COUNTERP●INT

Populist Rhetoric: UKIP

Introduction

This series of briefings examines the rhetoric of populist politicians in the European Parliament. We analyse exchanges between populists and their fellow MEPs and give recommendations for how to respond effectively to their rhetoric. The briefings are for politicians and campaigners who are looking to build a response to populist parties both inside and outside the Parliament: building on our extensive research on populist parties, we hope that they can be a useful advocacy tool for political parties and NGOs to counter populism successfully.

In creating these briefings, our main concern is with the danger that populist parties pose to open societies in Europe. As a result, we focus on rhetoric that seeks to undermine openness and tolerance, whether it focuses on immigration, Roma inclusion or minority rights.

We argue that:

- While populist parties vary significantly according to national context, they share similar tactics and rhetoric;

- The plenary debates in the European Parliament are a valuable resource for understanding this rhetoric; and

- This rhetoric poses a threat to open societies in Europe by paralysing the European Parliament and delegitimising institutions that protect minority rights.

Populism: different contexts, similar rhetoric

On May 22-25, as voters across the EU go to the polls to elect a new European Parliament, populist parties across Europe are expected to perform strongly. These parties range from the moderate, agrarian True Finns to the anti-immigration Front National in France and the extremist, anti-Semitic Jobbik in Hungary. Their policy prescriptions, voter bases, and hot-button issues differ according to national context.

Despite their policy differences, some populist parties have promised to work together. Geert Wilders, leader of the populist PVV in the Netherlands, and Marine Le Pen, leader of the Front National in France, announced in November 2013 that they intend to build a new alliance. Since then, other parties, such as the Austrian Freedom Party, Vlaams Belang in Belgium and Lega Nord in Italy, have also shown an interest in joining forces.[1] While such alliances have occurred before and have been ill fated, it is worth wondering whether a significant increase in the number of populist MEPs could impart a new set of dynamics after these coming elections.

Aside from the collaboration between members of the new populist alliance led by Wilders and Le Pen, populist parties more broadly share a range of tactics and rhetoric. Populist politicians of whatever stripe are relentless in their defence of the "ordinary people", positioning themselves as the representative of the common man and woman in opposition to a fickle, self-interested elite. They depict themselves as rebels and their mainstream counterparts as crooks complicit in a rotten system. At the same time, they often try to co-opt values like democracy, tolerance, freedom and human rights and use them against mainstream politicians. In these briefings, we illustrate, with a series of examples, how populist politicians from across Europe use these tactics again and again. And how this approach is effective despite its apparent lack of sophistication.

The debates in the European Parliament: a valuable resource

These briefings focus on debates in the European Parliament for two reasons. First, because a good deal more populist politicians are likely to be in the European Parliament after the 2014 elections. We therefore expect that MEPs from the mainstream political groups will spend more time engaging with populists. These briefings provide a guide for how populist rhetoric has been handled in the past and how it can be dealt with in the future.

But these briefings are also intended for those working beyond the walls of the European Parliament. So the second reason for our focus is that it provides a vital resource for understanding how populists interact with other politicians. The European Parliament is a perfect laboratory for exploring which responses to populist rhetoric work – and which do not.

Introduction

How populist rhetoric can delegitimise institutions and put minority rights at risk

In the European Parliament, populist politicians are not just speaking to their supporters. It is therefore much harder for them to make directly discriminatory statements in this setting. Outside of Parliament, politicians from the same parties have crossed the line and made statements that are more clearly xenophobic and racist (such as Geert Wilders encouraging his supporters to chant that they want "fewer" Moroccans in the Netherlands[2] or Lega Nord MEP Mario Borghezio describing the Italian government as "bongo bongo" due to the inclusion of Cecile Kyenge, Italy's first black minister).[3] But in the European Parliament they tend to tread a much more careful line, weary of their most immediate audience, the Parliament's other members.

This means that monitoring the rhetoric of populists in the European Parliament becomes a far murkier affair: in true populist fashion the targets of their speeches are often not minorities but the political elite – the other MEPs who they hold responsible for "selling out" the sovereignty and rights of "ordinary" people. But even though populist MEPs generally avoid "frontal" attacks against minorities, their rhetoric towards other parliamentarians still poses a danger. Populists do not follow the standard, informal rules of debate in the European Parliament: their attacks can be aggressive, unrelenting and infuriating. This can be extremely difficult to handle. Populists break expectations and protocol in ways that are fundamentally destabilising —and difficult to counter without resorting to the same unsavoury tactics. MEPs are damned if they do engage in similar ways—and damned if they don't. En masse these tactics can create institutional paralysis and weaken the effectiveness of the Parliament, an institution that has done a great deal of work to defend Europe from xenophobia and intolerance.

But can rhetoric really cause that much damage? In the current Parliament, where populists make up a small minority of the total number of MEPs, their rhetoric only has limited effect. But in the next Parliament things could change significantly. With more populist MEPs in the Parliament, debates on sensitive issues could be hijacked by these voices. And this really could shift the terms of the debate – a first step to deeper policy changes in the future. Outside the European Parliament, too, populist rhetoric – combined with success at the polls – has influenced mainstream party policy. So far mainstream voices have struggled to find a response that really stops the populists in their tracks.

In sum, populists from a range of different traditions often engage in rhetoric about immigration and minority rights in the European Parliament in ways that can be highly debilitating. We give examples of this rhetoric and discuss how campaigners and politicians can develop an effective response.

In this briefing we focus on the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP).

Context

The UK Independence Party is a populist party that argues for British withdrawal from the EU. Initially a single-issue party founded by the LSE's Professor Alan Sked after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, in recent years UKIP has gained greater prominence, winning support from older, male, working class voters.[4] Since the 2010 general election, UKIP's support has surged, in part benefiting from its anti-immigration rhetoric, its opposition to the EU's freedom of movement laws and its critique of the political elite. Nigel Farage MEP, UKIP's leader, has made no bones about aiming to win the European Parliament elections in 2014 – after coming second in the last 2009 elections – and to cause an "earthquake" in British politics.[5]

UKIP's leadership has strong libertarian leanings, unlike its support base. The party has advocated a flat tax and argued in favour of more international trade.[6] But at the same time it has a protectionist streak, opposing "open-door immigration" and advocating a greater use of temporary work permits and a five-year immigration ban for people who want to settle permanently.[7]

Our research shows that MEPs from populist parties tend to have little direct impact on policy in the European Parliament's committees but are disproportionately active in parliamentary debates.[8] UKIP is a prime example of this – one of their primary reasons for joining forces with other national delegations and forming a political group in the European Parliament is to ensure more speaking time in debates for Nigel Farage.

UKIP rhetoric

UKIP's rhetoric is composed of a number of interlocking frames, each one reflecting a different aspect of their world-view. Each frame contains a number of elements: the actors – individuals, organisations, and institutions – that the frame refers to and their relationships; the problem that the frame identifies; and the solution that the frame suggests. Drawing on UKIP's speeches in the European Parliament as well as their language outside the Parliament,[9] we have identified four frames that guide their discourse. For each frame, we discuss the different components, the values they activate, give particular thematic applications, and illustrate with examples of particular rhetoric. When taken together, the frames below show the narrative that UKIP aims to present.

1. Ruled from above

Actors: the ruled and the rulers

Problem: the rulers who represent the elites have gained too much power over those they rule, the hard-working ordinary people. The ruled no longer have control over their own affairs and are at the mercy of the unaccountable rulers.

Solution: the ruled should be able to rule themselves. We must reduce the power and reach of the rulers who only care about the elites, either by reducing their influence or by eliminating them altogether.

The frame activates the following values: Liberty, Democracy

Applications: UKIP applies this frame in at least three ways:

The EU rules the member states
Here the ruler is the EU and the ruled are the member states. The EU infringes on the sovereignty of the member states, making most of their laws and dictating what governments can and cannot do.

Examples: "all I want is a Europe consisting of individual, sovereign, democratic states", *Nigel Farage*[10]

"You cannot make any decisions, you have been bailed out and you have surrendered. Democracy: the thing your country invented in the first place", *Nigel Farage, talking to Antonis Samaras, the Greek President*[11]

The EU rules the people
Here the ruler is again the EU, but this time the ruled are individuals themselves. In this application of the frame, individuals have no say over their rulers in Brussels, despite the EU having more and more control over their lives. EU officials, who have no interest in the wellbeing of ordinary Britons, decide who can come to live in Britain. UK citizens have lost control over who can enter the country.

Examples: "We believe in the right of the people of the UK to govern ourselves, rather than be governed by unelected bureaucrats in Brussels" *UKIP website*[12]

"I want a Europe, but a Europe based on trade, a Europe based on cooperation, a Europe based on us sitting round the table and agreeing sensible rules on crime and the environment. We can do all of those things but we cannot do them if we are asked to rally behind that flag. I owe no allegiance to that flag and nor do most of the people in Europe either." *Nigel Farage* [13]

UK politicians rule the people

In this application, the rulers are UK politicians or "Westminster", and the ruled are the people of the UK. Politicians in the UK have grown too powerful, the state is too big, and politicians refuse to give the people a say on the issues that they care about.

Examples: "the EU is only the biggest symptom of the real problem – the theft of our democracy by a powerful, remote political 'elite' which has forgotten that it's here to serve the people." *UKIP website* [14]

"I would urge people - come and join the people's army. Let's topple the establishment who got us into this mess." *Nigel Farage* [15]

2. Paradise Lost

Actors: the representatives of tradition – who long for something lost in the past – and the representatives of modernity – who have forgotten or even betrayed the ideal "Paradise Lost".

Problem: The representatives of tradition want to bring back the Paradise Lost, while the representatives of modernity are engulfed in what is depicted as a meaningless rush toward a soulless future.

Solution: bring back the Paradise Lost

The frame activates the following values: Respect for Tradition, Sense of Belonging

Applications: For UKIP, the Paradise Lost is an independent, more homogenous Britain – the UK's membership of the EU, the acceleration of immigration to Britain, and the liberal, modernising politics introduced by New Labour and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition have transformed the country. Modern politicians have forgotten the Paradise Lost – some are too young to have seen it – but UKIP wants to bring it back: leave the EU, reduce immigration, stop multiculturalism, and turf out career politicians.

Examples: "In scores of our cities and market towns, this country in a short space of time has frankly become unrecognisable … Whether it is the impact on local schools and hospitals, whether it is the fact in many parts of England you don't hear English spoken any more. This is not the kind of community we want to leave to our children and grandchildren" *Nigel Farage* [16]

"We hear a lot about fundamental rights in this place [the European Parliament]. In England we had very good fundamental rights long before we joined the European Union. These were established over centuries under Habeas corpus, the Bill of Rights, the presumption of innocence, trial by jury, and guilt proved beyond reasonable doubt, to name just a few. These safeguards are now being destroyed by the creation of the EU's own system of criminal justice." *Gerard Batten* [17]

3. Reinstating common sense

Actors: the bookish, disconnected professional politicians vs the down-to-earth, practical real representatives of the people.

Problem: the professional politicians are in charge. Their ideas border on the absurd but are nevertheless being implemented to disastrous effect. They have subverted the natural order of things, because they have no appreciation of nature, "real life" or the heartland.

Solution: we need to listen to the non-professional politicians who have other forms of experience – they are in touch with reality and can find the way out of the mess the politicians have gotten us into.

The frame activates the following values: Natural Order, Competency

Applications: UKIP applies this approach to a range of EU policy areas – from banking to women's rights. On every

issue, EU policymakers are the naïve politicians, the "true believers" in the abstract European project at the expense of everything else. UKIP are the experienced representatives of the people, who could find a way out of the mess the EU has made of Europe if only they were given half a chance.

Examples: "Madam President, it is a shame that the Commissioner has gone. He would learn so much from me, since, unlike most of the people here, I actually have commercial experience. I have actually run companies. I actually know what I am talking about." *Godfrey Bloom* [18]

"Mr President, it seems that Chancellor Faymann understands some of the problems which are facing Europe, and yet his solution of course is more Europe. This represents the triumph of hope over experience, of ideological prejudice over everyday reality." *Roger Helmer* [19]

4. The bearers of truth

Actors: the naïve cowards in power, the fantasists who have put their head in the sand; vs the "truth-tellers", the realists who have the nerve to tell it as it is.

Problem: the naïve cowards in power have not listened to the truth-tellers. As a result, a great disaster looms.

Solution: the naïve cowards listen to the truth-tellers and disaster is averted.

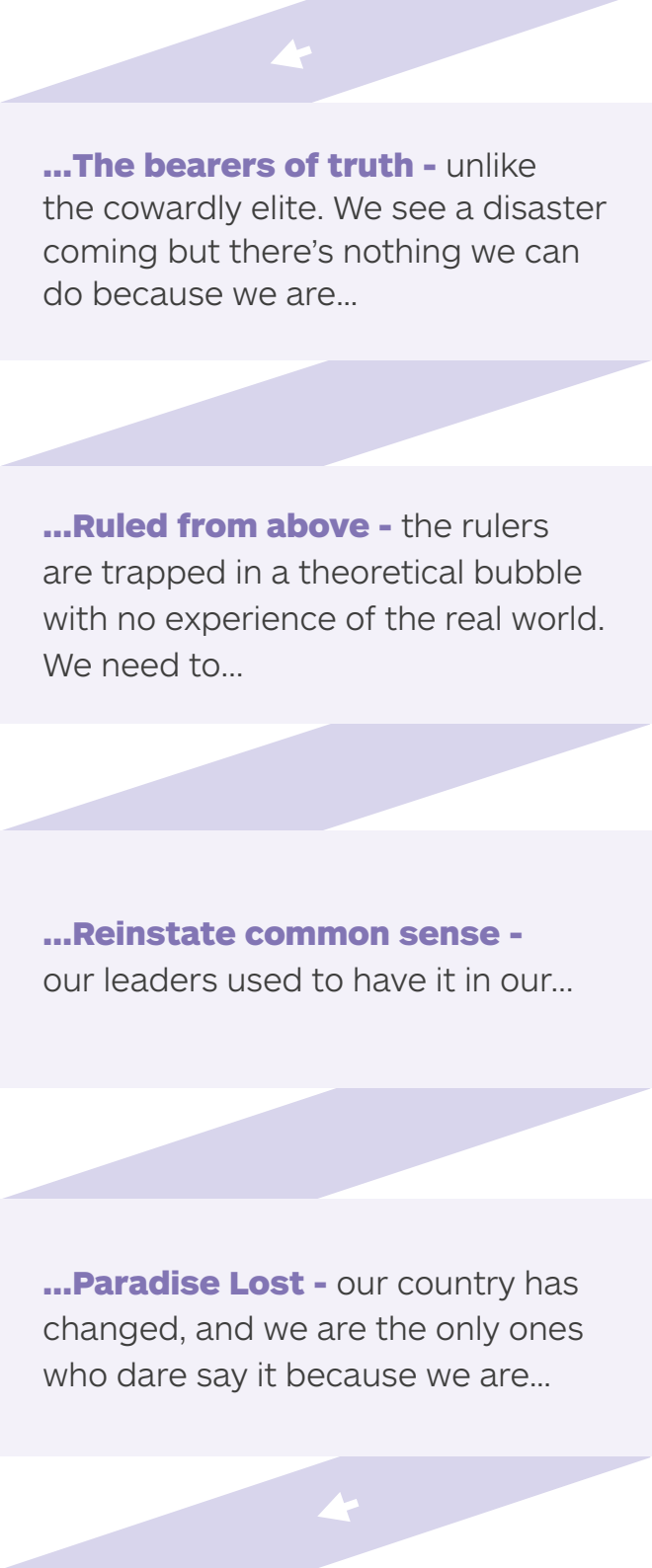The frame activates the following values: Integrity, Foresight, Courage

Applications: For UKIP, EU politicians are the "naïve cowards" and they and their supporters are the "truth-tellers". These politicians just will not listen to UKIP's message that the people of Europe have had enough of the EU and freedom of movement. Again and again, UKIP try to warn EU leaders of their mistakes and of the dangers that could result if they are not heeded. Again and again, they are ignored.

Examples: "if [the EU] doesn't end democratically, I'm afraid it will end very unpleasantly" *Nigel Farage* [20]

"The EU is not a country; the EU is a false state. What is being created is something very dangerous, because false states like the Soviet Union only ever break up in one of two ways. They break up in peaceful divorce, like Czechoslovakia – which is the way in which I hope this organisation will break up – or in bloody revolution, like Yugoslavia – which I fear very much indeed." *Paul Nuttall* [21]

Case studies from the European Parliament

In this section we look at three case studies that illustrate how the above frames work in practice. These case studies are exchanges between UKIP politicians and other MEPs in the European Parliament. We offer suggestions on how MEPs can respond effectively to these rhetoric and frames.

...The bearers of truth - unlike the cowardly elite. We see a disaster coming but there's nothing we can do because we are...

...Ruled from above - the rulers are trapped in a theoretical bubble with no experience of the real world. We need to...

...Reinstate common sense - our leaders used to have it in our...

...Paradise Lost - our country has changed, and we are the only ones who dare say it because we are...

Figure 1:
The relationship between the four UKIP frames

Case study 1:
Roma Rights[22]

In October 2013, the European Parliament debated the situation of the Roma people in Europe, discussing how to alleviate instances of extreme poverty and exclusion among the Roma community. During the debate, UKIP MEP Paul Nuttall made a speech.

Paul Nuttall (EFD):

Mr President, unlike many people in this Chamber I have actually been to a Roma camp in Bulgaria. That is me in a place called Fakulteta, which has up to 50 000 people living in slums in a square mile. And I saw conditions there of poverty and deprivation that one rarely sees outside sub-Saharan Africa. If I were forced to live like this, and you were forced to live this, you would seize any chance to leave, and that is what many will do on 1 January next year and many will be headed to the UK.

Some are coming to do honest work, we know that, but some will not. Sadly there are gangmasters within the Roma community who force children to work as everything such as pickpockets and prostitutes [sic]. This is already happening in other European countries and in January it will happen in the UK as well. So, centuries after social reformers in Britain stopped child prostitution and put a stop to Dickensian pickpocket gangs, the EU will foist them upon us once again.

There will be a backlash, trust me, and our government will not and cannot do anything about it because of the European Union's laws. The best way, I believe, to help these people is not to export them round Europe: it is for their own national governments to do what our people did a long time ago and take the fight to child abusers who force them to work as career criminals.

*Nuttall begins his intervention by referring to his "real-life experience" of meeting Roma communities. This is an example of the **"Reinstating common sense"** frame in action. Nuttall holds up a picture of his experience in Bulgaria, literally showing the other MEPs that for him the situation of the Roma is not a theoretical, academic question. It is something that he has grappled with on the ground. Nuttall also emphasises his empathy with the Roma by identifying with them ("if I were forced to live like this…") and by encouraging the other MEPs to identify with them. This is aimed at pre-empting the accusation that he does not care about Roma. The message he conveys is: I do care, more than you could appreciate, because I have been there in reality, not just written academic reports. Later, this opening allows Nuttall to tell the "hard truth" about Roma criminals, giving him a "reputational shield" against claims of xenophobia or anti-Roma sentiment.[23]*

*In the second part of his speech, Nuttall shifts tone. He begins to use the **"Bearers of truth"** frame, fulfilling the role of a "truth-teller" warning the Parliament of a great impending disaster, in this case the consequences of the lifting of restrictions on free movement of labour from Bulgaria and Romania on January 1 2014. He repeatedly mentions the date of the change in rules. This creates the impression of a sharp cut-off, a point of no return, requiring urgent attention. As with other instances of the frame, Nuttall portrays himself as an innocent observer, aware of a dangerous but inevitable "backlash"*

and desperate to wake the slumbering MEPs, who have no idea what approaches.

*Combined with this frame are two others that play a smaller role: **"Ruled from above"** and **"Paradise Lost"**. Nuttall argues that "the EU will foist" Roma criminals on the British. Here he uses the **"Ruled from above"** frame, identifying the EU as the rulers and the British public as the ruled. And in combination with this frame, he talks of the historical reforms Britain made to tackle child prostitution and pickpocketing, suggesting that the British "paradise" of low crime is at risk of being lost.*

In fact, Nuttall makes the historical comparison for a second reason. By conjuring up an image of a "Dickensian" past, before reforms had been introduced, Nuttall positions himself on the side of progress. This is an attempt to co-opt the language of progress and modernity to pre-empt the critique that he is stuck in the past. It is the EU, not UKIP, Nuttall contends, that wants to take British society backwards.

Corina Crețu (S&D):

My question was: what is your basis when you speak about such an apocalyptic idea, referring to the 1st January 2014? It is the obligation of all the European countries to lift the restrictions on the labour market for Romanian and Bulgarian labourers. And I think this political, or even populist

position towards this obligation, on the part of the United Kingdom amongst other member states, is counterproductive for the European Union.

Suggested Response:
*Rather than challenging Nuttall's **"Ruled from above"** frame, Crețu accepts the frame and operates inside it, emphasising that the UK has an "obligation" to drop the temporary restrictions. Crețu also uses the word "apocalyptic", sarcastically repeating Nuttall's warning about the change in labour restrictions. Crețu needs to address Nuttall more directly – she refers to Nuttall as "populist" but never really attacks his fundamental message. A different response would take on Nuttall's claim that he has "real-life experience":*

"Are we now supposed to believe that overnight Mr Nuttall has developed a deep passion for Roma issues? Mr Nuttall, members of this Parliament have been working on these issues for years – we have been to the camps, we have seen the challenges Roma people face, and we have grappled with the policy dilemmas. So let's get serious and try to address these problems. And yes, you're right, that does mean that national governments have a responsibility – but rather than lecturing other countries, Mr Nuttall, why don't you try to help?"

Paul Nuttall (EFD), blue-card answer:
Of course I think this obligation is completely wrong. We have 22 % of our own young people in the UK out of work.

That is a million people unemployed. All that will happen when we open up the borders on 1 January 2014 to 29 million more people is that they will saturate the job market. It is about economics, it is nothing to do with racism and, quite frankly, we are only a small island and we cannot cope as it is.

Nuttall has no trouble in clearly stating he disagrees with the "obligation", using the word again because he knows that it evokes his characterisation of the EU as antidemocratic and dictatorial. Sensing hostility, Nuttall responds by insisting that his concern has "nothing to do with racism", a regular refrain by populists who are often sensitive to the critique that they are intolerant of other ethnicities and nationalities. Nuttall ends his speech with a phrase that has significant emotional resonance – by saying "we cannot cope" he evokes a sense of deep personal anxiety and frustration. "We cannot cope" is something a family might say if they are struggling to pay the bills or if they are reeling from a personal tragedy; by using the phrase in the context of a national political issue, Nuttall marries together this emotional distress signal with his wider political vision.

Case study 2:
Immigration[24]

In 2011, the French government temporarily reintroduced border controls between France and Italy after the Italian government issued visas for thousands of Tunisian migrants, in the expectation that many would take the opportunity to travel to France. This standoff between France and Italy, along with other complaints from EU member states such as Denmark, compelled the European Commission to clarify and revise the rules of the Schengen agreement. The new legislation clarified in particular when temporary border controls could be reintroduced under Schengen. In this debate on the new legislation, UKIP MEP Gerard Batten takes aim at the fundamentals of the Schengen agreement.

Gerard Batten (EFD):

Mr President, last year we saw the Schengen system buckle under the strain of mass migration, and some Member States sought to introduce unilateral controls. The revision of the rules is an attempt to keep the lid on a boiling pot, but it is too little and too late. It only allows some controls in very exceptional circumstances for a limited period of time. It is too little, too late.

An open-borders policy could only work between countries with very similar and stable economic and cultural natures. The EU's open-borders policy is a disaster for ordinary people, and has created enormous social problems. This has all been done in pursuit of a political ideology not shared by the people of Europe. That ideology is that the continent of Europe is a single country, a United States of Europe, which obviously it is not.

Batten opens the exchange by using the metaphor of "a boiling pot" to describe disquiet over immigration. This is a powerful metaphor that has a number of natural consequences if accepted and not overturned. If immigration is "a boiling pot", then failing to clamp down on immigration will result in a dangerous accident—in "over-heating" and "injury". The

image of burning heat suggests loss of control, as if the very machinery of Europe (reinforced by the use of the word "buckle") were literally "uncontainable". This is the reasoning that the "boiling pot" metaphor seeks to promote; without subverting the metaphor, this reasoning will guide the rest of the exchange.

*The central frame underlying the "boiling pot" metaphor is the **"Bearers of truth"** frame. According to this frame, UKIP and others are the "voice of reason" and control. UKIP's politicians are nothing but the bearers of the truth—there are nasty, natural forces at play here, and UKIP is simply pointing out the dangers. The ostensible aim is to "help" political leaders – who have behaved like children, or worse, irresponsible care-takers – by telling them where they have gone wrong with immigration. If the political leaders, the phrase suggests, do not listen to UKIP and others like them, then more dangerous, less controllable forces will gain prominence. The choice is simple: listen to UKIP or face the wrath of the electorate and violent instability in Europe.*

*The **"Bearers of truth"** frame can be persuasive, not only because it conveys a sense of urgency and presents a false*

dichotomy between supporting UKIP and an option that few would find appealing, but also because it is underpinned by the assumption that UKIP's position has widespread support – why else would there be social unrest if UKIP's agenda is not addressed and the "boiling pot" explodes? If this frame goes unchallenged, then it forces political debate onto dangerous territory for the mainstream – either listen to the populists, the voice of the people, or risk democracy itself.

*Batten changes tack in the second part of his speech. The underlying frame here is **"Reinstating common sense"**, which draws an opposition between the unrealistic, naïve and artificial, and the pragmatic, reality-based and natural. Batten places himself firmly on the side of the latter: in the Parliament only he and a few others see the "obvious" fact that Europe is by its very nature a collection of countries. This is portrayed as immovable. The attempt to impose a "United States of Europe" is by contrast a violation of the natural order of things. Because of this artificiality, it is doomed to failure.*

Case study 2:
Immigration
(continued)

Robert Goebbels (S&D):

Mr Batten, you just told us that on the matter of border controls European policy is a complete catastrophe. We know that Great Britain is not part of the Schengen area. Could you explain, Mr Batten, why there are so many illegal immigrants in Great Britain and why your country, which is not part of this cursed Schengen, has so many problems with immigration?

Goebbels responds by asking why Batten is so concerned about EU immigration policy given that the UK is not part of Schengen. He repeats the premise of Batten's argument – that the EU's immigration policy is fundamentally wrong. But this is a mistake. Goebbels treats the exchange as if it will be won or lost on the quality of reasoning. Accordingly, he thinks that by pointing out that the UK is not part of Schengen he can beat Batten. But that is not how political debate of this kind works. By repeating Batten's criticisms of the EU, he just ends up reinforcing them.

Suggested Response:

Instead, the most effective response to Batten is to promote an alternative frame that directly challenges the populists' underlying message. At the same time, some of the underlying values that UKIP politicians evoke in their frames – integrity, democracy and liberty – are values that the mainstream supports, and yet populist parties like UKIP use these values against them. A good response must therefore reclaim these values. One alternative response to Mr Batten is the following:

"Like Mr Batten, I'm worried too about the rise of extremist and violent movements in Europe. But instead of panicking, what we need to do is talk to people about the issues underneath these concerns. What we've found is that no doubt many people see downsides, but they also see huge plusses of freedom of movement too. We live in a peaceful Europe and we want to keep it that way. And that's why we want to address these issues head-on by finding the problems and sorting them in a democratic, responsible way."

Case study 3:
Gender Equality[25]

On International Women's Day in 2011 (March 8), the EU held a joint debate on two reports about women: one on the equality between women and men, and one on female poverty.

Godfrey Bloom (EFD): [26]

Madam President, there is a lot of self-congratulation going on here in the European Union on International Women's Day. It is my opinion that you have made a complete dog's breakfast of it. You talk about maternity leave. All that is happening with draconian maternity leave, let me tell you, Madam, is that fewer and fewer young women in my country are getting jobs because you would have to be stark staring mad to employ a young woman if you have a small business. So you have done them no favours.

We have equal opportunities for car insurance now due to another lunatic judgment by the European Court, which means that even if young women could get a job, they could not afford to drive to it because they have just had their car insurance doubled. And now you are talking about quotas. What kind of madness is this? Women who have worked all their lives to get to a position of responsibility in business – professional women – are being patronised on quotas. Now those women who have been successful will sit in a board-room and people will look across that boardroom and say, are you a token woman or did you get there because you know your business? The whole thing is completely crazy and it is a tragedy that none of you have done a real job in your lives or you would understand this.

*At the heart of Bloom's speech is the **"Reinstating common sense"** frame. Bloom contrasts the "natural order" with EU*

politics. The latter he treats as something that he observes but bears no responsibility for, using the words "you" throughout to refer to European policymakers.

In the previous case study, UKIP MEP Gerard Batten associated the "natural order" with the sovereignty of member states. Here Bloom associates it with the free market – equality legislation subverts the natural process of recruitment, creating perverse incentives for employers. Importantly, Bloom insists that people want to do the right thing, but he laments that elites have interfered with this natural process and as a consequence have ruined a perfectly good system.

Bloom further contrasts the common sense of ordinary people (people who have a "real job") and the free market with a sense of the absurd – absurd because, according to Bloom, the EU's legislation hurts the very people it is trying to help, by making women pay double for car insurance and reducing their employment chances. As with every minority group UKIP discusses,[27] Bloom implies that UKIP is the only party truly on the side of women.

*At the same time, Bloom appeals to the **"Paradise Lost"** frame – triggering nostalgia for a bygone age when small businesses were free to hire and fire who they liked. In the earlier examples, the Paradise Lost was typically a more homogenous Britain; in this case, the Paradise Lost is a laissez-faire*

*political economy, before political correctness had begun to have a stranglehold on the political elite. Even though Bloom makes an effort to show his support for greater equality between men and women, the Paradise Lost of his frame also coincides with a period when men were more likely to be the main breadwinners. Indeed, Bloom's other remarks about women (see note 26) suggest that the subtext of Bloom's speech is also to do with restoring traditional gender roles. Finally, in highlighting the "draconian" EU laws, Bloom also draws on the **"Ruled from above"** frame. In this instance, the "small businesses" play the role of the "ruled" while the EU plays the role of the "ruler".*

*In all of Bloom's frames, women play a secondary role. In **"Reinstating common sense"**, for instance, the two key sets of players are the down-to-earth small businesses and the academic and naïve EU officials. Gender equality is side-lined. Only indirectly does Bloom address the challenges women face – his apparent concern for gender equality is a corollary of the deeper frames underlying his rhetoric.*

Eva-Britt Svensson (GUE/NGL):

Madam President, Mr Bloom, desiring parental insurance and believing it to be a good thing does not make someone raving mad. You only need to look at those Member States that have a well-developed parental insurance system. Those countries – the Nordic countries, Sweden for example

Case study 3:
Gender Equality
(continued)

– also have the highest rate of employment for women. This proves that good parental insurance means that we will also have higher employment figures for women, and men, too, of course. Parental insurance is good for equality on the labour market. Women can also contribute to prosperity in the EU.

Godfrey Bloom:
Madam President, this is simply not true and is not borne out by the statistics in my country. Speak to any small businessman you like in my country. I am not interested in the honourable Member's country or other people's countries, I am interested in my country and my economy, and I can tell you that all businessmen and women will say that they will not employ young women because of the draconian maternity laws. I wish, I desperately wish, you would come into the real world; hands up any of you who have had a real job!

Svensson tries to address Bloom's points by negating one of the frames that he introduces, **"Reinstating common sense"**. *But when Svensson tries to use employment statistics to undermine Bloom's argument, he responds not with his own quantitative analysis or with a careful unpicking of Svensson's argument, but with straightforward denial. Indeed, in his response, Bloom uses Svensson's carefully reasoned, comparative approach against her. He dismisses her attempt to draw wider lessons from the Swedish system – the idea that he should care or know about Sweden suggests*

that he should take his eyes off his own country. The presumption here is: I don't have time to care about the whole world and I know my priorities. As a result, Svensson's remarks barely deflect Bloom from his overarching message – that only Bloom has spoken to small businessman in the UK and can tell the situation as it really is – which he repeats with gusto.

Suggested response:
Again, as with our other case studies, Svensson and Bloom are not playing by the same rules. To really pin down Bloom, a different approach is needed. The **"Reinstating common sense"** *frame needs to be tackled directly. Bloom's claim to speak on behalf of ordinary people needs to be challenged. This is our suggested response:*

"Mr Bloom, today on International Women's Day we are talking about female poverty and equality for women. Paternity leave in Britain, as in all of Europe, leads to healthier parents and children and means that more men and women in the UK and in the rest of Europe can enter the workforce and contribute.

It is you, Mr Bloom who is in thrall to an out-dated ideology, who is out of touch and who refuses to take into account the needs of families or the needs of the British economy. Only an ideologue would leave it down to the free market alone to offer equality for men and women.

And as for your claim about having a "real job"? You know full well that everyone in this chamber has that. We are here to deal with the persistent pay gap between men and women and the large number of women who are living in poverty in the EU, rather than trivial personal attacks that do nothing but waste our time and resources."

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26 Godfrey Bloom has in the past courted controversy for sexist and misogynistic remarks. At a UKIP party conference in September 2013, he referred to the female audience as "sluts". ('Godfrey Bloom: UKIP MEP Calls Women "Sluts"', September 20, 2013, Sky News, http://news.sky.com/story/1144453/godfrey-bloom-ukip- mep-calls-women-sluts). Following this remark, he resigned from UKIP and is now an independent in the European Parliament ('Godfrey Bloom quits as UKIP MEP after "sluts" joke row, BBC News 24 September 2013, http://news.sky.com/story/1144453/godfrey-bloom-ukip-mep-calls-women-sluts).

Prior to this, Bloom was in July 2004 criticised for telling an interviewer that "no self-respecting small businessman with a brain in the right place would every employ a lady of child-bearing age", only a few weeks after being appointed to the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. He also told journalists that he wanted to deal with women's issues because "I just don't think they clean behind the fridge enough and that "I am here to represent Yorkshire women who always have dinner on the table when you get home." ('UKIP MEP in row over working women', BBC NEWS, July 21, 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/3912205.stm).

In 2004, he was accused of sexual harassment, misogyny and the use of offensive language by a female student from the University of Cambridge Women's Rugby Club, who was invited along with her teammates by Bloom to Brussels. In a formal letter of protest, the student says that she witnessed Bloom sexually harassing a number of women and making a constant stream of sexist and misogynistic remarks. ('UKIP man in Brussels faces harassment claim after trying to quash his sexist reputation', The Independent, October 16, 2004, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukip-man-in-brussels-faces-harassment-claim-after-trying- to-quash-his-sexist-reputation-6159897.html)

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Contact Counterpoint: