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THE NATURE OF THE FAR-RIGHT'S NATURE

'Nature', ethno-nationalism and the Finns party

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ABSTRACT

The thriving far-right has been transforming social and political space in Western Democracies for decades. Yet despite the contemporary ecological crisis and other environmental problems, there is a considerable lack of research on the far-right's positions on nature. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to filling the research gap and to investigate the ideological relations between the far-right's ideas of nature and ethno-nationalism, the core of the far-right's ideology. This thesis departs from a theoretical interest towards how different ideas of nature can contribute or give rise to nationalistic, racist or sexist agendas. The theoretical interest is supplemented by empirical research where the Finns Party's representations about nature are studied. Empirical evidence demonstrates that nature and natural protection are important themes in the party's official publications. Basing on textual analysis, four analytical themes are introduced to illustrate the ways in which ideas of nature can be related to the far-right's ethno-nationalism: homeland, human nature, population and limits of nature, and nature as object. This thesis argues that ideas of nature can serve as an important component of the far-right's ideology's ethno-nationalist core because, through certain ideas of nature, the far-right does not only define nature but also human nature. In this way, nature can function as a means to formulate social relations of power because through particular ideas of nature the far-right, such as the Finns party, naturalises 'fixed' human properties (rational, civilized, moral). Furthermore, the protection of nature is justified through spatial and temporal rhetoric and it is equated with the protection of place and the protection of the culturally defined nation. The far-right's ideas of nature can have important spatial and temporal implications: by emphasising the connection between culture and nature or the belonging and rootedness in the homeland, the far-right attempts to designate everyone's place and mark those who are 'out of place'.

Keywords: far-right, Finns party, ethno-nationalism, nature, homeland, place, environment, climate change, racism, whiteness, masculinity

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. IDEOLOGY OF THE FAR-RIGHT	5
3. EXPLAINING ETHNO-NATIONALISM	10
3.1 TERRITORY AND THE STATE.....	10
3.2 PLACE, NATION AND NATIONALISM	11
3.3 RACISM AND ETHNICITY	14
4. ‘NATURE’	17
4.1 BALANCING BETWEEN REALISM AND CONSTRUCTIVISM.....	18
4.2 NATURE AS AN EXTERNAL DOMAIN	20
4.3 ROMANTICISM AND HUMAN NATURE.....	22
4.4 EXPLAINING HUMAN SOCIETY THROUGH NATURE	24
5. HOW GREEN IS THE FAR-RIGHT?.....	28
5.1 CONCERNS OVER NATURE AND NATURAL ORDER	29
5.2 INCONSISTENCIES	31
6. METHODOLOGY	35
6.1 SELECTION OF THE CASE.....	35
6.2 SELECTION OF THE MATERIAL	36
6.3 THE ANALYTICAL STRATEGY	36
6.4 THE ANALYSIS AND LIMITATIONS	39
7. THE GREEN TURN OF THE FINNS PARTY.....	43
7.1 BACKGROUND OF THE FINNS PARTY	43
7.2 FINNISH NATURE IS NOT GREEN, IT IS BLUE AND WHITE	45
8. THE NATURE OF THE FAR-RIGHT’S NATURE	53
8.1 HOMELAND.....	53
8.2 HUMAN NATURE	55
8.3 POPULATION AND LIMITS OF NATURE	57
8.4 NATURE AS AN OBJECT	58
9. CONCLUSIONS: IT IS NOT ABOUT THE PAST, IT IS ABOUT THE FUTURE.....	60
APPENDIX	66
10. BIBLIOGRAPHY	70

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 15th of March in 2019, an Australian man who describes himself as ‘ethno-nationalist’ and ‘eco-fascist’ walked into two mosques in New Zealand and cruelly killed over 50 people. The man was driven by the dream of ethnic autonomy that is based on the preservation of nature and the ‘natural order’. Environmental protection played an important role in his manifesto; it was one of the major pillars of his utopia and ‘green nationalism’ the only right form of nationalism (e.g. Diwakar, 2019). Although this event is an example of an undemocratic, brutal and exceptional act, it also opens up an interesting question. Does the man’s ambition to protect nature and ‘natural order’ signify only an anomaly?

Traditionally protection of nature is connected to left-leaning and liberal political orientations or conservation to conservatism. As a result, some have argued that the far-right’s concern over nature is just a hoax (e.g. Jeffries. 2017). This claim is reasonable in the context of the research that shows that the far-right disputes climate science and is practising anti-climate politics (e.g. Allen et al., forthcoming; Lockwood, 2018; Reed, 2016). To contrary, however, several empirical cases from past and the present demonstrate that protection of nature is an important characteristic of far-right parties, groups and individuals (Forchtner et al., 2018; see also Forchtner, 2018; Forchtner & Kølvråa, 2015; Olsen, 1999, 2000). For example, in France, Front National launched in 2014 Patriotic New Ecology movement that is centred upon ecology and environment (Neslen, 2014). Yet, already in 1980 Jon Paerce, a member of the party, established that ‘social justice’, ‘ecology’ and ‘racial purity’ are “the three pillars of nationalism” (Wall, 2000). In Greece, The Greek Golden Dawn’s sub-organisation ‘Green Wing’ focuses explicitly on natural protection highlighting that “we fight for the Race and the Nature that nourished it. Don’t let this planet plunge on the darkness of the modern globalized Era” (Golden Dawn, 2013). In Germany, the far-right and natural protectionism has perhaps the longest tradition, partially influenced by the Nazi’s

who attempted to embrace Germans' relation to nature through different conservation and protectionism measures (e.g. Brüggemeier et al., 2005).

The far-right, here understood as a social and political movement whose core ideology is ethno-nationalism, has been transforming the political and social space of Western countries globally since the 1980s. Consequentially, the research on ideological aspects of the far-right has boomed. On the other hand, even though the contemporary ecological crisis, climate change and other problems concerning natural environment have increased academic interest on ecological issues, the research on the far-right's positions on nature is yet very limited (e.g. Forchtner & Kølvrå, 2015). Uncertainties about the far-right's positions on nature but also considerable lack of research opens up intellectually and politically interesting possibilities to study the far-right. Growing racism and xenophobia and aggravating ecological issues and climate change are timely problems that demand academic attention.

Contemporary research on the green aspect of the far-right debates whether the ambition to protect nature is a hoax or not. However, during the writing of this thesis, I have come to understand that it is not relevant to ask how green is the far-right. Instead, it is analytically more fruitful to examine what kind of 'nature' the far-right is endorsing and the ways in which the ideas of nature are linked to their political agendas. In this thesis, my aim is fourfold. My first aim is to contribute to the existing literature on the far-right and nature nexus by examining theoretically and empirically the ways in which the far-right represents nature and how these representations are related to their political agendas. The second aim is to contribute to the theoretical discussions regarding politics of 'nature'. In other words, I am interested to explore how different ideas of nature can contribute and give rise to nationalistic, racist or sexist agendas in the context of the far-right. Thirdly, by studying the far-right's positions on nature, I also aim to contribute to the discussion regarding the far-right's ideological underpinnings. In other words, by exploring the ways in which the ideas of nature are connected to their political agendas, I also hope to shed light on the far-right's ideology in general and on the ideology's ethno-nationalist core in particular. As I show in my thesis, examining

nature ('the green stuff') also serves as a useful lens to examine far-right's nature (character). Fourth, through my case study on the Finns party, I also hope to contribute to the literature on the far-right movements in Finland. The research questions that guide my thesis are the following: *How does the Finns party represent nature? How do the far-right's ideas of nature relate to their ethno-nationalist politics? What are the potential implications of these ideas?*

I depart from a theoretical interest towards politics of 'nature' in the context of the far-right and supplement my discussion by an empirical case study on a far-right actor (the Finns Party). The case study provides empirical material on different representations which, in turn, help me to develop analytical and theoretical discussions on links between ethno-nationalism and different representations of nature. The theoretical departure point of my thesis is that representations matter because they help to formulate and to maintain social relations. I proceed towards answering my research questions by discussing various critical theories from a wide range of constructivist, structuralist and post-Marxist traditions that go beyond naturalised ideas of the social world and investigate the ways in which different ideologies help in maintaining dominative relationships between humans and also between humans and nature. I discuss selected critical theories regarding the far-right, ethno-nationalism, and 'nature', and I apply them to examining the existing research on the far-right and my own empirical case study on the Finns Party.

The structure of this thesis is the following. In Chapter 2 I discuss the far-right's key features and the core ideology, ethno-nationalism. In Chapter 3 I unpack ethno-nationalism by explaining crucial concepts such as homeland, place, territory, nationalism, ethnicity and racism. In Chapter 4 I discuss 'nature'. I do not define 'nature' but instead comprehend it as a canvas that can assist uncovering political interest and attempts to formulate and naturalise social relations. In this chapter, I also discuss my epistemological underpinnings that serve as my lens to approach Chapter 5, where I map out the current literature regarding the far-right's positions on nature, environment and climate change. In Chapter 6 I describe my methodological underpinnings in regard to my case study. It is important to note,

however, that even though the methodology is discussed only in the latter part of the thesis, philosophical considerations on the ways how we know and what we know are present throughout this thesis. In Chapter 7 I examine my empirical material. First, I provide a brief background of the Finns party and after that, I demonstrate the ways in which the party represents nature. In Chapter 8 I analyse the Finns Party's ideas of nature in the context of the theoretical and empirical literature and consequently present four analytical categories of the ways in which the far-right's ideas of nature can relate to their ethno-nationalist politics. In Chapter 9 I wrap everything up and provide some critical reflections for the current research regarding the far-right and nature.

2. IDEOLOGY OF THE FAR-RIGHT

The new *far-right*¹ has been influencing the Western European political space since the 1970s and it has also taken gradually a global form, encompassing Eastern and Northern Europe and also countries such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, India, Russia and the United States (Bar-On, 2018; Gupta, 2010; Kitschelt & McGann, 1997; McCann, 2018; Rydgren, 2007). The scholarly interest but also the success of the far-right occurs according to Cas Mudde (2000) in waves. The last decades have been roaring times for both; the far-right has been rising and transforming political space of democratic states in an exceptional fashion (Betz & Johnson, 2004; Rydgren, 2018), and the production of new scholarly work has increased (Mudde, 2007).

The scholarship of the far-right is vast and there are no agreements on one definition or even one term (Bar-On, 2018; Eatwell, 2000; Mudde, 2007) which complicates anchoring this political force to any singular description. The disunity in the used terminology is also connected to an even broader division in the explanations for the emergence and electoral support of the far-right (e.g. Amengay & Stockemer, 2018). Many have explained the rise of the far-right by socio-economic or socio-cultural factors such as economic crises, unemployment or increased flows of immigration (e.g. Caiani & Porta, 2018) and resulting social and cultural fragmentation (Betz, 1993). The reality is, however, much more nuanced. As argued by Kitschelt & McGann (1997), the emergence of the right-wing parties cannot be only explained, for example, by increased immigration or economic crisis although those social changes “can serve as catalysts that crystallize right-wing extremist on the level of party competition” (Kitschelt & McGann, 1997, p. 3).

Roger Eatwell (2000) has recognised that the complexity to define the far-right stems from abundant terminology, changing programmes, from the far-right’s attempts to mask radical tendencies from wider public and from their claims to

¹ In scholarship also referred, for example, as *populist radical right* (Dryzek, 2013) *extreme right* (e.g. Mudde, 2000; Rydgren, 2005) *radical right* (e.g. Betz & Johnson, 2004; Rydgren, 2007, 2017) or *populist right-wing* (e.g. Bergmann, 2017)

speak for ‘the third way’, in other words, claim for not being situated in the right nor the left in the political spectrum. According to Tamir Bar-On (2018), however, most scholars agree that the core of the far-right is *ethno-nationalism*: a dream of a homogenous nation-state that is dominated by the majority ethnicity group. This group’s sovereignty must be protected against all internal and external threats (ibid.). In this form of nationalism, the nation’s distant past is romanticised, idealised and the nation is seen as a historical entity (Rydgren, 2007, 2018). Minkenberg (2018, p. 3) conceptualises the far-right as a reaction for modernist progression, as a movement that is “offering visions of a simpler, better society: a return to a romanticised version of the nation”. Furthermore, the far-right also tends to support conservative values and norms, such as traditional gender roles (e.g. Hilde, 2018; Mudde, 2007).

As I discuss in next chapter, the far-right’s nationalism is different from ‘liberal’ or ‘cosmopolitan’ nationalism because the far-right’s nationalism rejects cosmopolitan ideals of pluralist democracy, individualism and universalism (Minkenberg, 2018) and instead promotes communitarian ideas of an ethnically defined nation (e.g. Eatwell 2000). As a result, ethno-nationalism – which is often populist in style and radical in its content because it promotes ethnically defined nation – can be understood as the *master concept* of a family of political parties and movements (Bar-On, 2018). Without this master concept, the far right would lose the base of its main political arguments, such as opposition to ‘multiculturalism’, immigration, European Union and globalisation (ibid.) – not forgetting Islamophobia, another important distinctive characteristic of the far-right (Kallis, 2018). Furthermore, Bar-On (2018, p. 10) argues that “racism, xenophobia, and a strong state are tools used by the radical right in order to advance an ethnic conception of the nation and nationalism”. On that account, the far-right is defined according to its socio-cultural agenda of ethno-nationalism which places it to the right of the political spectrum (Rydgren, 2007; 2018).

In a similar vein, also Mudde (2000) identifies the far-right’s ethnic nationalism (or what he calls *nativism*) as the core ideology. However, he presents that the maximum definition for the far-right would require also incorporating two

other core characteristics: populism and authoritarianism. By authoritarianism he refers to the “belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely” whereas populism is understood as a thin ideology² that “considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’” (Mudde, 2007a, p. 23). In the similar vein to Mudde (2000), also Rydgren (2004) suggests that the far-right’s *master frame* is a combination between ethno-nationalism (or what he calls ‘ethno-pluralism’) and anti-political-establishment populism (meaning anti-democratic rhetoric that is often populist in tone) (Rydgren, 2005).

Many scholars also point out the far-right’s ambiguous attitudes to democracy (e.g. Rydgren, 2005). Betz & Johnson (2004) summarises that contemporary far-right is “both democratic and extreme” (p. 312). On the one hand, the far-right functions within the democratic framework and introduces itself as “champions of ‘true’ democracy and defenders of the values and interests of ordinary people, too often ignored if not dismissed by the political establishment” (Betz & Johnson, 2004, p. 312). On the other hand, the far-right tends to express hostility to certain institutional pillars and values of liberal democracy (Mudde 2007) and “seek to transform liberal democracy into an ethnocratic regime, which gives supremacy to the interests of ‘the people’ defined in terms of a narrow conception of citizenship” (Betz & Johnson, 2004, p. 313). In this regard, there is an important difference between radical and extreme forms of the far-right: extremists are opposed to liberal democracy as a whole and radicals are ‘just’ hostile towards it, perhaps only opposing certain values or institutions (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren 2018). However, Rydgren (2018) highlights the vagueness of the distinction between extremist and radical forms and argues that ‘moderate’ and ‘extremist’ agendas and memberships are often overlapping. This is the main reason why I have chosen in this thesis to use the prefix *far*: extremist and radical sections cannot be clearly distinguished. I use the prefix *far* to encompass both radical and extreme forms because following, for example, Rydgren (2018) and Caiani & Porta

² Thin ideology signifies an ideology that gets its meaning only when combined with a thick ideology (such as ethno-nationalism) (Mudde, 2007).

(2018), I recognise close ties between conventionally more radical non-party members and more moderate party members.

Whilst ethno-nationalism, populism and authoritarianism are features that the majority of the scholars have recognized as being the core characteristics of the far-right, its socio-economic positions, in turn, are debated (Rovny, 2013). The far-right's socio-cultural agenda has made some to conclude that evaluating their socio-economic positions is not relevant (Mudde, 2007; Rovny, 2013). On contrary, for example, Afonso & Rennwald (2016) point out that socio-economic positions should not be seen as a subordinate to socio-cultural dimensions but as an important part of the far-right parties' electoral success and governmental functioning. Challenge in providing a united understanding of the parties' socio-economic positions reflects the disunity within the party family in regard to economic policies: the far-right party family is claimed to have the widest variety of economic positions (Afonso & Rennwald, 2016). Rovny (2013, p. 2) suggests that this diversity is a result of their capability of adopting "a strategy of deliberate position blurring". Many have argued that the parties have also changed their economic positions from neo-liberal towards more centrist (Afonso, 2015; Afonso & Rennwald, 2016; de Lange, 2007; Kitschelt, 2004). Nevertheless, although it may appear that a part of the far-right party-sector has shifted socio-economically towards the centre, their proposed welfare is very exclusive and differs from leftist ideas of equality; instead, the far-right promotes chauvinistic ideas of welfare where the 'native' population's needs are seen as the priority whereas 'foreigners' as a threat to welfare of the native population (e.g. Betz, 1993; Kymlicka & Banting, 2006).

In this thesis, following, for example, Eatwell (2000), Mudde (2000) and Rydgren (2004), I understand ethno-nationalism as the far-right's distinctive ideology which to a great extent also defines their other positions, such as anti-immigration, Islamophobia and rejection of universalism. I understand ideology as 'a modality of power', in other words as a set of ideas about the world that contribute "to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 9). Furthermore, these

representations can “also be ‘enacted’ in ways of acting socially, and ‘inculcated’ in the identities of social agents” (ibid.). Ethno-nationalism as the core ideology is supplemented by opposition to liberal democracy and populism. In this thesis, populism is understood following Mudde (2000) as a thin methodology and therefore dependent on the thick ideology, ethno-nationalism.

I understand the far-right not only as a political but also as a social movement and therefore in my research I encompass both party and non-party sectors. I have come up with this decision due to two reasons. First, because of the considerable lack of research regarding the far-right’s positions on nature, taking both sectors could, perhaps, lead to a more detailed understanding of the nature of the far-right’s nature. Second, as Veugelers & Menard (2018) have argued, non-party and party sectors are united over mutual goals and adversaries and therefore cannot be on all occasions separated. Furthermore, although the far-right is a movement with distinctive national agendas, it is spanned internationally and different far-right actors cooperate with each other internationally (e.g. Copsey, 2018).

3. EXPLAINING ETHNO-NATIONALISM

Globalisation has made some to argue that the nation-states are becoming obsolete (cf. Scholte, 2005). Yet, as Ozkirimli (2017, p. 5) reminds, it is still nationalism that functions “as the fundamental organizing principle of interstate order” and “as the ultimate source of political legitimacy”. The far-right as a profoundly nationalistic movement is an exemplary illustration of how nations and nationalisms are still topical and essential concepts to understand the social world (Ozkirimli, 2017). The far-right’s nationalism is exceptional and differs from the ‘mainstream’ forms of nationalism due to its radicalism, the advocacy of the exclusionary idea of a homogenous nation-state and the rule of the major ethnic group (Bar-On, 2018). Although the aim of this thesis is to investigate the nexus between nature and the far-right, it is central to critically address the major concepts such as nationalism, nation and ethnicity. By criticality I mean not treating nations as natural social phenomena or ‘background condition’ (e.g. Ozkirimli, 2017) but instead understanding them as social constructs that manifest and organize power relations temporally and spatially.

3.1 Territory and the state

Territory, ‘a bounded space’ (Taylor, 1994, p. 151), is a pivotal platform for nationalist movements because “the claim to territorial sovereignty [...] is an inherent element in nationalist ideologies” (Agnew, 2010). The boundaries of the territory operate as an important means to create ‘the inside’ and ‘the outside’ and to control the characteristics of the content of the territory (Taylor, 1994). Territories are utilised in the processes of territoriality, “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area” (Sack, 1986, p. 19). There are different forms of territorialities (e.g. state, home) (ibid.) but the most important form of territoriality is *the territorial state*, a spatial organisation that emerged in the late 18th century (Agnew & Corbridge, 1995;

Delaney, 2005). The territorial state is a unique form of organization due to its claim for sovereignty within its clearly bounded territorial space (Agnew, 1994; Wallerstein, 1999). Sovereignty refers to the ability to “have absolute authority within a territorial space and to suffer no interference by parties outside of that space” (Delaney, 2005, p. 36). The state can be defined as “the exercise of power through a set of central political institutions” and as “the clear demarcation of the territory within which the state exercises its power” (Agnew 1994, p. 53). The state plays a crucial role in controlling economic activities through legal constraints (ibid.) and maintaining social relations through “the system of law”, in other words, legislation concerning freedoms and rights (e.g. property rights) (Harvey, 1976, p. 82).

3.2 Place, nation and nationalism

The state and the nation are rooted to a specific place because the state claims the right to exercise sovereign power only over a particular territory and the nation “has meaning only for a particular place, its homeland” (Taylor, 1994, p. 152). The place is an underlying component in nationalist movements because the movements evoke feelings over a particular place through embracing the idea of rootedness or by equating place with social identities (Staeheli, 2007). Cresswell (2009, p. 1) defines place as a “meaningful site that combines location, locale and sense of place”. Location refers to a location on the earth that can be specified for example using coordinates, locale to material settings (walls, buildings), and sense of place to “the feelings and emotions a place evokes” (ibid.). Place can be also understood as a social construct which is used in exclusionary practices: certain identities and meanings are associated with place which “leads to the construction of normative places where it is possible to be either ‘in place’ or ‘out of place’” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 5). Furthermore, as argued by Harvey (1990, p. 419), “space and time are always a primary means of both individuation and spatial differentiation” and “the mere act identification, the assignment of place within a socio-spatial structure indicates

distinctive roles, capacities for action and access to power to power within the social order”.

The modern territorial organisation merged the idea of the state with people, a nation, which generated the idea of the nation-state (Taylor, 1994). However, a nation is not a “natural, God-given way of classifying men” (Gellner, 2006, p. 38) but instead the fruit of modernity, more precisely the dual revolutions, the British Revolution and French Revolution (Hobsbawm, 1992). Therefore, as Benedict Anderson (2016, p. 6) has expressed, a nation is “an imagined political community”. It is imagined because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (ibid.). And the nation is, furthermore, imagined as limited and sovereign (ibid.). The paradigm that locates nation-states and nationalism in Modernism (e.g. Anderson, 2016; Hobsbawm, 1996; Nairn, 2003) challenges perennialist theories that perceive nations not as social constructs but instead as ‘natural’ or pre-modern (e.g. Anderson, 1996). Perennial ways to understand nation is advocated by nationalist movements such as the far-right, who discerns nations as immemorial and historical forms of human organisations and nationality as a fundamental attribute of humanity (Ozkirimli, 2017, p. 51).

Gellner (2006, p. 1) defines nationalism as “primarily a principle which holds that the political and national should be contingent”. Nationalism can also be understood as “a territorial form of ideology” where terms of citizenship and nationality are defined through the creation of social boundaries and therefore inclusions and exclusions (Paasi, 2000, p. 4). Although nationalism was originally a political project practised from ‘above’ (Hobsbawm, 1992) it is important to note that it is mobilised and reproduced in everyday life through various signs, places or symbols (e.g. landscapes) that can evoke national identities (Koranyi & Cusack, 2014). National identity can be also reproduced through banal nationalism “routines of life, which constantly remind, or ‘flag’, nationhood” (Billig, 1995, p. 38). Furthermore, nationalism has also an important psychological aspect because it can

provide individuals with feelings of belonging and identity which, in turn, yield subjectivities (Nairn, 1975).

Territory can be appropriated for identity production, for example, when used as a source for selected cultural symbols (e.g. wild animals, landscape) (Paasi, 2007) which consequently provide people with a continued identity with their land (ibid.). Another important spatial term that is used in nationalist projects is the concept of homeland which is often employed to signify “a distinct territorial division between ‘us’ and ‘the other’” (Paasi, 2007, p. 116). Homeland is an important site for the creation of national identities for example through “common myths and historical memories” (ibid.) or through the idea of natural rootedness to the physical environment (Bassin, 2003). Homeland is also an often-appearing concept in the vocabularies of the far-right’s (e.g. Bar-On, 2018; Forchtner et al., 2018; Rydgren, 2004). For example, Olli Immonen, a member of the Finns party, has expressed that “I’m dreaming of a strong, brave nation that will defeat this nightmare called multiculturalism. [...] These are the days, that will forever leave a mark on our nations future. I have strong belief in my fellow fighters. We will fight until the end for our homeland and one true Finnish nation.” (Immonen, 2015). In this quote, the homogenous (or ‘non’ multiculturalist) nation is associated with the homeland. The homeland is inhabited by ‘Finnish nation’ which is occupying a specific, bounded area (as its borders need to be defended against the Other). In this context, the bounded area refers to the sovereign state and therefore illustrates an example of an act of a territorial claim which is conveyed by evoking feelings by equating a geographical area (homeland) with people (‘Finnish nation’)

3.3 Racism and ethnicity

Yet no community can create a sense of belonging if it does not have bounds that it protects. The boundary is freedom in security (Macron, 2019)³

I start this subchapter by referring to Emmanuel Macron only to emphasise that nationalism is always in a way or another exclusionary, the ‘bounds’ do always exist. No nationalism is purely civic (inclusive, liberal, voluntarist, citizenship as criteria for nationality) or ethnic (exclusive, illiberal, particularist, ethnicity as criteria for nationality) or ‘good’ or ‘bad’ (Brubaker, 1999; Nairn, 2003; Tinsley, 2018). Nation-states do not necessarily have a ‘natural’ ethnic premise and therefore “nationalism cannot be defined as ethnocentrism except precisely in the sense of the product of a fictive ethnicity” (Balibar, 1991, p. 49, see also Gellner, 2006). In this thesis, I understand ethnicity as the “relationship between groups whose members consider themselves distinctive and these groups may be ranked hierarchically” (Eriksen, 2002, p. 7). However, as Balibar (1991, p. 56) argues, “the criteria used for differentiation can never be ‘neutral’” but instead encompasses “sociopolitical values which are contested in practice and which have to be imposed, in a roundabout way, by the use of ethnicity or culture”.

Ethnicity is linked to ‘race’ and nationality which makes these concepts a “single integrated domain” (Brubaker, 2009, p. 25). ‘Race’, however, is only an ‘ideological construction’ because there is no such thing as ‘race’ (Miles, 1993). By racism, in turn, I refer, following Robert Miles (1993), to the exclusionary practices that create the Other as specific and inferior on the basis of socially constructed criterion/criteria. The criteria that function as the justification for exclusion/inclusion “are interpreted as the determinants or signs of the groups’ difference” (ibid., p. 56). Racism is linked to the development of nationalism

³ In March 2019 Emmanuel Macron’s office published an open letter entitled “For European renewal”. In this letter Macron addresses European citizens, warns about nationalist movements and highlights the common values (liberty, justice) and histories that have served as the basis for construction of Europe.

because both racism and nationalism “positioned a natural division of the world’s population into discrete categories” (ibid., p. 62) This was facilitated by pseudoscientific racism that “asserted a deterministic link between biology and cultural variation” (ibid.).

The idea of whiteness has played a crucial role in the construction of European nationalism. By whiteness, I do not refer to colour but “a form of privilege” and power that advances white superiority for example through “institutional arrangements, ideological beliefs and state practices” (Twine & Gallagher, 2008, p. 5). Racialised whiteness was rationalised through the language of science and marked the emergence of “a triple conflation of White = Europe = Christian” (Bonnett, 1998, p. 1043). This triple conflation added “moral, cultural and territorial content to whiteness and legitimised White Europeans as the superior race” (ibid., 1038). European whiteness was naturalised as an ‘ethnic’ European feature which turned whiteness “into a fetish object, a talisman of the natural whose power appeared to enable them [Europeans] to impose their will on the world” (ibid., 1043). Therefore, since racism and whiteness were fundamental components in the creation of the idea of the white nation, it is important to be careful in not making strong juxtapositions between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ forms of nationalism. Brubaker (1999, p. 64) explains that “in fact all understandings of nationhood and all forms of nationalism are simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. What varies is not the fact or even the degree of inclusiveness or exclusiveness, but the bases or criteria of inclusion and exclusion”.

The far-right’s nationalism is extreme because it is driven by the idea that “the nation can achieve its destiny only through a state that represents and ultimately favours the dominant ethnic group” (Bar-On, 2018, p. 5). The contemporary far-right has adopted a new framework and partially replaced biological racism with subtle expressions of incompatible, naturally emerging, cultural differences (Eatwell, 2000, Bar-On, 2018; Rydgren, 2005).⁴ By adopting

⁴ The intellectual origin of this framework is in Nouvelle Droite, a political group that emerged in 1960s in France to challenge the prosperity of the left movements (Rydgren, 2007) Nouvelle Droite developed new framework to differentiate from old and despised extreme right movements such as National Socialism and Fascism (Rydgren, 2005).

this framework, the far-right was “able to attract voter groups that never would have considered voting for an ‘old’ right-wing extremist party promoting biological racism and/or antidemocratic stances” (Rydgren, 2005, p. 416). Nevertheless, as Eatwell (2000) has underlined, biological racism has not disappeared from the far-right's vocabulary, which is why it is important to understand the far-right's racism not only in cultural terms. Furthermore, ‘neo-racism’ does not differ from biological racism but instead is another *biological myth* that reproduces generalised belief of static cultures that are defined by certain human essences (Balibar, 1991). If before the racial hierarchies were the means to naturalise human differences, now the culture has the deterministic role consequently also naturalising the “racist conduct” (Balibar, 1991, p. 22). The far-right's discourses and languages may differ from the biological forms of racism, but the practice and the outcome remain the same: “denial of rights” and “creation of racist and racialized communities” (Balibar, 1991, p. 18).

4. 'NATURE'

According to Williams, (1980, p. 68) 'nature' is a complicated and changing concept that contains "an extra-ordinary amount of human history". Its complexity stems from its use to "indicate the inherent and essential quality of any particular thing" (ibid.). Consider, for example, the following lyrics of the song 'On Battleship Hill' by PJ Harvey:

The scent of thyme carried on the wind,
Stings my face into remembering
Cruel nature has won again.
Cruel nature has won again.

On Battleship Hill's caved in trenches,
A hateful feeling still lingers,
Even now, eighty years later.
Cruel nature.
Cruel, cruel nature

Is PJ Harvey referring to the non-human physical world, physical force, or an inherent essence of a person or a thing - following the definition of *nature* by Oxford English Dictionary? This example illustrates the multiple overlapping usages of the word nature that are not only overlapping but also debated and contested.

Because one of my aims in this thesis is to understand how the far-right represents nature, I do not provide any fixed definition for the word. Neither do I provide an overview of conceptualisations of nature – it would be an impossible task (as also noted by Soper, 1995 and Smith, 2008). Instead, in this chapter, I provide the reader with an analytical toolkit to understand the contestations and politics of the word 'nature'. First, I discuss two major epistemological approaches to nature: constructivism and realism. After that, I show the contestations of the word by discussing briefly two movements that have highly influenced the Western understanding of nature: The Enlightenment and Romanticism. The Enlightenment

marked the dawn of one of the most important inventions of modernity: human-nature dualism. This dualism has been reproduced in different scientific, capitalist and technological developments. Romanticism, in turn, was a countermovement to the Enlightenment and its instrumental rationality and gave also rise to nationalist and radical right politics. Romanticism gave also rise to a specific understanding of human nature, which is also addressed in this chapter. By discussing human nature, I also hope to illustrate the difficulties to separate human from nature. As I show, these categories have developed simultaneously which makes it crucial to address them both at the same time. After exploring three points, I also discuss the various ways in which ideas of nature have been used to explain both, human nature but also the human organisation and how these ideas have been ideologically driven.

4.1 Balancing between realism and constructivism

Two most influential epistemologies to understand nature in social theory are constructivism and realism, or what Kate Soper (1995) calls “nature-sceptical” (constructivism) and “nature-endorsing” (realism) positions. The epistemological and ontological differences between these two strands are in their different understandings of the mind-world relation. Ontology refers to a philosophical question regarding being. What exists in the world? Epistemology, in turn, is a philosophical question regarding knowing. How can we know the world? The nature-endorsing positions are based on realist philosophy (Soper, 1995), that comprehends the world existing separately and independently from the mind (e.g. Jackson, 2011). Nature-endorsing positions perceive nature as an autonomous domain that has its own laws and limits that are not dependent on human activity, on the contrary, human activity is enabled and curbed by nature (Soper, 1996). Constructivism, or what Soper (1995) calls nature-sceptical positions, on the other hand, understands nature as a discursive product, and therefore not existing separately from mind. Constructivist philosophy sheds light on the ways in which the world is constructed through language and the roles that different agencies hold in shaping different representations. Therefore, nature-sceptical positions point out

the ways in which relation to nature is “historically mediated” and “indeed ‘constructed’, through specific conceptions of human identity and difference” (Soper, 1996, p. 23). These approaches evolved during the 20th century as a response to the modernist instrumental rationality and its human-centrism (Soper, 1995). Nature-endorsing positions criticise the ways in which modernist understandings of nature positions human over nature and as a result creates destructive and dominative relation with it (Soper, 1996). Nature-sceptical positions, in turn, emphasise the ways in which nature has served as “the vehicle of an ethno-centric and ‘imperializing suppression of cultural difference” (Soper, 1996, p. 22).

The strengths of the nature-endorsing positions are that they point out the pre-discursive reality of nature (Soper, 1996). I do not want to deny the reality of material nature either but following realist positions, I acknowledge the existence of ‘independent’ natural environment. In nature, there are laws and processes that are independent of human action (e.g. photosynthesis in plants) although humans may, and most likely do, influence those laws (e.g. by polluting or cutting the plant). On our planet, there are hardly any places that are outside of human’s touch or gaze and we cannot ignore the materiality of the natural environment nor the destructive consequences of human actions. From this perspective, the realist position on nature is “the only responsible basis from which to argue for any kind of political change whether in our dealings with nature or anything else” (Soper 1995, p. 8). Even though environmental categories or labels (e.g. ‘deforestation’) are socially constructed, excessive debating of linguistic aspects may lead to the denial of the material reality (Soper, 1995; Robbins, 2012). Furthermore, not acknowledging the existence of the natural environment would take me to a dead end. In that case, how could I limit and frame my analysis of the far-right’s representations of nature if I reject the existence of nature? What would I be looking for in that case?

Although the starting point of this thesis is that the green ‘stuff’ exists and it is crucial to value, it is still constructivism that serves as the most suitable epistemological approach for my thesis. This is due to the fact that in this thesis, I am interested in politics of nature, in other words, to examine how different

representations of nature can be related to the far-right's ethno-nationalist ideology and the ideology's racist, nationalist and sexist social agendas. Constructivist positions serve as an important epistemological starting point because they address "the effects of denaturalization or naturalization" that using word 'nature' can contribute to (Soper, 1996, p. 22). In other words, as argued by Barry (2007, p. 8), "calling something 'natural' implies that it is beyond change, immutable, fixed and given" and therefore the term has power "to justify a particular argument". It is important to study representations of nature because these representations are not value-free but instead, they "inform actions", "provide the basis for justification and critique" (Delaney, 2001, p. 488) and may result in political effects (Soper, 1995). Nature is "not a timeless representation of a material reality but a contingent effect of power" (Hultgren, 2015, p. 7) and has been used to "legitimate social and sexual hierarchies and norms of human conduct" (Soper, 1996, p. 23). Furthermore, ideas of nature can also be used as the means to denote the boundary between nature and human and therefore controlling or justifying "physical acts of penetration" (Delaney, 2001, p. 490).

4.2 Nature as an external domain

Nature is traditionally conceptualised as being ontologically separated from humanity which according to Bruno Latour (2012), is one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the modern thought. The ontological separation emerged during the Enlightenment, a philosophical movement in the 18th century, which also marked the dawn of Western modern science. The Enlightenment was not a united movement but instead consists of many, also contradictory, tracks. However, the Enlightenment signified the break from cosmological ideas where human is seen being part of 'nature' (for example through the Great Chain⁵) and the emergence of new 'modern' ideas where nature is understood as an external

⁵ Great Chain of Being refers to from Middle Ages until the end of the 18th century dominant perception that understood 'nature' "in cosmological terms as the totality of being" and humanity was seen "neither opposed to it nor viewed as separable from it" but instead within its order (Soper, 1995, pp. 22-23).

domain that could and should be dominated by a human (Livingstone, 1992). These modern ideas were to a great extent developed by philosophers such as René Descartes or Francis Bacon who invented new philosophies of science where nature was rendered as an object and interior to the inferior mind (Soper, 1995, p. 43). Francis Bacon, “the father of empirics” and enthusiastic advocate for “the mastery of nature” (Guy, 1966; Smith, 2008, p. 13) understood that systematically collected, empirical knowledge (opposed to traditions) would help humanity to improve its conditions and help “establish man as the master of nature” (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, p. 1). The fusion of domination of nature, instrumental rationality and science produced an important belief called ‘Prometheanism’ that gave rise to the understanding of nature as limitless because humans were portrayed as being able to overcome natural limits of the world for their economic and material benefits (Barry, 2007).

During the Enlightenment ‘everything natural’ was rendered objective and therefore belonging under the power of sovereign (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002). Creation of nature as an external domain is, however, “neither arbitrary nor accidental” because “the connection between industry and scientific method [...] was quite apparent to Bacon” (Smith, 2008, p. 15). The exploitative use of nature has occurred also before industrialisation and capitalism, but what makes the capitalist system so special is its ideal for continuing expansion that is justified as being a necessity (Wallerstein, 1999). The idea of the necessity of continuing capital accumulation become embedded in various state institutions (ibid.) and created new forms of land control as the state started to map out its territories and look for ‘natural resources’ for capital accumulation (Peluso & Lund, 2011, p. 668). Capitalism utilised technology and endorsed the deterministic version of science which “permitted the political argument that humans could indeed ‘conquer’ nature, should indeed do so, and that thereupon all negative effects of economic expansion would eventually be countered by inevitable scientific progress” (Wallerstein, 1999, p. 84). The importance of science lies especially in its claim to be objective and value-free, which has consequently, positioned scientific knowledge (e.g. about nature) on special position separating it from the political sphere (Latour, 2012).

Capitalist commodification of nature can occur in various overlapping ways: for example, through privatisation (ownership status) or monetisation (giving a 'price tag') (Castree, 2003). One illustrative example is natural resources which, as Erich Zimmerman has presented, "resources are not; they become" (cited in Hanink, 2000, p. 227). The commodification of nature can also emerge in the context of conservation (Kelly, 2011; Peluso & Lund, 2011). Conservation, for example, of 'wilderness' is not apolitical but a territorial act, therefore a way to assert power over a specific area and its 'resources'. Furthermore, as Cronon (1996, p. 17) has famously argued, the wilderness is not 'naturally' occurring phenomena but instead a social construct, a place that is created in opposition to 'unnatural' civilization': "the place where we are is the place where nature is not".

4.3 Romanticism and human nature

The Romantic era was an artistic and intellectual movement in Europe at the end of the 19th century and together with the Enlightenment influenced highly European ideological development (Erikson, 2004). Romanticism was a countermovement to industrialisation and its instrumental rationality, and it opposed the negative consequences of industrialisation on nature (Barry, 2007, p. 57). Romanticism linked a nation and national identity with land (Paasi, 2007) emphasising emotions, community spirit, desires, the past and romanticising the human essence which was seen as the source of the truth (Kohn, 1950).

The Romantic era also marked the dawn for various radical right beliefs and values, especially in the context of the emergence of German nationalism (Forchtner, 2018). *Völkisch* nationalism, a populist movement in Germany, was carried by the belief of "a naturalistic vision of the national community as a cohesive organic entity" (Bassin, 2005, p. 206) *Volk*, "the people" were understood as "an integral part of the ecology of the natural world" (ibid.). This movement emphasised the naturalness, rootedness, organic territoriality, and mobilised concepts such as *Heimat* (homeland), *Landschaft* (landscape), and *Kulturlandschaft* (cultural landscape). Elements from the *Völkisch* belief were carried on by Nazis

who fused together of “Volk, racism and conservation” and mobilised several laws on natural protection (Brüggemeier et al., 2005).

Romantic ideas of nature reproduced nature-culture distinction in a new way: nature was no more seen as a site of domination but instead it was perceived as “a holy text” that “was seen to contain all kinds of moral truths which were directly painted into the landscape” (Smith, 2008, p. 23). Although romanticism embraced human-nature relation for example by creating a romanticised and aestheticized relation between human and nature, as Smith (ibid.) has argued, romanticism offered a new form of control as it “provided a model for social behaviour”, the spiritual morality and labelled some characteristics, such as competition, profit-seeking, sexism, and racism as “normal, God-given, unchangeable” (ibid., p. 28). As Smith (ibid., p. 26) elaborates, “it is striking that the treatment of women in capitalist society parallels the treatment of nature. As external nature, women are objects which mankind attempts to dominate and oppress, ravage and romanticize.”

In the romantic notions, ‘nature’ inside us serves as “the well-spring of human virtue and thus of social regeneration” (Soper, 1995, p. 29). Cultural progress was seen to halt the discovery of human essences and to have negative consequences to the “process of authentic human fulfilment” (ibid.). Therefore, in the Romantic understanding of nature, “the point is not to return to past primitivity, but to discover in ‘nature’, both inner and outer, the source of redemption from the alienation and depredations of industrialism and the ‘cash nexus’ deformation of human relation” (ibid.). Romantic understandings of “‘nature’ as wholesome salvation from cultural decadence and racial degeneration” were decisive in laying down the Nazi ideology and “an aesthetic of ‘nature as source of purity and authentic self-identification has been a component of all forms of racism, tribalism and nationalism” (ibid.).

It is important to note, that romanticism is only one way to conceptualise human nature. The origin of the modern understanding of human nature is in Modernism because the idea of nature developed simultaneously with the creation of human nature dualism because humanity was contrasted and constructed as the

opposite to nature (Delaney, 2001). The creation of the idea of human nature occurred simultaneously with the development of Western culture and ‘civilization’ and as Soper illustrates, the “metaphysical vocabulary” of humanity-nature distinction “has developed in tandem with the development of Western culture or ‘civilization’ itself” (1995, p. 61). In other words, “the very concept of the ‘human’ has been arrived at in the light of the practices and relations to nature of ‘developed’, or ‘civilized’ society – practices and relations, which by definition, are not ‘primitive’, ‘wild’, ‘savage’ or exotic” (ibid.).

4.4 Explaining human society through nature

Ideas of nature and ‘natural laws’ have given rise to various explanations for organisation of human societies. What Mark Bassin (2003) calls “argument from nature” is a way to explain or justify temporal and spatial organisations of human society through natural ‘laws’. However, these ideas are not natural but instead used, for example, “as part of an elaborate apologetic through which class, ethnic or (neo-colonial) repression may be justified” (Harvey, 1974, p. 274). I introduce two broad ways to integrate society as part of the ‘natural sphere’: firstly, through ecological arguments about ecological limits and, secondly, through arguments about ‘naturalness’ of human society.⁶ In this chapter, I address the most important arguments (overpopulation, natural limit, natural law, carrying capacity, natural order) just to provide some examples of how politics, ideas of nature and human societies can get intertwined. What combines these ideas is that they have been ideologically driven and often (but not always) linked to the right-wing or nativist politics (e.g. Chappell, 1993; Harvey, 1974). For example, ideas of overpopulation, carrying capacity or natural limits (ecological arguments) have been “an ideologically conservative attempt to mask socially unjust limits on progress as ‘natural’ and therefore ‘unalterable’ and beyond human capacity to change or

⁶ This distinction draws partially to the work by John Hultgren (2015) who has located, for example, discourses of social nativism and ecological nativism from environmental anti-immigrant groups in the United States.

improve” (Barry, 2007, p. 155). In turn, ideas of natural order and naturalness of human societies, have been used especially in nationalistic and nativist politics.

Ecological arguments refer to certain ‘scientific ideas’ about nature where it is, for example, argued to have certain limits that restrain or impact human action (Hultgren, 2015). The most widely used example of this way to represent nature is Malthusian and neo-Malthusian arguments about ‘natural law’ and population control where the natural law will lead eventually to overpopulation, as *natural limits* set the constraints to populations (Harvey, 1974). Malthus saw that exceeding natural limits would lead, for example, to war and misery. Malthusian law had, however, ideologically driven underpinnings because Malthus was driven by opposition to socialism and social benefits which he believed increasing human misery whilst reducing living standards for everyone (ibid.). Similar ideas of natural limits were presented by Garrett Hardin in his influential article ‘The Tragedy of the Commons’ (1968) where he argued that overconsumption and scarcity is an outcome of the individualist and self-interest driven use of freely available commons in the world of infinite natural resources. In another influential work by him, ‘Living on a lifeboat’, he states that the poor people’s uncontrolled breeding leads to exceeding carrying capacity and therefore “access to the world’s limited resources should be given to those who can ensure the survival of the Western civilization” (Naess, 2004, p. 25). By a lifeboat, he referred to “wealthy nations” where the poor people would hope to be admitted to (ibid.). Hardin’s ideas, were also highly normative, promoting certain ideological beliefs whilst he was “silent about the enormous inequalities in resource consumption levels between rich and poor countries” (ibid., p. 26)

The second way to explain human society through nature is by using arguments about the naturalness of human society. These arguments have taken shape in the context of *Social Darwinism*, a belief that conceptualised societies as being in a constant struggle or more precisely, in a natural competition (e.g. Livingstone, 1992). Social Darwinian ideas “justified European colonialism as much as a belief that in society the ‘fittest’ (mentally and physically) rise to the top of the hierarchy” (Castree, 2005, p. 54) and marked the beginning of the fusion of

natural and cultural dimensions within one “conceptual umbrella” of evolution theory (Livingstone, 1992, p. 177). In other words, theories of physical sciences were seen to be able to explain human organisations (Bassin, 2003). One of these concepts was *Lebensraum*, living space. This concept was originally used by Oscar Peschel, who used the term mostly to “describe the geographical conditions of human life” (Halas, 2014, p. 4). Friedrich Ratzel adopted the term from Peschel and developed it, so the main unit of *Lebensraum* was Volk⁷, a cultural entity that was “the equivalent of the biologically-defined species units” (ibid., p. 54). Ratzel understood that populations were dictated by “the laws of nature and organic reproduction” and would need to expand their living space as their population grows which in turn leads to “struggle for space”, echoing Darwin’s struggle for existence (Bassin, 2003, p. 5). This expansionist logic was an important theory to justify European imperialist projects and Ratzel believed that colonial expansionist was part of this logic and way how overpopulated European states “could further expand territoriality” (ibid.).

Social Darwinism gave also rise to the idea of environmental determinism where the physical environment was seen as having a deterministic role in shaping human societies and human nature (Livingstone, 1992). Environmental determinism was at its extreme in the Eugenics Movement⁸, a set of ideas about selective biological human improvement in which some traits should be selected out for the benefit of society. One of the most influential eugenics was Madison Grant, an eager conservationist and zoologist (e.g. Spiro, 2009), whose book ‘The Passing of the Great Race’ (1921) Adolf Hitler described as “my bible” (Purdy, 2015). Grant divided mankind into various hierarchical categories that were mastered by “the blond-haired, blue-eyed Nordics” (Spiro, 2009, p. xii).

Although these ideas serve only as a brief illustration of how the human organisation has been explained by natural limits or ideas of naturalness of human

⁷ In Ratzel’s notions the unit of Volk was cultural, not racial (Smith, 2008).

⁸ The Eugenics movement, the idea of human improvement, was practically manifested in the beginning of the 20th century in many Western countries through sterilization policies (Castree, 2005). Furthermore, one of the most systematic attempts to modify human traits was evident in the practices of Nazis where eugenics functioned as a basis in justification of removing “undesirable” human traits (Jews, homosexuals, disabled) (e.g. Castree, 2005).

organisation (e.g. connection between culture and soil), they show the close connection between ideological underpinnings and different ideas of nature. These representations have been veiled in the language of science which have granted them the value-free position. However, as Harvey has argued, “many of the scarcities we experience do not rise out of nature but are created by human activity and managed by social organization” (Harvey, 1974, p. 272). Different ideas of nature veiled as scientific and objective ‘truths’ can be ideologically or politically driven and hence have also political consequences (ibid.). As Harvey presents, “once connotations of absolute limits come to surround the concepts of recourse, scarcity and subsistence, then an absolute limit is set for population [...] Somebody, somewhere, is redundant, and there is not enough to go around. Am I redundant? Of course not. Are you redundant? Of course not. So who is redundant? Of course, it must be *them*” (Harvey, 1974, p. 273).

5. HOW GREEN IS THE FAR-RIGHT?

The leftists and the hippies tried to claim the ecologist movement as their own, but their movements ended up wanting to equate Men with the Animals and the Plants. Our love for nature is different than theirs: The environment is the cradle of our Race, it mirrors our culture and civilization, making it our duty to protect it. (Golden Dawn, 2013)

Many have recognised the far-right's commitments to environmental concerns as analytically and politically relevant phenomena (Olsen, 1999; Forchtner et al., 2018; Hurd & Werther, 2013). Already in 1999, Jonathan Olsen argued that the majority of the far-right parties in Europe are concerned with environmental issues and many have pointed out that the far-right's environmentalism is profoundly embedded in their nationalist ideologies (e.g. Olsen, 1999; Voss 2014). But if this is the case, why are they not supporting environmental politics (Gemenis et al., 2012) or why do they deny climate change (e.g. Forchtner et al., 2018; Jeffries, 2017; Lockwood, 2018; Reed, 2016)? Forchtner et al., (2018, p. 590) present, that there are "tensions" in the far-right's thought: on the one hand the far-right emphasises laws of nature and the connection between the land or soil and the people, on the other hand, this environmentalism has not resulted in environmental activities because "the focus on Volk and its sovereignty, have regularly subordinated environmental protection."

The existing literature on the far-right's positions on nature can be divided into two overlapping themes: the far-right and protection of nature (e.g. Forchtner, 2018; Forchtner & Kølvrå, 2015; Forchtner, et.al. 2018; Ivaldi & Gombin, 2015; Mix, 2009; Olsen, 1999, 2000), and the far-right and 'anti-environmentalism' (e.g. Anshelm & Hultman, 2014; Daggett, 2018; Jeffries, 2017; Lockwood, 2018; Reed, 2016; Schaller & Carius, 2019). The division helps me in structuring this chapter, but it is only analytical. Some of the scholars have provided arguments that suit both subdivisions. Furthermore, it is not always even clear what is meant by 'environmentalism' because environmentalism is not a straightforward word but an extremely broad umbrella term for various ideas concerning the protection of

nature. In addition, it is important to highlight that the literature of the far-right's position on nature is very narrow and therefore it is impossible to provide a detailed and comprehensive picture on the ways, how the far-right represents nature. Furthermore, because of particularities and historical and cultural specificities, it is impossible to draw any generalised pictures about the far-right's understanding of nature.

5.1 Concerns over nature and natural order

Nature and environment “have always played a role in nationalist thought and for those concerned with Volk” (Forchtner et al., 2018, p. 591) and environmentalism can be seen as “rooted in a set of ideological imaginings inherent to nationalism”. (Forchtner & Kølvråa, 2015, p. 200). Interestingly, the more extreme a far-right organization gets, the more likely it supports environmentalism (Voss, 2014, cited in Forchtner et al., 2018). Basing on his study on seven far-right groups and parties in Germany, Olsen (1999; 2000) conceptualises the green aspect in far-right's thought as *a distinctive environmental worldview* that according to him, provides a critique to the Enlightenment and its ideas such as universalism, rationality and social order.⁹

In the German context, one of the most important characteristics of the far-right has been “völkisch thought” which has its intellectual origins in Völkisch movement (Forchtner, et al., 2018, see also Hurd & Werther 2013). “Völkich thought” perceive the community as being “defined as an ethno-racial one, as an organic, collective subject rooted in the land” (Forchtner, et al., 591). As discussed in previous chapters, Völkich movement has given rise, for example, to concepts like ‘homeland’ or ‘national landscape’ which are also distinguished from the vocabularies of the contemporary far-right (Chapter 4.4).

⁹ The Republicans, Independent Ecologist of Germany, German People's Union, German Social Union, Eco-Union, National Democratic Party of Germany, World Federation for the Protection of Life (Olsen, 1999).

In the far-right's rhetoric, nature is often linked to locality and the nation. The nation is understood as an organic, perennial community, therefore naturally occurring and rooted in the soil. In this view, nature serves "as an anchor when experiencing societal change" providing "the ultimate insurance against 'zeitgeisty aberrations' such as fuzzing gender or races" (Forchtner, 2018). Consequently, "destruction of the harmony apparently characterizing the natural environment/ecosystems is also viewed as a violation of nature's 'laws'" (ibid.). Nature and its protection are linked to the people and place, which also provides symbolic elements for identity creation (Olsen, 1999). Olsen (1999) argues that for the far-right groups in Germany, protection of nature is linked to the protection of place, that is the site for belonging, emotions, here-feeling and identity creation. As he elaborates, "environmentalism has as much to do with protecting a piece of ourselves, a sense of our identity, as it does with protecting forests, rivers and lakes" (ibid., p. 5). Hurd and Werther (2013) who have also studied far-right groups in the German context argue in the similar vein that the far-right understand nature through localised, emotional, rhetoric which opposites modernist abstraction of place and alienation from nature. Furthermore, Olsen (2000, p.5) draws a link between right-wing ecologies and environmental determinism. According to him, right-wing ecology suggests that "culture reflects nature, or more correctly, that each culture, in a sense, grows naturally from the geographic space". Here, human nature and nature are entwined: "since human communities and cultures are seen as natural, then environmental protection can be conceptualized as encompassing both the protection of the human world – or in other words the protection of human cultures – as well as the non-human world" (ibid., p. 5).

Based on their research on the Danish People's Party and the British National Party, Forchtner & Kølvrå, (2015) argue that nature is understood in romanticised and aestheticized sense: cultural originality of some elements of nature (e.g. rural landscapes) is emphasised and the land is perceived as bearing "the marks of the national community's history" (Forchtner & Kølvrå, 2015, p. 209). Countryside and landscape function as signifiers of history, identity and continuity and therefore cultural heritage and traditions (ibid.). The importance of

rural landscapes is also recognised in the context of Front National in France (Ivaldi & Gombin, 2015). Ruralism holds a central role in Front National programme. As the party presents, “our countryside is immensely rich, and this is where the best of France’s civilization is perpetuated” (cited in Ivaldi & Gombin, 2015, p. 5). Furthermore, also animality and animal protection are recognised by many as being important themes for the far-right and nature. For example, Front National has highlighted the ‘brutality’ of kosher and the halal meat (Neslen, 2014) whereas various far-right groups in Germany have linked animal protection to ‘protection of homeland’ and have pointed out the “cruelty to animals” that caused by the production of kosher and halal meat (Hurd & Werther, 2013, p. 16). Furthermore, also arguments regarding carrying capacity and resource scarcity are pronounced. For example, the British National Party has argued against immigration on the basis of resource scarcity that will occur if population increased due to immigration but also increasing pollution, echoing Malthusian ideas of natural law that restrains populations (Forchtner & Kølvrå, 2015; Gemenis et al., 2012).

5.2 Inconsistencies

There is also another ‘track’ of literature, which questions the greenness of the far-right (e.g. Gemenis et al., 2012; Jeffries, 2017). Elisabeth Jeffries (2017, p. 470) asks “how credible are these parties’ energy and environmental policies?” and argues that the nationalist, anti-immigration and xenophobic agenda of the European far-right has disregarded the questions regarding the environment and climate change. Arguments that question the far-right’s rhetoric of protection of nature and the natural order are expressed especially by those scholars, who have examined the far-right’s environmental politics at the party-political level or/and attitudes towards climate change. For example Gemenis, et al. (2012) have surveyed 13 far-right parties and argue that the far-right is inherently ‘anti-environmentalist’ because it is against climate change mitigation and green taxes and because it prioritises economy over environment and supports nuclear energy

(Gemenis, et al., 2012, p. 18).¹⁰ Basing on these findings, Gemenis et al. (2012, p. 18-19) reject Olsen's (1999) argument about the far-right's distinctive environmentalism and instead argue that the far-right's anti-environmentalism is "framed within some of the classic ideological components of the radical right: opposition to immigration, nationalism, welfare chauvinism and Euroscepticism". In other words, Gemenis et al. (2012) draw a direct link between the far-right's anti-environmentalism and anti-immigration arguing that anti-immigration gives rise to anti-environmentalism, which is in their view a reaction to leftist environmentalist claims. Drawing a causal link between anti-immigration and anti-environmentalism is, however, highly problematic because it can hide various ways in which certain ideas of environment and nature can itself give rise to anti-immigration.

Anti-environmentalism is most clearly articulated in the research on the far-right's climate denialism. Traditionally, climate scepticism is linked to conservatism (e.g. Anshelm & Hultman, 2014; McCright & Dunlap, 2011). Forchtner, et al. (2018) point out, however, that the far-right denialism is articulated differently, and their climate denialism is based on "a concern with the Volk, its sovereignty, and well-being" (p. 601). Allen et al. (forthcoming) have examined climate and energy politics of nine far-right parties in Europe, arguing that anti-climate politics are an integral part of the far-right party politics, although there are differences in the ways how climate change and the need for mitigation is framed.¹¹ There are important differences between countries: some, like AfD, deny climate change outright¹² whereas some, like the Finns party, accept it but reject all commitments to mitigation efforts because of negative consequences to national industries and economy. Similar tendencies for climate scepticism is also found, for

¹⁰ The parties are: the Austrian Freedom Party, the Belgian Flemish Interest, the Danish People's Party, the True Finns (the Finns Party), The French National Front (Front National), the German Die Republikaner, National Democratic Party in Germany, the Greek Popular Orthodox Rally, the Italian Northern League, the Dutch Party for Freedom, the Swiss People's party, the British National Party and the Swedish Democrats (Valdivia, 2018)

¹¹ Alternative for Germany, The Finns Party, Freedom Party of Austria, Danish People's Party, Dutch Party for Freedom, The Law and Justice, Swedish Democrats, Front National, Lega Nord (Allen et al., forthcoming).

¹² For example, AfD in Germany claims that Co2 is not pollutant but instead an essential part of all life.

example, in regards to the far-right in Australia (Lockwood, 2018), Germany (Forchtner et al. 2018) the United Kingdom (UKIP, 2017) of course, not to mention Donald Trump, who has proclaimed that “Global warming is a total, and very expensive, hoax!” (Trump, 2013).

Forchtner & Kølvråa (2015) argue that the reason for ‘tensions’ between climate denialism and nature protectionism can be explained by the scale: protection of local nature is supported because it is a source for purity and identity whereas accepting climate change has the potential risk to threaten sovereignty. The far-right rejects climate mitigation efforts because admitting climate change would require transnational actions which could “diminish sovereignty and enforce ‘the globalis regime’” (Forchtner, et al., 2018, p. 597, also Lockwood, 2018). This belief is, however, limited because it explains climate denialism by nationalism and not ethno-nationalism. By this I mean, that the far-right’s ethno-nationalism is not only about securing the borders, but it is above all about securing the white European identities and subjectivities that ‘the triple conflation’ of White=Europe=Christianity has granted and institutionalised. This conflation has been fuelled by the deterministic science and capitalist expansionist logic. The paradox in the far-right’s climate denialism is that whilst the far-right movements deny climate change or are sceptical about, they still have “an abiding faith in industrial science and technology, free enterprise, and those great institutions of Western Enlightenment” (Jacques, 2012, p. 9).

Examining this ‘paradox’ in the context of ethno-nationalism helps to understand better the far-right’s climate denialism. As Jacques (2012, p. 15) explains, “climate science offers an imminent critique of the industrial base on Western modernity” and it “tempts us to think of authentic changes to the world political economic structure because it is so irreparably unsustainable”. Hence, climate scepticism is a reaction to the threats that admitting climate change would pose to Western modernity and industrial power that is heavily dependent on the exploitation of nature. In a similar vein, also Dagget (2018) proposes that climate change denial is actually a denial of potential threats posed to the fossil fuel-based world economy and the profits and consumption lifestyles it has granted. Changes

in the fossil fuel industry would mean “leaving trillions of dollars of profit in the ground” (Daggett, 2018, p. 2). However, as Daggett (2018) proposes, protection of the fossil fuel-based economy is not only about the profits, instead, it is also about cultural meanings and political subjectivities. As she writes, Western white subjectivities and privileges are “oil-soaked and coal-dusted” because fossil industry “built the modern world” and Western development has relied upon intensive fossil fuel consumption (Daggett, 2018, p. 4). This has not had only material consequences but also psychological because of creation of white masculinity, that was developed also on the basis of “extracting and burning fuel” (Daggett, 2018, p. 8).

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Selection of the case

This thesis departs from the theoretical interest in the politics of ‘nature’ and is supplemented by an empirical case study on the Finns party. My empirical study aims to provide new insights to how different ideas of nature can be connected to the far-right ideology in general and the far-right’s ideology’s ethno-nationalist core in particular. Case study refers to “a research strategy based on the in-depth empirical investigation” in which one or several phenomena are studied and related to “features of a larger class of (similar) phenomena” (Vennesson, 2008, p. 226). Possible pitfalls of conducting a case study are, for instance, selection of the case study, the ways it is delimited and the ways how the question of generalisation is approached (Bennett, 2004).

The most important criterion for the selection of the case study has been defined by this thesis: a far-right actor, which is defined by its ethno-nationalist core. The selection of the Finns party can be explained by several reasons. Firstly, and most importantly, it is a far-right party because its core is in ethno-nationalism, which is supplemented with populism and authoritarianism (Arter, 2010). As Arter (2010, p. 485) argues, the “pre-eminent concept” of the Finns party is “Finnishness (*suomalaisuus*)”. The ethno-nationalist characteristics of the party are addressed in more detail in Chapter 7.1.

The second reason for the selection of the party is the paucity in English-speaking research on the Finns party and complete lack of research on their environmental positions. The party’s positions and the profile have changed significantly with the election of the new leadership in June 2017. As discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the change of leadership replaced the agrarian populists in the party with immigration hardliners. Interestingly, the change in the party’s profile also extended to their environmental stances. The party, for example, published an environmental programme for the first time and commenced to emphasise the urgency for the conservation of nature. Therefore, I see studying the

PS intellectually and politically interesting but also an important opportunity to shed light on the party's 'renewed' form.

Last, but not the least reason for the selection of the Finns Party is my background as a Finnish speaking person, who is familiar with the Finnish political context. Therefore, studying the party is rather interesting possibility enabled by my linguistic skills and familiarity with the country, that have facilitated easy access to the materials but also understanding of their relation to the Finnish historical, cultural and political context.

6.2 Selection of the material

The PS has a rich body of well written and freely available textual material on their websites (party programmes, principles and monthly published magazines) where they propagate their political orientations. Because I am interested to know the representations and meanings constructed by the party, I have chosen to examine the primary communication channels of the party: party programmes and official party magazine, *Perussuomalainen*. The texts are tools in which the party are addressing their electorate and fellow members and they are inherently political ways to communicate. The timeframe of the study is determined by the previously mentioned and in the following discussed change in the leadership. The leadership changed in June 2017 which provides me with the 'natural' starting point for the selection of the material: from the change of leadership in June 2017 until April 2019, the month when I conducted my empirical analysis.

6.3 The analytical strategy

For my method, I have selected to conduct a textual analysis. Textual analysis refers to a methodology to collect data and understand the representations and assumptions through which people make sense of the world (McKee, 2011, p. 14). Textual analysis is the most suitable methodology for my aim to explore representations of nature because representations are textual and texts are one of

the most empirically noticeable components between language and the social world (Dittmier, 2010). As discussed in Chapter 4.1, I understand language as an important way to shape our understanding of the world and therefore to inform actions.

Because a text should always be understood as part of a context (McKee 2011) I have begun my analysis by providing a brief introduction for the Finns party. Through textual analysis I have collected empirical data for my first research question, *how does the Finns Party represent nature?* Studying representations of the Finns Party is an important contribution to the literature regarding the far-right and nature nexus because of the lack of empirical research on the topic. The collected empirical material has also contributed importantly to my theoretical discussions regarding the politics of nature in the context of far-right and therefore assist me in answering the two other research questions: *How do the far-right's ideas of nature relate to their ethno-nationalist politics? What are the potential implications of these ideas?* It is important to note that whilst my first research question is directed explicitly to the Finns Party, the second and the third research question discusses the relation between different ideas of nature and ethno-nationalist ideology in the context of the far-right. In addition to the empirical material on the Finns Party, I have also used the theories and empirics presented in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 to answer the second and the third research question. Although each far-right party and movement has its own particularities, since the far-right's core is ethno-nationalism, it is possible to develop broader analytical discussion regarding the relation between ethno-nationalism and various ideas of nature.

Following structuralist tradition, I have analysed the representations of nature by trying to locate “the deep structures that aren't actually apparent in the text” (McKee, 2011, p. 11). The signs (representations) of nature are not understood as an “isolated event” (constructed by itself) (Williams, 1981, p. 61). Instead, the signs are understood as being constructed in relation to other units and as such to be part of “a whole signifying system” (ibid.). In other words, the meaning of nature has been analysed by examining “the relations of this unit to other units” and then

to other structures that form a system that is held together by ideology (e.g. ethno-nationalism) (ibid.). My theoretical considerations in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 have served as an important theoretical framework through which I have analysed the representations and their connection to wider social context. In other words, my theoretical considerations (e.g. in regard to the ways how nationalism or racism is manifested) have guided me in locating these ‘deep’ structures that are not necessarily possible to discover from the text otherwise.

Methodologically, textual analysis can be challenging. It depends on interpretations (and thus the role of a researcher and all the knowledge she has gained), and textual analysis cannot be standardized or repeated in a conventional sense because the context and the content vary (McKee, 2011). This was also one important methodological challenge to me. How could I reach the most comprehensive understanding of the far-right’s representations of nature, if all the knowledge I have gained a priori (echoing Kant) has influenced my understanding of the empirical world? One way to overcome this dilemma would be to use beforehand defined categories, through which I could examine the texts. Some scholars have done this: for example, Forchtner & Kølvråa (2015) have analysed discourses of nature through beforehand established categories (symbolic, material, aesthetic). Furthermore, in a different context, Delaney (2001) has analysed representations of nature by departing from the assumption that nature is an external domain. Using pre-defined categories is, however, problematic because the categories would impact the research results because my bias as the researcher influences the categories. On the other hand, analysing the representations without any categories would be confusing for the reader and put the results into a questionable light.

To solve this methodological dilemma, I have conducted manual coding, where I have coded the party programmes and the analysed articles. Coding is a method for locating repetitive characteristics in qualitative data and organizing it to categories or families (Saldaña, 2015). I have conducted a ‘descriptive coding’ where I have manually coded by describing the content of a passage of the programme or an article that has covered nature (Saldaña, 2015). In other words, if

a passage has discussed forests, I have coded it accordingly. After coding the texts, I started to analyse them in relation to my theoretical framework which assisted me in linking certain units with each other and especially in understanding implicit meaning-making practices (especially in regard to place and space that are abstract concepts and therefore not necessarily apparent in texts). The analysis of the empirical material has helped me to address my first research question about the representations of nature (Chapter 7) but also have served as the basis for answering my two other research questions (Chapter 8 and 9).

6.4 The analysis and limitations

I conducted my analysis in the following ways: Firstly, I have gone through all the official material on the official website of the PS and all magazines published after June 2017 and excluded those articles and political programmes that do not discuss nature. I have looked for references regarding the natural environment: atmosphere, geology and biology (including vegetation and animals). I have searched for the references manually, by reading the programmes and magazines. I have also been interested in human nature (as discussed in Chapter 4.4) but for analytical reasons, I have analysed human nature only when it has been articulated in relation to nature. By analytical reasons I mean that ideas of human nature are articulated explicitly and implicitly in relation to an endless number of topics. Human nature can be, for example, discussed in relation to immigration (e.g. when immigrants are portrayed as having some fixed essences, like a higher tendency for crime) or in relation to marriage equality (e.g. when non-heterosexual people are presented in a stereotyped manner and have some inherent qualities that make them different and ‘non-natural’). Because of limitations of space and time and due to the main interest in nature, I have decided to include human nature only when it has been mentioned in relation to ‘the green stuff’. This has also applied to references to societal order: if it has been discussed in relation to nature (e.g. homeland rooted in soil) or natural laws (e.g. population limit) I have included it to my analysis.

Due to lack of time and space, I have excluded those articles that have mentioned nature only briefly (e.g. when a part of nature, such as lakes, have been mentioned to supplement an argument that is not related to nature). Therefore, I have coded only those articles, that have explicitly discussed nature. The coded themes are listed in the tables (see appendix) alongside other details about the articles and programmes: their length, publication date, citation, title and the writer (for magazines). The found themes structure my analysis and are in bold font. As my tools, I have used different colours to signify different codes. I conducted coding in several cycles in order to understand the meaning practices as well as possible.

My analysis of representations of nature is limited. The first limitation concerns my research design where I have decided to look at one case, the Finns party. As Vennesson, (2008, p. 237) illustrates, one challenge in a case study research design is to separate the “distinctive and the common dimensions of the cases” because although the assumption is that each case is unique, “cases are often deeply connected to one another” (ibid.). Another related pitfall is the question of generalisation (Bennett, 2004) the ways in which case could be related to other cases, in other words finding the particularities but also connectedness to other cases (Bennett, 2004). In order to overcome this problem, I am always careful in specifying what is the actor whose representations I am discussing. Although I perceive the far-right as ‘a movement’ my attempt is not to generalise their representations because every party and organisation has their unique political and cultural contexts. Instead, I am interested to examine the ideological relations between the politics of nature and ethno-nationalism.

The second limitation of my analysis concerns the analysed material. The analysed textual material cannot be taken out of social context but instead it is written by someone and with some intentions. Some of the representations of nature may be directed to attract some segments of the electorate or may have other hidden motives that are beyond my knowledge. This is especially relevant in regard to the magazines. Although the magazines are published by the party office, I am not aware of the motives of an individual journalist. Therefore, to overcome this dilemma, I have specified always the writer of the analysed article (if the writer has

been mentioned). All the material was in Finnish and thus all quotes have been translated by me. I have tried to provide as direct translation as possible by trying to convey the inherent meaning of the quote.

The third limitation – and also the most important one – is my subjectivity and research bias. All the knowledge I have gained for 26 years affect the ways in which I understand and interpret the world. I am not a value-free individual and I problematise all claims to objectivity and neutrality because of the crucial role that language and ideologies play in shaping our understanding of the world and mediating social relations (Chapter 4.1). As Harvey argues, “the claim to be ethically neutral and ideology free is itself an ideological claim” (Harvey, 1974, p. 256). As I have discussed throughout this thesis, scientific knowledge has played a pivotal role in constructing ‘natural’ and ‘objective’ ideas of the world and therefore I acknowledge my potential role in reproducing certain oppressive understandings of the world (e.g. Eurocentrism).

As a left-leaning scholar, my understanding of the world is substantially different from the one promoted by the far-right. Overall speaking, my research is driven by the critique towards society and especially the various dominative relations chain certain segments of the world’s population to specific socio-spatial intersections (e.g. my Finnish passport has a very different power that a passport of a person who is born, for example, in Palestine). My understanding of the world affects my research in two ways: on the one hand, I can understand the far-right’s ideologies and meaning-making as ‘an outsider’ which grants me an important critical lens. On the other hand, I am in a way insider. By this I mean that although my research is driven by the critique towards Western modernism and different racist, nationalist and sexist social relations Western modernity has institutionalised for example through science, I am myself a Western ‘construction’ because I have lived my entire life in the West and also gained my education in Western universities. Therefore, when I talk about Western racism, I talk about it as an insider because my identities and understandings of my own nature have to be located as part of the wider Finnish, Nordic and Western context. Hence, my role as a researcher in interpreting and analysing the material is substantial. Although I

have conducted coding in many cycles, occasionally it has been challenging to code the text according to themes because some of the themes are highly overlapping (e.g. territorialisation and commodification) or difficult to separate (e.g. abstract ideas of nature where it has been portrayed as a site for self-realisation for certain identities) and therefore coding has been dependent on my interpretations. Furthermore, my background as a geographer has influenced my attention to certain issues (e.g. place, space) whereas, for example, an ecologist could have directed her attention to other aspects. As I have discussed throughout this thesis, nature is extremely multifunctional and complex word and therefore I do not claim to be presenting any objective ideas of far-right's ideas of nature. In order to partially overcome my subjectivity and bias in regard to selection and analysis of the textual material, I have attempted to provide careful and transparent documentation of coding and all used materials (appendix). In Chapter 7.2, where I analyse the representations, I offer numerous examples of quotes to back by argumentation and show my logic and justification for the reader. However, it is important to note that all presented themes are just analytical and directional.

7. THE GREEN TURN OF THE FINNS PARTY

7.1 Background of the Finns party

Finland may be the happiest country on the Earth¹³ but the Nordic welfare state model, which has granted that happiness, has been heavily dependent on exclusionary welfare state politics (e.g. in the form of strict citizenship rights). Importantly, the Finnish national identity has developed on the basis of Nordic and Western white identities (Keskinen, 2013). White West, in this context, refers to “the place where modernity perceivably developed and resulted in superior economic, scientific and cultural achievements” (Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2012, cited in Keskinen 2013, p. 226). Nationalism has always been strongly present in Finland, for example, in the context of independence struggles against Russia, the Finnish Civil war, debates concerning Swedish language or disputes over Sámi territories. Hence, I want to emphasise, that the Finns Party has emerged to a country where nationalism and various exclusionary politics have been present over a century. Therefore, exclusionary nationalism cannot only be reduced to the Finns Party.

The origin of Perussuomalaiset, the ‘PS’ (the Finns Party, formerly known as True Finns), is in Suomen Maaseudun Puolue ‘SMP’ (The Finnish Rural Party), in 1959 emerged agrarian populist party (Koivulaakso, et al., 2012). The SMP went bankrupt in 1995, and some of the former members found a new party, the PS. The political priorities of the new party were the defence of the ‘forgotten people’, anti-immigration and Euroscepticism (Bergmann, 2017). Furthermore, the surge of the PS marked “a significant shift towards European continental-style extreme-right populist politics” (Bergmann, 2017, p. 83). In the national parliamentary elections of 2011, after the financial crisis, the PS broke through with 19.1 % share of the votes. This made the party the third biggest in Finland. In the national parliamentary elections of 2015, the party obtained 17.7 % of the votes, became the second biggest party and became part of a coalition government. Timo Soini, the leader of the party

¹³ According to UN report in 2018 (e.g. Collinson 2018).

since 1997, became the minister of foreign affairs. In 2017, Timo Soini announced that he would not stand for the PS chairman elections, and Jussi Halla-aho got elected as a new party's chairman. The 'old' PS was recognized as a far-right party due to its ethno-nationalism, populism and authoritarianist orientations, although it tended to be less openly xenophobic than some of the far-right parties in Europe (e.g. the Danish People's Party) (Arter, 2010). However, the profile of the party changed after the election of the new leadership. The new leadership gave the PS a more extreme ethno-nationalist profile because the new leadership's hardline stances on immigration replaced Timo Soini's more 'mainstream' orientations (Äystö, 2017) and several former (moderate) members of the PS resigned and formed a new party, Blue Reform.

The new leader of the PS, Jussi Halla-aho is known for his blog 'Scripta: Writings from Falling West'. In his blog, he, for example, has addressed genetic differences of races (e.g. Halla-aho, 2006). In 2012, Halla-aho got fined by the Supreme Court for ethnic agitation and disturbing religious worship due to a blog post where he links Islam to paedophilia and hints about theft and laziness being 'genetic attributes' of Somalis (e.g. Äystö, 2017). Furthermore, he has called Islam a 'totalitarian fascist ideology' and stated that the green-left leaning immigration supporters 'should be raped' (Halla-aho, cited in Bergmann, 2017). Now, under the leadership of Halla-aho, the PS defines itself as nationalistic and Christian social party that advances national interests (Perussuomalaiset, 2018). According to the PS, it is the defender of the underprivileged, unlucky and excluded Finns (ibid.). In Jussi Halla-aho's utopia, Finland is a country where "an ordinary Finn once again finds himself the main character regardless, for example, of his gender or place of residence" (Luukka, 2019). In the parliamentary elections of 2019, at the time of writing this thesis, the PS became the second biggest party with 17.5 % share of votes.

In a similar vein to other far-right parties in Europe, also the PS is ruled by men. Men are overrepresented among the leadership, membership and electorate (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2017). Furthermore, the PS promotes conservative and anti-feminist politics and understand the idea of the traditional nuclear family as

“the basic unit of society” (Perussuomalaiset 2011, cited in Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2017) and “central to the vitality of the nation” (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2017, p. 42). Furthermore, as studies on their discourse have shown, they support ‘traditional’ gender roles and women are, for example, portrayed in the role of caregivers (ibid.) Socio-economically the PS positions itself outside the traditional right-left wing spectrum and argues representing “economic policy of sane sense” and supporting Welfare chauvinism (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 2). However, in the comparison conducted under the elections of 2019, the PS was the only parliamentary party that wanted to cut the expenditures of the public sector (Muhonen, 2019). Furthermore, the PS has continuously criticised the various social welfare benefits which, according to Halla-aho, are “the luxury of society” (Karvala, 2017).

The new leadership also re-orientated the PS’s positions regarding nature. Under the leadership of Timo Soini, human-induced climate change was denied, and initiatives for state-led environmental protection, for example in the context of the establishment of new conservation areas, rejected (e.g. Ilmastofoorumi, 2012, Vihreä Lanka, 2011). During Soini’s leadership, the party stood firmly on their agrarian legacy and environmental issues were linked almost solely with questions regarding agriculture and forestry (Viheä Lanka, 2011). Furthermore, before the leadership of Halla-aho, the PS did not have any programmes on the environment and energy, instead, the environment was only briefly mentioned in the context of agricultural policy (cf. Perussuomalaiset, 2015). The change in the leadership reoriented the rhetoric regarding the natural environment. Now the PS admits that human-induced climate change is ‘a fact’ and points out that environmental protection is a fundamental component of the party’s nationalist agenda (e.g. Halla-aho, 2018; Meri, 2018).

7.2 Finnish nature is not green, it is blue and white

Nature is an often-appearing theme in the political programmes and the magazines of the ‘new’ PS (table 1 & 2). Right at the beginning of the environmental

programme, the PS describes that their positions on nature are based on their values which are patriotism, national interest, justice, Christian socialism and spiritual growth (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 3).

Protection of nature is brought up at the beginning of the programme and it is the overarching theme. The PS defines protection as a “broad entity that includes nature protection, the prevention of environmental problems, the concern of well-being and living conditions of humans and animals and sustainable development” (ibid., p. 3). The PS narrates Finnish nature in an **aesthetic** fashion: nature is “irreplaceable from urban nature to the harsh wilderness. Beautiful lakes, wide forests, pure air and easily accessible local nature are not self-evident but instead very rare and privileged living environment” (ibid., p. 3).

The need for protection of nature is connected to the nation and justified through spatial and temporal rhetoric: the protection of natural environment ensures also the existence and continuity of the community and the nation. Firstly, protection of nature is linked to **locality** and justified by arguing that not protecting nature has negative consequences on humans, for example through contamination. Jani Mäkelä (MP) pronounces that nature protection is needed because “no one wants to live in the midst of contaminant” (Perussuomalainen, 2018a, p. 15). The PS argues that “the more human get attached to the living environment, the better she wants to take care of it” and for that reason through everyday life acts (recycling, keeping local environment clean, saving energy, avoiding consumption and privileging local food) a member of community should take care of natural environment (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 3). On the other hand, the PS equates protection of nature to the continuity of **nation** and **homeland**. Protection of nature is narrated as a national duty and connected to the protection of the present and future generations and their “well-being and vitality” (ibid.). The PS illustrates that it is “our duty is to leave nature of our homeland as a heritage for the next generations in better condition as where we got it” (ibid.). Nature of the homeland must be protected because nature is the ‘heritage’ of the nation, the Finns. As they clarify, “Finland’s unique nature can only be nurtured only by the Finns themselves” (ibid.).

Additionally, the homeland is also a source of **national identity**. As the PS presents: “the Finnish nation has a strong and unique connection with nature, which also explains our interest in conservation. Nature has always been an inseparable part of Finnish tradition and identity [...] and also always been the source of wellbeing for humans” (ibid.). The Finnish nation, therefore, is portrayed as being connected to nature, resembling the idea of nation’s natural rootedness to the homeland and its physical environment.

Protection of nature is also justified by emphasising nature’s importance for **recreation**, which is linked to Finnishness, national identities and understanding nature as a site for self-realisation. In the environmental programme, the PS encourages people spending time in nature because it is the place where a Finn is “reared”. As the PS explains, “Finns must preserve their unique everyman’s rights¹⁴ [...] and all citizens should be encouraged to enjoy the opportunity to move freely and responsibly in nature. This is the best Finnish rearing and functions as a counterforce to the urban lifestyle” (ibid.).

Nature is also a source for **vitality** and **Christianity**: “nature has always been a source of wellbeing for humans. Enjoyment of nature should be possible for everyone as only a little moment gives energy to everyday life and reduces stress. The old saying that forest is a church of a Finn is still timely” (ibid.). Leena Meri (MP) (quoted in Männistö, 2018a, p. 7) elaborates further the interlinkage between nature, well-being and Finns: “the Finns live from forests, we breathe forests and we love nature. It is very therapeutic to be in nature and to be in contact with animals [...] I hope that Finland will remain such a country and that we are not too many here. Population movements from developing countries threaten biodiversity”. This quote overlaps interestingly also with the theme of **carrying capacity**, which I have discussed below. Furthermore, the previously mentioned sentences also overlapped with the theme of **forest** – important symbol for national identity, site for self-realisation but also, as I have discussed in below, a part of nature that is important for commodification.

¹⁴ Everyman’s right or ‘the freedom to roam’ is a legal concept in Finland that gives everyone the right to access nature, regardless the land’s ownership status.

Similar understandings of nature as self-realisation are also found in an article regards to a Finnish man who is named by the PS as ‘Vuoden Äijä’, the true man of the year¹⁵. In this article, I have located three themes: national identity, **animality** and **masculinity**. The man is selected for the man of the year because of his life work for carnivores. The PS explains the prize in the following way: “In Finnish nature, there are things that are perceived as blue and white¹⁶. One of these is a bear, our national animal [...] The man of the year can be a male person who through his own natural behaviour, opinion, effort, and general nature has promoted honest manliness” (Perusäijät, 2017, p. 21). ‘Bear’ but also ‘blue and white nature’ function as symbols for national unity and national identity. Nature serves also as a source for self-realisation for human nature, ‘natural behaviour’ and ‘general nature’. Furthermore, the realisation of masculine identity, ‘honest manliness’, takes place through domestication of a part of nature: carnivores.

The PS justifies the need of protection of nature also through arguments regarding nature’s **intrinsic value** as well as its value for **tourism**. The following passage, in which protection of nature is proposed to be conducted through establishing natural reserves, is illustrative: “when planning to establish new natural reserves areas, in addition to nature values, also their value in camping and recreation must be taken into account” (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 3). The passage shows already discussed recreational value, but also that nature is portrayed as having an intrinsic value, a value that derives from its essence. Secondly, conservation is justified through arguments regarding tourism. Finnish nature is illustrated as being “unique”, and “sustainable” nature tourism “economically beneficial” (ibid.).

In the environmental programme but also in the magazines, the protection of nature and economic activity are presented not exclusive but instead complementary because the protection of nature provides the means to achieve both economic but also social well-being. The following sentence is illustrative:

¹⁵ “Vuoden äijä” can be translated in several ways. Generally speaking, ‘äijä’ refers to a man but it is not a neutral noun to signify sex. Instead, it is used to refer to ‘a true man’ or ‘old man’ whose behaviour is masculine in a stereotypical way.

¹⁶ Blue white colour combination refers to the colours of the Finnish flag.

“sustainable environmental protection is an entity that affects positively the entire society, well-being of humans and economy” because “in healthy, safe, and comfortable living environment grows healthy Finns who build and respect our country” (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 4, see also Perussuomalainen, 2018a).

Nature is also discussed in relation to different processes of **territorialisation** and **commodification**, the most frequently occurring themes in the magazines (table 2). First, the PS makes territorial claims for land and nature by highlighting that nature is national property and its resources ought to be sustainably utilised only for the national benefit. As the PS argues, “sustainable use of nature and its resources to promote the well-being of our society is an advantage for our whole country. Nature and natural resources of Finland are our national property, the value of which is immeasurable and must be protected” (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 3).

The commodification of nature is evident also in terms of water, which is presented as **natural resources**. Water is a frequently occurring theme and is portrayed as a profoundly valuable national asset, “bright cold” (Perussuomalaiset, 2019a, 2019b). As they present, “clean waters are our great national wealth whose values are immeasurable. The importance of clean fresh water and the so-called blue bioeconomy will continue to grow in the future, so we should take good care of our waters” (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 4). As they continue, “‘bright gold’ must be kept under control, and under no circumstances should the rights of water resources be jeopardized or given away from your own hands” (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 4). The importance of **minerals** is also noted. However, interestingly, the PS recognises the value of minerals also for the international markets. According to the PS, the commodification of minerals is not only the national right but, instead, can be exploited by international mining companies as long as the companies act responsibly (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, also Perussuomalainen 2018c). **Fossil fuels** are also brought up several times (Perussuomalaiset, 2019a; 2019b). The PS advocates peat and coal and proclaims that phasing them out is harmful to the economy and taxpayers because it would increase energy prices (Suomen Utiset,

2018b). As they argue, “Finland cannot afford to phase out coal and peat and there is no climate political need for that” (Suomen Uutiset, 2018b, p. 15)

Nature is also understood through **Promethean** views where human is understood to be able to overcome through technology all limitations posed by nature. Promethean understanding of nature is discussed for example in relation to forest management. Forests are understood to grow faster in Finland because of “good forest management” (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 8). As presented, “in Finland the growth of forests exceeds logging and capturing the land to other purposes. The growth based on active forest management makes it possible in the future that Finland would be land of zero-emission” (Suomen Uutiset, 2017, p. 7). In the same article, the writer of the article is wondering why the active management of the forest is not leading to any decrease in carbon emission reduction targets but to contrary “the sink is considered to be naturally part of Finland’s land” (ibid., p. 7). This same rhetoric is presented also elsewhere where the PS utters that “we have increased the number of carbon sinks in our forests with our own operations” (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 7). As the previous passages have shown, carbon sinks¹⁷ are represented not part of nature per se but instead as occurring because of human’s active management of forests.

On the other hand, nature is portrayed as being limited in terms of **resource scarcity** and the global importance of these resources will increase “along with resource scarcity” (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b). Global scarcity of waters is expressed to “possibly cause armed conflict that in turn created refugee flows” (Perussuomalaiset, 2018b). Secondly, limits of nature are also explicitly illustrated in the context of **population** and **carrying capacity** that is brought up especially in the context of climate change. **Climate change** is a frequently appearing theme especially in their magazines¹⁸ (Männistö, 2018a, 2018b; Suomen Uutiset, 2018b, 2019a). Climate change is in Jussi Halla-aho’s words “a global problem, that

¹⁷ Carbon sinks are natural (e.g. forests and oceans) reserves that absorb more carbon than what they emit. Finland is a highly ‘forest-rich’ country and consequently carbon sinks have become an important political issue in regard to climate mitigation efforts.

¹⁸ It is important to note that climate change was a very widely discussed topic by public and other parties under the elections of 2019.

requires global solutions” (Meri, 2018). However, since Finland’s share of the World’s carbon dioxide emissions is only “1 permille”, the countries that pollute most need to take responsibility. The PS locates the cause of climate change in structural issues such as “global population explosion” (Perussuomalaiset, 2019b, p. 5). The PS argues that the main cause for contemporary environmental problems, including climate change, is population growth. The PS argues that “population growth is the mother of all environmental problems” (Männistö, 2018b) and “an essential part of the growth of emissions, so it should be talked about whenever we talk about climate change” (Suomen Uutiset, 2018a). Population growth, however, happens elsewhere. As they argue, “in industrial countries there is no need for special actions against population growth” but in the rest of the world “slow and controlled population reduction should be pursued” (Männistö, 2018b).

The PS argues that consumption is one of the main contributors to climate change and when fostered, leads to exceeding of the carrying capacity of the Earth. As Leena Meri illustrates: “if the population increases by one billion by 2030 [...] the carrying capacity of the planet has been briskly exceeded” (Suomen Uutiset, 2018a, p. 8) According to the PS, “population movements” increase “carbon footprint” and therefore in order to protect the environment, acts for reduction of birth rates and improvement of women’s positions in developing countries are required (Männistö, 2018a, p. 7, see also Männistö, 2018b).

The PS also argues against immigration on the basis that because the weather in the North is so cold, people in North consume more and therefore immigration should be restricted in order to restrain the emission growth. As Hallaaho (2018, p. 5) presents, “a person living in the North needs more energy just to stay warm than a resident in the South. He also consumes more because his purchasing power is better. Thus, international migration from the South to the North will increase emissions globally, and that is why we must strive to combat it.”

As already mentioned, animality is also an often-occurring theme. Already at the beginning of their environmental programme, the PS argues that “animal protection is part of European and Finnish civilization tradition” (Perussuomalaiset,

2019, p. 3). In one article they justify the need for animal protection in the following way: “Only as pets, we have 1.4 million cats and dogs and a huge variety of farm and hobby animals, whose well-being and unnecessary suffering are avoided [...] How we treat animals tells us a lot about humans and society. The value of society is measured by how we treat our weakest” (Männistö, 2018a, p.7). Therefore, as these passages show, protection of animals is linked to Finnishness and furthermore, to humanity. Animal protection is often discussed in relation to slaughtering practices. The PS is opposing to the meat that is “ritual slaughtered” and argue that its demand is increasing due to immigration (Suomen Uutiset, 2019b, p. 8). According to the PS, “religious groups should not be given any kind of exemptions that violate animal rights in this case. The Western method of slaughter is based on science and the fact that the animal must not be allowed to feel extra pain or pain at the time of slaughter” (ibid, p. 8).

8. THE NATURE OF THE FAR-RIGHT'S NATURE

As my empirical analysis indicates, nature is an often-appearing topic in the communications of the PS. In the context of my theoretical framework, I have located in the previous chapter presented material and codes four broad analytical categories, that have helped me to frame my discussions about the link between the ideas of nature and ethno-nationalism: *homeland*¹⁹, *human nature*²⁰, *population and limits of nature*²¹, and *nature as object*²². In this chapter, I examine the contestations of representations of nature, in other words, explore the ways in which *the far-right's ideas of nature relate to their ethno-nationalist agendas*. By ethno-nationalist agendas I mean in Chapter 2 and 3 discussed ethno-nationalism, the master concept of the far-right, that also defines its other political objectives such as anti-immigration, racism, opposition to multiculturalism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, rejection of universalism and advocacy for traditional family values. The core agenda of the far-right is to restore the 'historical' nation that is defined and ruled by the majority ethnicity group, the Finns. Because the main principle of nationalism is that "political and national should be contingent" (Gellner, 2006, p. 1), one could argue that the nationalism of the PS is directed towards limiting the political rights (e.g. citizenship rights) of those, who are not part of the ethnically defined nation.

8.1 *Homeland*

The first way how the far-right's ideas of nature can be related to their ethno-nationalist politics is through the advocacy of *homeland* and rooted *Volk*, nation, that is perceived as an organic and natural entity. These ideas have their origins in

¹⁹ Themes of *homeland*: the people, conservation, locality, homeland, national identity, territorialisation.

²⁰ Themes of *nature and human nature*: aesthetic, recreation, Christianity, vitality, animality, masculinity, intrinsic value.

²¹ Themes of *population and limits of nature*: resource scarcity, carrying capacity, population, globality, climate change.

²² Themes of *nature as object*: commodification, tourism, minerals, natural resources, Promethean.

Völkisch movement that presented Volk (nation) in Romantic ways as an organic, natural community that is rooted in its soil (Chapter 4.4). As discussed in Chapter 5, Völkisch thought has been apparent among certain far-right groups in Germany. Similar vocabularies are also used by the PS. The people, ‘the Finns’ are presented as a culturally defined entity that shares the trait of Finnishness. The Finns are *rooted* (‘attached’) in the homeland and its nature. The PS frames nature as a place that is meaningful only for Finns since the Finns have a unique and historical connection through tradition and culture to it, and hence nature is also a place that evokes feelings and emotions. The significance of place for the far-right in regard to the protection of nature is recognised for example among far-right groups in Germany (Olsen, 1999). In the German context, the place is a site that evokes feelings of belonging and identity creation and protection of nature and place is linked with the protection of the nation (Chapter 5.1).

By uttering rootedness in particular homeland and evoking the homeland’s symbolic meanings for creation of national identity (e.g. national animal, ‘blue and white’ landscape) the PS aims to naturalise the belonging of the Finns to the homeland and to establish historically continued identity with land. Nature is seen as national heritage which can be ‘nurtured only by Finns’ and therefore the PS links nature to spatial and temporal dimensions and continuity of homeland. Similar rhetoric in regard to understanding nature as a national heritage of homeland is also recognised in the context of the British National Party (Forchtner & Kølvråa, 2015). In the PS rhetoric, homeland is a place only for the Finns, therefore indicating social boundaries of naturally separated groups. Furthermore, they present nature as a site for the historical continuity of land, which signifies the perennial way to conceptualise nation. By emphasising the rootedness, they also try to assign identities to places, which consequently creates ‘out of place’ groups. Homeland, as a bounded territory, marks the division between ‘us’ and the Other: it is the place for ‘in place’ group (the Finns) and the ‘out place’ group (non-Finns who are not rooted in the homeland).

The rhetoric of the PS in regard to the homeland is spatial because the PS is alluding to a certain geographical area that is inhabited by the cultural group of

Finns and that should be protected against other cultural groups (immigrants). Although not explicitly stated, this reasoning resembles distantly the idea of Lebensraum, a living space of a culturally defined unit. It is important to note, however, that I do not recognise the expansionist logic from the rhetoric of the PS. Instead, I recognise an unease in regard to the expansion that is approaching from outside in the form of ‘overpopulation’ and ‘population relocations’. At the beginning of the 20th century, Lebensraum was used to justify expansionist logic where overpopulated European states could expand territorially due to struggle for space (as discussed in Chapter 4.4). From the PS empirical material, I recognise that now, through anti-immigration claims, the PS presents ideas that resemble ‘struggle for space’ as they fear for territorial expansion of the ‘overpopulated’ non-European states.

8.2 *Human nature*

The second category is *human nature*, where I have recognised a set of ideas where romanticised and aestheticized nature is represented serving as the site for self-realisation of inscribed human essences, in other words, human nature. The PS encourages spending time in nature because it is a ‘counterforce to urban life’ and source for vitality (‘gives energy... and reduces stress’), Christianity (‘forest is a church’), national identity (‘the best Finnish rearing’) and just ‘general naturalness’. The PS recognizes the intrinsic value of nature and portrays nature in aestheticized terms: nature is ‘beautiful lakes’, ‘wide forests’ and ‘harsh wilderness’. Portraying nature in these terms resembles Romantic ideas where aestheticized and romanticised nature provides a site for realisation of human nature because it is outside of the modern progress that alienates human from nature – both inner and outer (Chapter 4.4). Furthermore, romantic ideas include the notion that human nature is ‘fixed’ (not modifiable, only discoverable), and a human is a part of ‘the integrity of nature’. Portraying nature in romantic terms has been also recognized elsewhere, for example in the context of the British National Party and the Danish People’s Party but also among far-right groups in Germany and the United States

(Chapter 2 and 5.1). In Romantic manner, also the PS locates human part of the integrity of nature (Finns are ‘attached’ to nature). When the PS encourages a Finn to spend time in nature, it encourages a Finn to discover both inner and outer nature. Nature is a place where a Finn discovers her inner essences: Finnishness, Christianity, morality and rationality.

Animality is also used as a means for self-realisation of human nature. Domestication of parts of the animal world (‘carnivores’) provides self-realisation for ‘true manliness’ (masculine identity) and ‘natural behaviour, opinion, effort, general nature’ (which in this context, perhaps, corresponds to rationality and morality). Animality is contrasted to humanity and in this construction, ‘natural’ human essences such as morality and rationality are discovered. Animality was also used to denote the uncivilized Other and consequently to express moral and cultural superiority. The PS makes a call for animal protection because it is a part of ‘European and Finnish civilization tradition’. They make a case against ‘ritual slaughters’ by saying that unlike ‘ritual slaughter practices’, the Western method of slaughter is based on science and ensures a ‘pain-free’ way to die. Therefore, animality functions as a way to contrast inscribed human essences (civilized opposite to uncivilized, rational opposite to irrational, humane opposite to brutal) and consequently to create the racialised other. Similar representations about ‘ritual slaughter practices’ are also recognized among Front National and far-right groups in Germany (Chapter 5).

Above described representations of nature are linked to the far-right’s ‘neo-racism’. As discussed in Chapter 3.3, neo-racism is an exclusionary practice where the Other is created basing on certain ‘cultural’ traits that are seen as determinants of groups’ difference. Neo-racism pronounces cultures as static and incompatible because they are defined by fixed human essences (therefore human natures) and, directs attention to some generalised human traits that are seen as special and inferior (e.g. being Muslim). This, in turn, justifies various social boundaries of inclusions and exclusions. The idea of fixed inscribed human essences that I have located from the empirical material is closely linked to the far-right’s ethno-nationalism in general and neo-racism in particular because it

reproduces the idea that human traits are fixed, not changeable and therefore incompatible. Importantly, these ideas also reproduce the idea of rational, civilized and moral Finland and West because they emphasise the scientific cultural achievements especially in regard to animal slaughter practices. As I have shown, the PS attempts to naturalise certain properties as being solely their own nature (humanity, morality, civilization) and through this rhetoric, they create the Other that does not have these properties.

8.3 Population and limits of nature

In the third set of ideas, the PS represents nature as limited and threatened by overpopulation which according to the PS, is ‘the mother of all environmental problems’. Ideas of natural limits, environmental problems and resource scarcities are linked to population growth that happens *elsewhere*. As my empirical material shows, the PS claims that population reduction is needed in non-industrial countries.

According to the PS, water scarcity can cause refugee flows and armed conflicts in future which is why it is important to keep water (or what they call ‘bright gold’) in national ownership. The PS represents nature in terms of carrying capacity which is explicitly linked to population and the consequential consumption. The ideas about resource scarcity and consequential conflicts resemble Malthusian idea of natural law that sets natural limits to population growth but also the ideas of Hardin where individualist overconsumption of commons leads to the crossing of carrying capacity (Chapter 4.4). Similar articulations of the connection between population and environment in the context of the far-right are also located in the case of the British National Party (Chapter 5.2).

The common ground for these articulations regarding population and natural limits is that they blame the population in the South for environmental problems. This is related to the PS’s ethno-nationalism in general and to its anti-immigration in particular because presenting the idea of natural limits is a way also to draw social limits in terms of anti-immigration. By pointing out overpopulation

they also point out the ‘redundant’ Other whose population size should be controlled. When the PS justifies anti-immigration on the basis of population growth, it also justifies the exclusion of people from the access to wealth, peace and resources. When the PS dreams about closing the borders, it does not only dream about the maintenance of ethnic homogeneity but also about restricting the Other from accessing the Finnish resources and wealth. Most importantly, when the PS (and other far-right actors) blames population in non-industrial countries for environmental problems, they are also masking the unequal global structures that are one of the major causes for the environmental problems. By global structures I mean, for example, the capitalist ideal of continuing expansion and consequential exploitative use of natural resources (e.g. fossil fuels, the main contributor for climate change) or environmental degradation caused by intense consumption in high-income countries which are also fostering the demand of raw materials. Adopting rhetoric regarding population growth, as discussed in Chapter 4.4, is one characteristic of right-wing politics because it assists in maintaining class and ethnic-based exploitative relations.

8.4 Nature as an object

In the last set of ideas represented by the PS, nature is presented as an object. As the empirical evidence presents, although the PS represents nature in a romantic way, utilization and exploitation of nature are still in the core of the party’s political agendas. There were no signs that romantic understanding of nature was contradictory to ideas of nature as a site of exploitation but instead as presented by the PS, they are simultaneous. Through territorial claims, the PS attempts to reassert control over land and natural resources that in their view belong to the sovereign nation, the Finns.

The PS perceives nature as opposed to mind, spirit and soul and as an object to research, modify and exploit. The PS present nature in Promethean terms: as limitless because humans can overcome all limits posed by nature through technological and scientific advancements. This was well illustrated in the

empirical example of forestation: forest grew faster because of active ‘management’ and carbon sinks are not ‘naturally’ occurring phenomena but instead, through active human interfere occurring process, that can ease climate change. In the Promethean way, the PS sees that capitalism, technology and science are fused together. It is interesting that for example in the context of forest management, the PS perceives climate change as being solvable through technological advancement whereas when climate change was discussed in regard to population, Promethean view of limitless nature was not present anymore.

The commodification of nature and its instrumental use among the far-right has been debated – perhaps, on the one hand, reflecting their various socio-economic positions but on the other hand, also the division between far-right groups and far-right parties. In his study on far-right non-political movements, Olsen (1999) argues that the far-right’s ‘environmentalism’ is opposed to capitalist exploitation and alienation from nature. On the other hand, studies on far-right political parties have shown that the far-right parties tend to prioritise economy over environmental politics, for example, in regard to climate change mitigation and also tend to support industrial science and technology (Chapter 5.2). From the perspective of my empirical material, I do not find any evidence about opposition to capitalist exploitation and alienation from nature.

The PS emphasises that nature is the property of the Finnish nation, and therefore should be only used, enjoyed and utilized by the Finnish nation. Therefore, by emphasising the ownership over nature, they perhaps try to exclude people who are not Finns from the wealth and profits derived from the utilisation of nature. Furthermore, by articulating the idea that nature is an object that could and should be exploited no matter what it takes (e.g. in relation to continuing fossil fuel use) the PS is securing the wealth that derives from those resources. Furthermore, the dominative relationship between human and nature that bases on continuing extraction do not only provide wealth, but it has also been an important component of the creation of white masculine identities and consequential subjectivities (as discussed in Chapter 5.2).

9. CONCLUSIONS: IT IS NOT ABOUT THE PAST, IT IS ABOUT THE FUTURE

If a nation does not have a viable national identity, then the nation has no instinct of self-preservation or community spirit. The blurring of national identity leads to rootlessness. We know how it works for a tree whose roots are damaged; it decays and falls. (Immonen, 2019)

In 1820, one of the most influential thinkers of German nationalism, Ernst Moritz Arndt, argued that lading axes on trees is in fact lading axes “on the whole nation” (cited in Forchtner, 2018). This same poetic equation between trees and the nation is also apparent in the above sentence by the PS member, Olli Immonen. But what would be the reasoning behind an equation like this, what is the connection between the nation and a tree? This thesis has been driven by a question like that. More precisely, my aim has been to contribute to the existing literature on the far-right and nature nexus by examining how the PS represents nature and the ways in which these representations are linked to the far-right’s ethno-nationalist core. In other words, I have tried to understand what the nature of the far-right’s nature is.

I define the far-right as a social and political movement whose core is ethno-nationalism: the dream of the nation-state that is defined and ruled by the majority ethnicity. The ethno-nationalist core also defines the far-right’s other views, such as racism, xenophobia, support for traditional family values and rejection of universalism and globalism. The current research concerning the far-right’s positions on nature is limited and divided: on the one hand, many points out that nature and natural protection are important components of the far-right’s nationalist ideologies. On the other hand, many questions the ‘greenness’ of the far-right and argue that it should rather be described as anti-environmentalist due to its support for anti-environmental and anti-climate politics.

My empirical research on the PS has demonstrated that nature and natural protection are important themes in the party’s official publications. As discussed in Chapter 7 and 8, the ideas of nature articulated by the PS are diverse and occasionally also contradictory. To conclude, the PS represents nature as an

external domain and therefore, it is reproducing modernist human-nature division. The externality of nature is represented in two different ways. First, the PS represents nature as an external domain that can be conquered and utilised for technological and profit-seeking purposes. Nature is resources: it is 'bright cold', forests, minerals and fossil fuels. On the other hand, nature is also represented in Romantic terms where it is aestheticized notion: it is a harsh wilderness, beautiful lakes and vast forests. Nature is represented as having intrinsic value and it is unchangeable and timeless backdrop through which human self-realisation occurs. Although Romantic ideas of nature embrace human-nature relationship (e.g. by encouraging spending time in nature), they reproduce the human-nature distinction because human nature is contrasted to romanticised ideas of nature (e.g. wilderness or forest), and consequently, nature is a site for self-realisation of 'fixed' human properties (Christianity, morality, civilization). Nature is also harsh and limited and a site of various environmental concerns, such as resource scarcities and carrying capacities. On the other hand, nature is also represented as limitless: through scientific and technological advancements nature can be modified and utilised and its various environmental problems can be overcome.

I have introduced four directional analytical themes of the ways in which the far-right's ideas of nature can be related to their ethno-nationalist core: *homeland, human nature, population and limits of nature* and *nature as object*. In developing these categories, I have used the empirical material and the presented theoretical framework but have been able to point out similar ideas also from other far-right groups. The first category is homeland, where the PS presents the homeland as part of natural order and the people as rooted in the homeland's nature. Nature is linked to place, people and homeland, to the past and the future and to national identity. The second theme is human nature, in which nature is a place to discover your true essence which marks your difference from the uncivilized, irrational Other. Through this rhetoric, as I have shown, the PS reproduces its neo-racist articulations. Third, nature is limited and a site of various environmental concerns such as resource scarcities or carrying capacities, which are the outcome of overpopulation that occurs 'elsewhere'. Fourth, the PS presents nature as an

object, which can be modified and exploited through technological and capitalist advancements.

In a similar vein to Forchtner et al. (2018) and Olsen (1999), I argue that ideas of nature are an important part of the far-right's ideologies. In the context of my empirical analysis but also existing research on the far-right and nature nexus, I argue that nature can serve as an important component of the far-right's ethno-nationalist core because through certain ideas of nature, the far-right does not only define nature but also human nature. In this way, nature functions as a means to formulate social relations of power because through certain ideas of nature the far-right naturalises 'fixed' human properties (rational, civilized, moral) and consequently naturalises particular nationalist, racist and sexist assumptions. However, it is crucial to note that the far-right is not necessarily 'modifying' ideas of nature to suit their ethno-nationalist agendas. Instead, they adopt ideas of nature that according to John Hultgren (2015) *give rise* to nationalist agendas, in other words, they adopt certain ideas of nature that have emerged simultaneously with the development of nationalism, modernity and the ideas of 'civilization' and 'the West'. I problematise for example Jeffries' (2017) claims that the far-right's ideas of nature are just a hoax. In the context of the PS, I argue that the party's ideas about nature are not randomly selected nor a hoax but instead to a great extent traceable to historical intellectual movements such as Romanticism and German Nationalism and also to certain 'scientific' ideas about human organisation and ecological limits (e.g. Malthusian ideas).

Despite the fact that it is important to recognise historical continuities of the far-right's green thought – especially because the far-right tends to romanticise the past – it is important to recognise that the far-right is not about past. It is about the future. Suvi Keskinen (2013, p. 231) argues that the far-right's tendency to romanticise the past is actually rhetoric that is directed to *visioning the future* and to reasserting the normative position of *endangered white masculinity*. Basing on my empirical material, I argue in a similar vein to Keskinen (2013) that the future of the PS is driven by the dream about restoring the normative societal order. One could argue, that when the PS makes a claim about roots and homeland and the

need for protection of nature, it is visioning the future where everyone is 'back in their places' and the social order that is based on social hierarchies and normative power of white masculinity is restored. Protection of nature, which is justified through spatial and temporal rhetoric, is equated with the protection of place and therefore with the protection of the culturally defined nation.

Hence, the PS's ideas of nature have potential implications to naturalise societal order that bases on ethnically divided cultural units; to naturalise the idea that each unit has its own place; to naturalise the idea that each culture has its own essence that is defined by nature. The idea of 'Finnish' nature functions as a means to anchor the nation spatially but also temporally. This nature has always been Finnish, and it has to be preserved and kept in Finnish hands. This idea naturalises the perennial idea of immemorial nation and a world order based on nation-states. Although not pronounced explicitly (but instead through subtle language), when the PS refers to morality, rationality, Christianity and civilization, it also refers to whiteness and white superiority, which, as discussed in Chapter 3, are intertwined with the creation of White, Christian Europe. As I have shown, the PS attempts to naturalize certain properties as being solely their own nature (humanity, morality, civilization) and through this rhetoric, they create the Other that does not have these properties.

When the far-right uses the idea of 'nature' or 'natural' to make an argument, it makes a claim for neutrality because 'natural' signifies something that is ideology-free, apolitical and beyond change and debate. By emphasising the connection between culture and nature or the belonging and rootedness in the homeland, the far-right attempts to designate everyone's place and mark those who are 'out of place'. This, in turn, can contribute to exclusionary practices, for example, denial of rights from immigrants in regard to healthcare. As Harvey argues, the place makes the difference because place "indicates distinctive roles, capacities for action and access to power within the social order" (Harvey, 1990, p. 419). Due to increasing global connectedness, we are becoming more and more 'placeless' and the meaning of place has faded or at least changed. This, consequently, has faded out traditional social order, identities, social meanings and

subjectivities that places have given rise to. Therefore, for the PS and other far-right movements, not being fixed in place would also signify the loss of roles, capacities and accesses to the power that places (Finland – Europe – the West) have granted.

Many have rejected far-right's environmentalism, for example arguing that the green ethno-nationalists are just "wolves in sheep's clothing" and "doing their best to seduce the mainstream environmental movement" (SPLC, 2010, p. 5). The far-right's 'environmentalism' is unique, but it should not be rejected but rather seen as an analytically important factor. Representations of nature are contested and studying them can provide new perspectives on the far-right but also on how certain ideas of nature can be utilised in different political projects. As I have shown in my thesis, the PS's stances on nature are not just a way to lure voters or follow or reject mainstream environmentalism; instead, these representations of nature function as an important component in their ethno-nationalist political agendas.

Forchtner et al. (2018) argue that there are tensions in the far-right though: on the one hand, the far-right expresses concern over laws of nature and natural order; on the other, the far-right generally denies climate change. According to Forchtner et al. (2018), the explanation is nationalism: whereas protection of nature is linked to the nation and national identity, climate change is a global issue and hence threatens the sovereignty of the Volk. However, I problematise this perspective because I do not see a contradiction in the far-right's climate denialism and environmental 'protectionism'. Rather, I see them as two sides of the same coin. As my empirical material has shown, the romanticisation of nature does not mean that the dominative relationship with nature disappears. Instead, romanticisation and climate denialism serve as the means to reinforce Western masculine power. As also Smith (2008) has argued, the romanticisation of nature is a way to provide a model for social behaviour and, therefore, it is just another way to control. Therefore, I argue that climate denialism is less about being worried about sovereignty and more about being worried about losing normative power, subjectivities and wealth that Western industrialisation and exploitation of natural resources have granted.

One interesting analytical limitation that I have come across in this thesis is that although my starting point was to look at nature ('the green stuff') I have ended up talking about human nature and human essences, which have actually turned out to be one of the most important concepts in understanding of the nature of the far-right's nature. When going through my empirical material and the far-right's ideas of nature, I have noticed that nature, human nature and human are all highly intertwined concepts. This reflects well the complexity of this topic but also absurdity: it is impossible to separate nature from humans and impossible to locate the exact spot where nature starts and where it ends. Then, I want to ask, if it is not possible to separate humans from nature, can we separate societal racism from natural exploitation? As long as our (Western) understanding of ourselves is based on the ideas of rationality and morality – as opposed to nature - are we ever able to free ourselves from the mastery of nature? In turn, I want to ask, if our understanding of ourselves is based on the ideas of civilized, rational and humane – as opposite to uncivilized, irrational and brutal – how are we able to free others from our mastery of human nature? In other words, if our essence, the way how we understand ourselves, is based on the distinction between subject and object (human – nature, civilized – uncivilized) how can we change our dominative relationship with nature and the Other if we do not first change the conception about our human nature?

APPENDIX

Table 1. All official party programmes published 22.6.2017 – April 2019 available online.

<i>Document</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Length (pages)</i>	<i>Explicit references to nature</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Citation</i>
Vote Finland Back: Parliamentary Election Programme	22.2.2019	8	no		–
The Finns party's social policy	21.1.2019	16	no		–
The Finns party's economic policy	21.1.2019	12	yes	<i>water, climate change, fossil fuels, natural resources, resource scarcity, minerals, territorialisation, commodification</i>	Perussuomalaiset 2019a
The Finns party's Immigration Policy	21.1.2019	12	no		–
The Finns party's EU Policy	21.1.2019	8	no		–
The Finns party's environment and energy policy	15.1.2019		yes	<i>homeland, local community, protection, national identity, intrinsic value, tourism, recreation, vitality, animality, commodification, territorialisation, population, fossil fuels, Promethean, forest, water, Christianity, minerals, natural resources, climate change</i>	Perussuomalaiset 2019b
The Finns party's alternative programme	13.11.2018	28	yes	<i>water, territorialisation, commodification, natural resources, population,</i>	Perussuomalaiset 2018b
Principle program of the Finns party	19.10.2018	2	no		–
The Finns party's Educational Policy	24.9.2018	13	no		–

Table 2. All magazines and the analysed articles from Perussuomalainen – magazine during the time frame of June 2017 to April 2019. The short description of the author is provided in the end of the table.

<i>Volume of Perussuomalainen</i>	<i>Length (pages)</i>	<i>Explicit references to nature</i>	<i>Headline</i>	<i>Coded themes</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Page number</i>
3/2019		16	no			
2/2019		20	yes			
			"Halla-aho about topsy-turvy climate politics: biggest polluters are treated as development countries"	climate change	Suomen Uutiset (2019a)	10–11
			MPs of the PS: ban on imports of ritual slaughtered meat	animality	Suomen Uutiset (2019b)	8
<i>Perussuomalainen 1/2019</i>	20	no				
12/2018		yes	"A fair environmental and energy policy program from the Finns party: Housing and transportation cheaper - hundreds of millions cuts from wind power"	animality, protection, natural resources, population, climate change, territoriality	Mika Männistö (2018a)	6–7
			"More equality in burden sharing: Emission goals should be based on population"	Climate change, population	Mika Männistö (2018b)	8
11/2018	20	yes				
			"The Finns of the environmental committee: we don't accept increases in energy taxation"	climate change, fossil fuels, commodification	Suomen Uutiset (2018b)	14–15
10/2018	24	yes				
			"Column: Climate elections"	Climate change; population	Jussi Halla-aho (2018)	5
			"Some limit to climate fuss"	climate change, carrying capacity, population	Suomen Uutiset (2018a)	8–9

8/2018	20	yes				
			"Mäkelä: Environment cannot be left to eco-enthusiasts"	locality, commodification, protection	Perussuomalainen (2018a)	15
6-7/2018	24	no				
5/2018	24	no				
4/2018	20	yes				
			"Mining companies should be held accountable for environmental damage"	commodification, natural resources, minerals	Perussuomalainen 2018c	6
			"Coal phase out increases costs"	fossil fuels	Suomen Uutiset	7
3/2018	20	no				
2/2018	24	yes				
			"Finnish work is a real ecological act"	protection, climate change	Perussuomalainen 2018b	6
1/2018	24	yes				
			"In climate matters the benefit of Finland to the negotiation tables"	climate change	Leena Meri	22
12/2017	28	no				
11/2017	28	no				
10/2017	24	no				
9/2017	24	yes				
			"Halla-aho about forest debate in the European parliament: the benefit of Finland won but not without Finnish fight"	commodification, natural resources, forests	Suomen Uutiset 2017	7

	"Bear man is the man of the year"	national identity, masculinity, animality	Perusäijät 2017	21
8/2017	20	no		
9/2017	24	no		

^aSuomen Uutiset (in English Finnish News) is the online platform for the Perussuomalainen magazine. It being as an author probably means that the article has been first published online.

^bMika Männistö is journalist of Perussuomalainen magazine and was also PSs candidate for parliamentary elections in 2019.

^cJussi Halla-aho is the current leader of the PS.

^dLeena Meri is a MP in the Finns party.

^ePerusäijät (in English Basic men) is the man subgroup of the Finns party

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