you might have thought of Ecuador or Romania. You probably would not have thought of the United States,” wrote Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, Professors of Government at Harvard University, who believed Trump as a norm breaker possessed a serious threat to American democracy (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 149). They were concerned that Trump ruined two norms that helped sustain American democracy and enabled the operation of constitutional checks and balances: mutual tolerance of political rivals and institutional forbearance (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 189).

Volodymyr Zelenskyy's first two years in the office exposed some anxiety about the

future of his presidency. He preferred loyal allies around him, tried to take control over key institutions, undermined them when he was not able to reach his goals and did not like criticism coming from the media or civil society. “It scares me a lot. He has no balances left. He does not have them in the executive branch. He does not have a person who can say ‘no’ to him. The concentration of power never ended well,” said Sonya Koshkina, editor-in-chief of LB.ua (Butsko 2021d).

The political behavior of both presidents has caused concern in academia and civil society. This research aims to understand better if the threats possessed by populists weaken democracy or whether they may lead to authoritarianism.

CHAPTER 2

POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY

2.1. DEFINITIONS OF POPULISM

Researchers have more consensus on who populists are than what populism is. Benjamin Moffit classified existing definitions and grouped them under three categories. The first is the ideational approach represented by Mudde, Canovan, and Müller which considers populism as an ideology, or worldview. The strategic approach (Jansen, Weyland, Urbinati) sees populism as a strategy. These scholars study how populists pursue and sustain power. The discursive-performative approach (Moffitt, Laclau, Mouffe) studies populism as a discourse that pits “the people” against “the elite” and how this type of language affects political identity (Moffitt 2020, 12-22).

To demonstrate that Donald Trump is a populist, Kurt Weyland and Raúl L. Madrid analyzed his policies under different definitions but with a few modifications in categories (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 9). I am going to apply this approach to Zelenskyy to demonstrate that the Ukrainian president fits these definitions too.

The first class of definitions explains “populism as a personalistic political strategy” (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 10) and emphasizes the top-down nature of leadership when a charismatic leader abuses power, communicates with electorates without intermediaries, and tries to avoid institutional constraints or party rules. Populists’ source of power comes from popular support, they may turn to mass rallies, elections, or referendums to demonstrate their political strength. Weyland and Madrid find that Trump fits this definition as a businessman and a media celebrity who ran as a political outsider and relied on his personalistic image. When in office, he exercised authoritarian decision-making and marginalized governmental institutions. Neither did

he engage the Republican Party in government work. Additionally, he preferred direct communication with the populace through Twitter and mass rallies (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 10-11).

Volodymyr Zelenskyy was also a businessman and a celebrity when he launched his campaign. Even before he ran, he was recognized by more than 90% of Ukrainians. 40% of respondents had a positive image of him, another 41.3% were neutral. This was the highest indicator of positive attitude among Ukrainian politicians (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2018). Zelenskyy's campaign strategy was built on "direct communication" through social media. He asked his followers on social media to create his program together instead of presenting his own. Zelenskyy avoided journalists and his campaign managers stressed that they preferred new ways of campaigning. From the very start, Zelenskyy sought to obtain popular support by promising to listen to people's opinions more often, including on referendums. His party in the parliament indeed passed the law on referendum. They haven't organized any referendum yet but Zelenskyy's team organized several mass polls.

Zelenskyy's popularity allowed him to have full control over parliament (his party obtained a majority in the Verkhovna Rada) and appoint members of the government without consulting with other political parties. Zelenskyy reportedly surrounded himself with loyal people. In his infamous phone call with Donald Trump, Zelenskyy said: "Since we have won the absolute majority in our parliament, the next prosecutor general will be 100% my person, my candidate who will be approved by the parliament and will start as a new prosecutor in September" (CNN 2019).

"Of course, the government exercises the powers conferred by the Constitution, the parliament exercises its powers, and the president exercises his powers. But, of course, we are

consulting with the president on many issues, there are no secrets,” Denis Shmygal, Prime Minister of Ukraine, confirmed that Zelenskyy plays an important role in decision-making in government (Shmyhal 2020).

The second type of definition represents populism as an opposition between “the people” and “corrupt elites.” In this case, populists promise to return power to the real people whom they claim to represent. Like other populists, Donald Trump built his campaign on critics of American elites and promised to “drain the swamp” in Washington (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 11-12).

Zelenskyy fits this definition too. His campaign was built on devastating criticism of established politicians and confronting oneself as a new unblemished candidate. His campaign managers chose the phrase “Let’s screw them together” as the main slogan, meaning “we, the people” will defeat “them, corrupt elites.” Similar mottos were used by other populist candidates in Europe (“Down with them all!”, “Everyone out!”, “Let them all go!”, “Fuck off-Days” (Müller 2006: 26-27). Zelenskyy promised to fight corruption in the government and presented himself as the only candidate that has not been involved in corruption. “I am different from Poroshenko: both physiologically and as president. I am an honest, decent person who really cares about the country,” said Zelenskyy during the press conference in 2020 (Unian 2020).

Other notions of populism combine economic aspects and political-cultural appeal. Populists are characterized by overspending, economic populism, nationalism, and protectionism, as well as authoritarian leadership, masculine style, “low” language. For Weyland and Madrid, Trump fits these definitions with massive tax cuts, disregarding economic equilibria in budget balance, trade protectionism, and industrial promotion as elements of economic nationalism. Trump appealed to authoritarian leadership and a coarse style using “intemperate language,” including opponents (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 12).

Zelenskyy's economic policy may be described as populist and characterized by overspending. For example, Zelenskyy's team launched the Large Construction National Program in 2020 and allocated money for the program from the Coronavirus Fund, which drew criticism from the opposition. The government spent UAH 132 billion for road construction in 2021 which was more than defense spending that year (Freik 2022). The Large Construction program became the biggest PR campaign for Zelenskyy. Authorities advertised these achievements on billboards around the country mentioning that the roads were built on the initiative of President Zelenskyy. Sluha narodu, Zelenskyy's party in the parliament, launched a protectionist policy: in December 2021, Verkhovna Rada adopted the law №3739 on localization of industrial production which provided preferences to domestic producers.

Zelenskyy also fits the characteristics of masculine style and the use of "low" language. His communication style has progressed since the beginning of the presidency but he obsessively used folkish language when he came to the office. In July 2019, Zelenskyy asked Boryspil City Council Secretary Yaroslav Godunko to leave the meeting after he learned about his criminal record and called him a gang member. In October 2019, Zelenskyy fought with veterans when he said: "I am the president of this country. I am not some kind of a jerk" (Zanuda 2020).

Finally, President Trump has also exhibited most of the characteristics identified in multidimensional definitions of populism. His movement is multi-class, anti-establishment, and personalistic, albeit not urban-based (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 13). This is also true for Zelenskyy, except he was supported by constituencies both in rural and urban areas so he suits the multidimensional definition as well.

To sum up, both Zelenskyy and Trump can be regarded as populists under various types of definitions. The next stage is to understand their influence on democracy.

2.2. POPULISM AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Trump's presidency and the popularity of far-right groups raised a new wave of interest in populism among political scientists. While the majority of researchers took a critical stance against the possible deterioration of liberal democracy under populist rule, previous studies found the question of the influence of populism on the political system to be more ambiguous: it may have positive and negative effects on democratization.

Populist movements may help to democratize monarchies, authoritarian regimes, sometimes even improve hybrid regimes. The British political scientist Margaret Canovan distinguished agrarian populism that was represented by the People's Party in the USA and the Narodniks in the Russian empire in the late 1800s. The People's Party, also known as the Populist Party, represented the economic interests of farmers and small businesses against corporations. The Narodniks, the movement of Russian intellectual elites, attempted to educate and prepare farmers and peasants for political struggle against the ruling class. Although both political movements disintegrated soon, they advocated the political participation of underrepresented groups and invoiced their needs (Canovan 1981). The Populist Party raised the question of direct elections of US Senators (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 17).

Also, historians note that the first populist American president Andrew Jackson started transforming the US into a majority democracy and brought popular interests into Washington politics (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 17).

Other authors also recognized the importance of populism, especially for authoritarian societies. Moffitt mentions the Shinawatra movement agitation against the royal-aligned military junta in Thailand, the role of Solidarność (Solidarity) in bringing down the repressive Polish communist government in the late 1980s, and the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (the

Party of the Democratic Revolution), which helped to shift Mexico away from authoritarian rule (Moffitt 2020, 108). However, it does not mean that populism always has a positive influence in authoritarian countries. Getúlio Vargas, president of Brazil who turned the country into a dictatorship, and Juan Perón, authoritarian leader of Argentina, used populist rhetoric to gain the support of the mass electorate, stay in power and persecute opponents.

Neither have political scientists reached a consensus on how populism affects democracy. Despite prevailing concerns, some scholars think that the state can still benefit from populism. Radical democrats (Laclau and Mouffe) believe that populists can shake up closed political systems that usually are controlled by a few and bring the voice of “the people” to politics. In their opinion, liberal democracy has swung far away from an expression of popular will toward the liberal side and protecting minorities from the tyranny of the majority. In this perspective, populists help to restore the balance (Moffitt 2020, 100,104).

David M. Ricci writes in his “Political Science Manifesto for the Age of Populism,” “They [populist sentiments] have the potential to be a force for good in the world when grassroots reform movement help reduce corruption, strengthen responsive governance, expand the issue agenda that is debated and the electoral choices on the ballot, and reengage participation among group alienated by mainstream party politics” (Ricci 2020, 462).

Harsh critics find populism dangerous for democracy because of the ideology it professes. Edward Luce argues that “a true populist is not just opposed to the elites, he is also an enemy of pluralism. Without a plural society democracy loses its foundation” (Luce 2017, 139).

Among the main concerns that populism brings are the undermining of equal representation of all citizens and the anti-institutional stance. Anna Grzymala-Busse argues, “In the populist vision, the institutions of liberal democracy, whether courts, parliaments or laws, are

not to be trusted precisely because they are the products of corrupt elites who do not have the people's interests at heart (and who actively oppose these interests). Therefore, these institutions need to be circumvented, or, better yet, brought under the control of "the people"—as represented, of course, by the ruling populist party. Moreover, and as a result, populists also emphasize demands for popular sovereignty and direct democracy, rather than the mediation of interests through democratic institutions such as parliaments or parties" (Grzymala-Busse in Weyland and Madrid 2019, XIX).

Populism may foment polarization, turn political adversaries into enemies, delegitimize any negotiation, and threaten fair competition. "Us versus them" narratives enable the use of all means to keep populists' opponents from returning to power, including undermining checks and balances and overriding the institutions. Populists usually focus their campaign on personal appeals and build their own parties that do not constrain populist leaders as an established party would do (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 15-16). Ricci argues the Us-versus-Them dichotomy is a defining feature of an authoritarian orientation that legitimates misfeasance and abolition of constitutional safeguards (Ricci 2020, 72-74).

This dual opinion applies to Trump's presidency. Although he didn't turn American democracy into a dictatorship as the worst-case scenario, his politics and public rhetoric forced researchers to re-evaluate the stability of American democracy. Norris and Inglehart "view Trump as a leader who uses populist rhetoric to legitimize his style of governance, while promoting authoritarian values that threaten the liberal norms underpinning American democracy" (Norris, and Inglehart 2019, 1). Ricci describes Trump as an authoritarian-populist who "appeals to strongman executive rule, disregarding conventional constitutional checks and balances" (Ricci 2020, 338-339). At the same time, Weyland and Madrid had no doubts that

safeguards of liberal democracy would prove resilient against populism in America (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 2). The question is how much it damaged democracy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach of the research consists of the analysis of democracy indexes and the four key indicators model of authoritarian behavior created by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt to evaluate the risks of Trump's presidency for American democracy. This model was applied to Zelenskyy's presidency and the authoritarian risks were analyzed through four components. This analysis was supplemented by five interviews with Ukrainian journalists and members of the Ukrainian parliament.

3.1. DEMOCRACY RANKINGS

The authors of leading metrics of democracy scrupulously analyzed the political situation in the United States. Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit noted a significant decline in the level of democracy in the USA over the past 10 years. Since 2016, the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index (EIU/DI) began to classify the United States as a flawed democracy as a result of a decline in public trust in institutions. This decline also continued during the Trump presidency. EIU/DI shows a slight fall from 7.98 in 2016 to 7.92 in 2020. "Although we expect the US system of checks and balances to remain intact, these actions risk undermining public confidence in institutions further," the Economist Intelligence Unit concluded in the report on Democracy Index 2019 (Democracy Index 2019 2020, 42).

On Freedom in the World's 100-point scale, the US dropped six points from 89 in 2016 to 83 in 2020. After the first year of Trump's presidency, Freedom House warned of the decline of American democracy. Just in 2017 alone, the USA lost three points which is rare for an established democracy (Abramowitz 2018, 3).

"The president's behavior stems in part from a frustration with the country's democratic

checks and balances, including the independent courts, a coequal legislative branch, the free press, and active civil society. These institutions remained fairly resilient in 2017, but the administration's statements and actions could ultimately leave them weakened, with serious consequences for the health of U.S. democracy and America's role in the world," the president of Freedom House Mike Abramowitz reflected on the decline (Abramowitz 2018, 5).

Trump's attempt to overturn the 2020 election was even more disturbing. Freedom House characterized it as "the most destructive act of his time in office" which culminated after his previous uneasy relationship with democratic norms. "Even before 2020, Trump had presided over an accelerating decline in US freedom scores, driven in part by corruption and conflicts of interest in the administration, resistance to transparency efforts, and harsh and haphazard policies on immigration and asylum that made the country an outlier among its Group of Seven peers," mentioned the authors of the report on 2020 (Repucci and Slipowitz 2021, 9).

However, some rankings were less harsh on Trump. The Democracy Matrix by the University of Würzburg hardly saw noticeable changes and criticized Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit for "maximalist understanding of democracy": they cover side factors not directly related to political and civil rights (socio-economic life, political culture) and overestimate the use of the media over the basic aspects of political rule (hate speech or fake news do not necessarily cancel or restrict freedom of expression and the press per se as the law would do) (Lauth, Schlenkrich, and Lemm 2020, 7). Unlike maximal definitions that also include socio-economic parameters, the University of Würzburg uses middle-range definitions of democracy and measures only political freedom, political equality, and political and legal control. However, even under this scale, the United States is not a working democracy but a deficient democracy and the Democracy index dropped from 0.87 in 2016 to 0.81 in 2020.

Table 1. Democracy in the United States (2016-2020)

Report Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
The Democracy Matrix by the University of Würzburg	0.87	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.811
Freedom in the World by Freedom House	89	86	86	86	83
The Intelligence Unit Democracy Index by Economist	7.98	7.98	7.96	7.96	7.92

Democracy rankings demonstrate either a slight or significant decline in democracy in the USA during Trump's presidency (Table 1). While American democracy may be fully analyzed and widely represented in reports, it may not be the case for Ukraine's president due to the specific political and security background in the country. Volodymyr Zelenskyy was inaugurated on May 20th, 2019. The following year governments around the world, including Ukraine, imposed restrictions to curb the spread of the pandemic and governed under exceptional conditions. Zelenskyy ruled the country under normal circumstances for less than a year. Then, the Russian military buildup on Ukraine's border influenced democratic freedoms in the country.

Table 2. Democracy in Ukraine (2018-2021)

Report Year	2018	2019	2020	2021
The Democracy Matrix by the University of Würzburg	0.44	0.54	0.54	-
Freedom in the World by Freedom House	60	62	60	61
The Intelligence Unit Democracy Index by Economist	5.69	5.90	5.81	5.57

Ukraine's score in the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index declined from 5.81 in 2020 to 5.57 in 2021. EIU/DI explained that, in part, it was a result of the centralization of power and securing public safety that was meant to deter Russian aggression. The Ukrainian government became less transparent and the military exerted more influence over politics (The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2022, 45). At the same time, Freedom House mentions that

“traditional” Ukrainian issues remain in place. The Freedom in the World report praises improvements in freedom of assembly but also mentions that “domestic politics in Ukraine were bogged down by stalled efforts to uproot corruption and the controversial prosecution of former president Petro Poroshenko” (Repucci and Slipowitz 2022, 23). Ukraine’s Freedom House rankings slightly changed during Zelenskyy’s presidency: from 60 in 2018 to 61 in 2021. The Democracy Matrix showed improvement from 0.44 in 2018 to 0.54 in 2020. However, it is not clear if Petro Poroshenko’s presidency influenced the rankings (Table 2).

Taking into consideration the conditions of Ukrainian geopolitics, a more detailed analysis is needed. Further analysis will discuss the latest developments and other nuances not included in reports on democracy.

3.2. LEVITSKY AND ZIBLATT’S MODEL

Levitsky and Ziblatt based their model on four main issues that help understand if a leader has authoritarian tendencies. Those issues are a rejection of (or weak commitments to) democratic rules of the game, denial of the legitimacy of political opponents, toleration or encouragement of violence, and readiness to curtail civil liberties of opponents, including media. If a politician meets at least one criteria, they may undermine democracy.

They concluded that Trump met all four criteria of authoritarian behavior and possessed a threat to democracy. According to scholars, Trump demonstrated a weak commitment to the democratic rules of the game when he questioned the legitimacy of elections and made claims about fraud. The book was written in 2017 and the authors mentioned previous Trump’s threats that he might not accept the results of the 2016 election. The 2020 elections only exacerbated this threat. Trump manifested the denial of the legitimacy of opponents by casting his political rivals as criminal, unpatriotic, and dangerous to national security. He challenged the legitimacy

of Barack Obama's presidency by suggesting that he wasn't born in the USA and branded Hillary Clinton as a criminal. Third, Trump encouraged his supporters to commit violence. For example, at a rally in Birmingham, Alabama November 21, 2015, he demanded to "throw out" Black activist Mercurio Southall Jr. after he yelled, "Black lives matter!". On February 23, 2016, in Las Vegas, Trump said, "I'd like to punch him in the face," referring to a protester (Cineas 2021). Finally, Trump displayed a readiness to curtail the civil liberties of political rivals and media when he said that Hillary Clinton should be imprisoned and threatened to sue the Washington Post and the New York Times. Levitsky and Ziblatt believe that Trump's presidency challenged American democracy (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 66-70).

I am going to apply this model to Zelenskyy's presidency.

1. Rejection of (or weak commitments to) democratic rules of the game.

- *Do they reject the Constitution or express a willingness to violate it?*

Yes. Volodymyr Zelenskyy demonstrated several times he would not hesitate to act beyond his powers provided by the Constitution of Ukraine. The constitutional crisis of 2020-2021 is one example. In 2020, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine invalidated anti-corruption reforms and created chaos not only for reforms but also for itself. On July 28th, the Court declared the appointment of Artem Sytnyk as the head of the National Anti-corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) by a presidential decree as unconstitutional and a violation of the ban on the usurpation of state power. Some experts found this appointment indeed unconstitutional since the Constitution of Ukraine does not empower the president to appoint heads of anti-corruption bodies. In October, the Court's ruling found unconstitutional articles of the Law on Prevention of Corruption that enabled the National Agency on Corruption Prevention (the NACP) to carry out control functions, and Article 366-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, which provided for

liability of government officials for false declarations. The NACP had to shut down access to the E-register of Asset Declarations of Public Officials which became one of the most advanced open sources for monitoring corruption in Ukraine. The next day the government obliged the NACP to restore the E-register access. The NABU had to stop all investigations of false declarations. The European Union criticized those decisions and called on resuming the work of anti-corruption agencies (Unian 2020).

President Zelenskyy tried to restore anti-corruption reforms but in an unconstitutional way. On December 29th, 2020, Zelenskyy suspended Oleksandr Tupytskyi, the chairperson of the Court, for two months. On February 26th, 2021, the president suspended Tupytskyi for another month. Finally, he tried to fire him. On March 27th, Zelenskyy annulled the decree of former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich appointing Oleksandr Tupytskyi and Oleksandr Kasminin as judges of the Constitutional Court. Neither of these actions were legal. As the journalist of Graty media Victoria Matola explained, “Neither the Constitution nor the Law on the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, which governs judges of the Constitutional Court, provides for the possibility of removing a judge of the Constitutional Court from office... Decisions on the dismissal of judges of the Constitutional Court are made by the judges of the Constitutional Court themselves. The president has no such powers” (Matola 2021).

While civil society criticized the decision of the Constitutional court to suspend anti-corruption bodies and Oleksandr Tupytskyi was under investigation for bribing a witness in a criminal case, president Zelenskyy did not have powers to dismiss him.

An MP from the opposition party Yaroslav Yurchyshyn argues that Zelenskyy’s abuse of power comes from a lack of political experience and a misunderstanding of checks and balances. Yurchyshyn says, “He did not understand how his decision of the president could be overturned

by a Constitutional Court. If it cancels them, then it is wrong. If law enforcement can't prove it wrong, let's break it down" (Butsko 2021b).

The second wave of violation of the Constitution comes with the president's interaction with The National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (the NSDC). Zelenskyy publicly demonstrated that he considers check and balance restrictions as burdens for his plans. His team came up with an idea of how to pass the desired decisions without going through the legislative and executive branches. In 2014, the NSDC got the possibility of imposing economic sanctions and other restrictive measures (sanctions) due to the new law. The President of Ukraine, who is the head of the Council, enacts its decision. He also appoints members of the NSDC. The original idea of the sanctions was to impose restrictive measures on foreigners "to protect the national interests, national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine." According to the Law of Sanctions, "sanctions may be imposed by Ukraine against a foreign state, a foreign legal entity, a legal entity controlled by a foreign legal entity or a non-resident individual, foreigners, stateless persons, and entities engaged in terrorist activities" (Law of Ukraine on Sanctions 2014). Although the law stipulates that sanctions are imposed on foreigners or citizens of Ukraine who live in the occupied territories where the Ukrainian court can't prosecute them, Zelenskyy's government used the phrase "entities engaged in terrorist activities" to claim that the NSDC has a right to impose sanctions on any citizen of Ukraine.

On February 2th 2021, Zelenskyy put into effect the decision of the NSDC on the application of sanctions against a member of parliament Taras Kozak and shut down TV channels 112 Ukraine, NewsOne, and ZIK, which were owned by Kozak and affiliated with another member of parliament, Putin's ally in Ukraine Viktor Medvedchuk. On February 19th, 2021 the NSDC imposed sanctions for financing terrorism on Medvedchuk, his wife, Oksana

Marchenko, and their business assets. The Council also instructed the government to return the Samara-Western direction oil product pipeline to state ownership. The pipeline was believed to be owned by people close to Medvedchuk (Liga.Biznes 2017). In both cases, this was explained by the need to fight Russia's proxy in Ukraine.

On April 21st, the president implemented the decision of the NSDC on sanctions against 13 individuals and 95 legal entities, which Zelenskyy accused of smuggling. Zelenskyy was going to use the NSDC as a tool against oligarchs. According to the so-called law on oligarchs, the Council was expected to decide if a businessperson was an oligarch. The Russian invasion postponed the introduction of the register of oligarchs.

The use of sanctions to fight internal problems concerned human rights activists. Five Ukrainian human rights organizations warned about signs of abuse of power. They criticized decisions to sanction the citizens of Ukraine because it undermines “the fundamental principles of law, grossly violate the Constitution and international treaties ratified by Ukraine, entail serious threats to the human rights and liberties, as well as have the indicators of usurpation of power in the state” (Zakharov & others 2021). They explained that a person should have the right to due process and a punishment imposed by a court, not other bodies.

“We emphasize that the sanctions cannot serve as the instrument of legal prosecution for the commission of criminal offenses, even if the investigation is ongoing against the person. The sanctions cannot substitute the criminal responsibility, since in such cases the principles of justice would be ruined by political expediency that is used by the bodies of the executive. The use of sanctions instead of a fair trial would mean the ruination of the democratic foundations of our society,” the statement said (Zakharov & others 2021).

Victoria Siumar, a member of parliament representing the opposition European Solidarity

party, finds all those discussions illegal and explains that Zelenskyy uses the NSDC as “the system of quick decisions” and desires “to control the law enforcement system” (Butsko 2021c).

- *Do they suggest a need for antidemocratic measures, such as canceling elections, violating or suspending the Constitution, banning certain organizations, or restricting basic civil or political rights?*

No.

- *Do they seek to use (or endorse the use of) extraconstitutional means to change the government, such as military coups, violent insurrections, or mass protests aimed at forcing a change in the government?*

No.

- *Do they attempt to undermine the legitimacy of elections, for example, by refusing to accept credible electoral results?*

No.

2. Denial of the legitimacy of political opponents.

- *Do they describe their rivals as subversive, or opposed to the existing constitutional order?*

No.

- *Do they claim that their rivals constitute an existential threat, either to national security or to the prevailing way of life?*

Yes. Zelenskyy’s presidential campaign was built on sharp criticism of established politicians, ex-president Petro Poroshenko in particular. Coming into power, he continued his attacks against Poroshenko and his allies. For example, Zelenskyy blamed the previous government for using the country’s resources and promoting its prosperity “...some people like to

humiliate themselves. They have been doing this for five years. They continue to humiliate their country, to deny its strength and abilities today,” Zelenskyy said (LB.ua 2020).

Zelenskyy attacked corruption in Poroshenko’s office, blaming his predecessor for making a business out of war (Ukrainska Pravda 2020). This can be understood as a threat to national security.

“He has some kind of irrational hatred for Poroshenko,” Sonya Koshkina, the editor-in-chief of LB.ua, told me (Butsko 2021d).

One of the reasons for this hatred is personal attacks on Zelenskyy’s family spread by Poroshenko’s team during the election campaign, as he explained. “I really think he is an experienced manipulator and an experienced politician. That’s why I do not believe him,” Zelenskyy mentioned in an interview. “He used these bot farms against me, my family ... They only insulted me, and all of that was their lies: that I was a drug addict, that I was something else”(Kravets 2020).

While Zelenskyy didn’t hesitate to criticize his political rivals, it should be mentioned that independent journalists published dozens of investigations exposing corruption in Poroshenko’s office. Zelenskyy’s accusations could be justified.

- *Do they baselessly describe their partisan rivals as criminals, whose supposed violation of the law (or potential to do so) disqualifies them from full participation in the political arena?*

Yes. Zelenskyy not only criticized Poroshenko but tried to imprison him. Law enforcement agencies, often under Zelenskyy’s control, have begun investigating dozens of cases against Poroshenko. Poroshenko was suspected of treason and aiding and abetting terrorist organizations. The investigators believed that Poroshenko ordered Ukrainian authorities to buy

coal from Russian-backed terrorists in Donbas, and the state budget lost about UAH 1.5 billion because of the scheme. Viktor Medvedchuk is another suspect in this case and probably transferred money to pro-Russian terrorists. The court forbade Poroshenko from traveling abroad and ordered him to hand in passports to authorities.

Although Poroshenko had confirmed that Ukraine was buying coal from entities in uncontrolled territories, he didn't believe it was illegal. The media and NGOs consider this case selective justice (Shevchenko 2020).

- *Do they baselessly suggest that their rivals are foreign agents, in that they are secretly working in alliance with (or the employ of) a foreign government—usually an enemy one?*

Not without reason. Zelenskyy repeated the accusation that Victor Medvedchuk and his party acted on behalf of Vladimir Putin in Ukraine. As was mentioned, Medvedchuk is a friend of President Putin. The Russian leader is the godfather of his daughter. Also, Medvedchuk has business interests in Russia. Although Zelenskyy made those suggestions, they were based on facts.

3. Toleration or encouragement of violence.

- *Do they have any ties to armed gangs, paramilitary forces, militias, guerrillas, or other organizations that engage in illicit violence?*

No.

- *Have they or their partisan allies sponsored or encouraged mob attacks on opponents?*

No.

- *Have they tacitly endorsed violence by their supporters by refusing to unambiguously condemn it and punish it?*

No.

- *Have they praised (or refused to condemn) other significant acts of political violence, either in the past or elsewhere in the world?*

No.

4. Readiness to curtail civil liberties of opponents, including media.

- *Have they supported laws or policies that restrict civil liberties, such as expanded libel or defamation laws, or laws restricting protest, criticism of the government, or certain civic or political organizations?*

No.

- *Have they threatened to take legal or other punitive action against critics in rival parties, civil society, or the media?*

Yes. Publicly Zelenskyy said that it was up to investigators and the court to decide whether Poroshenko committed a crime. However, his campaign was built on promises to arrest politicians involved in corruption. His campaign slogans read: “When spring comes, we’ll start planting” (planting and arresting are homonyms in Ukrainian). In his interviews, Zelenskyy made it clear that the constituency wanted the establishment to be punished for wrongdoings. “Everyone is waiting for Poroshenko to be imprisoned,” the president said in 2020. “As for Mr. Poroshenko’s verdict, I am sure of it. All this is still ahead. They ruled the country in such a way that many different adventures and different verdicts await them,” Zelenskyy “predicted” Poroshenko’s arrest (Ukrainska Pravda 2020).

Although the threats may not have been so pronounced, they raised concerns about the understanding of democratic processes and the work of law enforcement agencies.

- *Have they praised repressive measures taken by other governments, either in the past or*

elsewhere in the world?

No.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Democracy indexes slightly dropped in the USA and Ukraine during Trump's and Zelenskyy's presidencies. The authoritarian tendencies model shows that both leaders broke norms that safeguard democracy. It places both presidents among other populists who tried to abuse power and should be a concern for both states. Especially dangerous may be the rejection of the election results as the January 6 attack on the United States Capitol proves. No matter what the outcome of the 2024 election will be, American democracy may be attacked again, if candidates do not accept the results.

Levitsky and Ziblatt made a pessimistic prediction, "Norms are the soft guardrails of democracy; as they break down, the zone of acceptable political behavior expands, giving rise to discourse and action that could imperil democracy. Behavior that was once considered unthinkable in American politics is becoming thinkable. Even if Donald Trump does not break the hard guardrails of our constitutional democracy, he has increased the likelihood that a future president will" (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 179).

However, there is a difference between Ukrainian and American institutions and, with that, the possibility for populists to undermine democracy. Trump's presidency did not destroy democracy per se although he shook its long-standing norms. Weyland and Madrid were quite positive about Trump's presidency. In 2019, when the book came out, they believed that American liberal democracy would prevail due to institutional constraints, partisan opposition, and civil society. In their view, the federal and presidential system enshrines a firmer separation of powers than the parliamentary system. The US party system imposed more constraints than most European and Latin American countries where populist leaders formed and controlled their

own parties. Third, the social and political cleavage makes support for one unifying leader impossible. Finally, Weyland and Madrid found that the United States “was lucky” not to face a huge crisis during which Trump could successfully overcome and gain more popularity. This happened when Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Carlos Saúl Menem Akil in Argentina, and Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil drew political benefits from fighting hyperinflation (Weyland and Madrid 2019, 2–5).

These safeguards do not exist or are much weaker in Ukraine. As the analysis shows, there are some trends in Zelenskyy’s politics that question his devotion to democracy and understanding of the need for check and balance institutions. Zelenskyy met three out of four criteria of authoritarian behavior: readiness to curtail civil liberties of opponents, denial of the legitimacy of political opponents, and rejection of (or weak commitments to) democratic rules of the game. Zelenskyy’s misunderstanding of the democratic system and impatience with dissent in his inner circle may undermine the young Ukrainian democracy that has not established itself yet. Ukraine has a premier-presidential system with weak political parties and Zelenskyy is in control of his party. Ukrainian society is not as polarized as the American one and it does not prevent a politician from gaining an overwhelming victory which happened to Zelenskyy in 2019. He obtained the support of 73% of the voters. However, there is another safeguard in Ukraine, civil society.

All speakers that I talked with believe that Zelenskyy demonstrated some authoritarian tendencies, but they did not think he could turn Ukraine into an authoritarian state. Two journalists mentioned a lack of institutionalized abuse of power like in other post-soviet countries that would allow Zelenskyy to take over the presidency without resistance.

“There is a trend towards authoritarianism. As I was told, he had such conversations. In a

number of cases he restrained himself, in a number of other cases there were no people who would perform that for him. People are not ready to do whatever you tell them. But at the same time, there is no such feeling [in Ukraine] as in Russia that you can do whatever you want with people,” explains Yevheniy Kuzmenko, a political reporter for Censor.net (Butsko 2021e).

Yulia Mostova, an editor-in-chief of *Dzerkalo Tyzhnia*, thinks that Zelenskyy’s authoritarian behavior comes from his background when he led the entertainment business team and acted as an operational manager. He transferred this system of management to the state level and still tries to micromanage everything, Mostova argues. “He is usually prone to autocracy, to dictatorship, because he considers it unalterable, naturally justified. If there was such a system under his fingers as in Belarus or Russia, then it would be an extremely dangerous alarm, but we do not have it,” Mostova added (Butsko 2021a).

However, none of the speakers I interviewed believed in the complete overtake of Ukrainian democracy.

“He is authoritarian and populist in nature, but does not have the ability or energy to be a populist like Hugo Chavez, nor does he have the strength to be Pinochet,” said Victoria Siumar, a member of parliament representing the European Solidarity party. “The Ukrainian people are very democratic. In a post-colonial society, power has always been seen as something aggressive. This anti-authoritarianism is deep and he will not succeed in this. He really wants to, but he won’t succeed” (Butsko 2021c).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The conducted analysis was meant to explain authoritarian tendencies based on Zelenskyy's politics before the Russian invasion. The war Vladimir Putin started on February 24th, 2022 is more than just a factor for the future of Ukraine. While this research is being written, the war is still ongoing and predicting its outcome is hardly possible. For sure, the Russian war is a great threat to the international security system, Ukrainian sovereignty, its democracy, and even president Zelenskyy himself. At the end of the first day of Russia's invasion, Zelenskyy said that Russian sabotage groups were ordered to kill him (Zelenskyy 2022). Putin indirectly confirmed this when he appealed to the Ukrainian army and asked to stage a coup and overthrow the elected government (Roth 2022). However, Moscow changed its rhetoric after the attempted blitzkrieg failed and the Russian army faced resistance from the Ukrainian army. On March 9th, 2022, Maria Zakharova, director of the Information and Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, said that Russian aims did not include neither "the occupation of Ukraine, nor the destruction of its statehood, nor the overthrow of the current government" (Petrenko 2022). Despite these claims, the future of Zelenskyy's presidency remains in danger until there are Russian troops in Ukraine. Another test for Ukrainian democracy will begin with the after-war period. War or other security threats usually increases the popularity of the leader and allows the government to abuse power.

Levitsky and Ziblatt warned, "One of the great ironies of how democracies die is that the very defense of democracy is often used as a pretext for its subversion. Would-be autocrats often use economic crises, natural disasters, and especially security threats—wars, armed insurgencies, or terrorist attacks—to justify anti-democratic measures" (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 92).

Examples from other countries are also warning. In 1972, president Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines used a series of mysterious bombings of Manila and an assassination attempt on Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile as an opportunity to stay in power for the next fourteen years. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan used the 2016 coup to demolish checks on presidential authority and launch repression against public officials, judges, prosecutors, and journalists in Turkey (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018, 95).

President Zelenskyy's endurance resistance against Russia made him popular in Ukraine and abroad. According to the poll conducted by the Sociological group "Rating", 91% of Ukrainians supported the activities of president Zelenskyy (Fink 2022). There were no Ukrainian leaders who ever enjoyed such a level of support and at this moment it is impossible to predict how Zelenskyy will use it.

At the beginning of the war, on February 24, 2022, the Ukrainian president declared martial law which provides him with the right to restrict freedoms. Zelenskyy didn't use security instability to excessively oppress opposition like Vladimir Putin. However, on March 20th, Zelenskyy suspended 11 political parties that he claimed collaborated with Russia and combined all national TV channels into one platform. It is not clear at this point if that decision was based on security precautions alone, although the leader of the banned Opposition Platform for Life, Viktor Medvedchuk, is an ally of Vladimir Putin, and the head of the Nashi party Yevhen Murayev has been considered by Russia as a head for puppet government in Kyiv, British intelligence reported (The Guardian 2022).

Full-scale war is a big challenge for any country's security and democracy. When the war ends, Zelenskyy may still have huge support. Probably, civil society in Ukraine will try to prevent abuse of power if Zelenskyy tries to do it. Nevertheless, it is too early to predict what

happens when the Russia-Ukraine war ends.

REFERENCES

1. Abramowitz, Michael J. 2018. "Freedom in the world 2018". Freedom House. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/FH_FIW_Report_2018_Final.pdf
2. Butsko, Diana. 2021a. Interview with Yulia Mostova on November 16, 2021.
3. Butsko, Diana. 2021b. Interview with Yaroslav Yurchyshyn on December 27, 2021.
4. Butsko, Diana. 2021c. Interview with Victoria Siumar on December 13, 2021.
5. Butsko, Diana. 2021d. Interview with Sonya Koshkina on November 16, 2021.
6. Butsko, Diana. 2021e. Interview with Yevheniy Kuzmenko on November 7 2021.
7. Canovan, Margaret. 1981. *Populism*. New York: Harcourt.
8. Caputo, Marc. "Biden Camp Clapback: Trump's Best Debate Case 'Made in Urine.'" POLITICO. September 27, 2020. <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/09/27/joe-biden-trump-debate-422328>.
9. Cineas, Fabiola. 2021. "Donald Trump Is the Accelerant." Vox. January 9, 2021. <https://www.vox.com/21506029/trump-violence-tweets-racist-hate-speech>.
10. CNN. "Read Trump's Phone Conversation with Volodymyr Zelensky". September 26, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/25/politics/donald-trump-ukraine-transcript-call/index.html>.
11. The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited. "Democracy Index 2021. The China Challenge." 2022. <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2021/>.
12. Fink, Jenni. "Ukrainian Support for President Zelensky Skyrockets amid Russia Invasion." Newsweek. February 28, 2022. <https://www.newsweek.com/ukrainian-support-president-zelensky-skyrockets-amid-russia-invasion-1683238>.
13. Freik, Natalia. 2022. "Na dorohy vytratyly vtrychi bil'she iz derzhbyudzhetu u 2021 rotsi, nizh planuvaly." Liga.net. July 22, 2022. <https://finance.liga.net/ua/ekonomika/novosti/na-dorogi-potratili-vtroe-bolshe-iz-gosbyudjeta-v-2021-godu-chem-planirovali>.
14. The Guardian. Ukraine Suspends 11 Political Parties with Links to Russia. March 20, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/20/ukraine-suspends-11-political-parties-with-links-to-russia>.
15. Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation. "100 dniv pislya prezidents'kyh vyboriv: otsinky ta ochikuvannya hromadyan." August 28, 2019. <https://dif.org.ua/en/article/100-dniv-pislya-prezidentskikh-vivoriv-otsynki-ta-ochikuvannya-gromadyan>.
16. Klein, Naomi. 2017. *No is not enough: resisting Trump's shock politics and winning the world we need*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
17. Kravets, Roman. "Volodymyr Zelenskyy: Poroshenko bahato raziv meni proponuvav zustrich. Kazav, shcho mozhemo znayty porozuminnya." June 11, 2020. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2020/06/11/7255137/>.
18. Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. *Social and Political Attitudes of the Residents of Ukraine*. May 7, 2018. <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=764&page=1>.
19. Kyle, Jordan, and Limor Gultchin. 2018. "Populists in Power around the World." Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. <https://institute.global/policy/populists-power-around-world>.

20. Law of Ukraine on Sanctions. 2014. The Official Bulletin of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/en/1644-18#Text>.
21. Lauth, Hans-Joachim, Oliver Schlenkrich, and Lukas Lemm. "DeMaX Report 2019: No Age of Autocratization! Growing Hybridity in the Center of the Regime Continuum. Democracy Matrix." 2020.
https://www.democracymatrix.com/fileadmin/Mediapool/PDFs/Report/DeMaX_Report_2019_Growing_Hybridity.pdf.
22. LB.ua. "Lyudy z amputovanoyu sovisty": Zelenskyy zayavyv, shcho politychni oponenty "radiyut" yoho hvorobi." November 9, 2020.
https://lb.ua/news/2020/11/09/470214_lyudi_z_amputovanoyu_sovisty.html.
23. Liga.Biznes. "Vladelets' ukrainskogo truboprovoda stal export'orom Rosnefti." September 5, 2017. <https://biz.liga.net/all/tek/novosti/vladelets-ukrainskogo-truboprovoda-stal-eksporterom-rosnefti>.
24. Luce, Edward. 2017. *The Retreat of Western Liberalism*. New York: Grove Atlantic.
25. Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. London: Penguin.
26. Matola, Victoria. 2021. "Yurydychnyy chaos. Yak prezident sprobuvav zaminyty suddiv Konstytutsiyneho sudu, ale vse stalo shche zaplutanishe." *Graty*. December 3, 2021.
<https://graty.me/uk/yuridichnij-haos-yak-prezident-sprobuvav-zaminiti-suddiv-konstitucziynogo-sudu-ale-vse-stalo-shhe-zaplutanishe/>.
27. Mudde, Cas and Kaltwasser, Cristóbal Rovira. 2017. *Populism : A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.
28. Müller, Jan-Werner. 2017. *What Is Populism?* London: Penguin Books.
29. Moffitt, Benjamin. 2020. *Populism*. Medford, Massachusetts: Polity Press.
30. Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2019. *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
31. Petrenko, Roman. "Russia Is Now Claiming That It Did Not Intend to Overthrow the Government of Ukraine." *Ukrainska Pravda*. March 9, 2022.
<https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/03/9/7329720/>.
32. Repucci, Sarah, and Amy Slipowitz. 2022. "Freedom in the World 2021. Democracy under Siege." Freedom House. February 25, 2021.
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2021/democracy-under-siege>.
33. Ricci, David M. 2020. *A political science manifesto for the age of populism: challenging growth, markets, inequality, and resentment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108785440>.
34. Roth, Andrew. "It's Not Rational": Putin's Bizarre Speech Wrecks His Once Pragmatic Image." *The Guardian*. February 25, 2022.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/25/its-not-rational-putins-bizarre-speech-wrecks-his-once-pragmatic-image>.
35. Shevchenko, Sashko. "Zahidni eksperty pro spravu proty Poroshenka: "Zelenskyy hrayetsya z vohnem." *Radio Svoboda*. July 1, 2020.
<https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/zakhidni-eksperty-pro-spravy-proty-poroshenka/30699013.html>.
36. Shmyhal, Denis. Denis Shmyhal: Treba navchytysya zhyty v novy umovah shchonaymenshe dva roky. Interview by Serhii Shcherbyna. *RBC*. April 22, 2020.
<https://www.rbc.ua/ukr/news/denis-shmigal-nauchitsya-zhit-novyh-usloviyah-1587495027.html>.

37. Steshenko, Anna, and Diana Butsko. "Boy banochkami": kak kandidaty analizy sdavaly". LB.ua. April 5, 2019. https://rus.lb.ua/news/2019/04/05/423848_boy_banochkami_kandidati.html
38. Ukrainska Pravda. "Ya nichoho pohanoho ne roblyu. Shcho hovoryv Zelenskyi zhurnalistam. Holovne." May 20, 2020. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2020/05/20/7252427/>.
39. Unian. Ambassador Maasikas: IMF, EU Financial Aid, Visa-Free Travel Depend on Fighting Corruption. November 12, 2020. <https://www.unian.info/politics/ambassador-maasikas-imf-eu-financial-aid-visa-free-travel-depend-on-fighting-corruption-11218355.html>.
40. Unian. Pro perehovory z Putynym ta druhyi termin: holovni zayavy Zelenskoho na pres-konferentsiyi. May 20, 2020. <https://www.unian.ua/politics/pres-konferenciya-zelenskogo-golovni-zayavi-prezidenta-novini-ukrajina-11004278.html>.
41. Weyland, Kurt, and Raúl L. Madrid, eds. When Democracy Trumps Populism: European and Latin American Lessons for the United States. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. doi:10.1017/9781108692793.
42. Zakharov, Yevgeniy, Anastasiya Martynovska, Oleksandra Matviychuk, Oleksandr Pavlichenko, and Yevgen Nietsvietayev. "There Are Signs of Usurpation of Power: A Statement by Human Rights Organizations Regarding Sanctions against Ukrainian Citizens." Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group. April 7, 2021. <https://khpg.org/en/1608808963>.
43. Zanuda, Anastasia. "12 misyatsiv prezydenta Zelenskoho v tsytatah." BBC News Ukraine. May 19, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-52574575>.
44. Zelenskyi, Volodymyr. "Address by the President to Ukrainians at the End of the First Day of Russia's Attacks." Official website of the President of Ukraine. February 25, 2022. <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/zvernennya-prezidenta-do-ukrayinciv-naprikinci-pershogo-dnya-73149>.

VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Diana Butsko

dianabutsko@gmail.com

B.A., Lomonosov Moscow State University, May 2015

M.A., National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, June 2017

Research Paper Title:

Populism and Democracy: A Comparative Analysis of Trump's and Zelenskyy's
Presidencies

Major Professor: Dr. Stephen Bloom